

EXCLUSIVE

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LANKA

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OPPOSITION APATHY

WHILE the police banned an SLMP-LSSP-CP meeting which was to be held on Feb. 20 at Borella, the MEP leader, Mr. Dinesh Gunawardena M. P. organised a meeting in his electorate where the current debate on the Universities Act and the accompanying agitation was the main issue. The three-party bloc was also expected to capitalise on the same question which has led the security-conscious police to place strong police contingents at most campuses. "Security reasons" was the Colombo Police Commissioner's reply when asked why the Borella meeting was banned.

It is pretty clear that a long dormant, divided and demoralised opposition which was desperately looking for an anti-government issue to breathe some life into its own ranks, saw its brightest chance in the student unrest. In this light, the apathy of the SLFP leadership, was marked. References were made to the question at the recent Nugegoda and Bandarawela rallies but no SLFP stalwart — not even the young Opposition leader — identified himself personally with the student movement. It was Chandrika Kumaratunge, taken

in for questioning by the police, and Vasudeva Nanayakkara detained under Emergency laws, who made the front pages. Three British MP's even dropped in to see Vasudeva who has a certain talent for getting himself into trouble. Oppositionists all over the world respect the old adage that any publicity is good publicity.

PRIVATISING PHONES

FROM the universities to telecommunications. In the latest venture, privatisation is the medium and the message. But the message, if loud, is not clear. Cabinet spokesmen, Dr. Anandatissa de Alwis said that the Cabinet, on an experts committee report, decided that the entire telecommunications system should go private. The Director of Telecommunications demurred.

Meanwhile, the Telecommunications Engineers Union argued in favour of an autonomous statutory body like Air Lanka or Air Services Ltd. While attributing a "gross waste of public funds" to political pressure, the Engineers Union made a good point. To hand over telecommunications at this stage when the State has already invested a large sum of money on a long-term development

programme is to give private businessmen the benefit of state capital already invested.

(Continued on page 5)

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THE IRONWOOD TREES

U. Karunatilake

Father Rector musing stands,
Half seeing the leaves swoop and scatter,
wind flung,
From the blue sky, cloud spun,
Half seeing the teeming ironwood branches
Drop white petals from their pollen stars.

Father Rector absently watches
The Orphan boys crop the lawn
Ramping somewhat, as boys do.
Thinking this could have been a happy afternoon
Why this misgiving
Why this vision of orphans
Torn from corpses riddled and bloody
Why this vision of ragged children
Straggling single-file
Bringing blood stains to the white-lace fall
Of ironwood petals on his lawn.

Troubled, he remembers
The broken voice on the telephone
Long distance, faint, but icily clear
Father they killed him
The voice broke but rose proud again
He died for us

He fell at the door of the Church
Father Rector's head spins
Years ago
Such things happened only in Latin America
Years ago
He thought the rich had clean hands
During the take over
He fought for their schools
Where the sons of the rich played cricket
Where poor boys such as these polished the
carved stairways,
Cut the lawn as they cut it now

On the lawn the dead leaves turn and spin
Round on their tracks like the seven sisters
What was it about the seven sisters
The voice on the telephone whispered about?

Father Rector sees the sun
Slant down the line of gnarled black tree
trunks
Four hundred years old
Light up the long, pillared Lisbon verandah
And he wonders
Where do all these sad avenues lead?



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No political solution but a 'final battle'

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

In all three critically important fronts, the military, the political and the diplomatic, there were highly significant developments in the past fortnight which taken together, and these "fronts" are

GEN. GIAP

"A war of this nature in general entails several phases in principle, starting from a stage of contention, it goes through a period of equilibrium before arriving at a general counter offensive.

... "Viet Nam, in the first years of its struggle, did not and could not engage in pitched battles. It had to rest content with guerilla warfare. At the cost of thousands of difficulties and countless sacrifices, this guerilla warfare developed progressively into a form of mobile warfare that daily grew in scale. While retaining certain characteristics of guerilla warfare, it involved regular campaigns with greater attacks on fortified positions. Starting from small operations with the strength of a platoon or company to annihilate a few men or a group of enemy soldiers, our army went over, later, to more important combat with a battalion or a regiment to cut one or several enemy companies to pieces, finally coming to greater campaigns bringing into play several regiments, then several divisions to end at Dien Bien Phu where the French Expeditionary Corps lost 16,000 men of its crack units".

(from 'People's War, People's Army')

of course inter-connected, represent a qualitative change in the Sri Lankan situation.

It was President Jayewardene himself who placed the main emphasis on the altered character of the armed confrontation in the north and the change in the nature of the offensive assaults launched by the separatist rebels. In his address to Parliament on February 20, Mr. Jayewardene, who has been long regarded as a student of military affairs, noted that the armed Tamil youth groups had so far concentrated on "hit-and-run tactics." On information received and on his own reading of the military situation, he believed that the "terrorists" were preparing for a "head-on battle" with the army, as soon as they had 'sufficient trained men and weapons.'

On the same day, the *SUN* published an exclusive report by "Defence Correspondent". Giving a fairly detailed account of the 5-hour battle at Kokilai, an army base camp re-opened only a fortnight earlier, the *SUN* observed:

"It was not just another terrorist attack...They pounded it with grenades, mortar shells, rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles...This was the first time the terrorists had come in for a direct confrontation with the security forces. Two days before, they had attempted strikes at the navy base at Karainagar, and the army camps at Valvettiturai, Gurnagar, Nelliady and Elephant Pass. Now they had made a full frontal assault on an army camp..."

The description left no doubts in the minds of anybody conversant with the literature of guerrilla warfare that the armed struggle had entered a new phase. (See Box)

Final Battle

President JR then went on to warn the country that the rebels may launch a 'final, decisive battle' and even strike at the island's heartland. By the phrase "the heart of Sri Lanka" he meant of course the area south of Vavuniya and north of Anuradhapura. (Mr. Maitripala Senanayake, MP for Madawachchiya for 37 years has been stating on SLFP platforms that he is not sure whether his NCP electorate will be a Sinhala constituency at some future election.)

President JR explained "the borders of what they call the State of Eelam."

In a characteristically crisp statement, he concluded that "if we don't occupy the border, the border will come to us."

Thus, the military significance of the new 'settlement scheme' became clear. The *Far Eastern Economic Review's* Chief Correspondent, Rodney Tasker, who met Lands Minister Dissanayake suggests that its inspiration is the Israeli 'West Bank' policy. (See "New Settlements"). Whatever the sources of inspiration, what needs to be underscored is that strategy or the military factor has gradually become the determining or dominant consideration in the making of policy in most spheres.

Only 'trained men and weapons' were mentioned by President JR. No reference was made to a time-table, though it was strongly hinted that the "decisive battle" was not too far away. In another speech, however, mention was made of "unity moves" among the Madras-based expatriate groups. This has been in the air for sometime, and many an Indian newspaper, the *HINDU* chiefly, and several foreign correspondents have written about

a "unified military command structure." (SEE: "Moderates and the Guerillas"). According to President JR, three groups had agreed to work together.

On Sunday 24, National Security Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali was prepared to set a deadline — March / April. "The country is ready for the attack, and we will succeed in defeating them," he said.

While UNP stalwarts (See: **PREMADASA LINE**) are making stirring speeches, often to the martial sound of trumpets in the background, the Opposition, particularly the SLFP leader Mrs. Bandaranaike, has started to "pooh-pooh"

the "final battle" theory and castigate the government for both its failure to achieve a political settlement as well as its ineffectiveness in the counter-insurgency drive. "Can they hold a GAMU-DAWA or MAHAPOLA or any tamasha anywhere in the north?" asks Mrs. B sarcastically at country-wide rallies.

Opposition Moves

The long dormant Opposition has become more active again, although in Parliament only Messrs Dinesh Gunawardene and Sarath Muttetuwegama, inject some combative spirit to the most supine and colourless Opposition in the history of the Sri Lankan national assembly.

Mao on the three stages of protracted war

SINCE the war is a protracted one and final victory will belong to China, it can reasonably be assumed that the protracted war will pass through three stages. The first stage covers the period of the enemy's strategic offensive and our strategic defensive. The second stage will be the period of the enemy's strategic solidation and our preparation for the counter-offensive. The third stage will be the period of our strategic counter-offensive and the enemy's strategic retreat. It is impossible to predict the concrete situation in the three stages, but certain main trends in the war may be pointed out in the light of present conditions. The objective course of events will be exceedingly rich and varied, with many twists and turns, and nobody can cast a horoscope for the war; nevertheless it is necessary for the strategic direction of the war to make a rough sketch of its trends... our sketch may not be in full accord with the subsequent facts and will be amended by them...

The second stage may be termed one of strategic stalemate. At the tail end of the first stage, the enemy will be forced to fix certain terminal points to his strategic offensive owing to his shortage of troops and our firm resistance, and upon reaching them he will stop his strategic offensive and enter the stage of safeguarding his occupied areas. In the second stage, the enemy will attempt to safeguard these areas... This second stage will be the transitional stage of the entire war; it will be the most trying period but also the pivotal one.

The third stage will be the stage of the counter-offensive to recover our lost territories... Because of the unevenness in political and economic development, the strategic counter-offensive of the third stage will not present a uniform and even picture throughout the country in its initial phase but will be regional in character, rising here and subsiding there.

In an immediate reaction to the Opposition's nationwide campaign, the UNP began to hold "Help the Government to Combat Terrorism" rallies. The Opposition line is that the UNP needs to keep the 'war' issue on the boil in order to mobilise sagging mass support, "Earlier, the nation was told that EELAM is going to be declared on Thai Pongal Day, now it is the big battle in March-April" said a politburo member of the SLFP.

A re-activated SLFP with Mrs. B. throwing herself spiritedly into the fray has produced a knee-jerk reaction from the UNP. The SLFP is now being blamed for destroying the propertied Sinhalese through land reform, and Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara once more under detention is being referred to as 'the SLFP-sponsored' candidate at the Eheliyagoda by-election.

Old Politics

The SLFP and the UNP thus trap themselves in 'the old politics' of "more Sinhala-Buddhist than thou", totally oblivious to the fact that Sri Lankan politics have been radically transformed by the unprecedented challenge thrown by the Eelamist rebels and the unparalleled nature of the national crisis. Thus, the Opposition leader, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike finds himself in the curiously ironic situation of defender of 'the defender of the faith' Mr. Cyril Mathew, dismissed by his party and evidently spurned by his own notorious JSS, the *bete noire* of the SLFP rank-and-file and all SLFP and opposition grass-roots supporters. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike wants Mr. Amirthalingam tried for treason and Mr. Thondaman dealt with by the UNP as firmly as it did with Mr. Mathew, the poor fallen hero!

Unfortunately for Mr. Bandaranaike, this 'mass line' only earns him a withering riposte from Mr. Athulathmudali who taking cognisance of the fact that Mr. Amirthalingam was Mr. Bandaranaike's predecessor in office styles his attack on the TULF leader as 'an exercise in self-preservation'.

And Prime Minister Premadasa, mischief-maker extraordinary, is content to read a passage from FORUM, sister Sunethra's paper, which refers sneeringly to the Opposition leader's "perks" (a Company Chairman's) and "powers" (a Colonial Chieftain's).

Against the dark backdrop of Sri Lanka's tragedy, at least some Opposition personalities seem to be reduced to bit players in a

comedy grotesque, getting their 'lines' all crazily mixed up too. They are not attacking the government on mass issues, on economics or democracy or even on the Universities Act — only on the government's failure to deal with Messrs Amirthalingam and Thondaman.

Diplomatic Factor

While the military factor has seized a commanding position, the diplomatic has prevailed over the political via-a-vis the paramount issue of our times.

"Some think that a (political) solution will make terrorism wither away. Others think that any solution will be impossible unless terrorism is first eliminated. I think the last sentence is correct", President JR told Parliament.

It was left to the National Security Minister to reveal the integral connection between the military — political — diplomatic in government thinking. According to the *Daily News*, he ruled out "the chances of a negotiated settlement... as long as Tamil separatists are given re-inforcements in Tamilnadu".

So, for the moment at least, the political option has been discarded. The collapse of the APC did announce that. Now it has received clear, formal recognition and sanction. Tamilnadu means India means diplomatic accord.

On Mr. Athulathmudali's return from Delhi there was a sudden surge of hope and optimism. Commentators called it "a thaw" in Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

But subsequent developments have seriously undermined any calculations founded on that hopeful assumption. Though Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has bluntly rejected the idea of military intervention (Bangladesh-type or any other) Delhi has also said 'no' to Sri Lanka's proposal for joint naval surveillance in order to stop the flow of both Eelamists (Sri Lanka's main worry) and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees (India's main concern).

The announcement was made, diplomats noted, after Tamilnadu

Chief Minister, the ailing MGR, had criticised the proposal and then met Mr. Gandhi in Delhi.

Finally, Mr. Gandhi's statement to the LOS ANGELES Times, republished by the SUNDAY ISLAND (a censored version) showed that India's offer of help was conditional. "I told Lalith Athulathmudali as long as there is a feeling in India that you are committing atrocities on civilian Tamils, not the terrorists but the non-terrorists, it is very difficult for us to help you".

High Commissioner Chatwal's departure and the arrival in Colombo of his Sri Lankan counterpart Mr. Bernard Tillekeratne for "urgent talks" indicates that positions have hardened.

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

DIYAWADANA DILEMMAS

POLICY differences, personal conflicts and natural exhaustion create problems of their own for every government at the end of its term. The UNP was not re-elected. 6 year term of the 1977 parliament was extended by the highly controversial 1982 December referendum. What we are watching today is an administration that has exhausted its energies so much that the pretence of a 'new term' is really wearing thin.

The politics of the 'new' parliament in the 'new' capital by the Diyawanne Oya is the sterile and petty politics which has exhausted both its parliamentary term and its vitality and nothing illustrates this fact better than the weird, byzantine and essentially futile drama of the Diyawadana Nilame issue. After suffering a humiliating set-back at the hands of the Maha Sangha and Buddhist opinion, the UNP has had to allow a contest on the old rules but with at least three key UNP personalities locked in a battle on behalf of rival aspirants. With a serious war on its hands, it simply cannot afford even small internal conflicts — the dismissal of Mathew was bad enough — and the odour of decay in the court or the capital.

SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

THE SENSE of paranoia among the Tamils is probably as deep-seated as that of the Sinhalese except that it has now been given a painful physical edge with the almost daily bloodshed in the areas where most of them live. There is a general feeling among Tamils who, quoting the downgrading of their language, and educational and employment opportunities since 1948, feel that the Sinhalese leadership discriminates against them. Another major grievance is what they call colonialism — the settlement of Sinhalese in predominantly Tamil areas to dilute the ethnic makeup which, for instance, the Tamils claim has built up the Sinhalese population in predominantly Tamil Trincomalee from a small minority in 1948 to roughly 30% parity with Tamils there now, with Muslims making up the rest. The settlement Policy is compared to Jewish settlement of the occupied West Bank.

In a speech on 20 January, Jayewardene said the government would not accept that certain parts of the island were traditional homelands of any community, saying there would be settlement along the lines of the island's overall ethnic proportions. He was referring to a new programme under which it is planned to settle 30,000 Sinhalese from the south in the Wannu "dry zone" area of Northern Province, stretching from Mannar to Mullativu this year. Each family would be given a half-acre of land and money to build a house — plus 25 machine guns and 200 rifles per settlement to protect themselves, presumably against Tamil guerillas. It was a similar settlement scheme in the Dollar and Kent farms, in the Mullaitivu district, which provoked a Tamil guerilla raid in November in which an officially estimated 72 Sinhalese ex-convicts were massacred.

— Far Eastern Economic Review

Driving the moderates into the guerillas' camp

Rodney Tasker

The moderate Tamil leadership, represented by the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), and the young Tamil guerilla groups find themselves almost in the same boat these days.

While the five main guerilla groups — with an estimated armed strength of at least 2,000 men — have always borne the brunt of the government's drive to stamp out an increasingly popular movement among the Sri Lankan Tamil community to form their own separate state in the country's northern and eastern provinces, the TULF has found itself set adrift by President Junius Jayewardene's announcement on 21 January that he will now refuse to talk to any party advocating a separate Tamil state.

The leadership of the TULF — on paper the country's main opposition party — feels it has no where to live but Madras, the capital of southern India's Tamil Nadu state, now that it cannot talk to Jayewardene.

So now the TULF should logically become more aligned with the Tamil guerilla leadership — a force which has the same declared aim as the TULF — a separate Tamil Eelam state — but has taken up arms to achieve it. The guerilla groups represent young Tamils who have become frustrated with the failure of the TULF to secure concessions from the Colombo government through peaceful negotiations.

In interviews with TULF leader Appapilai Amirthalingam and spokesman for one of the leading guerilla groups, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, A. S. Balasingham, in Madras, this correspondent found there had been more contact between the two forces since the breakdown of the All-Party Con-

ference in Colombo. "We will certainly try to avoid any conflict between the militants and those who believe in peaceful resistance or Gandhism," said Amirthalingam. "We don't think they are terrorists — we have never accepted that they are terrorists... the TULF states that the Tamils can't co-exist with the Sinhalese."

On his part, Balasingham said. "We met the TULF leaders recently. We impressed on them that the time has come for them to take a clear-cut position on the Tamil issue. They have not specifically stated what they want. We have to put pressure on them to openly declare that negotiations will never work and that they should carry out the mandate given them by our people to work for an independent state."

Whether or not the two forces forge a working relationship, both are agreed that the government's plans to settle armed Sinhalese communities in the Northern Province risks the danger of civil war. "That will be the most dangerous policy, which will lead to civil war conditions," said Amirthalingam. "That is a policy that should be resisted to the last Tamil."

Balasingham, commenting on the government's resettlement plan, said: "I feel the government of Sri Lanka is generating conditions for a civil war. They are mobilising the population for a civil war. What I fear is that racist, chauvinist elements in the government as well as the Buddhist clergy are taking up a very intransigent stand, and they are embarking on a very dangerous path."

Amirthalingam said he had warned the government shortly before the massacre of Sinhalese ex-convicts by Tamil guerillas at the

Dollar and Kent farms near Mullaitivu, in Northern Province, that the settlement policy was a provocative act. He claimed Indian Tamil families who had lived on the farms for six years had been forcibly removed by troops to make way for the Sinhalese settlers in mid-1984. "The militants did the only thing they thought was necessary. These settlements... provoked retaliation."

On the possibility of further negotiations with the government to seek a political solution to the Tamil problem, Amirthalingam was pessimistic. "We have come to a parting of the ways," he said. And hinting at an escalation of violence, he added: "We have no alternative but to continue our struggle to liberate our people from this oppression."

But whereas Amirthalingam saw his party's role as one of lobbying "friendly foreign governments," given the perceived fact that the TULF would be "immobilised" if they returned to Colombo, the militant groups already sniff victory in their armed struggle to drive the Sri Lankan army from their "homeland." The five guerilla groups have yet to agree on a concerted mode of operation — the Tigers and another major group, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation, are waging an increasingly effective guerilla war in the northern and eastern provinces, while the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) claims that such tactics bring innocent Tamil civilians into the cross-fire, and prefers to wait until it can launch a full-scale conventional war against the Colombo armed forces.

According to both Balasingham and PLOT spokesman Raja Nithiyar there are moves afoot to form a joint military command comprising leaders from all the guerilla groups.

But this seems an unlikely prospect in the near future, given the squabbles among the groups on both methods and ideology. All the groups claim they are either socialist or Marxist or both. This is fine for attracting support from like-minded liberation forces worldwide, but the crunch will come if the guerillas succeed in battling their way to a separate Tamil state. Balasingham told the REVIEW that such a state would be a "democratic people's state," in which there would be elections after the Tamil caste system had been dismantled, with several parties vying for power. Nithiyar, however, envisaged a one-party state, even though this would be labelled a people's democracy.

Both groups said they would encourage "revolutionary movements" among Sri Lanka's Sinhalese community. And both said the Tamil-speaking Muslims, who comprise about 7% of the country's population, would be invited to join their state, or be granted a form of federal autonomy. (Sri Lanka's Muslims, officially called Moors because most of them have Middle East ancestry, live mostly in the in the eastern and northern provinces, but are known to harbour fears about the aggressive policies of both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.)

India, which has expressed opposition to any break-away Tamil state in Sri Lanka, is looked on by the Tamil militants as something of a

guardian angel. If the militants succeed in establishing a separate state, New Delhi would find itself in a very difficult position. While the guerillas are confident that the Indian Government would recognise their right to self-determination, it is doubtful whether Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government would give its blessing to one more territorial division in South Asia, given the problems it has closer to home with Pakistan and Bangladesh. And a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka would find it hard going without the support of Mother India.

— Far Eastern Economic Review.
21 February 1985

The Premadasa line — and Eelam Radio

Consistency pays. This at least must be said of Prime Minister Premadasa, even if one doesn't agree with him all the time or most of the time. The sheer logic of events has forced the UNP to accept, step by step, the Premadasa line as the party consensus. He argued that the problem and therefore the threat was primarily external. The UNP position today is precisely that.

Of course, the UNP neglects, for good reason, to accommodate into its own debate a salient fact — the pre-election talks with the TULF leaders, under Mr. Thondaman's auspices, and the clear, unequivocal statement in the 1977 manifesto of "long standing Tamil grievances" and the explicit promise of 'an all-party conference' in 1977 'terrorism' was a marginal threat, quite easily manageable. The UNP, dizzy after its 4/5ths majority, felt it did not need to accommodate anybody. It is when the liberal reformist option is ignored at the right time that the extremist military option is forced upon one at the time when things

are already getting beyond control. The reformist option meant decentralisation and devolution, genuine devolution. The UNP chose the path of centralisation driven it would appear by what it regarded as the imperatives of its 'open economy' strategy and the need to "close the system" politically.

Mr. Premadasa refused to make a distinction between Madras and Delhi. Those who made the distinction, often quite legitimately in the context of the election campaign, were hoping to capitalise on what they believed was different (Delhi-Madras) perceptions of the Sri Lanka Tamil issue, and certainly widely divergent interests. If this distinction has not been altogether abandoned, at least it is now deliberately blurred in official and high-level party pronouncements.

Mr. Premadasa has won a third point, as far as the UNP position and current propagandist line is concerned. He said the separatists were more than separatists. They

were Marxists — again a simplistic classification. (see 'The Moderates and the Guerillas'). But it is now the party line.

It is Mr. Premadasa who has been bold enough to mention the clandestine "Eelam Radio" at a public meeting. Of course he mentioned it in order to buttress his ideological argument. But now that this "rogue" radio has received political 'recognition' (illegal but legitimised by public acknowledgment of its existence) shouldn't the government re-consider censorship and its many obvious perils. It is bad enough to censor, as the ISLAND wrote editorially, the President and the Army Commander but the crude suppression of too many facts too long will only lead people to go to some other source — Eelam Radio? As it is, the educated Sri Lankan plays a simple game of arithmetic with the two opposed information sources — the government's and the Madras-based. He divides both sets of casualties figures by 2 !!

— M

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Kissinger on Sri Lanka, India, U. S.

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He was recently on a visit to India where he met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The excerpts that follow are from an interview given to Suman Dubey, Managing Editor of INDIA TODAY.

Q. Lots of Americans seem to feel that the change of government in this country, there is now a new opportunity for better Indo-US relations. Do you share this view?

A. Yes. I share the view, but one has to keep in mind that the foreign policies of great nations like ours and yours are determined by certain realities which confine possible changes to certain limits. I say that in order not to put an undue burden on your prime minister. The previous prime minister was a strong leader who defended India's national interest. So will the current one.

I believe that there is considerable room for improvement of relations. Much of it would have happened also under the previous prime minister. The new prime minister can give this additional impetus, and in addition, he represents a new generation and therefore has perhaps fewer of the preconceptions of the previous generation that grew up in the colonial period.

Q. Are you satisfied that the Reagan Administration is doing all it can to help Indo-US relations?

A. No, don't think they are doing all they can to help things along. The Reagan Administration came into office with certain preconceptions, and they have changed very importantly in their relations with the Soviet Union. I suspect they will now change in their relations with the developing world. But since we cannot deal with the

whole of the developing world as a unit effectively, we must deal with some of the key countries, and that again makes India one of the principal countries.

Q. What do you think the Indian Government should do?

A. I think that there should be a continuing dialogue on perceptions of international problems. We don't have to agree, but we should explain to each other periodically what we think the key issues are as we see them and see how we can avoid needlessly irritating each other even while we maintain our national positions. Secondly, there must be something on which Indians and Americans can work together — economic and scientific projects. That would create a body of people on both sides that at least know each other. Thirdly, it is strange how little systematic contact there is.

Q. There's a feeling here that successive US administrations, including the one you were part of, have never treated India as the central point of their south Asian policies. Why is this so?

A. I can't speak for all administrations. I attempted to treat India as a leading country and a central point of south Asian policies. We had in 1971 an inevitable clash that would take too long to explain but which, given our new relationship with China and the role Pakistan played in that at the time, had its own necessities. Then the question is,

what does one mean by central role and how does one articulate it, and does that mean one can do nothing without the permission of India? I would say, we should do nothing without discussing with India, but I don't think we should give any country the veto power over our foreign policy in any part of the world.

Q. Well then, to what extent do you think Indian sensibilities should be taken into account in the formulations of American policies towards this part of the world?

A. I think Indian sensibilities should be taken very much into account.

Q. More than at present?

A. Well, what is lacking at present and has been lacking is a systematic review of policy when there is no problem. For example Britain had a major influence on American foreign policies for a long time and it still has a big influence — not because they raise an issue every two weeks, but because there is so much dialogue between Britain and America at all levels of government that they have an influence even on policies already formed. As a general proposition, we don't deal with India or India with us until there is already a problem and until both sides have gone a long distance down whatever road they are going. I think we can pay more attention and I think India should pay more attention to us, and that I say without any prejudice to any existing Indian relationship.

Q. One of the reasons this doesn't happen is that the US views problems from a global point of view and India from a very regional point of view, and these perceptions do not meet.

A. Yes and no. Because it seems to me...what does the US want in this sub continent? Peace, sta-

bility and progress. Not even many Americans present this as self-interest. Supposing this area became like the Middle East, divided — which it could be — between seven or eight conflicting states, all in constant rivalry with each other. It would of course not be desirable for the people of the region, but it would lead to endless international conflicts in which everybody could fish in troubled waters. I think that peace, stability and progress in the region is a joint interest.

There are, of course, conflicts between India and Pakistan and between India and Sri Lanka or Bangladesh in which the US does not have the same intensity of interest that India can have, and there we may part company, but we have conflicts in Europe and Latin America of which India has

a different perception. We have to learn to live with them.

Q. Couldn't the Americans do more to bring India and Pakistan closer and help the India-Sri Lanka problem instead of, as it is now perceived here, doing things that drag them apart, such as the arms aid?

A. Let's take the India and Sri Lanka problem. I think that your high officials will agree that the US has attempted to play a helpful role and has had many discussions on a serious level with the Indian Government trying to bring about reforms that would make it possible for all the nations here to join in a constructive solution. And we have also expressed a view very similar to that of your government and the President's speech to Parliament, that a purely military solution of the problem

is not possible. I think in Sri Lanka I would be surprised if your government had a substantial disagreement with us or our role, but you'd have to ask your government.

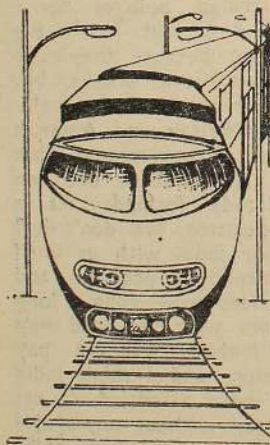
Now, on the Pakistan issue, there are two separate problems. There's the arms relationship and there is the general relationship between India and Pakistan. I think the US would like nothing better than improved political relations between India and Pakistan. I know for certain, having talked to our leading officials at the very highest level before I came that they would be willing to play any facilitating role that they could in improving this relationship. I have the impression that both parties, specially India, preferred to conduct the negoti-

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THE CRISIS OF DEBT OF THE 1980s

Cheryl Payer

The debt crisis of the 1980s marks a turning-point in the system of international economic relations which we have lived under for forty years. In order to understand why the system which has worked for so long (though it has not worked equally well for everyone) is no longer sustainable, it is necessary to go back even further, to the great depression of the 1930s.

The crash of 1929 and the depression of the 1930s is the spectre which is haunting capitalism today. The 1920s saw a dizzy pyramiding of debt structures, domestically and internationally, which eventually collapsed when the economy failed to expand. The crash was triggered by a bank failure in Austria which had immediate repercussions throughout the developed world. In its wake, shattered national economies attempted to protect themselves by the imposition of controls on trade and currency, and the depression lasted until World War II once again stimulated economic demand.

At the end of World War II the United States was by far the dominant economic power among the victorious allies. It held both the vast bulk of gold reserves and of undestroyed productive power. It was the intent of US policy makers to reconstruct a world without exchange controls or import barriers to the movement of US goods and capital, and thus to wipe out the experience of the depression and war years and to bring about a new era of capital movements among countries. Because the United States was the strongest country, it expected to be the chief beneficiary of such a system. However, painful memories of the Great Crash and depression were still

alive among both investors and lenders (on the capital exporting side) and the weaker nations (on the capital importing side).

The Bretton Woods system which was constructed at war's end represented the generally successful effort by US planners to provide incentives to the actors on both sides which would be strong enough to overcome their aversion to international economic entanglements, an aversion which was based on painful memories of the crash.

It was easiest to restore exports from US industries to the rest of the world, since this could be done simply by supplying massive government credits, in the form of the Marshall Plan (and later, "foreign aid" and export credits to the third world). Now foreign investors followed more slowly. Of the major categories of private capital export, the bankers were the last to overcome their acquired resistance to "risky" foreign investors.

The IMF and the World Bank, dominated initially by the US alone, and later by a coalition of the more developed capital-exporting countries, played a critical role in encouraging the return of international capital export. In order to do this, they had to move on two different fronts.

For the investors and lenders, they labored to build an elaborate structure of government guarantees (and of sanctions against foreign governments who might be tempted to nationalize investments or default on other obligations) which would reassure those parties that overseas ventures were no longer as dangerous as prewar experience had shown them to be.

The governments of capital-importing countries, on the other hand, had to be persuaded that the rewards of participation in international markets for capital and goods were more attractive than the inward-looking economic policies which had been forced upon them by the collapse of the international trading system.

The most effective method of persuasion, apart from military action against governments determined to redistribute assets and restructure trade, was to shower these countries with masses of goods from the countries who wished to gain their business. In this way a taste for imported goods could be cultivated in local markets. Hollywood movies, another export, advertised a lifestyle equated with "developed" countries and implied that no one was poor in such societies.

Thus the countries of the Third World were sold a bill of goods, in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. In the metaphorical sense, the ideology was inculcated that held that economic development was closely dependent upon, if not indeed synonymous with, the import of Western consumer goods, producer goods, capital, technology, and even culture. This metaphorical (ideological) bill of goods was fabricated by Western business and its supportive governments in order to sell the real bill of goods — the material, cultural and technological imports produced by Western firms.

The ideological bill of goods, however, would not in itself have sufficed to create a market. However effective this social and cultural conditioning might have been in creating an American image of "development", goods do not flow in the direction of im-

potent desire. They must be paid for, in hard cash or in credit.

Some hard cash was used for this purpose, from foreign exchange reserves accumulated by Third World countries and colonies during World War II. Some hard cash was spent by the US government on behalf of these countries, colonies, and ex-colonies, in the early days of the foreign aid program. In the 1950s the US government virtually gave these goods away — paying their US manufacturers full price but writing it off as "grant aid" to the recipients, or extending very easy credit.

The purpose, and the effect, of this generosity was to create a taste, and even a dependence upon, these goods in the markets of the "aided" country which could eventually be translated into an economic demand. The surplus grain production of the United States inspired the so-called "Food for Peace" program which aimed to induce a taste for US-grown wheat in countries which could never hope to produce wheat themselves. Grain was exported to the urban markets of Third World countries at prices which were far lower than the cost of production of their own farmers.

Today, after the market for domestic foodgrains has long been destroyed by these cheap imports and the self-provisioning domestic farm families driven into the swollen slums of their capital cities, after their agricultural land has been diverted to the production of luxury agricultural products for foreign markets, the imports of grain are no longer cheap, and IMF demands that the government reduce subsidies for their purchase lead to riots.

Similarly, exports from the US, Europe, and later Japan of manufactured items and capital goods aimed not only at the immediate sale, but at a continuing relationship and permanent market for the seller based on the buyer's dependence on spare parts and supplies for the purchased equipment. Goods financed by foreign aid, were the free samples or "special introductory offers" of

the world supermarket. The sale of entire factories in "turnkey projects" created a dependence on very expensive foreign consultants as well as an unending need for spare parts.

This eager search for new markets in the Third World, and the extension of both official "aid" and suppliers' credit as a means of penetrating these new markets, allowed the "aided" countries to run substantial deficits in their balance of payments, year after year. They were encouraged to do so by the International Monetary Fund, which held that because these countries needed substantial capital imports in order to develop, they should not be expected to balance their payments.

The result is that for most countries today, the "balance" has long since disappeared from the concept of the balance of payments. The theory behind the Bretton Woods system held that over the long run the cost of any nation's imports of goods and services would be financed by the earnings of its exports: the International Monetary Fund was set up to finance temporary problems, not permanent deficits.

But the reality of the post-war world has been the division of most nations into those which run chronic deficits and those with chronic surpluses, to the point that the internal economies of these countries have in fact been structured around such chronic or surpluses so that a turnaround becomes difficult or impossible for domestic political reasons.

Germany and Japan are the prime examples of industrial countries which have become structurally dependent on a surplus on trade account (deficits on service account help to counteract their trade surpluses, putting their overall accounts into a rough longterm equilibrium) and a turnaround in the trade account would be politically very difficult as their manufacturers would thereby lose markets. The second category of chronic surplus countries is that of the sparsely populated oil-exporting countries of the Middle East.

The chronic deficit countries similarly fall into two categories. The first group comprises the special case of "reserve currency countries", strong economic powers who are enabled to run chronic deficits because their currencies are held as reserve assets by many other nations. The United Kingdom enjoyed this role until recently, and the United States has been the world's largest debtor country in this respect in the post-war world.

The nearly ubiquitous use of the dollar to finance international trade is also at the same time a means of financing the deficits of the country issuing the currency; foreign exchange reserves are in essence a loan from the countries holding them to the country of issue. This dual role of reserve currencies (domestic and international) is a source of many problems in the world economy, in particular the high interest rates on dollar-denominated floating rate loans.

The second major group of deficit countries is, of course, the large number of Third World nations (including several oil exporting countries) which now have large debt burdens. The debt burdens are simply the crystallized accumulation of many years of chronic current account deficits. The current account deficits are, in turn, the sum of chronic trade deficits and the service payments on past capital movements which financed these deficits (profit remittances on equity investment and interest and amortization payments on debt).

These chronic capital movements, and the flood of imports and investment which they financed, have always been justified by the assumption that this was necessary for economic development. The ideology of development via capital imports has become so dominant and all-pervasive in our culture that those who dissent are considered worse than eccentric. Even when the current crisis of Third World debt has conclusively shown the fallacy of this belief

(Continued on page 21)

BANNED OR BRANDED ?

W. Pathirana

Some weeks ago Dr. Aloysius, President of the College of General Practitioners warned that several banned pharmaceuticals were coming into the country, and what's more were being prescribed by doctors. Has the 'Open Economy' caused this breakdown in a vital area of the Health Services, or is it simply lack of vigilance in implementing existing controls. Actually while the Open Economy has lifted the gates to a whole flood of dangerous chemical compounds coming in on Open licence the authorities were discreet enough to keep Pharmaceuticals under licence. The requirement of a licence to import a Pharmaceutical item is the first in a sequence of controls to prevent indiscriminate import of medicines.

(1) Import licence from Controller of Imports.

(2) Controller of Imports checks whether items have been approved by the Ceylon Hospitals Formulary Committee.

(3) Licence is issued and the incoming items are checked by Customs in conformity with schedules of Approved Drugs gazetted by the Controller of Imports from time to time.

(4) New drugs enter these schedules only on the basis of applications that are screened and approved by the Formulary Committee from time to time.

(5) Local manufacturers are only allowed to manufacture drugs in the Formulary approved schedule.

If banned items are entering the country, then it means that there is a breakdown in vigilance somewhere in the above sequence of operations.

It may be that with all this talk about the Open Economy, and the so called abolishing of controls, officials have become apathetic and demoralized. They also lack the inspired guidance of men like Professors Bibile and Lionel who sacrificed a good part of their professional and academic life to

make certain that the public was not exposed to the hazards of unauthorised drugs.

The situation outlined by the President of the College of General Practitioners can be quickly remedied by a call for the same vigilance that was exercised in the recent past, especially by Import Control and Customs.

All this is a part of the larger scheme which was outlined by the UNCTAD in their November 1982 report on Guide lines for the Pharmaceutical Sector in developing countries, and by the WHO Reports of 1977 and 1979, and 1983 on the Selection and Use of Essential Drugs.

Of course the Open Economy has negated the principles embodied in the above reports in that there has been no import of selectivity and there has been an indiscriminate import of branded drugs at following import figures which show that contrary to the UNCTAD recommendation of conserving financial resources of developing countries by importing large volumes of generic drugs at low cost, a significant portion of the foreign exchange increase has gone on imports of small quantities of branded drugs, which reach only a small sector of the population thus compounding the Health Problems of a poor country.

This is a 800% increase. In dollar terms however devaluation can only account for 500% increase, the dollar moving up from Rs. 6/- to Rs. 30/- during this period.

Inflation in the exporting countries has been running at an average of 10% per year, so that the maximum increase for the ten year period on account of inflation should be 100%. Devaluation and inflation thus allow for a 600% increase. The total increase on Government imports for the State Health Services as well as the Private Sector roughly confirms this, moving up from Rs. 35 million in 1973 to 230 million in 1983, (657%) the increase above 600% probably being an increase in the volume of drugs imported by the Government. That this increase in volume is insufficient is demonstrated by the prevailing shortage of drugs in Government hospitals and clinics.

It is also worth noting that the Rs. 50 million shown against raw materials for local manufacture of drugs represents approximately Rs. 250 million in volume terms. However the Open Economy levies import duties up to 100% on raw materials whereas finished drugs are allowed at 7½% duty.

On the otherhand we find that the Private Sector imports have moved from 8 million in 1973 to 120 million in 1983 a 1500% in-

FOREIGN EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS (1973-1983)

| | 1973 | 1977 | 1978 | 1981 | 1983 |
|---|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| A. Government imports for Private Sector distribution | 15 M | 30 M | 80 M | 70 M | 100 M |
| B. Government imports for State Hospitals and Clinics | 20 M | 32 M | 54 M | 160 M | 130 M |
| C. Private Sector Imports | 8 M | Nil | 15 M | 90 M | 120 M |
| D. Raw Materials for local manufacture | 6 M | 15 M | 29 M | 50 M | 50 M |
| E. Total Foreign Exchange Required | 49 M | 77 M | 178 M | 370 M | 400 M |

These figures make some startling revelations. The total foreign exchange outflow has increased from 50 M in 1973 to 400 M in 1983.

crease. Does this mean that the private sector is importing more drugs than in 1973? Unfortunately

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Black July and its aftermath

Urmila Phadnis

As for the July 83 catastrophe, interviews with various people as well as the available literature on the subject indicate that though the fuse which ignited the spark was the killing of thirteen soliders by the terrorists in the north, tension had been building up for quite some time. The dialogue between the government and the TULF had almost reached a breaking point. The relationship between the military in the north and its people had worsened. The hit and run activities of the Tamil militants in the north had been hitting the headlines almost daily in the media. Meanwhile, the military operations were becoming harsher leading at times to indiscriminate burning of places and destruction of property particularly when a segment of them was incensed by the terrorist killings of their compatriots.

It was also agreed by many that the July violence was partly premeditated and partly spontaneous. There was some sort of pattern in violence. "Incidents were directed at Tamil houses, business establishments, shops and factories. Destruction of property seemed to be the principal aim — violence against the persons being secondary". However, looting on a great scale followed which, it was felt was not the work of the same group. Looters generally were elements from the underworld and also were shanty and slum dwellers.

The violence reached its frenzy on the black Friday of July 29 when rumours of the Tigers attacking Colombo led some of the Sinhalese go berserk and murder Tamils mercilessly in not only Colombo but other areas too. In many instance, the police and defence forces remained passive. In others

they encouraged the marauders. The fury of the mob violence found insane forms in the modalities of the killing and burning of some of the Tamils—young and old—leading to the Tamils trying to find refuge — some with the Sinhalese families but a large number — almost a lakh — huddling in refugee camps with some being shipped to Jaffna. The loss in terms of lives and property was bad enough but even worse was the sense of insecurity of the Tamils.

During discussions, different theories were put forward to explain the catastrophe of July 83. A general point of view was the 'civilisational approach, a degeneration of the moral fibre of the Sinhalese. However, such an approach appeared to be a unidimensional one and therefore inadequate to explain a highly complex phenomena.

Another explanation, provided mostly by the spokesman of the ruling regime harped on the 'leftist conspiracy' theory. It was argued that the left parties (i.e. the Communist Party, Janata Vimukti Peramuna i.e. People's Liberation Front and the Nava Sama Party), unable to wrest power through electoral means had planned to destabilise the government through a three-phased violent action with the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict followed by the Sinhalese-Muslim clash and finally the Buddhist-Christian confrontation. Accordingly, the government proscribed these parties but soon after, the ban on the CP was lifted.

The critics of the 'conspiracy theory' have contended that in its efforts to sidetrack its own incapacities the government found 'scape-goats' in the left parties. If there was connivance on their part 'then why did the government lift the ban on the CP? Besides, how could it explain the murders of Tamils — many of whom political

prisoners — in Welikada jail not once but twice? If at all, their were indications that a segment of the pro-governmental were accountable for the July violence. They were interested in creating a 'little trouble' to teach recalcitrant Tamils a lesson and also divert the attention of the public from the governmental failures in socioeconomic spheres. However, once ignited, the situation went out of control and the mob frenzy set in.

This may seem to be a harsh indictment. However, there is no doubt that the government controlled media, while referring to the killings of 13 soldiers refrained to divulge the fact of retaliatory killing of about 40 people in the north almost immediately after the incident. Besides incisive observations of an eminent Sri Lankan sociologist are telling in this respect. "Behind the rioting", wrote Professor Ganannath Obeyesekere's "is the spectre of increasing authoritarian rule. If Marcos uses his army to crush opposition, Sri Lanka (which has no army to speak of) has created a parallel institution in a government trade union that has a para-military function. Contrary to Tamil opinion, I do not believe that the government actually organised the riots; rather it was organised for the government by forces which the government itself had created, albeit for other purposes". Finally it was revealed by one of my respondents that though the President had given the orders to shoot the marauders, the orders were not complied with by his forces who at best fired in the air or looked the other way. This could be symbolic of the suppressed fury and resentment of the Sinhalese soldier in coping with the Tamil insurgency in the north.

Notwithstanding various efforts towards a negotiated settlement since last July, the credibility gap

Professor Urmila Phadnis of the Jawaharal Nehru University writes this for the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi.

between the two communities remains wide. And although there is an uneasy calm in the island, the scars of July 83 continue to be raw. Distrust, misgivings continue to persist and if the Tamils have yet to forget the wrath brought on them by a segment of the Sinhalese, the Sinhalese are crudely reminded of the Tamil militants. Thus, if the constant presence of the military in the northern and the eastern provinces are perceived by the Tamils as a confrontation between them and the State apparatus, there is a nervous jumpiness among the armed personnel because of the ever-present threat of a sporadic attempt on their lives which they find difficult to anticipate.

It is not surprising thus that several efforts to evolve a consensus among various communities for a lasting solution have run to a dead end. In fact, what appears to have happened as a result of the All Parties Conference (APC) is that those participating in it have brought on the conference agenda grievances of various kinds of the majority community what had been perhaps dormant but which became articulate in the conference proceedings. The rather neatly sketched out proposals emerging out of the shuttered diplomacy of Mr. G. Parthasarthy have not only been shelved but what is more, they have failed to attract consensus even amongst the Tamils themselves. As for the Muslims, they have virtually dissociated themselves from the concept of regional Councils which formed the basis of the proposals.

Under these circumstances, although it will be again almost a years since Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene agreed to Mr. Parthasarthy's good office, the situation appears to be virtually back to what appears to the Tamils to be militant mood of President seeking Israeli and reportedly British assistance to counter the Tamil terrorists.

As stated earlier, reasons for the prevailing impasse are multi-dimensional. For one thing, there are far too many contenders in the political arena jostling with each other and trying to play a zero sum game perceiving the loss of one as a gain of another. This

appears to be an endless game and has only resulted in the leadership among both the Tamils and the Sinhalese to some extent, fragmented with neither having a spokesman who can claim to represent an opinion which could be said to reflect a consensus amongst the ethnic groups. In other words, the question which is nagging both the communities is: who represents whom?

On the Tamil continuum for instance, are the Indian Tamils settled mostly in the Sinhalese dominated central and southern areas having Mr. S. Thondaman, the leader of Ceylon Workers' Congress and a Cabinet Minister as their spokesman. Although before 1977, Mr. Thondaman was amongst the leaders of the Tamil United Front, he dissociated himself from the Ealam issue and understandably in the interest of the estate workers has consistently maintained that a separate state is not a solution to the Tamil problem. To be sure, the estate workers have several legitimate grievances for some of which they have wrested redressal through negotiations with the Centre.

There is then another level of Tamil leadership consisting of political parties and groups like the Tamil Congress (TC) and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) which despite the electoral mandate in 1977, for Ealam are amenable to negotiate on the basis of a 'viable alternative' the **minimum negotiable component** of which seems to be a regional council of the north and Eastern provinces with a considerable degree of autonomy and powers vis-a-vis the centre envisaging more or less a federated pattern.

An irreconcilable Tamil opinion on the extreme end of the continuum is the Tamil 'Tigers' who perceive the TULF as 'traitors' to their cause. Their strategy of violent means as an instrument for the establishment of a separate state has led to a fragmentation of their ranks as indeed is implicit in such a strategy. While different groups swear by Marxist Leninist ideology there are as many varieties of this ideology as elsewhere. Apparently, the hidden agenda is the power and therefore personality conflict amongst them as to

which group will control Ealam if it becomes a reality at all through violent means. Interestingly, while some of the group claim to stand for an 'Ealam' while others of 'Tamil Ealam'. This differentiation between the two had led President Jayewardene to conclude that some of these groups envisage the establishment of a marxist state of Tamils in the north and eastern provinces and those of Tamil Nadu. He gave expression to this while he was recently in Washington.

Amongst the Sinhalese, political opinion is equally fragmented. If the imperatives of governance with its compulsions of having to heed the electoral susceptibilities has imposed strains on the ruling UNP with which President Jayewardene has yet to come to terms, the main oppositional Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) has not adopted a position on this national issue which would have helped the President to strive for a nationally acceptable opinion amongst the Sinhalese let alone in his own party. The SLFP more or less argues that the UNP wants to use it as a 'cats paw' and the SLFP leadership sees no reason why it should 'oblige' the UNP. Its break-away group — the Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya (SLMP — Sri Lanka People's Front) — led by Mrs. Bandaranaike's daughter and actor son-in-law is yet to adopt a clear-cut stand on the issue and presumably finds ambivalence a better political tactic than a well defined stand on the subject.

In these Sinhalese spectrum, the left parties have taken a reasonable stand of a search for a solution which will be equitable to the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Incidentally, it should be noted that for a brief while the oldest amongst the left parties, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party had strayed away from this secular concept because of its alliance with the SLFP. Predictably, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka adopts a stand consistent with its view of the needs of proletarian internationalism as interpreted by Moscow. Whatever the differences in nuances amongst the left parties, their opinion has little clout because of the limited support which they have amongst the Sinhalese.

The net consequence of this pattern of fragmentation among the Tamils as well as Sinhalese parties is that public opinion amongst both the ethnic groups is bewildered and virtually leaderless. Worse still, inter ethnic group attitudes have hardened. It is not without significance that in the APC convened in January 1984 ostensibly to discuss a gamut of issues relating to minority communities, the Sinhalese spokesman raised the issue of the Sinhalese disabilities which had suffered in the past and compelled the APC to go into their grievances. To prevent the conference from breaking down, the only consensus which was possible was to take on the agenda the grievances of all the communities.

With the Tamil parties participating only in the plenary session and keeping out of the two committees which have been formed to examine the issue of authority devolution and terrorism and, the SLFP already out of it in protest against the TULF leader Amirthalingam's statement in Madras soon after the adjournment of the APC in January 1984, the All Party character of the group has been lost and even if certain decisions regarding the short/long term solution are arrived at it is difficult to envisage that they will reach anywhere near the minimum negotiable demand of the TULF, i. e. regional councils. The resistance to the idea of the regional councils by the Sinhalese is high. In my conversations with some of the members of the Buddhist clergy, it was made clear to me that they suspected regional council formation as a step towards Tamil Eelam and could not agree to the proposal. Their antipathy towards a federal structure was even more intense.

Added to this is the issue of the Tamil terrorism. In my interview with Prime Minister Premadasa and National Security Minister Lalith Athulthudali, both of them made it clear to me that unless terrorism was taken care of, no negotiated settlement at the APC would work out.

Referring to the kidnapping of the Allens, the American couple working in Jaffna, Premadasa maintained that "when that incidence

took place lots of things came out. A leader of one group claimed responsibility from Madras and he gave orders for their release also on the basis of Mrs. Gandhi's and Mr. Ramachandran's appeals. By that time we had information that there were terrorist groups in Tamilnadu and we had furnished all the information to the Government of India and also to Tamilnadu. Our countries are only 20 miles apart. Our troops cannot go to India. It is the duty of our friendly country, India, to see that these people are not given facilities to stay there". He complained that India denied altogether the existence of the "terrorists" or "the training camps for them", despite the fact that "criminals who looted banks were caught in India and were produced in Indian courts". Despite the fact that the interview was granted on Saturday — an official holiday, it was obvious that the Prime Minister had already fortified himself with a fat file which had a number of clippings from the Indian newspapers and periodicals. Earlier in Parliament, he had faced a strong criticism from the SLFP MPs when he had maintained that "Sri Lanka had "tolerated India enough ... Let India invade us ... We will see".

That Sri Lanka has a pretty strong proof circumstantial as well as otherwise regarding the presence of terrorists and their camps was made clear to me when in a friendly and frank conversation with the Security Commander of Jaffna, Nalin Seneviratne and the Chief of Army of Jaffna, Ariya, a surprise was sprung on me. After about a two hour long discussion followed by lunch, Ariya quietly got up and gave me a sheet. "Have you seen this"? He asked. The sheet was a very neatly drawn map showing the terrorist training camps and bases in Tamilnadu. I was rather startled and told him that I had not but it looked similar to the map produced in one of the despatches of "India Today". After hesitating a bit I asked as to whether I could have a copy of the map. "You keep this" he replied and then added "we found this in a cadjan house in Jaffna".

(To be continued)

Banned . . .

(Continued from page 13)

not. They are actually importing less, very much less in fact, because the Government is now importing the bulk of the Private Sector requirements in terms of volume. This means that the Private Sector is squandering Rs. 120 million of foreign exchange on small quantities of high cost branded drugs.

This completely violates the spirit of the WHO and UNCTAD resolutions on Drug Policies for Third World countries and raises the very significant question as to whether we deserve the financial aid and organisational assistance we get through these agencies.

In the WHO schedules generic drugs in each therapeutic category are listed in preference to the multiplicity of items marketed under various brand names. Of every hundred such branded pharmaceutical products only about one finally remains to be included in the Pharmacopoeia as therapeutically valid. Retention in the Pharmacopoeia is based on sound scientific judgement after evaluation of data by specialists in various scientific disciplines who constitute the Pharmacopoeial committees in the U. S. A., E. C. M. and the Socialist bloc. Needless to say this is not a responsibility that can be left to the good sense of practitioners because hundreds of items which are prescribed as a result of private promotional efforts are finally outlawed by the Pharmacopoeia for reasons varying from therapeutic ineffectiveness to high toxicity. Now comes the news that such banned items are being imported and prescribed.

When we review this situation obscured to the profession by various merchandising skills, we see that there are high stakes on each side of the arena.

On one side there is human life and the living standards and values of millions of Third World citizens and on the other millions of dollars in profits for a ruthless and sophisticated marketing effort. It is needless to ask on whose side the Open Economy operates.

THE PRICE OF DIPLOMACY

Netanel Lorch

LIKE MOST Israelis, I received the news concerning the renewal of diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka with satisfaction. Any broadening of Israel's diplomatic network is welcome news, not only for its own, political sake, but also as a vehicle for contacts in other fields — economic, cultural, tourist *et al.*

This is particularly true in the Asian continent. We are perched on its western rim, and yet — in the wide belt between Israel and Burma — there is a gaping diplomatic vacuum, apart from the embassy in Nepal and the toe-hold of a consulate in Bombay.

Ceylon, as it was then called, had "suspended" relations with Israel — officially it never broke them, although the term suspension does not have any other meaning — for reason of its own, in 1970. This happened not because of any act committed or omitted by Israel detrimental to its interest, but because the prime minister at the time, Mrs. Bandaranaike, considered such a move advantageous for securing the support of the Moslem minority on the island, and possible also because of misplaced expectations of Arab economic and financial support.

There were many at the time who opposed this move. One influential Ceylonese friend observed to me that during the preceding election campaign, Bandaranaike had made two promises — to reduce the price of rice, the staple food of the island, and to break relations with Israel. Of the two, she found that the latter would be much cheaper.

The author, Netanel Lorch, was the first Israeli Charge d'affaires in Colombo. Colonel Lorch is better known in his country as the official historian of the Israeli army. His book was titled 'The Edge and the Sword'. After many diplomatic appointments, he became Secretary-General of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) and held a top appointment in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

ONE OF THOSE who tried to influence the government in Colombo against taking this step, strangely enough, was the Egyptian ambassador.

For some years before, a Ceylonese, Mr. Shirley Amerasinghe, had chaired the three-member UN Commission on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. The remaining two members were from Somalia and Yugoslavia, neither of which is represented in Israel.

Israel's representative at the UN utilized this as an argument, demonstrating the basic imbalance and partiality of the commission.

The Egyptian ambassador realized that the severance of diplomatic ties by Ceylon would serve as grist to Israel's mill.

In any case, Israel had not damaged Sri Lanka in any way, which in the normal course of international relations is the only valid ground for breaking diplomatic relations. It was welcome news that the wrong done to Israel would now be righted.

But as more details emerged, in publications in Colombo and subsequently in Washington, the initial satisfaction soured.

It was revealed that Israel would only be permitted an interest section — within an existing embassy, a form of diplomatic representation practised even between countries in a state of war, which has little or no political function or significance.

The embassy in question would be that of the United States. Without any lack of respect for the U.S. this was seen as implying some political message — one which, in the eyes of the present Sri Lanka government, may be favourable, but in those of its successor may have the opposite effect.

TO BE perceived in a Third World country as a friend and an ally of the U.S. is one thing; to appear as its protege is another. Neither the U.S. nor Israel has ever derived benefit from the perception — or misperception — of a patron-client relationship.

Finally the foreign minister of Sri Lanka announced publicly that in return Israel would help to eradicate the Tamil terrorists in the north of the country.

The result of this announcement was to be foreseen. Not only did Arab governments protest against this rather modest move towards the re-establishment of diplomatic relations — and some of the Moslems in Sri Lanka duly echoed these protests — but there were outcries from the Tamil community — and not only those ideologically, or otherwise, identified with the underground.

It is true that Israel, as one of its first victims, has a vested interest in combating international terrorism. It is also true that in the course of many years of continuous struggle it has gained valuable experience and developed original strategies and tactics to combat terrorists which can be of immense help to other governments faced with a similar problem.

To put this experience at the disposal of other governments, may under certain circumstances, be in Israel's interest. However, that is by no means necessarily true in the case of all governments, and under all circumstances.

In the case of Sri Lanka, it would seem that — if the information is true, and to the best of my knowledge no denial has been forthcoming from Jerusalem — Israel is paying a high price indeed for a moderate return.

Relations between the Sinhalese mostly Buddhist, majority — concentrated in the south and south-west of the island — and the Tamil Hindu minority in the north and

east — has bedevilled Sri Lanka politics for many years, before and after independence in 1948.

It is complex in itself, and its complexity is compounded by the fact that in addition, there are millions of Tamil estate workers and their families in the heartland of Sinhalese Sri Lanka, and by the presence of about 40 million Tamils in the south of India, just across from Jaffna, on the other side of the Palk Straits.

Constitutional arrangement devised by the British during the period of self-rule were designed to guarantee the rights of both majority and minority.

Some ambitious Sinhalese politicians found fertile ground in the feelings of some members of the majority, by appealing to their anti-Tamil emotions. The Tamils are considered as frugal hard-working and intelligent.

Under the British raj they had occupied a disproportionate share of positions in the public service. Bandaranaike had gained elections with his slogan of "Sinhalese only" — that is, Sinhalese as the only official language, which would automatically eliminate Tamils from the public service.

From time to time, violent outbreaks in an otherwise tranquil country accentuated the inherent tensions. In 1958, pogroms were committed against Tamil — barely reported in the Western media, but on a scale and with a brutality which compare to the worst in the annals of the Jewish people.

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MANY TAMILS identified emotionally with the Jews. They are hard-working and industrious, yet they constitute a minority in all the countries in which they live — not only India and Sri Lanka but also further east, in Malaysia and Singapore.

They viewed with admiration mixed with envy the feat of a small people which, with tremendous effort and sacrifice, had succeeded in establishing its own independent state.

Israel representatives were, of course aware of this empathy, but while maintaining good personal relations with representatives of all sectors, including Tamils, took care not to take sides or to identify with one of the parties in a crucial domestic struggle.

J. R. Jayawardene (known as J. R. long before *Dallas* was conceived), the incumbent president of Sri Lanka, went out of his way at the beginning of his term of office to accommodate what he considered legitimate Tamil demands.

Tamil ministers were included in his cabinet, and Tamils were given senior positions in the army and police. Tamils cultural autonomy in the north was confirmed, and permitted to expand.

The operations of the Tamil Tigers, initially a small undergrounds no doubt with connections across, the straits in India, aiming at partition of the island and total independence for Tamil areas, therefore came at a time when Tamil fortunes were at a relatively high point, and J.R.'s suspicion that the underground was motivated and supported by elements which disagreed with other aspects of his policy — his pro-Western orientation, his encouragement of private enterprise — was probably well founded.

The possibility that Tamil guerrillas had been trained by the PLO cannot be excluded either. When Tamil guerrillas killed some Sinhalese soldiers in the north, widespread violent reaction followed in many parts of the island.

Dozens of Tamil prisoners were killed in one of the prisons in cold blood by their fellow inmates — according to an Amnesty international report — with the acquiescence, if not tacit approval, of prison officers.

Tamils were indiscriminately shot or harassed on several occasions. On the political level, Tamil MPs who were absent from parliament in Colombo for fear of their lives, were deprived of their seats, and some of them went into exile. Emergency regulations abolished the need for inquests in the case of unnatural deaths.

Tamil feel abandoned and helpless, and it would seem that more and more among them are now inclined to support full independence for the Tamil north as the only way to ensure the safety of their lives and property.

UNDER THESE circumstances, Israel's reported willingness to help train Sri Lanka-Sinhalese units to combat terrorists, if it is true, will obviously be interpreted as an act of taking sides.

Israel will, by implication, be associated with the human rights record of the present Sri Lanka government, which, judging from reliable international sources, is questionable, to say the least.

Israel is bound to lose whatever sympathy it enjoys not only among the Tamils in Sri Lanka, but also amongst those in the big "Tamilstan" of India in the area around Madras.

It would seem that similar consideration prevailed in councils in Washington and London, and the U.S. and British governments are reluctant to extend help to the Sri Lanka government. Yet Israel is prepared to incur the losses.

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WHAT DOES Israel stand to gain? The Sri Lanka government has already publicly declared that it was not about to change its attitude on the Palestinian question. It has indicated that full diplomatic relations are not being contemplated.

Israel will therefore be left with an interest section — with all the diplomatic and other constraints pertaining to that status — a low return for a major investment.

Relations with Sri Lanka are definitely in Israel's interest. Sri Lanka has hurt Israel by suspending relations, and it is only right that they should be restored.

If Israel has to pay a price for such restoration, so be it. But not any price.

Agricultural cooperation, as stated in the laconic announcement, made by the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, seems proper and adequate.

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Main research topics under the programme

Samir Amin

The research topics have been defined within the context of the major assumptions adopted. The concern therefore has been not to lose sight of the overall unity of the programme based on the question "Building a national State capable, in the world game, of becoming an active element in a polycentric set, or submission to the dictates of transnationalization thus reducing the role of the local State to that of a passive bystander in the conflict of the big powers.

Topic 1: The State and the Peasants in Africa (The relationship between agriculture and accumulation)

1. The working hypothesis for this topic is that progress in agriculture cannot be judged as such but that, on the contrary, it becomes meaningful only within the context of an analysis of the relationship between the rural world and the overall evolution of society. The role of the State is central in such an analysis and the nature of the global strategy (nation-building or transnationalization?) depends to a great extent, given the conditions prevailing in the Third World and Africa, on the internal State/peasantry relationship.

2. In the global history of world development, two paths are known towards the development of agriculture, two ways in which production and rural life have been integrated within the society as a whole. In both cases, self-subsistence at village level was progressively reduced by this very development and the rural producers became integrated within a social division of labour

that put an end to their isolation and to self-sufficiency in the countryside.

(i) The first of these is the capitalist path as such. It is characterized, in brief, by the setting up of relatively large farm holdings with modernized means of production (mechanization and the use of chemicals) and extensive use of wage labour.

(ii) The second is the peasant way. This is characterized by small family holdings without any wage labour. However, their modernization process is gradual but genuine even though for a long time they maintain a not negligible food self-sufficiency aspect.

Generally speaking, the peasant way implies active intervention by the State, the indispensable intermediary between the fragmented family peasantry and industrial capital. The State intervenes in order to impose price policies in support of the peasant way and to organize their access to modernization through a system of credit and extension services. In the capitalist path, on the other hand, because of class differentiation within the peasantry, the impact of State intervention is considerably reduced. Modern big landowners and Kulaks can organize their relations with industry directly, either on an individual or a collective basis.

The development of capitalism in the centres, whether directly through the capitalist path or by way of the peasantry, has resolved two basic historical problems of accumulation within a national context in that:

(a) it has made possible global national development on the basis of a policy of food self-sufficiency, also national (even though only approximately so);

(b) it has brought about growth in rural demand for different types of goods, equipment, industrial raw materials (fertilisers...) as well as manufactured consumer goods, more or less in step with the overall growth of GNP. On the whole then, peasant earnings, aside, have kept pace with the overall growth of incomes of urban wage-earners, workers and employees.

3. However, when we observe the main features of the development of capitalism in the periphery... in Asia Africa and Latin America... over a long period, it becomes clear precisely that agricultural development has generally failed to fulfill these two functions satisfactorily.

What is the possible answer to this crisis in the relationship between the development of agriculture and overall development? The research outlined here is based on the working assumption that there are three alternatives for reform:

(i) the rural economy must submit to the logic of agri-business. The spontaneous solution of the system will perhaps be to integrate agriculture within global development by sub-ordinating agriculture to industry, i.e. to the transnationals engaged in agri-business. However, will not this alternative lead not only to a transfer of profits from surplus labour to the transnationals but also accentuate even further the distortions in the process of accumulation in Africa?

(ii) the sub-ordination of the more or less collectivized rural economy to a State whose principal target is industrialization.

This solution, inspired by the Soviet historical experience, lays emphasis on the appropriation of agricultural surplus to finance industry. But in this case, will the municipal State, being itself integrated within the unequal international division of labour, be capable of avoiding the process of transnationalization?

(iii) the strategy of a popular, global, self-reliant development.

These alternatives should be compared with those based on a people's and peasant's alliance which presupposes: (i) equal exchange between town and countryside, no enforced appropriation, no systematic price distortions designed to cream off the gains from productivity in agriculture; (ii) no development of marked inequalities within the rural societies; (iii) industrialization with a view to servicing the countryside, i.e. primarily directed towards the supply of adequate inputs and consumer goods in response to improved rural incomes.

Topic 2: The State, natural resources and industrialization strategies in Africa.

1. Africa is rich in mineral resources. But it is no secret that in the present state of power relations, the big powers have designs on this wealth. There is a danger of "carving up" Africa, through a revised and aggravated version of the Berlin Conference.

For each of the major resources in Africa (oil, hydro-electricity, uranium, iron ore and iron and steel, bauxite and aluminium, copper, phosphates, rare minerals etc...) we must analyze:

(i) the strategies of the world actors: the multinationals, States and groups of States (United States, Japan, EEC Europe, the USSR), their common vested interests and their conflicts;

(ii) the terms and conditions proposed by these actors to the

African States for the exploitation of these resources;

(iii) the measures (including their shortcomings) taken by the States to acquire control over their resources: nationalization, organization of Third World producers/exporters and interventions on the world market; assimilation of technologies etc...

2. The acquisition of national control over natural resources cannot be reduced to a mere matter of form, i.e. the formal nationalization of the ownership of these resources. In this context, research must take stock of African experiences of nationalization as well as management and marketing contracts for the products obtained by these resources. Up to what point is national control merely an illusion? what degree of technological and financial control has nationalization brought about? Are there any signs of an interaction between the exploitation of these resources and the overall industrialization policy in the country concerned?

3. Industrialization strategies presuppose a certain form of interaction with agriculture (or absence of such an interaction), a certain form of interaction with the exploitation of natural resources (or its absence).

In this context, the options open to Africa are:

(i) conventional type light import substitution industries, built on consumption but operating within the structure of an unequal incomes distribution and hence devoted to consumption by the privileged strata in society, often, incidentally, largely controlled by the multinationals.

(ii) an export-led industry based on the comparative advantage of cheap labour and/or plentiful low-cost natural resources;

(iii) a national industrialization policy based on the control of natural resources, integrated within the international division of labour but no interaction with the development of agriculture as a matter of priority;

(iv) industrialization based mainly on agricultural development.

Can these strategies be related to the subject of the nature of the State? And is it possible to say, for instance, that the two first options correspond to a type of State which accepts the constraints of transnationalization, whereas the third refers to an elite-type national State evolving within the world system and the fourth to a popular national State trying to de-link as far as possible from external constraints?

These are open questions, both with regard to their historical feasibility and to the future social prospects for Africa and its relations with the world system.

Topic 3: The State, the social components of the nation and world conflicts.

1. These relations must not be studied from purely a "political science" viewpoint and in isolation from the analysis of development policies (the two previous research topics). What the research must do here is to transcend the ideological talk and practical politics and to demonstrate the function of these relations.

(i) How the "national issue" is viewed within the various ideological currents (modernist liberal and socialist, traditionalist and nationalist culturalist...) in the statements and practices of the liberation movements and the political parties and States that have emerged from these movements;

(ii) How the nation/world relationship is seen by these ideological and political forces. In other words, how the options (nation-building or transnationalization?) are justified and the internal conflicts inherent in these options overcome? A historical analysis of culturalist nationalism should be envisaged.

(iii) How, especially in the Arab region, the "Arab ideology" has been sliding, from the modernistic liberalism of the twenties and thirties to the Nasserian and Baathist brand of socialism of the fifties and sixties.

2. What are the relations between the State in Africa and the component social groups?

The working hypothesis here is that the final outcome — nation-building or transnationalization? — largely depends on the relationship between the State and the peasantry, the State and the "petty bourgeoisie", often taken to mean the State apparatus, must therefore be defined in concrete terms. In other words, is it the function of the State apparatus in Africa to transfer surplus for the benefit of transnational accumulation or for the benefit of national accumulation (based on the elite or on the masses)? or is it even incapable of appropriating this surplus?

If concrete analyses of the State can be developed in this way, we would probably be better able to appreciate the real meaning of the current "political" classifications such as "socialist" country and country with a "liberal" option. In fact, could not the "socialist" State be subordinated to the forces of transnationalization just as much as the "liberal" State if it fulfills the same function of appropriating surplus for the benefit of transnational accumulation?

Thus the difference between these options does not reside where it appears to, but underlies the relationship existing between the State and the elites. Hegemony of the agrarian mercantile bourgeoisies, and even sometimes segments of the industrial bourgeoisie, would tip the scales in favour of the liberal option; the absence or weakness of these would work in favour of the statist option. There is a third case: where the State is incapable of appropriating the surplus or where this is not its target. Thus incapacity sometimes leads to stagnation, i. e. the absence of accumulation, whether national or transnational. But also at least in terms of declared objectives the popular alliance option (and the equal internal exchange relations between town and countryside which this pre-supposes) could pave the way for a popular

and national accumulation model, thus conferring upon the State a definite national and popular character as well.

Is the State in Africa always subject to the constraints of transnationalization, its only function then being to make the surplus extracted from, among others, the peasantry available for transnational accumulation? Such a characterization would be even more serious if the State concerned made available to transnational accumulation the mining rent collected from the exploitation of natural resources, considering that it controls neither the rate nor the conditions for their exploitation. But there are also in Africa attempts to build a national State. Are such attempts doomed to failure? To find out we must return to a concrete examination of trends and policies concerning (i) the taking over of control over natural resources and means of financing essentials for national development; (ii) the substance of the relations relationship between the State and the peasantry; (iii) the scope of the industrial options (linkage with rural development or absence of such linkage; whether the product is intended for consumption by the privileged class or by the masses; integration within the international division of labour etc.). Only then would it be possible to put forward a futurological judgement, i. e. national States or transnationalization.

3. On the basis of relections arising from the earlier studies, which would make it possible to define the nature of the State in Africa, and on the basis of hypotheses concerning (i) the nature of the stake in world conflicts and (ii) the nature of the strategy of the non-aligned countries, that is the NIEO, it is possible to consider the way in which Africa could become involved in the world conflicts.

If this NIEO strategy corresponds to a national project, one would be entitled to ask the following questions:

(i) would the NIEO lose its relevance in the case of Africa if, for instance, the African States confined themselves to exercising formal control over their natural resources and only seek to "have them exploited", and if Africa had no prospects of an exported industrialization?

(ii) will the "plans" for the future of Africa be formulated elsewhere, e. g. :

*among the multinationals, who compete with each other for access to mineral resources, for the modernized exploitation of agriculture (agri-business) and for the import substitution industry (now taking on a new lease of life thanks to the formation of "common markets" such as ECOWAS etc.);

*in international circles drawing up "stabilization plans" for those countries currently left out of the game (the "basic needs" approach "least developed countries" etc..)

The most important of these "plans for Africa" should in this context be looked at, especially those of the EEC (ACP association agreements), the World Bank and the IMF.

(iii) Does Africa offer its own alternatives to confront these plans? A careful critical examination of the Lagos Plan of Action is vital in this context. Is it a "national-collective" plan or implementation within the context of transnationalization? Or an inconsistent whole?

(Concluded)

THE CRISIS OF...

(Continued from Page 12)

in "development by imports," there is a nearly universal reluctance to admit that the concept contains a fatal contradiction.

(To be continued)

THE LEFT IN INDIA

Gail Omvedt

1985 has begun with disturbing prospects for India's Marxists, 60 years after their first conference was held in Kanpur in northern India. Then communism was a small and ideologically immature force outshadowed by a strong national movement dominated by the Indian bourgeoisie. Today the communist movement is a powerful force, well-based in all sections of workers, peasants, agricultural labourers and specially oppressed sections such as tribals and women, spread throughout the country, and big enough to form a government in two states. But it is still ideologically confused and highly fragmented, while the bourgeoisie has grown even more powerful and self-confident and remain several steps ahead of the working class revolutionary forces.

The ruling Congress(I) party and its leader Rajiv Gandhi are the direct organizational and family heirs of the bourgeois forces which dominated the nationalist movement from the 19th century onwards. In the December 1984 parliamentary elections they won a bigger majority than ever in history, by combining the "sympathy factor" whipped up over the death of Indira Gandhi, nationalism, and appeals to the growing force of right-wing Hindu chauvinism with a fairly healthy economy compared to most other third world countries, little debt as yet, and a sophisticated technological infrastructure. India seems set in spite of its impoverished millions to stand forth as a "Hindu empire" in Asia.

There seems little immediately that the Left can do about this. Popular and oppositional movements, whether based on workers, tribals, women, low castes or oppressed nationalities, are scattered both in terms of leadership and ideologies. They are at present on the defensive, repressed and often divided through the coopting policies of the state.

Electurally, the left has been mauled along with the rest of the opposition. The socialists, who had chosen to merge themselves into the bourgeois Janata party in 1977, have practically disappeared as a political force, though many youth coming out of the socialist trend are merging into new Marxist forces. The strongest communist party, the CPI-M (Communist Party of India-Marxist) is the second biggest opposition party in the country, but its 22 seats are meagre before the Congress 401. It has been given a bad shock through its drastic loss in Kerala, where it could win only one seat, and even in its stronghold of West Bengal, where the Congress (I) won 16 seats to the CPM's 18. Outside of these states, the CPM, CPI (Communist Party of India, the more pro-Moscow of the two big parties) and other left parties have won together only a handful of seats.

More important, none of the left — whether the pro-Moscow electoral parties, the still-surviving Naxalite fragments, or the youthful "post-traditional communists" working in small networks and groups throughout the country, seems capable in the near future of offering a national political alternative meaningful to a significant section of the Indian people. At best their mass political strength is in pockets.

Yet if survival in this period of right reaction and left ideological confusion is a criterion, the Indian left is doing better than in most countries. Electorally, the communists have maintained a solid constituency of about 10% of the national vote over the last 20-25 years, and while they have not solved the dilemma of handling elections in a bourgeois system, they remain a force to reckon with. Forms of armed struggle, in spite of tremendous state repression, are still carried on by Naxalites — remnants of the revolutionaries who broke away in

1967 to form the Maoist CPI-ML — who maintain a vigorous presence among the most oppressed sections of tribal and dalit (ex-untouchable) poor peasants in many areas. Armed struggle is no longer a serious insurrectionary strategy, but for these groups, but arms are maintained, movements are protected, and violent gunbattles still occasionally break out.

And on the edge of new action and theory, not only among workers, and the rural poor with new perspectives as well as in the "new social movements" in ecology, science and health, culture and anti-caste movements, are small groups and individuals, sometimes newly coming into movements, sometimes dissident veterans of years of struggle within ML movements or traditional CPs, sometimes coming from Gandhian or Socialist backgrounds, turning the "crisis of Marxism" into a renewal of theory and practice.

These represent the three major trends of the left movement in India, all in some ways outgrowths of the original communist movement of the 1920s as well as of anti-caste and social movements which at that time had remained alienated from the marxist movement.

"Traditional" Communists

In various ways the CPI, CPM and a number of smaller, often regionally based Marxist parties can be called "traditional." They cling to the basic models of the Third International — a democratic-centralist model of the party; the notion that the party relates to mass movements by providing "revolutionary leadership" and thus should itself organize "its own" workers', peasants', students', and women's fronts (in India this leads to a plurality of mass organizations at every level, each linked to a separate party); a rejection of "Eurocommunism" as revisionist but a maintenance of electoral participation; an unwillingness to allow critics of the

countries they consider "socialist"; an insistence on "class" as practically the exclusive form of important social contradiction.

These parties maintain a fairly strong base in the working class and rural poor; they continue to have students' and women's fronts active at many levels; they have still a strong and disciplined machinery of often self-sacrificing activists. But their decision-making and leadership levels (as well as decision-making and leadership levels of all their mass fronts) are overwhelmingly dominated by activists of petty-bourgeois origin.

The two biggest of these parties, the CPI and CPM, hold to Third International models in additional ways: they believe in a four-class alliance in which "rich peasants" or the "national" or "progressive" bourgeoisie can be allies of workers, and they consider their main fight to be against "imperialism" and "feudalism" rather than "capitalism" as such. They hold to a pro-Moscow position on all international issues, and joined in condemning Solidarity as an imperialist plot.

The two parties have had important differences in the past, partly in the fact that the CPM originally saw itself as being "independent" of both Moscow and Peking and was more pro-China (particularly in the period before the "Maoists" split away from it), but primarily in their analysis of the Indian situation. The CPI believed that the national bourgeoisie was in the Congress, while the CPM analyzed it as representing the pro-imperialist monopoly bourgeoisie and looked for bourgeois allies in the opposition. Thus, during the Emergency, the CPI earned the stigma of giving support to Indira Gandhi and helping to suppress working class struggles, while the CPM fought in the opposition and then supported the post-Emergency Janata Party government.

Today these differences have almost vanished. After the departure of its one-time chairman S. A. Dange to form the pro-Congress All-India Communist Party (AICP), the rest of the CPI swung around to the same position as the CPM

in regard to national affairs. Today the AICP is a negligible force, while the CPI and CPM work together in a "Left and Democratic Front" which strives to include all of the opposition parties except for the pro-Hinduist Bharatiya Janata Party. On international affairs, their only difference is that the CPI is somewhat more loyalist to Moscow, while the CPM's current links with the Deng regime in China make no practical policy difference. Both are much more loyalist in relation to the USSR and "Stalinist" in relation to party line and practice than the majority of communist parties in the world today.

The paradox haunting the political line of these parties is now that while they agree in seeing the Congress(I) as the main internal enemy of the working class and the strongest agent of the repressive bourgeoisie, at the same time they support nearly all international positions of the Congress (and many internal positions) as "progressive" and "anti-imperialist." They nearly all hailed Indira Gandhi after her assassination as an anti-imperialist fighter, praising her role in the nonaligned movement, general support for Vietnam and the Afghanistan government. Their analysis has almost always confused efforts of the Indian bourgeoisie to win a stronger place for itself within the world capitalist system and to oppose U. S. hegemonism with opposition to imperialism itself.

Similarly, both parties have used the same rhetoric of "national integration" that the Congress(I) uses in condemning many movements based on oppressed nationalities within India. While the CPM has made efforts to ally with regional bourgeois forces seeking more autonomy for the states within India, it has joined with the CPI (and the Congress) in opposing not only the Khalistan movement but also the Assam movement as "separatist", "reactionary" and CIA-inspired. The movement of tribals in southern Bihar and parts of Bengal for a separate "Jharkhand" state within India has equally been opposed as splittist, while the on going struggles in Nagaland,

Mizoram and Manipur as the atrocities of the Indian army in these regions have been simply ignored.

These parties have stood up at the time of Hindu-Muslim or other riots and fought against the forces of "communalism". But their analysis has generally seen the forces of communalism (or religious revivalism) located mainly in Hindu rightist groups and parties like the BJP and similar minority parties. The Congress(I) has been characterized by them as "authoritarian", but secular; thus they have failed to analyse the communal and fundamentalist forces growing within the Congress(I) and the state itself.

As a result there has often been little to distinguish these parties from the Congress(I) as far as the average citizen is concerned. Much of the rhetoric is similar — condemnation of imperialism, "CIA conspiracies", "splittist movements", "reactionary and communal forces". Condemning authoritarianism has little effect on those who have not actually experienced repression, and characterizing Indira Gandhi as the main source of authoritarianism and the biggest enemy of the Indian people (as so much of the opposition did for so long) simply helped up her image. The parties the CPI and CPM allied with (Janata, Akali Dal, etc.) often represented local kulak classes who were the immediate oppressors of the rural poor in rural areas; their support for the "farmers' movement" for higher crop prices is used by Congress (I) politicians to claim that the Congress in contrast represents the real poor. The basic electoral dilemma of these parties is that their line is too similar to that of the Congress; they have a much more honest cadre but in most areas the Congress can believably claim the real capacity to run the government.

The CPM leads a government in West Bengal and the nearby small state of Tripura, which also has a majority population. It has in the past led state governments in Kerala. But it has been unable to solve even nonrevolutionary problems of development in [a

backward capitalist economy. Its Kerala government has fallen, unable to expand its base after abolishing feudal landlordism and leaving agricultural labourers and workers confronting a sizeable kulak class, unable to win over the middle sectors which were often alienated by the militant economism of unions, unable to combat the growing appeal of caste and religion.

In West Bengal, it has a more solid near-majority of loyal voters, but its efforts to attract capital for development (for which it was willing to suppress union demands) have not worked. Unemployment is high in traditional industries like jute, where nearly 100,000 are out of work in a situation not much different from the textile industry of capitalist-dominated Bombay. Not enough new jobs have been created, and continued power shortages and unbelievable crowded transport conditions have made life in Calcutta torture even for the middle classes. A greater "Bureaucratiation" among party cadres, even though this is a more civilized and rational bureaucratism than that of the Congress, has alienated many supporters. One result was the loss of Calcutta in the recent elections.

In the Bengal countryside, significant reforms and an invigorated village panchayat system have maintained a rural base uniting agricultural labourers and middle peasants in the context of Bengal's more "semi-feudal" economy. Nevertheless, the CPM at this point appears to be just holding on. In spite of its attraction for many new youth after 1977, disillusioned with naxalite alternatives and feeling the need for a "national" party, in spite of bold plans to expand in the Hindi belt, the party is not really growing, though it remains the biggest single organized Communist force.

There are other parties which remain "traditional" in terms of their conception of the party-mass linkage but analyze the Indian state as basically "bourgeois" and condemn alliances with bourgeois opposition

parties such as the Janata. These include the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI), located mainly in eastern India; the Lal Nishan Party (LNP), based in Maharashtra — both still loyal to a Stalinist-Leninist tradition; and the Trotskyite Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). These also have union bases in urban and rural areas that are quite strong in many places, as well as bands of committed cadres. But their dislike for the parties of the "Left and Democratic Front" and their antagonism for the other CPs leads them at times into political isolation or even indirect support for the Congress (I) itself.

All these parties share an inability to really understand the new social movements arising in India. They organize among dalits, tribals and women, but their mechanical marxism — they still generally accept the five-stage theory and the Stalinist formulation of the "dialectical materialism", "historical materialism" and the base-superstructure relationship — makes it impossible for them to really analyze the nature of caste oppression and women's oppression. With the basic attitude that what India really needs is "more development" and that science, technology and industry are "neutral" in class terms, they are unable to understand the new environmental movements or the militant opposition to dam-building that is growing up. The assertion of the need of women, tribals or oppressed castes are understood only as "splitist", and the CPI and CPM even withheld active support from the historic Bombay textile strike because they thought textile workers were opposing the "red flag" when they rejected party leadership as subordinating their struggles to political alliances with the bourgeoisie.

(To be continued)

THE PRICE...

(Continued from page 18)

But if active help in combating Tamil guerrillas in the north is part of the deal — and one must still hope that it is not — it must be clearly stated that the price is exorbitant, the return not commensurate, and that Israel's government would be well advised to reconsider its decision.

At the very least, it should be made clear that by sending a diplomat to Colombo, Israel has not committed itself to support Sri Lanka when human rights on that island will again be discussed in international forums, that Israel is not taking sides in an internal struggle and harbours no ill feelings towards the Tamils.

That much, at least, we owe to ourselves, to our dignity to our character as a Jewish State, the State of the Jewish people, the majority of whom still live as minorities in many parts of the world.

(Continued from Page 10)

Kissinger on....

ations between India and Pakistan as a bilateral matter which is very understandable. I think we could play a facilitating role designed to meet the various concerns of both sides.

On the arms supply, if the Soviet army could be removed from Afghanistan, I think the American perceptions of the problem would alter and remove one of the causes of the arms relationship as it now exists. Secondly, if one looks at the overall strength of the Indian and Pakistan military forces, it is difficult to visualise any rational motive that would cause a Pakistan leader to attack India. But, still, this is a problem. I understand the Indian view but I think considering that I have not yet been to Pakistan, I should not pronounce on this.



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