

# CEASEFIRE !

— Mervyn de Silva



**LANKA**

# GUARDIAN

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## PROBLEMS OF NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY

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**Rodolfo Stavenhagen — Why minorities matter**

**Gail Omvedt — Nationalism in Marxist theory**

**Gamini Samaranayake — JVP and Tamil Question**

**Jehan Perera — The case for Federalism**

**Radhika Coomaraswamy — Nationalism and the NIEO**

**Victor Gunawardena — Campus quotas & discrimination**

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**Also:** Paul Caspersz on Ian Goonetilleka's work  
Alexander Magno on the Marcos model **and**  
Upali Karunatileke's 'Comrade Gabriella'

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## MRS. B's CIVIC RIGHTS

THE former premier and SLFP leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike was expelled from Parliament and stripped of her civic rights for a long seven year term. But like the ghost in Hamlet "doomed for a certain term to walk the night", the civic rights issue haunts the House. The matter came up on April 3, May 10, and then again on June 7 with the Opposition persisting with its basic argument that Parliament can rescind a resolution passed by the House. The Prime Minister thought not and raised a point of order.

Now the point of order has become a subject for debate with the Members for Matugama, a lawyer, and Attanagalla, a stout SLFP loyalist fighting a spirited rear-guard action against the arguments of the Education Minister Mr. Rani Wickremasingha, a lawyer too, that the Opposition cannot continue to debate the matter.

Constitutional intricacies and parliamentary procedural questions apart, the issue is political, and in the context of the current crisis, national.

The cry for (Sinhala) "unity to fight 'Eelam terrorism'" or the appeal for a (Sinhala) 'consensus' to reach a negotiated settlement with the Tamils are both meaningless without the participation of Mrs. B. The UNP knows it but is a captive creature of its own past.

With the Maha Sangha in a 'working alliance' with Mrs. Bandaranaike and the other Opposition parties, the UNP will have to find a way out of its trap.

## QUIS CUSTODIET?

Hardly a few weeks after President J. R.'s much publicised speech on the importance of "discipline" in the security services, navy personnel from a base in Colombo were involved in what the SUN called "a brawl" near an illicit liquor den in Kochchikade.

The SUN report said that Navy sentries had opened fire on a mob of about 500, while some others

from the base had "gone on a rampage".

The demand for discipline from the police and the armed forces is of course much higher than from any other State service. They are the custodians of law and order. Besides, they are trained to fight, and are therefore armed. For these reasons, the discipline they must impose on themselves must be far more rigorous; they cannot use their extra 'fire-power' at random.

Two years ago we had the battle of Wanathamulla, involving air force personnel shanty-dwellers and hoodlums. Now it is the navy once rightly respected as an elite service. The breakdown of discipline among those who are required to be the most disciplined is a symptom of a deeper disease that is afflicting our increasingly disturbed and violent society.

## ANTI-PRIVATISATION

WHILE the government was announcing that the State Distilleries Corporation may be handed over to the private sector, the trade unions continue their campaign against the proposal to privatise Sri Lanka's telecommunication services.

Twelve unions in this sector decided last week not to let up their agitation although the government's negotiations with local businessmen and their foreign collaborators have been stalled. The TU campaign will be carried out at the regional level.

From

Prof. A. J. Wilson,  
Canada.

TRENDS  
+  
LETTERS

## Royal Road

LIKE my very dear friend A. W. Singham I would like to express my warm admiration of your courage as a fearless and commanding personality in the struggle for free expression. But I do not accept Professor Singham's self-lacerated jeremiad and I wish I could wake him up from his stupor. Rather I look on the future with expectation. We are of course on the right royal road to barbarism where irrational attempts are being made to institutionalise demonic state power. But my view is that the exercise is doomed. We may be in darkness for a while but there is hope. War, as Lenin once remarked, is the locomotive of history. I'd interpret this as also including the dynamics of the international relations of internal wars.

As for the Tamil question, it is clear that the time lag effect is in play. Concessions have been denied for far too long until they have now lost their grace. The fact of the matter is that the Tamil People have ceased to protest, "a prerogative of the powerless." Their militants have decided to not merely "bandage the casualties of the juggernaut" (these phrases are borrowed from some source I cannot remember) but to take

(Continued on page 24)

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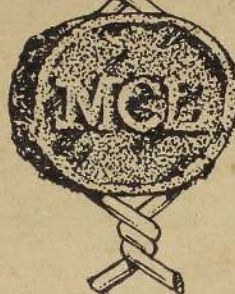
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# LAND MINES ON THE ROAD TO PEACE ?

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

There is "ceasefire" in the air and apparently on the ground. Villages around Trinco were in fact in flames when the summit was on, but there was a lull as we approached the middle of the month.

In May Sri Lanka had a fight on every front — against Pakistan at cricket and the least belligerent, and against Australia's Foreign Minister Bill Hayden and, most of all, a furious battle against India's Khursheed Alam Khan.

June is the month of Sri Lanka — India "bhai bhai" and the sun began to shine through the overhanging monsoon clouds. The optimism is evident, especially in government and pro-UNP circles. The Anuradhapura massacre, a cold-blooded essay in pure, unbridled terror, sent the government reeling.

Tea prices tumbled to their lowest in two years — thirty rupees a kilo was a new low. The CWC led several lakhs of workers in "prayers for peace and justice" for three days, a virtual work stoppage, however piously disguised. Finance Minister put on a brave face as he spoke in Parliament about soaring defence expenditure. "I'll find the money somehow" he said with a burst of patriotic bravado but the figures he gave were sufficient cause for dismay — one billion rupees, then an increase of 2.6 billion rupees and finally an additional two billion. Hotels were empty and retrenchment already underway in the south western beach resorts now hit the eastern seaboard, with the violence moving out of the north.

Last year Mr. de Mel told the 'Aid Group' that his case for continued assistance to Sri Lanka at previous levels was founded on

(a) a confidently anticipated balance of payments surplus of about 200 million SDR (b) on the monetary controls and other measures he had introduced and (c) the restoration of political stability consequent to a negotiated settlement of the ethnic issue via the all-party conference.

Thanks to tea, Sri Lanka's payments surplus exceeded our most buoyant calculations — about 300 million SDR. The IMF praised the Finance Minister for 'sound economic management'. But the third leg (the political) collapsed with the A. P. C.

And to a heavily aid-dependent Sri Lanka (half the budget is foreign-financed, and our borrowings are increasingly commercial) the political is as crucially important as the purely economic because the Sri Lanka's patrons and financial backers have their own perceptions of what should be done (and not done) and how stability should be restored. Sri Lanka, particularly with its 'new open economy', is open to external pressure. In conventional terms, we are vulnerable to diplomatic pressure.

The United States is Sri Lanka's largest aid-giver; Sri Lanka is the highest per capita receiver of US aid in the region.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has had a highly successful visit to the Soviet Union. Those who expected a dilution in Indo-Soviet friendship after Mrs. Gandhi have been proved wrong.

US leaders always regarded Mrs. Gandhi as imperious, abrasive and hostile. They are confident that the modernist outlook of the high-tech conscious Rajiv and even more importantly the objective needs of

the Indian economy as it advances towards the 21st century could lead to much better Indo-US relations. One of the foundations on which such a relationship could be built is a recognition of India's pre-eminent position (Vice President George Bush called it 'pivotal power') in the region. For the US, the major regional issue — a strategic one — is Afghanistan. But this involves both its rival, the USSR, as well as its client, Pakistan. This is one of the causes of tension between India and the US.

There is another urgent issue which involves India — the Sri Lankan problem. Mr. Gandhi discussed Sri Lanka with Mr. Gorbachev. He is certain to do so with Mr. Reagan. The US State Dept has denied that it "arranged" the summit but the JR-Rajiv meeting — a rush job — was held between Mr. Gandhi's visits to the two superpower capitals.

Talk of 'truce' and 'ceasefire' is very much in the air now that there has, according to Mr. Athulathmudali and other highlevel spokesman, a 'change of attitude' in Delhi. The abatement of violence, it has been agreed, will create the right climate for resumption of negotiations.

But the abatement of violence requires both sides to fulfil obligations they have obviously undertaken. So we can see two main obstacles. First, credibility or the degree of mutual trust as the respective obligations are simultaneously fulfilled. Second, the delivery-capability of each side. Then it is not a question of will or genuine desire, but of the capacity to impose one's will.

There could be many land mines on the road to peace.



# Maha Sangha, Opposition : Emerging alliance?

**E**ven if they had only agreed to disagree, their decision to meet at all is a fact of great political significance, made greater still by the character of the crisis that is now upon us. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. All around us there is despondency racing towards a near-total despair. Organised opinion and decision-making groups are getting fragmented and this is apparent in the contradictory attitudes of key UNP personalities and their public squabbles and in-fighting.

So when the Maha Sangha convenes a meeting of ALL opposition parties, ranging from the Centre-Left to the traditional Left, and two of the most well-established lay Buddhist organisations, the act

and the gesture cannot be ignored by any political analyst.

It is fashionable in radical circles to regard the clergy, especially the conservative layers of the hierarchy, as politically 'reactionary'. But few institutions can maintain a monolithic character or a rigid ideological position when a society is engulfed in a crisis that continuously generates social-political pressures. The Church in Latin America or the Philippines for example cannot survive if it allows its conduct to be totally circumscribed by the doctrinal dictates of the Vatican.

With the articulate and extremely influential Mahanayake of Asgiriya, Ven. Palipane Chandanada playing the most active role, the conferen-

ce, attended by Mrs. Bandaranaike, the SLMP, LSSP and CP, issued a statement that expressed its "total opposition" to:

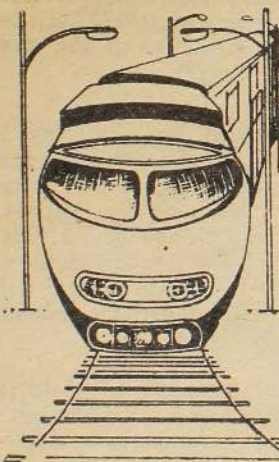
- 1) Any proposal to declare Martial Law throughout the island.
- 2) The vesting of Executive powers, including powers that touch on security matters, on MP's.
- 3) The proposal to set a National Auxiliary Force, outside the regular armed services.

Perhaps most significant of all, considering the varied complexion of the group that met, was the common stand on the ethnic issue. They agreed that the problem needed a political and not a military solution.

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# Amirthalingam welcomes statement

MADRAS, June 4

Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Secretary-General of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), has welcomed the joint statement of Mr. Jayewardene and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi that immediate steps be taken to create a proper climate for progress towards a political settlement acceptable to all.

In a statement, Mr. Amirthalingam said: "The Tamil people of Sri Lanka are very thankful for the concern and sense of urgency shown by the Prime Minister of India in devoting so much time to their problem on the eve of his departure to a number of foreign countries. His invitation to President Jayewardene and the several rounds of talks they had is a reaffirmation of India's good offices to work out a final solution to this problem, first offered by Indira Gandhi in the dark days of July August 1983.

"We welcome the joint statement that immediate steps should be taken to create a proper climate for progress towards a political settlement which would be acceptable to all concerned. We hope that India will play a more positive role towards the achievement of a solution acceptable to all," Amirthalingam said.

**Dissappointment:** President Jayewardene's statement to pressmen at the airport regarding district councils as first devolution units causes much concern and disappointment to us. His special envoy said the same thing to Mrs. Gandhi in

(Continued on page 16)

## TELF opposes

**'No constructive move':** The Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TELF) has expressed bitter disappointment at the joint statement issued by Mr. Jayewardene and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi on ending the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. "No concrete or constructive proposals have been put forward by JRJ", Mr. M. K. Eelaventhana, TELF general secretary, said in a statement today.

## TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE

Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, the president of Sri Lanka, paid a visit to New Delhi from 1st to 3rd June 1985 at the invitation of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India.

The President had several meetings with the Prime Minister and also accompanied him to Dhaka. The two leaders discussed the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka and its impact on bilateral relations.

Both sides agreed that immediate steps should be taken to defuse the situation and create a proper climate for progress towards a political settlement which would be acceptable to all concerned, within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

The two sides further agreed that all forms of violence should abate and finally cease. Every effort will be made for the speedy restoration of normalcy in the northern and eastern provinces. This will be conducive to the early return of Sri Lankan citizens in India to Sri Lanka.

The talks were cordial and frank, and were characterised by a sincere desire to cooperate in overcoming difficulties and evolving a durable political solution. They reaffirmed the traditional friendship between India and Sri Lanka.

The two leaders decided to remain in close touch with each other.

## Thondaman looks forward to a workable solution

RURAL Industrial Development Minister, S. Thondaman yesterday appealed to Sri Lankan Government to reciprocate the Indian undertaking to help curb violence by finding a viable and acceptable solution to the Island's ethnic tangle.

Reacting to the New Delhi accord between President Jayewardene and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the Ceylon Workers Congress leader said: "Efforts to find a lasting solution should immediately follow the cessation of violence. Permanent peace will depend only on the political solution."

He added: "The CWC which has consistently opposed violence as a means to find solutions to political problems, welcomes the New Delhi agreement to co-operate to abate the senseless violence. That is a step in the right direction."

"Now it is the duty and responsibility of Sri Lanka to work out a durable solution that will satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil community. I am sure Sri Lanka is alive to this obligation. I trust a workable solution will be worked out soon" Mr. Thondaman said.

## DWC welcomes

Democratic Workers Congress leader A. Aziz has appealed to the government to use no time in taking meaningful and concrete steps to evolve an honourable formula on the question of devolution of power and extend an acceptable autonomy for the minority communities in the country.

In a statement on the Indo-Lanka summit, Mr. Aziz said President Jayewardene deserved congratulations for having secured a mutually agreed formula on the question of ending violence.

—SUN' June 11



# Tamil Nadu reacts hopefully

Sinha Ratnatunga

**MADRAS June 9:**

The Tamil Nadu state government today made its first formal announcement on the Jayewardene-Gandhi summit stating that the talks had generated hopes among the people of Tamil Nadu that there would be an end to the conflict.

The state government reacted cautiously to the summit, careful to echo New Delhi's wish of a halt to violence in Sri Lanka, but not giving the opposition an advantage with Tamil sentiment here.

The state's Finance Minister, Nedunchezhiyan, a 'dove' on the issue, speaking on behalf of the M.G. Ramachandran government said Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi had told Chief Minister Ramachandran on the telephone that his talks with President Jayewardene were useful and that he hoped a political solution to the Island's crisis would be found soon.

Speaking in the legislative assembly, Mr. Nedunchezhiyan added that the Tamil Nadu state government hoped that Prime Minister Gandhi on his return from his foreign tour would take steps to end the conflict.

Mr. Nedumchezhiyan said premier Gandhi had told newsmen in Paris that the Sri Lanka government was working out new proposals to solve the Island's crisis. It was hoped that these proposals would lead to an early political solution.

It is clear that the Ramachandran led state government is taking steps to persuade militant groups based here to adhere to a temporary cease-fire in Sri Lanka. Its Commerce Minister today attacked the DMK for trying to Prop themselves up on the Sri Lankan issue. He said that peace should be given a chance. The state industry Minister yesterday said that the present problem could be resolved only through the central

government. Mr. Ramachandran, the minister who once took the issue on behalf of the state before the UN following the July 1983 riots said "what was needed was a sensible approach to the problems. A sentimental approach would not help improve matters," he said.

Reports from Colombo meanwhile appeared on wire agency tickers in this state stating that there was a lull in "violent activity" in the troubled areas.

The United News of India (UNI) quoting Colombo's 'SUN' referred

to its report about the proposed councils to devolve power.

The major Sri Lankan Tamil separatist group the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF) comprising ITTE, TELO, EROS and EPRLF is still in closed-door sessions 'SUN' learns that at least one group of the ENLF has suggested, talks with the Sri Lankan government.

A member of the Front however declined to say which of the four groups suggested this. They will discuss the cease-fire and the possibility of talks further tomorrow.

—SUN June 11

## U. S. lauds summit

**WASHINGTON, June 5**

The United States is greatly encouraged by the recent summit meeting between Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, a senior administration official said here yesterday.

In a meeting with South Asian correspondent, Robert A. Peck, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, while denying that the U.S. had "promoted" the summit between the two leaders, he said, "we have long felt that the dialogue between India and Sri Lanka was an absolute essential ingredient in the search for a political settlement in Sri Lanka which we think is necessary."

He asserted that "certainly we didn't promote it. There had been I guess, over the recent days or weeks some speculation about the possibility of a summit meeting, so it didn't come as a total surprise to anyone."

Peck pointed out that "we felt that India and Sri Lanka should

talk and that India would make the kind of positive contribution to the settlement of this problem which it can clearly make.

"So I think it is significant that Prime Minister Gandhi and President Jayewardene are getting together and that they are discussing this issue and we certainly wish them well."

Asked by 'SUN' what the U.S. reaction was to the amnesty offered by president Jayewardene to the Tamil militants to lay down their arms, and whether Washington saw it as a step toward a political solution to the ethnic crisis that has plagued the country, Peck said: "Well, I don't want to really take a position on the details of proposals that may be made one way or the other. Certainly it is important that the violence in Sri Lanka be contained, that a process get underway which gradually brings about a lessening of the military. If President Jayewardene's proposal can contribute to that end, then certainly it is very much to be welcomed", he added.

—SUN June 6,



# Uma Maheswaran reluctant to lay down arms

MADRAS, June 10

One of the two major Sri Lankan Tamil separatist groups hinted it was prepared for a negotiated settlement for the on-going conflict in Sri Lanka.

Uma Maheswaran, Secretary-General of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (P. L. O. T.) told a press conference held in the town of Madurai that experience showed that talks were of no use, and that history for the past 35 years had only proved that talks bore no results for Lanka's minority Tamils.

Uma Maheswaran was reacting to new moves by the central government of India to pressurise Sri Lankan Tamil separatists based in Tamil Nadu to cease-fire for at least three months to enable the Sri Lankan government to search for a political settlement without violence as a backdrop.

Asked if his organisation would lay down arms, as demanded by Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene to begin the talks, Mr. Maheswaran said the question of laying down arms did not arise.

It is the Sri Lankan government and the army which forced us to take to arms. So they should lay down their arms first, he added.

But, significantly, he also said that the PLOT's decision to participate in talks, following the Jayewardene-Gandhi summit "would depend on the conditions put forward by the Sri Lankan government."

This, sources here indicated was a hint that PLOT would consider a negotiated political settlement.

The hit-and-run attacks were meant to draw the attention of the world to their struggle and

to put some fear in the minds of the Sri Lankan government and the army.

Asked if his organisation would take part in the talks proposed after recent meeting of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene, Uma Maheswaran said their participation would depend on the conditions put forward by the Sri Lankan government.

He said his organisation never wanted the Indian army's direct intervention in the struggle for a separate Tamil Eelam, but wanted only the moral support of the Indian people and the central government's recognition for their organisation on the lines of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Asked if the leadership question was the stumbling block in the organisations coming together, Maheswaran said it was not so, but there were other issues involved.

Asked about the open fighting in Tamil Nadu with arms by the rival Tamil Eelam groups, Uma Maheswaran said his people never carried arms in public and did not want to fight with other groups as it only spoils their image and turned public opinion against them.

Uma Maheswaran said he and his men were against attacking of Sinhalese civilians, as their fight was only against the army.

It was only last month that a major consignment of arms imported to India from Singapore by PLOT was uncovered by Indian customs. A Ruling Congress (I) member was contacted and he subsequently informed New Delhi through G. Parthasarathi, Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee.

The New Delhi administration ordered that the consignment of weapons be confiscated. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi put the value of these arms at US dollars 4 million.

Sources here said that as a result PLOT plans for a major offensive against Sri Lankan forces would have had to be kept in abeyance.

The Uma Maheswaran group is the only group which is on talking terms with the Tamil United Liberation Front led by Amirthalingam.

TULF Secretary-General Appapillai Amirthalingam told 'SUN' today that he did not wish to comment on Uma Maheswaran's press conference, but added that the TULF wanted to bring the militant groups together to speak with one voice.

"Otherwise each group will try to prove they are more extremist than the other," he said.

Mr. Amirthalingam said there were moves to bring the militant groups together. Asked whether the TULF had not established contact with the militant groups so far, on coming to a negotiated settlement, the TULF leader said that they were "groping in the dark", having no intimation from either the Indian nor Sri Lankan governments on the proposed cease-fire.

The ruling Congress (I) members have conferred with Tamil Nadu State Ministers over the weekend. The state government was to make a statement today or tomorrow on the lines its central government wishes to adopt with the Sri Lankan militants.

(Approved by the censor with deletions).

— SUN June 11, 1985.



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# "Changing processes must take into consideration ethnic minorities"

— Rodolfo Stavenhagen

FOREIGN  
NEWS

Inter Press Service

MEXICO

The Mexican expert Rodolfo Stavenhagen, chief of a programme of the UNU (United Nations University) on this topic, declared to IPS that the cultural identity of the ethnic minorities, generally discriminated and persecuted in the world, must be taken into consideration in the development process and programmes of the countries.

For long time, claimed Stavenhagen development has been considered only as transfer of capitals, technologies and other material goods, while the cultural problem has been neglected, generating in this way strong conflicts in the religious racial and linguistic field.

Stavenhagen, 52, anthropologist general staff co-ordinator of the College of Mexico, will participate in the 18th World Conference of the Society for International Development (SID) which is an independent non governmental organisation. The Conference which title is "World Development: Risk and Opportunities" will gather more than 30 statesmen and experts from developed and developing countries and will be held in Rome 1—4 July 1985.

"Ethnic minorities: recognition or suppression", this is the polemical title that the Mexican expert will tackle in Rome together with other international committed experts.

"This is a very ample, serious problem, and above all very complex," says Stavenhagen. Tamils in Sri Lanka, Muslims and Sikhs in India, Kurds in Western Asia, "Basques in Spain, Catholics in North Ireland, Eriteans in Ethiopia, black Africans in Sudan, and about 400 ethnic indigenous groups out of 30 million in Latin America, are among many examples, actors of an explicable present concern of Governments and experts."

Stavenhagen is a well known Latin American Social Scientist and an early critic of the myth of Latin American feudalism.

For Stavenhagen, the problem manifests itself generally between an ethnic majority which controls the state power and one or more minorities, who are persecuted and discriminated, and whose cultural values are not contemplated or respected in development programmes and strategies.

"I have always defended the right of each people to its own culture and identity, and this is also the United Nations, its organisations and many governments. "None the less he added, these governmental positions are usually only claimed as a "declaration", but in practice in many countries the right of the minorities to their own values, their own development, way of living that some people call autonomy and others self-determination, are not respected.

Asked by IPS correspondent, Stavenhagen, former assistant director of UNESCO's Social Sciences Department, analysed the problematic as seen from the side of Latin American Indians. He has written, in fact, numerous book and essays on this theme. According to Stavenhagen, the history of the Indians of Latin America, from the beginning of the 16th Century up to now is the history of their extermination, slavery, servitude, oppression, pillage, exploitation, treason and expropriation by the representatives of the ruling society.

These representatives have been or are "The Colonial Administration, The National Governments, The Clergy, The Class of Landowners or the Transnational Enterprises. The few exceptions are those which prove the general rule."

As for the problem of the ethnic minorities, Stavenhagen points out three great basic trends in the international debates among anthropologists and sociologists. The first one is the so called "Sociology of Development" or "Theory of Modernisation" which has tried to incorporate or integrate these

emarginated minorities in the supposed benefits of development, but of course eliminating them as minority social groups.

The second tendency is defended by the marxist sectors which consider ethnic minorities as a social class pertinent to the one of the workers and farmers, seen as "proletariat" in opposition to the "bourgeoisie".

A third one, opposed to the previous ones, sustained by many indigenous groups and supported by social scientists, is the one which promotes the right of the minorities to develop themselves independently from the "modernisation" and the "class struggle" following their own social, economical and cultural values.

Stavenhagen points out that these minorities must have their sovereign right to develop themselves keeping in mind their own indigenous reality as well as their own ideas and values. They in fact, define as "foreign colonists" mestizos, creoles as well as spaniards, anglosaxones, and marxists.

For the UN expert, it would be a mistake to put a label on ourselves as for these different and opposed assumptions, but he thinks that for each of these major perspectives concerning the ethnic minorities, we must take into consideration their most important theoretical problems.

He stresses that it would not be correct to impede the access to modern technologies for indigenous groups, aiming at the improving of their living conditions. In the same way it would not right to deny that the indigenous peoples are in their great majority members of the exploited classes add that they share common interests with peasants and workers.

(Continued on page 23)



# Sri Lanka : The Federal Alternative

Jehan Perera

"It is easy to understand how the ethnic problem has got so bad" said Punchi Banda while we were walking back to his house. He was still thinking about the animated discussion we had left behind at the village "Hotel and Bar". A moonless night had fallen and I was more interested in following the narrow beam of torchlight and avoiding the crawling thing I worried would suddenly pop up and bite me. But what PB (as he preferred to be called) had to say was plain enough for me to understand without much concentration.

"You know," "how hospitably my family has treated you. Even though we did not know you we let you have the front room in our house. And you can stay there as long as you like to and see how we live in the village." Quite overwhelmed by this statement I struggled to phrase an adequate reply. "No, no," PB said impatiently, "I did not mean it like that. I was trying to illustrate my point about the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. Now suppose you spent 6 months with us and no one thought anything odd about it. And then you suddenly demanded a part of the house, not only the room you are now in, but also the verendah. Would that not be very wrong and unfair?" I agreed it would. "This is exactly what the Tamils are trying to do to us" concluded PB gloomily, and then directed his torch at a creature that slithered by.

## In the shadow of the Mahavamsa

An analysis of PB's description of the ethnic problem offers illuminating insights into the Sinhalese psyche as it relates to the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. In his example, PB was clearly equating his house to Sri Lanka, his family to the Sinhalese and myself to the Tamils.

The writer is at Harvard Law School

Just as his family fully owned their house so did the Sinhalese own Sri Lanka. Just as I was an outsider who had barely spent a week in the village, so were the Tamil intruders into Sri Lanka. Students of Sinhalese history will recognize that PB was speaking in the Mahavamsa idiom. PB's "house" example reflected that ancient Sinhalese chronicle's version of Sri Lanka's early history — an image of the island as the precious possession of the Sinhalese and the last refuge of Buddhism. In this view of the world, others were seen at best as outsiders, and the Tamils in particular as intruders and enemies.

Thus, although most Sinhalese would, today, base their opposition to regional autonomy or federalism on the grounds of fear that it will lead to separation (a reasonable fear in the context of bitter secessionist violence), a further explanation is to be found in the Mahavamsa mentality. In terms of this reasoning, Sri Lanka is the country of the Sinhalese; it is not the country of the Tamils or of the other communities. Carried to this extreme it implies the Tamils have no business to ask for, and none whatsoever to be given, the power to govern themselves in any degree in any part of Sri Lanka.

Instead of accepting this as a fixed psychological fact, it is time the Sinhalese asked themselves whether they can fairly expect the other communities to accept this way of looking at their status in Sri Lanka. The minority communities have their own vision of Sri Lanka and their place in it — as their homeland too, where they have the right to live in peace with justice just as the Sinhalese do. In fact if they do accept the Mahavamsa view, then the Sinhalese cannot expect their full loyalty —

how can Sri Lanka, and the Sinhalese, expect aliens to be loyal?

## The common interests

When the Sinhalese leaders insist "District Councils and no more" and the Tamil separatists respond "Eelam" the conflict in positions or stances, taken seems unresolvable. But positions do not exist in a vacuum. People take up positions (for instance, District Councils, Eelam, federalism) because these positions represent certain key interests (such as security, employment, educational opportunity). In other words, what people really want are the interests, and they see the positions as the way to achieve those interests.

Clearly, all people do not want the same things. They do not share identical interests. Many of the interests of an Eskimo hunting seal in the North Pole are bound to be different from those of a German factory worker. Likewise, in Sri Lanka, the interests of the people living in the north are not identical to those in the south. But the differences in their interests are very much smaller the gap in their positions might suggest.

Due to historical reasons these different interests have manifested themselves in the form of different political positions represented by the various political parties. These positions appear to be in fundamental conflict. But behind the facade, the interests which these positions are supposed to represent are not in basic conflict. So if we, Sinhalese and Tamils, can break away from the hostile positions we have taken and focus instead on our real interests we will find that our problems have viable solutions.

What are the common and overriding interests of the Sinhalese and Tamils? To live in security, with adequate employment, edu-



cation and trade, to enjoy freedom and prosperity. But now the Sinhalese perceive all of this to be threatened by Tamil secession and eventual domination. So they insist "District Councils and no more." The Tamils, on the other hand, view the present system of government as one in which these same interests are not protected and they in turn are dominated. Thus, the key to finding a peaceful solution is to find a means of reconciling the true interests of the Sinhalese and Tamils within a united Sri Lanka.

### **The Tamil interest in unity**

To reach this solution the Sinhalese will have to put away the Mahavamsa mentality. It may have been appropriate in the 6th century when in fact the Mahavamsa was written. It is not appropriate at the close of the 20th century. Likewise the Tamils will have to give up secessionist violence. Indeed, the Tamils do not have historical chronicles that show the Sinhalese as the traditional enemies of the Tamils. This explains in part why the Tamils consistently opposed separation from the colonial era right up to 1975.

They also opposed separation for more pragmatic reasons. First, because they see Sri Lanka as their home, and not India which would merely swallow them up in its vastness. Thus, many Tamils living in Colombo who in the aftermath of the 1983 riots left Sri Lanka intending to settle down permanently in India have returned to Sri Lanka. They had more in common with their Sinhalese friends in Colombo than with strangers in Madras.

A second reason is because the Tamils need the rest of Sri Lanka for their economic survival — markets for their perishable crops, employment for their youth, and customers for their businesses. Separation was never in the interests of the Tamils, and is not now either. It is only the recent political and military developments that have pushed them into taking up positions that they, for good reasons, rejected earlier.

A glimpse at recent history will make this clearer. When S.W.R.D.

Bandaranaike who was to become Prime Minister in 1956 first proposed federalism in 1925, the Tamils together with the low-country Sinhalese opposed it. When the Federal Party was formed in the aftermath of the mass deprivation of the Estate (Indian) Tamils citizenship rights, the Tamils rejected federalism once again and thoroughly defeated the FP at the 1952 general elections. They did so because they considered their ties to the south as being of highest importance, both politically and economically.

It was only in 1956, when both major political parties, the UNP and SLEP, opted for Sinhala-only language legislation that the Tamils finally turned towards federalism. Even then, every Tamil candidate who campaigned for separation lost his election deposit. After the riots of 1956 and 1958, the University admission crisis of the early 1970s and the adoption of the first Republican constitution in 1972 (which eliminated the guarantees given to minorities) the Tamils still rejected separatism.

Finally, in 1975, separatism was accepted by the major Tamil political parties which formed the TULF. Even then, at the 1977 elections, a majority of Tamils voted for candidates who rejected separation. Most of those who voted for the TULF voted for a party that championed Tamil rights and not for separation in itself. The demand for separation was then seen as a bargaining chip.

Terrorist attacks and army counter-attacks conspired to give life to strawman.

### **Mutual interests**

Not just the government, but all the Sri Lankan ethnic groups, Indian and even the United States have interests in the resolution of our ethnic problem. Thus, the government needs to be able to effectively govern the whole country and secure the loyalty of all its people. The Sinhalese want to ensure that the integrity of the country is not compromised and there is no secession or Indian invasion. The Tamils want physical security and equal rights as citizens. The Muslims, currently caught in the middle, want to avoid becoming the next

target of resentment and violence in an unstable environment. The Estate Tamils seek citizenship in a land they have told to make prosperous. The Indian government finds that the ethnic violence in Sri Lanka destabilizes India as Tamil refugees and militants generate emotions in Tamil Nadu. And both India and the United States are concerned that an unstable Sri Lanka, with its strategic military location, might act in a manner harmful to their broad regional and global security objectives.

These problems interact. No party's problems can be solved until all parties concerns are addressed. There is as a result an incentive to get together to solve the main problems. This is why both India and the United States want a political solution and not a military solution. All our genuine allies interested primarily in our welfare such as the United Kingdom and the Nordic countries want a political solution. It is only Israel, itself an unhappy garrison state, that openly advocates a military solution. But it should be clear by now in terms of the above analysis that attempting to solve the ethnic problem solely in terms of Sinhalese interests (via a military solution) will not lead to a stable solution. It is like trying to solve a simultaneous equation having 6 variables using only 1 of the 6 equations. Any 9th grader should know this is not possible.

### **Towards a solution**

At this time of grave danger and misery it is for the Sinhalese, the majority community in Sri Lanka who consequently have the largest stake in peace, to take the initiative in reaching a peaceful solution. The tried and tested principles of federal government offer the best chance. The Sinhalese have a right to obtain safeguards in respect of separation and foreign intervention, these can be obtained by means of well-drafted constitutional provisions and foreign treaties. And it will be in the Tamils interest to help the Sinhalese safeguard their interests and arrive at a fair solution that will bring peace and normalcy to

(Continued on page 23)



# THEORIES OF NATIONALISM

Radhika Coomaraswamy

This paper was written while the author was Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

*"All this has made me reflect on the strength of nationalism"*

— Dudley Seers, *The Political Economy of Nationalism*

The New International Economic Order was the culmination of two generations of progressive theorising about colonialism and the nature of under-development in Third World countries. A broad coalition of theorists from "Keynesian" liberals to "Dependency" radicals, a "popular front" on the international scene, helped generate models and analysis for a more just and equitable international system. The discourse which legitimated much of the discussion appeared to be based on:—

a. the theory of uneven development — the desire to vindicate the rights of the periphery for the economic exploitation of the centre — a variant on Lenin's thesis on imperialism.<sup>1</sup>

b. the right to self-determination — "the belief that people have the right to take their destiny into their own hands no matter how difficult they may find it to run their affairs — the first article contained in both International Covenants on Human Rights."<sup>2</sup>

c. National Sovereignty — the belief that nationalities have the right to equal treatment and that the State representing that nation remains the ultimate source of authority for matters concerning its "internal affairs"<sup>3</sup>

The coalition of forces which united under the banner of the NIEO have given the concept of nationalism and nation-state a new legitimacy. This new legitimacy, born of developmentalism, may have in turn contributed to internal developments within Third World societies. It has been argued that the over-emphasis on the

nation-state has ensured the hegemony of nationalist elites and in some cases underwritten unpopular governments. Since access to large-scale international finance and capital is often dependent on being a "nation-state", the new legitimacy may have also strengthened the resolve of sub-nationalities, especially those outside the mainstream of national life, in their bid to create separate states of their own.

The purpose of this paper is not to challenge the historically important contributions of the NIEO and organisations such as UNCTAD in attempting to effect a just distribution of the international resources, especially after the era of colonialism. However, the new orthodoxy which dominates the world's financial institutions, with new forms of "conditionality", has interfered with the doctrine of sovereignty, and forced the "popular front", once united under the banner of the NIEO to become self-critical and to rethink their analyses and strategies for a future "consensus".

This paper argues that in doing so, political and ideological factors which operate at the sub-national level must now be included as important analytical variables in any future programme. To be relevant in today's context, international development theory must come to terms with the post-colonial state and post-colonial nationalist ideology.

Such rethinking is necessary, not only from a moral standpoint so as to ensure equity at the sub-national level, but for practical reasons as well. It is conceivable that for the next few decades the post-colonial state in numerous

societies will be challenged by social forces from within with different political and ethnic ideologies. To mystify the state is therefore to avoid the major issues of the next decade. It is important that development analysis free itself from the stranglehold of economic determinism, of either the neo-classical or the Marxist variety if it is to truly come to terms with future dimensions of developmental policy.

This paper attempts to review the problem of nationalism and the theories of nationalism in the context of the post-colonial experience. It then attempts to identify the special issues of power and conflict posed by this experience and finally explores the manner in which development theory may reflect some of these concerns in subsequent discussions.

## Part One: Theories of Nationalism

L. Tivey in his recent book on the Nation-State concludes that "Nationalism is an ideology, in fact the world's foremost ideology" — a self-evident conclusion which has received little analysis during the 1960s and the 70s.<sup>4</sup> Seton-Watson in his large volume on *Nations and States* argues that nationalism contains two aspects, the first a structural form — an organised movement or state — and ideological form — a system of myths and symbols which allows for the creation of a strong sense of community.<sup>5</sup> The common shared assumptions about the ideology of nationalism include the following factors:

\* members of a nation have **shared experiences** recounted in history and culture



\* each nation needs its own polity as it will otherwise not be able to realise the fruits of its character and culture. This polity may be another sovereign state or "home rule"

\* all nations must respect each other — regardless of size; they are separate but equal.<sup>6</sup>

\* all nations have an inalienable right to their "homeland" These factors are elements in the discourse which legitimate the rhetoric and actions of nation-states, especially in the international arena.

#### Four Phases of Scholarly Analysis

It would of course be false to claim that social theorists and schools of political science have not analysed the phenomenon of nationalism. A survey of literature on the subject points to four major phases of scholarly analyses. The important social theorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Smith, Marx and Weber, in the tradition of the enlightenment, viewed nationalism from a cosmopolitan perspective. It was seen as an important factor in politics but ancillary to the great developments in economic and political history. Only German scholars such as Herder and Nietzsche and perhaps the Italian philosopher Vico, spoke of a different truth but as Isaiah Berlin writes, their philosophy was really "against the current"<sup>7</sup> The first generation of theorists deeply concerned with nationalist movements were those interested in Eastern Europe. The scholarship today of people like Ernest Gellner and Karl Deutsch is greatly influenced by these East European experiences. The polemic between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin on the Polish question still contains the major contentions within Marxist theories of nationalism.<sup>8</sup>

The next generation of scholars interested in nationalism were those concerned with the process of decolonisation and the nature of nationalist movements in Third World societies, especially in their attempt to combat colonial and neo-colonial structures of political and economic exploitation. The literature in this field is vast,

comprehensive and ever-growing. Shils, Lerner, Eisenstadt, Apter, Almond, Kedourie, Kohn writing from a western liberal perspective, and Third World scholars, especially South Asians such as Kothari and Goonatileka, urging the articulation of nationalism through indigenous structures and discourse. Mao, Fanon and Cabral were Marxists, writing on nationalism from revolutionary experience with Gunder Frank, Sunkel et al. providing a more sophisticated analysis of economic dependence and neo-colonial structures.

It is only recently that scholars have begun to focus internally and analyse the implications of the post-colonial state and post-colonial nationalist ideology. Western liberal scholars spearheading new approaches are Anthony Smith, Ernest Gellner and Leonard Tivey. Despite Regis Debray's important polemical piece in the New Left Review and Tom Nairn's assertion that nationalism is the left's greatest failure, only a few Marxists such as Benedict Anderson in his

**Imagined Communities** have attempted new insights. The centrality of Lenin and Leninist interpretations of imperialism for Third World Marxists has to some extent curtailed the development of new approaches by Third World writers. In addition very few Third World scholars interested in indigenous movements have yet articulated a coherent critique of the nationalist phenomenon. They are still pre-occupied, as the title of Ashish Nandy's well-received book suggests, with "The Self under Colonialism".

#### "Monopoly of Violence" — Weber and The State

In analysing the rise of the nation-state, Max Weber placed a greater emphasis on the concept of the State which he defined as "the agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence."<sup>9</sup> Weber's definition of the State can be questioned as a general modern phenomenon. During the colonial era, the British, for example, recognised the concept of tribute raids provided that the raiders dutifully registered their violence

and pickings. In many Third World societies, especially in Latin America, paramilitary, forces organised thuggery often protect the interest of certain groups and "illegitimate violence" may sometimes be employed by the State to meet particular ends.

In societies ridden with violent internal conflicts, the Weberian definition is not particularly useful, especially as States in many post-colonial societies do in fact represent partial interests of class and race, having neither resources **not** the political will to implement an equitable national programme. They often do not have effective control over certain areas within their own territorial boundaries. The questions which have to be asked are not whether a given State is a "modern state" because it has monopoly of coercive power, but, what are the social forces in control of the apparatus which is called the **State**, which not only has the right to distribute resources internally but, which is recognised and protected by international law and international practice. Weber's conceptualization of the State in terms of bureaucracy and bureaucratic imperative, therefore, is beginning to have a new relevance in the third world context.

(To be continued)

#### Foot Notes

1. The most famous uneven development thesis is that of Lenin's — V. I. Lenin. *Imperialism, the Highest State of Capitalism*, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1947. It is also argued that R. Hilferding, in 1910 put forward the thesis on finance capital in Vienna.
2. Article I of both the International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights.
3. The concept of national sovereignty is a customary principle of International law, emerging toward the end of the seventeenth century. See Friedmah, et. al, *Cases and Materials on International Law*, West, New York, 1971. Introduction.
4. L. Tivey ed. *The Nation-State—The Formation of Modern Politics*, Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1981, p. 7.
5. H. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States, An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, Methuen, London, 1977, p. 3.

(Continued on page 24)





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# The ethnic problem & the JVP (1964—1985)

Gamini Samaranayake

**S**ri Lanka with its unique multi-ethnic pluralistic society is faced with an enhanced ethnic conflict after Independence. This conflict has been manifested in the sporadic violence which has subsequently acquired a strong political dimension aimed at achieving a separate state (Eelam), based on the grievances of the Sri Lankan Tamils who comprise 12.6 per cent of the total population (Census of 1981). These developments have not only challenged the existing unitary system and political regime but also been a main contributory factor to the deteriorating relations with India, thus leading to a regional problem.

The main aim of this article is to analyse the policies and the solution postulated by the Peoples' Liberation Front (JVP) in relation to the ethnic conflict before and after the April insurrection of 1971.

The origin of the JVP dates back to 1964 but its political activities came into focus in the late 1960s. During this period the JVP concentrated on capturing state power by an armed struggle within a short period. However, the minority communities of Indian Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils came under discussion in their political classes based on Economic Crisis and Indian Expansion. The lecturer dealing with the Economic Crisis traces its origin and causes attributing the break-down of the indigenous self-sufficient economy which prevailed during the period of the Sinhala Kings to the successive invasions from South India. This emphasis on the invasions from South India indicated the unfavourable attitude of the JVP towards the Tamil population.

However, it is in their lecture on Indian Expansion that the ideological approach adopted towards the Tamil minority is best exem-

plified. Indian expansion was defined as an Indian threat to Sri Lanka's political independence. The motivation of the Indian capitalist to meet their economic needs was said to be the driving force of this expansionism. Furthermore, the trade monopoly held by the Indian tycoons, the smuggling between India and Sri Lanka the struggle of the Federal Party the organization known as **We Tamils** (Nam Tamilar) and the Indian plantation workers were identified as crucial aspects of Indian expansionism.

It was also said that the Indian plantation workers continued to regard India as their motherland rather than Sri Lanka. On this basis the plantation workers were seen as the reactionary force.

In a comparative analysis of the plight of Indian plantation workers and Sinhala chena cultivators it was indicated that the former were favoured with better facilities and conditions than the latter. (A. Jayaweera, Lanka Guardian, Volume I, No. 18, January 15, 1979, p. 15).

As a solution to these existing conditions it was suggested that a system of forced repatriation be adopted as in Burma under Newin. The Communist Party (CP) and the Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP), on the contrary were of the view that the Indian Tamils be granted citizenship and the right to vote.

No attention was paid by the JVP to the grievances of the Sri Lankan Tamils. They justified the declaration of Sinhala as a State Language and condemned the CP and the LSSP stand of equal status for the Sinhala and Tamil languages. In spite of the fact that the CP and the LSSP joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) led demonstrations in opposition to the Tamil Language Special Provision Act of 1966 and their original stand was

The writer was an activist in the pre '71 JVP. He was captured by the army after 11 months hiding in the Wilpattu jungles. After his release from prison he resumed his academic career. He holds a Masters Degree and is a lecturer at the Depr. of Political Science, University of Peradeniya.

a demand for equal status for both languages.

Further the colonization programme was not perceived as a threat to the Tamils and a solution of re-settling the Tamil population island-wide was suggested.

Federal Party was seen as a tool of Indian Expansionism and fears of an integration between a Tamil State in the North and East was expressed. These fears were founded on the Tamil version of the Federal Party which meant Tamil State Party (Tamil Arasu Kachchi).

The Sinhala Buddhist chauvinist ideology thus expressed proved to be a factor inhibiting this understanding the grievances of the Sri Lankan Tamils made it difficult for the JVP to attract the Tamil youths. The membership of Tamil youths in the JVP was less than 1 per cent, at the time of the insurrection in 1971.

Since the release of its leaders in 1978 the JVP was once again integrated to the Sri Lankan political scene. The socio-economic base of the JVP did not undergo any remarkable changes during this period but changes did take place in their ideological approach to the Tamil minorities. They condemned all forms of discrimination based on ethnicity and the Sinhala Only policy was subsequently changed to one of "equal status for both languages". The Revolutionary Declaration of JVP Policies" condemned all forms of discrimination based on race or caste".

Similar changes were evident in the policy towards the Indian plantation workers. In an article titled "The Solution to the Problem of Indian Plantation Workers without Sri Lankan Citizenship" (Niyamuwa, July 19, 1981) the dissatisfaction of



the JVP with the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreements in 1964 and 1974 was emphasised. In its policy declarations it is further stated that the choice of obtaining Sri Lankan citizenship or opting for repatriation should be made by the plantation workers and not by the State.

Equal rights for Tamils, on the basis of language and employment was proposed and all forms of discrimination were condemned by the JVP in its policy Declaration. Further it is stated that those who violate this will be punished (The Revolutionary Declaration of JVP Policies, Publ: Niyamuwa, P15).

However, in 1976 the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) gave Publicity to their resolution of a "Separate State". The JVP's attitude towards the proposed Separate State (Eelam) was first expressed by Lionel Bopage (one time General Secretary) in his book "A Marxist Analysis of the National Problem" and in a article: The JVP and Self-Determination. (Lanka Guardian May 1, 1979).

The following are the points raised:

1. The recognition of Self-Determination for the Tamil people, and the right to establish a Separate State.

2. The solution for the Tamil problem is Socialist State and not a Separate State. (L. Bopage — 1977, p. 68).

3. The TULF is a Tamil Bourgeois Party and Eelam is their demand.

4. The means of solving the ethnic conflict is by solving the socio-economic problems in the country.

5. Although the TULF claims that they have received a mandate for a Separate State in the 1977 Election from the Tamil speaking people in the North and East, the real situation is vice-versa.

6. Instead of arbitrary centralization and division of the country they advocated a democratic centralization.

Thus Bopage's ideological approach is contradictory and confusing. He sometimes claims that a Separate State is acceptable even under the leadership of the TULF (ibid) and again contradicts himself in claiming the JVP's opposition for a Separate State.

In spite of the fact that the JVP accepted self-determination they opposed a Separate State or Eelam on the following grounds.

1. A Separate State would only aggravate the country's problem. (Lanka Guardian dated 2.9.1978).

2. The slogan of Tamil Eelam is a communal slogan of the Tamil capitalists. (Niyamuwa: Path to National Unity, 1976).

3. The Eelam runs counter to the Socialist Social Revolution. (L. Bopage — Lanka Guardian, 1981).

From 1980 onwards the Anti-Eelam stand taken by the JVP was more clear and precise. The JVP contested the Presidential Elections in 1982 under the slogan of anti-Eelam.

In 1983 the JVP was proscribed on the accusation that it played a major role in the ethnic violence that broke out. The JVP has since adopted an even stronger anti-Eelam stand, as seen in a letter sent to the President by Rohana Wijeweera appealing for the restoration of their rights to participate in active politics. He states that the JVP was completely opposed to the struggle of the Tamil people and condemns all forms of terrorism aimed at the division of the country. (R. Wijeweera — 1984). They were also against the Round Table Conference and the Federal or Provincial type of Government. (Lanka Guardian, June 1, 1984).

The JVP as an underground movement since proscription for the second time continues to operate its anti-Eelam propaganda based on the following aspects.

1. Accusing the militant northern youth fighting for a State of Eelam of being ultra-left or terrorists.

2. Sympathising with the armed forces who are engaged in combating terrorism.

3. Its total antipathy to a Separate State.

4. Denying accusations of maintaining links with the PLOTE group led by Uma Maheswaran or any other such group.

Accusing the present political regime of not taking the necessary action to defeat the struggle for Eelam and the division of the country.

6. Maintaining that the Government and the Eelamists are trying to bring about the total downfall of the JVP. (Lanka Guardian — January 5, 1985).

The JVP firmly believes that the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka could be solved without any division of the country. According to Rohana Wijeweera the unitary system in a pluralistic society is maintained by mutual trust and unity. This centralization should take place democratically and not arbitrarily. Finally, he proposes a unitary socialist State inclusive of areas of self-government.

Thus, the JVP exhibits its inability to present a definite solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, in spite of it being the only Sinhala political organization which shares similar characteristics with the Eelam movement in the North. Its strong Sinhala Buddhist chauvinistic approach has not only proved to be barrier to its arrival at a acceptable solution but has alienated the JVP from the minority communities and the left movement in Sri Lanka.

## Amirthalingam . . .

(Continued from page 5)

August 1983 to which she replied that it did not go far enough to satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people. We are disappointed that after two years or sacrifice and suffering by the Tamil youth and Tamil people, the President should hark back to the same proposals," he said.



# MARXIST THEORY AND NATIONALISM

Gail Omvedt

Let us begin by asking what Marxism has to say in regard to nationalities and nationalism that differentiates it from bourgeois theories. The points mentioned below may seem obvious, but they are worth emphasizing today when there is a danger of sounding like bourgeois nationalists whether we call for maintaining the "integrity" of India or hail movements based on oppressed nationalities. In a period in which Marxism as a political force, with a unique political project, is in danger of stagnating — while other political forces grasp the leadership of so many movements — it is crucial to understand the uniqueness of Marxism, to take it as a beginning point in order to move ahead.

(1) Marxism does not take nationalism or the establishment of nation states\* as valid in and of itself, but evaluates these in terms of their role in a process aimed

at human liberation — at socialist revolution and the establishment of a communist society. They are not "progressive" or reactionary in and of themselves, but only insofar as they further this process.

It is on this basis that we must understand Marx and Engels position during the revolutions of 1848, when they condemned the nationalist movements of the southern Slavs on the grounds that these had no basis for success and could only end by relying on Russian support. Here they were applying a long-term historical criteria in express opposition to Bakunin's abstract upholding of the right to self-determination as an absolute, and while their concrete historical analysis may have been wrong in this case, their criteria was not;

For Communists, internationalism is the more long-term and enduring value, while nationalism is an historically contingent value.

(2) Connected with this is the basic analysis applied by Marxists: whereas bourgeois nationalists tend to see the nation as an almost a historical phenomenon, going back to King Arthur, Joan of Arc or the Aryans, Marxists analyze it as a phenomenon of the capitalist stage of history. This is a position agreed to by all Marxists; however much we may search for the roots of a nation or of nationality formation in the pre-capitalist period, nationalism and national movements develop with some form of penetration of capitalism and as a historical project are connected with its completion:

As Lenin sums it up,

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with

national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language...Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is toward the formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal, and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the national state is typical and normal for the capitalist period.

Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of the self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state?\*

It is in connection with this point also that the problems arise. It can be noted that disagreements among Marxists today and ambiguities in general about assessing nationalist phenomena, are primarily related to disagreements in assessing the nature and degree of development of capitalism and the role of the capitalist stage in the development towards socialism.

\* It can also be noted here that "self-determination" may have other referents than "national self-determination", for instance the rights to self determination of indigenous groups.

\* For a definition of "nationalism" the four criteria (common territory, common economic life, language, historical-psychological makeup) are useful in identifying the characteristics of a "nation" or "nationality" but as many have pointed out, should not be taken as any kind of absolute: basically, a nationalist movement is one that is aimed at establishing nation-state (see below). This may also have the implication that not all "national contradictions" need give rise to national movements/nationalism — they may have some other legitimate (progressive) outcome, and not all movements of oppressed nationalities need be national movements: they may find their fulfillment in the establishment of a multinational proletarian state. Should we differentiate "national liberation movements" from "national movements" (since so many of them involve what are in fact multinational units) on these grounds? In some ways the concept of "national liberation movement" is less precise than the concept of "nationalism". Similarly, an anti-imperialist movement is by no means necessarily a nationalist movement...



## Marxist Assessments of Nationalism Today:

### Differences and Ambiguities

(1) Differences Related to the analysis of the stage of capitalist development:

Today we can see in India, and some other countries, very sharp differences among Marxists on the question of whether to support or oppose (presumably critically in most cases) various movements based on national contradictions. Some of these differences can be related to different assessments of the stage of capitalist development in India and the role (potential or otherwise) of the Indian state in promoting capitalist development.

For example, most of those who see capitalist development in the main as being dominant in India (and who see the Indian state as having at least potentially a positive role in this process) generally also see no progressive or positive role for "subnational" movements (movements based on nationalities in India) and instead support the "unity of India", or an Indian nationalism; e. g. CPI and CPI(M).

On the other hand, those who see "feudalism" or "semifeudalism" as dominant and stress backwardness, may argue for supporting "national liberation movements" of different nationalities within India on the grounds that establishment of independent nation-states would promote independent capitalist development (or a new democratic" type of development under proletarian leadership) — e. g. the CPI(ML) position in general.

However, both these positions share one additional assumption (which is not shared by all Marxists!), which is that "completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution", or completing the capitalist stage of development in some form or another is a necessary historical phase. This point we can come back to.

(2) Differences regarding the "progressiveness" of capitalism:

While Marx and Engels themselves, (at times, e. g. in the **Communist Manifesto**), tended to be too optimistic in assessing

capitalism's progressiveness, its destruction of outmoded social forms and customs, breaking down of national barriers, international thrust etc. still their basic emphasis was on the overall exploitative nature of the system. **However there is a tendency**, particularly among many Third World Marxists, to see capitalism in idealistic terms — so that all sorts of factors, ranging from religious chauvinism to casteism or patriarchy tend to be seen as "feudal", feudal remnants or feudal hangovers or evidence of the survival of feudal relations; or at most as having to do with **a late-developing, backward capitalism**. The implication is that these have not been a factor in the advanced or early developing capitalist countries, such as those models of the nation-state, England, France and the U.S.

For someone coming from the U.S. it is perhaps easier to appreciate how racism, religious chauvinism, women's oppression are far from being feudal and even are products, in their contemporary form, of capitalism itself. In fact all of these forms are related to class society as such and to its processes of exploitation and alienation, and capitalism, as the most advanced form of class society, brings them to a kind of height — even though it may give them a particular form. For instance, the separation of public and private, hence of church and state, is a characteristic of capitalist societies particularly in their most "pure" form; but this does not mean the disappearance of religion from these societies or that religion no longer influences the state — far from it.

Looking at our "model" capitalist nation-states, we can see from the beginning how they have been fully characterised by such features as patriarchy, racism, religious fundamentalism etc. Women, for instance did not get the vote in England and the U.S. until the 1920s (after the October revolution!) while "bourgeois law" until very recently in these and other countries institutionalized the male as family head: "husband and wife are one, and that one is the husband", as an English saying went. The role of racism in the U.S. goes with-

out saying; not only slavery but the fact that Blacks in the southern part of this "advanced capitalist democracy" did not effectively have the vote until about 20 years ago. In England, colonial racism, racism in regard to the Irish and the recent outburst of national chauvinism/racism in regard to the war over the Malvinas are examples; in France Arabs and Africans can testify to racism in spite of the cultural assimilationist policy. The rise of religious fundamentalism in the U.S. today, for another example is a notable feature of political life. **None of these can be attributed to semi-feudal survivals; they have to do with the nature of capitalism itself.**

The point is, that **nationalism also, as a capitalist phenomenon is ambiguous**. On one hand, it clearly has a progressive character in emphasizing the working classes as part of the nation; it no longer sees the nation (and its territory and people) as simply the property of king or aristocracy; it borrows from and brings forward popular culture.

On the other hand, nationalism and nationalist ideologies are inevitably class collaborationist. As a capitalist phenomenon, taking place under bourgeois hegemony, nationalist culture and ideology are inevitably given a ruling class shape. The bourgeoisie may take up old popular cultural traditions to build national unity, but it will never emphasize the popular or proletarian aspects of this culture but instead will try to build on and develop the retrogressive, elitist and ultimately chauvinist aspects of any national culture. And these elements are not so difficult to find in any society that has passed through a long feudal or other pre-capitalist class stage.

(3) Implications for analysis of India: Related to the national question, there are many differences among Marxists today regarding analysis of questions like communalism and their relation to the Indian state and the claim of nationalism

(Continued on page 24)



# In ongoing fulfilment of a bibliographical mission

BOOK  
REVIEW

Paul Caspersz

H. A. I. Goonetilleka, **A Bibliography of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). A systematic guide to the literature on the land, people, history and culture published in Western languages from the sixteenth century to the present day.** Vols IV and V. Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company.

"...librarianship is, in its highest form, an art of social service to the mind of one's fellow-men" — H. A. I. Goonetilleke, Farewell Message to the 88 members of the Staff of the Library of the University of Peradeniya, April 1979.

So also is the companion art of the bibliographer an art of service to mankind. Until 1979 Ian Goonetilleke exercised both arts (and sciences). Vols I, II and III were produced by him when he was — first as Deputy Librarian, than as Librarian — at the University of Peradeniya atop the majestic splendour of the Upper Hantane hill on the University campus in a home and in surroundings rendered doubly beautiful by the assiduous care of the person to whom are dedicated all the five Volumes that have so far appeared. Nearly three decades of assiduous bookmanship formed the background to this enterprise, sparked off by the congenial practice of librarianship.

Then came the crossroads. Another man may have sacrificed some principle for much position. The type of person we call a realist may have compromised a little and stayed. But not Ian Goonetilleke. He snapped his fingers at insolent incompetence and left Peradeniya. "I finished writing the main text of these volumes on July 12th 1979, and at the end of the same month I 'retired' involuntarily from the post of Librarian, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka."

But there was no retirement from scholarship, no respite in the practice of social service to the minds of all of us. Self-effacing yet idiosyncratic, unobtrusive yet unforgettable, like the man, his new home at the bottom of a lane off another land, about 9 miles from the heart of Colombo, for comfort and chic the antithesis of the Peradeniya retreat, has now perforce to be the arena of the continued encounter with books of this extraordinary bibliographer. His arsenal still consists of the personally conceived appropriate technology of 5 by 3 handwritten slips of flimsy throw-away paper. From this unpumpered base, Vols IV and V were sped on to his publisher and the 12,000 or so entries of Vols VI and VII are being sedulously prepared for future publication.

Vols I and II which appeared together and listed material published up to 1967 contained 11630 entries (9948 main line entries and — for new material that swum into the author's ken after the main manuscript had been mailed to the publisher — 1682 small alphabetical letter entries). In Vol III the author continued his voyages of discovery up to material published in June 1973 and also included pre-1967 material which had eluded entry into the earlier Volumes, recording a total of 6455 main line and 25 small letter entries. And now, in Vols IV and V, which were published together, he supplements the previous Volumes and extended the record up to December 1978 with a total of 9473 entries (9430 + 43), 2515 closely printed pages form the impressive log of this remarkable bibliographical odyssey up to now.

In the five Volumes there is thus a total of 27583 entries. They are numbered in three separate sequences for Vols I and II, III, IV and

V respectively. The Scheme<sup>11</sup> of Classification which is the author's own designing separate the entries into 30 chapters which are subdivided into sections and, where there was need, into subsections. The 30 main subject chapters have remained unchanged but new subsections were added in Vol III and again in Vols IV and V in order to accommodate new material or to facilitate the work of users of the Bibliography. There will be few to dispute the author's claim that his "home-grown scheme of classification has stood the test of the advancing deluge and...the requirements of the user" (Introduction to Vol IV).

The Preface of Vol I describes the scope of the Bibliography as being possessed of "dimensions approaching comprehensiveness, particularly in the core areas of social and cultural anthropology, history, the arts and religion". The catholicity of scope is maintained in Vols IV and V. But, as in the earlier Volumes, the emphasis is on the humanities and social sciences while "the sections on the natural sciences, and their applications to technology and industry serve merely as a forecourt, and I am happy that, at long last the bibliographical control of modern scientific literature has begun to be organized and published in systematic forms by other hands" (Introduction to Vols IV and V).

In his Preface to Vol I the author suggested that the "central spire of meaning" in his work was in "the emphasis throughout the work on the rich and many-faceted saga of the traditional civilization of Ceylon before the coming of the European Colonizer". Already in Vol III, and clearly in Vols IV and V, there is a tilting of that central spire towards the pressing demands of contemporary culture and civilization in the island. The tilt is



both welcome and necessary, especially in the wake of the many convulsions our country has experienced after inchoate constitutional independence was granted to it in 1948.

The most momentous of these — certainly, before July 1983 — was the 1971 youth struggle. In Vol III, to Chapter VIII, History, Goonetilleke was impelled even more by his intense social consciousness than by his bibliographical daemon to add an Appendix of 90 entries on the April 1971 Insurrection. Vol IV adds 48 more entries to the same Appendix. (And, even so, these are only the distillates of a careful listing of Insurrection literature which first appeared in 1973 in a separate Goonetilleka publication entitled **The April 1971 insurrection in Ceylon. A select bibliography** and in later editions in 1975 and 1978. In the second augmented edition there were 440 entries, enriched by 50 plates as well.)

In July 1983 came the devastating anti-Tamil pogrom and Goonetilleke has already published a bibliography of 606 items on the catastrophe, its antecedents and aftermath: **July 1983 and the national question in Sri Lanka: bibliographical guide** (Race and Class, 29:1, Summer 1984). Vol VII may well include a second Appendix on this other murky watershed in the contemporary history of our country.

Vols IV and V maintain the high standards of the earlier volumes. The typesetting, as in Vol III, is excellent and the print easy on the eye. But what distinguishes the latest Volumes from their predecessors is the commentarial annotation which Goonetilleke suffixes to several entries. They are open protestation that the author is not content only to list, but wants both to list and understand. The annotations in these two Volumes have increased in quantity, in length and in vigour. There is an uncanny clarity and conciseness about them, evidence of the author's synthetic perception and his ability to read a book steadily and to read it as a whole. The reviewer makes bold to say that these annotations will be pacesetters for

other bibliographers who may also wish to go beyond enumeration.

Goonetilleke's is therefore no mere bloodless, enumerative bibliography. Like historians, bibliographers should — after Goonetilleke — be divided into two classes: "those who have been there" and "those who have not". There can be no question but that the author wants to be, and is, in the first of the two classes. As a bibliographer, his first task is to festoon the various parts of his material together in a certain order, and he performs it excellently. But where he takes bibliographical science to a qualitatively new dimension is when he sets himself the altogether more fraught goal of seeking to penetrate to the inner meaning of a book, monograph or short article and to its significance in the area of its subject matter. He therefore makes a consistent and unconcealed attempt to get behind the veils of a writer's language to the writer's driving forces and central thoughts and to the society which is the object of the writer's Incubations. Some may demur and say that the inevitable subjectivism of such a methodology runs counter to the norms of conventional bibliographical science. It may be facetious to say that the author is not a conventional person. But it is certainly legitimate to ask whether the norms themselves need to be re-examined in order to allow for Goonetilleke's own creation of creative bibliography?

From such creativity flow certain features which render Goonetilleke's work unique. His Volumes are, subject to correction by the better informed, the only example of a regional or country bibliography undertaken with so sweeping a scope in modern times. They are the work of an individual working alone, perusing personally wherever possible each item listed, filling out in elegant manuscript thousands of paper slips, without research assistants or the backing of rich foundations, with only occasional access to libraries abroad, and without any of the resources and technological fanfare of dictaphone and word processor which would be the normal diet of bibliographers in the rich countries of the world.

(Continued on page 23)

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# Corporatist-nationalist ideological line

Alexander R. Magno (Professor of Political Science, University of Philippines, Manila)

The main expression of this corporatist-nationalist ideological line is 'Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa' (One Nation, One Spirit) that recalls Hegel's projection of the abstracted nation into the individual. More familiar, perhaps, is the Nazi and Fascist projection of the 'greatness' of the nation-state, extolling the excellence of the individual as they prod him more along both the lines of submission to authority and creativity in the service of the State. This statement should sound familiar:

'We seek to establish a New Society, we seek to excel, we seek perfection.'

The political images exuded by the regime convey its corporate-nationalist appeal in more concrete forms. The glorification of the bourgeois nationalist revolution a century before is meticulously attended to since the revolutionary claim of the regime is in the past rather than in the present. The pursuit of a nationalist image though half-hearted ideologically, is fullheartedly cultivated in the

media. It extends to both its foreign policy thrusts, specially as it builds an international image of non-alignment, and in occasional anti-American tirades for domestic consumption. The renaming of the smallest political unit from barrio to barangay harps back to the pre-hispanic communities. The President's voluminous work on Philippine history, *Tadhana* (Destiny) provides a reinterpretation of history that aims to give historical substance to the regime.

The almost purely cultural variation of nationalism — in reconstructed monuments and modern architectural design, in ethnics as well as in fashion, in the glorification and idealization of the 'Filipino' so distant from the daily lives of the masses that it is almost foreign — has one distinct advantage as a cornerstone of authoritarian ideology: it is hardly disputable. The emphasis on a cultural nationalism appeals to a value transcendent of immediate conflict and class differentiation. Marcos is more explicit in *An Ideology for Filipinos*:

'Let us stress this phrase: **our people**. Not one individual, but all Filipinos; not one class, but all classes in our national society. Our principle is to build, not to destroy; not to pull down but to raise up; not to exalt, but to balance the interest of one with the interest of all.'

Clearly, nationalism is understood as a conservative, preservative emotive force, one that 'builds' rather than 'destroys' and its main expression is the 'democratic revolution' that is pursued to hold the nation together. The other alternative is only national 'disintegration.' This *apres moi, le deluge* attitude permeates the whole rhetoric of the regime.

## COMRADE GABRIELLA

*My plane, departing, passes low  
Over the wooded volcano  
Did I see you with your rifle flit  
The slopes teeming trees, noontide lit?*

*Heading back over the city  
Into the monsoon leaping the sea  
I seem to see steel glint on the Boulevard  
Through the squalls, as the sun breaks free.*

*Resolute, the footfalls in the swift gulleys  
They will not falter, coming down  
No time to recall someone who waited  
In the shadows till the jeep came round.*

*You knelt with your gun at the jeep window  
Your white hand fluttered like a flame  
You said, almost in a whisper,  
Look, this is our monsoon rain.*

*The spell didn't last, anyway  
I did not set the seal on the incantation  
I did not say, let me take a gun  
And follow the raging river to the plain  
There are thousands in your land to do that  
And they will do it, come blood, come pain.*

*And come the years, we await, hereafter  
Idle guns will only adorn  
Walls bright with light and laughter  
From your many children, grown.*

U. Karunatilake



Nationalism means recognizing the general will that is rendered inevitable by the shortsightedness of political competition. Martial law is then to be understood as the longer view:

'The truth is that we had a political philosophy, but one which viewed politics as essentially a competition for public power and privilege among individuals, political parties and pressure groups, and only secondarily as a means of promoting the general welfare and the public interest... the shortsightedness of this view accounted for its failure and led to the martial necessity.'

Nationalism, in its strict bourgeois-liberal meaning, is classless in character. It rigidly holds the primacy of the nation over the individual or group. The nation and the national state constitute the objective 'mean' of a society, the fundamental unity that binds the political community together and the individual to the state. Bourgeois theoretical understanding of the state is the basis of fascist ideology; ultimately, fascism is nothing but liberalism. Every social class, every group and ultimately every individual is bound to the state. Social conflict can only be peripheral in this ideological view and is often dysfunctional, in the eyes of bourgeois-liberal social scientists. The nation constitutes an essential unity so that holding an identity separate from the state constitutes almost a perversion, or what Aristotle considered as being 'either a god or a beast.' This classless understanding of the nation state is fundamental in the corporatist ideological claims of the regime:

'Accordingly, we have moved to make our expanding working class a partner, rather than a tool in the process of production. Our new **Magna Carta of Labor** enshrines in law the fundamental tenet that man must not be alienated from the fruits of his work, that he must have a just share in every increment of rising productivity, and that it is government's commitment to provide him employment and secure him in his work'.

Since the state is the embodiment of the interest of the whole, it is the sole instrument by which this interest may be recognized and realized. The general welfare can be achieved if the people are 'integrated' or 'assimilated' into a unidimensional, unidirectional political process:

'The political authority must further consolidate itself as an instrument for the promotion of the general welfare of the people. While government to a large extent is the rallying center for development, government alone even in behalf of the people cannot sustain development. Only the people can do this, and only through their transformation and assimilation into political authority'.

To sustain this 'assimilation into political authority' in a situation of fundamental class differentiation and social crisis, the rhetorics of liberalism is transformed into the polemics of incorporation and the logical structures of the technocratic ethos. With it, the regime, largely by force of actual circumstances, speaks of 'participation' in rhetorics which means nothing more than control of political policies. The corporatism in effect of liberalism in words is the creature of real historical circumstances. In most cases, populism in words has justified authoritarianism in deed:

'Since society is a complex integration of various individuals, groups, talents, skills and energies, each man must perform his part within one overall design, if society is to survive and progress. Each Filipino has his specific role and value; and the essence of individual responsibility is to do well whatever role it is that fate and circumstances have assigned to each one of us. National success is an national endeavour.'

Nationalism in rhetoric and corporatism in substance is not unique to the New Society alone: it is a logical conclusion of bourgeois-liberalism. By conceiving 'nation' as a fact rather than as a concept, it is inevitable that it be reduced both in theory and practice to assume an abstract corporeality, an ideological imagination that is

at the same time the *raison d'être* of the national state. Rigid materialism would understand the distillation of this ideological strand as the ideological reflex of political necessity. Hegelianism would understand this as the essential consciousness base that finds concrete forms in the structure and actions of the state. In the case of the 'New Society', it is both at the same time and therefore neither.

Note the distillation of the concept 'nation' from an understanding in the theory to an understanding of the 'concrete' individual:

'(T)he life of a nation, its vitality, its reality resides not in the boundaries of geography or race, but in the consciousness of every citizen in sharing a common identity and a common destiny with others. It is union that strengthens the most basic of social units in our society, the family. It is union that makes organizations effective. So that it is a union that not only makes a nation strong, it is union that makes a nation'

The imputation of a national essence on the individual binds him on a fundamental basis to his 'nationality' and therefore to the national state which is the objective embodiment of not only a national spirit but also of the national destiny. From this ideological standpoint, the state thus presents itself with a view into the future from a vantage point not available to the individual. It denies the individual a separate view comparable in significance to that state which is not only benefited with the historical accumulation of the whole society, its 'heritage,' but also a profound grasp of the collective effort of the society. Therefore, to oppose the 'public welfare' state would be to oppose public welfare. To oppose the 'national development' state would be to oppose national development. To oppose the 'national security' state would constitute a 'threat' to national security. Thus political repression is not only validated, it is necessitated.

'The strategy then in the matter of insurgency and secession was and remains political,

(Continued on page 23)



## The Federal . . .

(Continued from page 11)

the north, rather than continue without it.

To achieve this end, the TULF, as the elected representatives of the Tamils, must also act in a statesmanlike manner. Viewed in its historical context, the TULF's acceptance of a separatist platform in 1975 is perhaps understandable. But it was nonetheless a mistake of tragic proportions for it meant a shift in power away from democratically elected leaders accountable to their electorates, to bands of armed youth accountable to no one.

Attempted secession is not any part of a viable solution to Sri Lanka's crisis. To contrary, for the past 10 years it has meant gory bloodshed in which the bulk of the victims have been innocent Tamils caught in the north in-between the depredations of the armed forces and guerrillas, and mauled in the south by goondas. The TULF must accept this reality — that its secessionist platform has enabled militant Sinhalese leaders to play upon Sinhalese emotions; that what might eventually have been accepted by the Sinhalese as legitimate Tamil grievances have instead become metamorphosed into a national threat to the Sinhalese; and that secession-based violence has alienated international opinion which, although alive to gross human rights violations, nevertheless finds secession both unreasonable and unpalatable.

It is in the interests of a solution that is both just and satisfying that the TULF must give up its cry for a separate state and instead take up the cause of federalism that it abandoned 10 years ago. India must encourage the TULF to do so. India must also take steps to restrain the Tamil guerrillas just as it attempts to restrain its Sikh guerrillas. Then India's efforts to bring about a negotiated solution in Sri Lanka would be seen in a more positive light by the Sinhalese who are currently skeptical of India's role in the whole crisis.

The goal to be aimed for is a federal Sri Lanka where Sinhalese and Tamils share political power and live with respect for one another. The Sinhalese simply because they are the majority cannot expect the minorities, who value their own sense of dignity, to live in Sri Lanka on terms dictated by the Sinhalese. Responsible Sinhalese leaders must discourage this type of thinking which is precisely what has led, by stages, to Tamil disenchantment and secessionist violence. But this is not enough. Together with the Tamil leadership they must work towards establishing the right of regional self-government within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, which is what federalism is about. It is in the Sinhalese interest, as the Tamil, to compromise in this before violence embraces the whole island. And it is in India's interest to be supportive.

## In ongoing . . .

(Continued from page 20)

Other bibliographies of comparable size and scope would be the work of a team; this one is not. It bears on its every page the unmistakable imprint of its single author. The vision is his and the execution is not shared. Only the results are public and made available to us all.

Goonetilleke's Bibliography is a work of which Sri Lanka as a nation should be proud. The centuries of foreign domination were also the centuries of astounding progress in the printed word. Some of that word regarded Sri Lanka. Goonetilleke has garnered it in his volumes with scrupulous care and utmost devotion. The collection by a bibliographer of international standing (J. D. Pearson, Professor of Oriental Bibliography at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, placed him among the greatest Orientalist bibliographers of all times) not only of the major literary artefacts but also of lesser known, small, but not for that reason insignificant, works reflects the vicissitudes and the glories of the country's tryst with its historical destiny. For Goonetilleke scholarship is not an ornament but a responsibility, not a profession but a passion,

not a static discovery but a dynamic voyage into truth and justice. All those who are in and manner bound to our country and to its people can only wish him success in the further fulfilment of his mission. Meanwhile, we wait in the wings, with expectancy of more arrival.

## Changing . . .

(Continued from page 9)

None the less, Stavenhage is of the opinion that these minorities are in their own full right to proclaim the validity and respect towards their own culture, and to their ethnic values that distinguish themselves from the rest of the farmers.

Conciliate and integrate in one strategy the most positive aspects of these great trends, with the active and direct participation of the people interested in the Latin American case the Indians is the challenge that confronts all the so called "ethnic question", sustains Stavenhagen.

"The SID Conference in Rome, will be only one step of the long process. We must not hope in spectacular results. But it will certainly be a forum where people will exchange their experiences and improve the global world debate" concluded Stavenhagen.

(Interview with Mario de Cautin of IPS)

## Corporatist . . .

(Continued from page 22)

in the sense that it follows the politics of integration rather than of conflict. We have attempted to show — and, I believe, succeeded in showing — that social, economic, political and even cultural grievances can be redressed in a society based on the rebellion of the poor. As insurgent and secessionist rebels are Filipinos, they can be rewon by a resurgent sense of nationality and a renewed sense of society.<sup>26</sup>

On these bases the ethics prescribed and enforced by the New Society are therefore enunciated.

(To be continued)



## Letters

### Royal. . .

(Continued from page 1)

their place in the driving seat. If I were a Sinhalese I would settle for an Annexure "C"-type settlement leavened by a Parti Quebecois style sovereignty-association, with New Delhi or a **Congress of New Delhi** (like that of Vienna or Berlin) guaranteeing the borders. History has moved too fast for us to now try and stop it in its tracks. Let us not repeat the experience of India and Pakistan with a Tamil Jinnah rejecting any other alternative as being, in Jinnah's words, "a maimed, moth-eaten and truncated Pakistan." Thus was Pakistan created. India would otherwise have still been one country, even as a loose confederation, but for the uncompromising intransigence of the Congress high command.

### 'Suddhi'

If the pro Indian formula was spurious, the one designed by the makers of 'Suddhi' is far more dangerous. We have now been dragged to the portals of raw sex and violence in Lankan cinema.

And for those waiting in the wings and or with same trepidation to carry forward the new formula, 'Suddhi' certainly provides the much needed pat on the back.

Of all the comments voiced on the film, those of Sunila Abeysekara and Leila Isaac were the most meaningful. They remind me of Kenneth Tynan's slogan "Night nurses of good drama, we critics should keep a holy vigil."

**Gamini Dissanaik**

Nugegoda.

## Non-discrimination and self-determination

Dr Nihal Jayawickrama has arrived at some untenable conclusions in his article titled **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION** appearing in the "Lanka Guardian" of 1st May 1985. I refer to his analysis of the University admission data for the academic year 1983/84 for the faculties of medicine, science and engineering. He says that "if we assume that approximately one third of those excluded from Colombo schools were also Tamils, the total number of excluded Tamil students would be 273 or 51.6 per cent: a result which leads irresistibly to the conclusion that, in the matter of university admission, the principle of non-discrimination had been violated."

What is the basis for assuming that one third of the 224 students excluded from Colombo schools were Tamils? Godfrey Gunatilleke in *Inter-Racial Equity and National Unity in Sri Lanka* interprets the same data differently. He assumes (also without explanation) that of the 224 excluded students from Colombo schools 25 per cent were Tamils. On this basis 276 of the 530 excluded students would be Sinhalese. This means that the majority of the 530 eligible students who were excluded were Sinhalese, and not Tamils.

I have reason to believe that Dr Jayawickrama based his argument on a Marga draft document which was revised subsequently by its author.

A fact which Dr Jayawickrama has ignored is that in the admissions to the Physical Science faculty for the same academic year 12 students from Jaffna schools, 19 from Colombo schools, and 8 each from Galle and Kandy schools were admitted not on the basis of raw marks but according to the present policy, whereas 20 eligible students from Matara schools were excluded in spite of their eligibility on raw marks. It is wrong therefore to conclude that

the district quota system affects only Tamil students adversely. It creates a sense of injustice among all eligible students who are adversely affected. On the other hand, the beneficiaries of the district and disadvantaged areas quota system are drawn from the Sinhalese, Tamil and Moor ethnic groups.

How then does Dr Jayawickrama arrive at his irresistible conclusion in the matter of university admissions that the principle of non-discrimination on the ground of race, language or religion had been violated?

**Victor Gunewardena**

Dehiyala

## Nationalism . . .

(Continued from page 13)

6. L. Tivey, *op cit*, p. 5.
7. I. Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, London, Hogarth, 1979, argues that Vico, Herder, pluralists and nationalists were "against the current" of the Enlightenment search for universal, rational principles guiding the conduct and institutions of Man.
8. See generally, H. B. Davies, ed., *The National Question:—Selected Writings of Rosa Luxemburg*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1976.

## Marxist . . .

(Continued from page 18)

So far, much of the discussion of the development of Indian nationalism during the anti-imperialist struggle of the colonial period has not really confronted this issue (an important exception appears to be Sumit Sarkar's recent book). What was the actual content of the Indian nationalism that developed during this period? It seems to me that there is only a scanty historical basis for maintaining that it was basically secular and progressive because of being anti-imperialist.

(To be continued)

## Foot Notes

1. Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848 Political Writings*, Vol. 1, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1973.
2. V.I. Lenin, *The National Liberation Movement in the East*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1952), "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (written 1914), pp. 85-86.
3. Gail Omvedt and Bharat Patankar, "Notes on the National Question", *Frontiers*



# **INTER-RACIAL EQUITY AND NATIONAL UNITY IN SRI LANKA**

(The document was produced by the Marga Institute in October 1983, as part of a programme of work initiated by the Citizens' Committee for National Harmony, immediately after the communal violence in 1983 ...)

Since the document was first released, more up-to-date information and data on some aspects of the problem have become available — for example the data from the socio-economic survey 1980/81 ....

Nevertheless the document is being reproduced essentially in its original form, both because it reflects the state of the discussions at the time it was prepared, and also as the substance of the report including the factual analysis has not been rendered any less relevant or valid by what has taken place. There has also been a continuing demand for the original document locally as well as from abroad. A few clarifications have been included in the present version.)

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