

India, the militants & the Lankan crisis

— *N. Sanmugathasan*



LANKA

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**Moneragala peasants' struggle — An
imminent confrontation** — *Gamini Yapa*

Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Dostoevsky

— *Reggie Siriwardena*

New trend in Indo-US relations

— *Bhabani Sen Gupta*

Poems — *Tilak Gunawardhana, Patrick Jayasuriya*

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BALL AND CHAIN

'ISLAND' cartoonist Wijesoma's first local exhibition was in its own way a milestone in Lankan journalistic history.

Conspicuous by her absence from the host of messages to felicitate the occasion was former Prime Minister Mrs Bandaranaike. Then the 'A' pura diaries' revealed all. The lady didn't give a message for the paper, said U No Hoo, because Wijesoma is constantly drawing her with a ball and chain around her ankles.

Now the shrewd Mrs. B. must realise that the reasons Wijesoma does this is not, we presume, in order to portray the scion of a proud and aristocratic family like the archetypal convicted criminal. Rather, he must be trying to keep constantly in the mass mind the fact that she is unjustly fettered.

And the ex-P.M. must have worked that out. In that case, why her silence? We all know that brothers and sisters have their differences (like, after all Anura and his sister). But could the reasons for this particular silence be attributed to the 'Divaina' silence of recent times — on the meetings of the National Front? Incidentally, how to characterise the N.F.? Most left intellectuals call it a 'right wing religious populism' or 'protofascist', but Dr. Wickramabahu Karunaratne of the NSSP writing in its Newsletter, curiously terms it a "front among a section of SLFP, Sinhala petty bourgeois radicals and the pro-JVP elements." Equally oddly, the same newsletter carries a summary of the NSSP Conferences political resolution which criticizes the JVP for its... 'ultra-leftism'.

CMC EXPANSION

NOBODY ever thought the CMC was going to be a legal, or even quasi-legal, body. And the government's first three names — Godfrey Gunatilleke, M. Sivanathan and ex-Justice Abdul Cader — included only one of that type, giving credence to the belief that perhaps the CMC would go about its business (whatever it may be

and whomever it may be for) in the shortest possible time.

Now, along with ENLF nominees Sivathamby and Sivapalan (talk of Siva's people!!) have come six more legal personalities — lawyers and judges. Now question is, why the CMC was expanded in this fashion, instead of including people like Neville Kanakarathne who have experience in hotspots from the Congo to Cyprus?

TELE- COMMUNICATIONS

"LET the robber barons come!" will in most probability one day go down in tricontinental history as J. R.'s most aptly quotable quote. And from the local point of view, nobody seems to have minded since all these guys were robbing was our money — and not more prized possessions like our traditional culture or heritage.

Well, even if the really multinationals didn't accept the invitation a few barons of a strictly minor calibre did turn up. And they robbed. And now, with the tax holiday over, have gone. So much for continual benefits to the economy.

But one baron that was most definitely interested in coming over was the British giant multi-national telecommunications company Cable and Wireless. And they even made a tempting bid to put into order our much battered telephone system. ("It's easier to get through to New York than to Nuwara Eliya!" and "How do telephone department men spend their time?" "They dig the roads.")

So a committee of investigation (naturally!) was appointed to see into the whole business. Should we, or should we not, hand over this vital sector to the private sector? Even though Cable and Wireless (naturally) had friends in high places, it now seems they will not be invited in. The state will retain control over telecommunications, even if one has increasingly got to use telepathy to communicate across distances these days.

TRENDS + LETTERS

The English Department

BY QUOTING Mandy Rice-Davies against me (L.G. 1 October) Ms D Perera my have elicited a guffaw from prurient readers. Calling for a guffaw, however, is a wholly inadequate response to Qadri Ismail's lengthy indictment of Peradeniya University's English Department. To refute Ismail Ms Perera will have to write at greater length, quoting somewhat weightier authorities than Mandy Rice-Davies.

I repeat that I found Qadri Ismail's irreverence concerning

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A LITTLE BIT OF PEACE

NEWS
BACKGROUND

War or peace?, we raised the question in the last issue. There seems little doubt that for a little time at least, we will have what, for want of a better word, one may as well call peace. Both sides, for their own reasons, have agreed to this. The government "unilaterally" said it would continue to observe the cessation of hostilities and 'the boys' finally agreed. (One uses the theme 'cessation of hostilities', coined by Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, P. C., advisedly. As he said, "ceasefire" would imply that both sides hold on to territory.)

At this point what made the militants stall for so long, if they were to agree anyway, is not very clear. Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the LTTE, told Amita Pratap of **Sunday** that while the government was using the lull to arm itself they had use for the time too. Whatever that may mean, it certainly sounds ominous. Then came the anger at the composition of the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, or C.M.C. (as it is popularly called). Here the militants had something (six extra names) slipped past them in a masterpiece of lego-political legerdemain. The agreement said that the monitoring committee "will be expanded to include new members... some from the list suggested by (the) ENLF". From the purely legal point of view, there was nothing to prevent the government from doing what they did: while adding two ENLF nominees (and Tamil ones at that) also incorporating six others, all legal men, on their own. Naturally the militants protested that this was a violation (that word again) of the spirit of the agreement.

The question obviously arises as to why the government couldn't, or wouldn't, appoint a group of people all of whom would be acceptable on both sides. If there

is not going to be mutual give and take, then there is very little point in continuing the negotiations — which have to be based on trust of some kind. What the CMC gives the militants a chance to do, is to protest to Rajiv immediately on arrival from the Bahamas that if the government is going to behave like this over the monitoring of the ceasefire, how on earth are they to trust them over the implementation of any accord reached?

From the Indian point of view, this kind of rule-bending by the Sri Lankan government has been going on for a long time. But it is also true that during the same time it has been going on, ironically, relations between the Sri Lankan govt and Rajiv have improved. Put another way, does Rajiv, who has openly admitted his abhorrence of "terrorists", really care whether the militants get a fair deal or not? And would the Sri Lankan government have constituted the CMC as it did if it knew the Indians would publicly protest? The timing of the announcement of the new list was perfect: just before Rajiv left on a foreign tour.

While it was reported in the press that Bhandari was unhappy with what had happened, there was no official Indian protest. Certainly Rajiv's foreign cruise was only a convenient excuse for the lack of one, instead of which Rajiv actually welcomed the agreement. By the time he comes back, it will be too late to do anything about it. And the 'boys' would be well advised to go back to school and take a few lessons in international relations — both its theory and practise. (One of the books they would be advised to read — as would just about every person interested in India — is Srikanth Dutt's **India and the Third World: Altruism or Hegemony?**)

In the immediate political situation the Sri Lankan thorn in Rajiv's flesh demands quick extraction. This is where all those who felt these would be a total continuity of policy between Gandhi the mother and Gandhi the son have been proved wrong. Rajiv Gandhi has **not** turned out to be a step backward for India into feudalism/monarchy, albeit in a democratic guise. Ideologically, he is the best representative of the new ruling elite that the Indian socio-economic system must create if it is to continue to control that country. He has as many have noted, the archetypal M. B. A.'s attitude to solving even political problems, as in Punjab in Assam.

At the level of international politics, therefore, this would necessitate India getting closer, since it would have to co-operate with it, with the international Establishment. Again, the scenario is long term; and also subject to Indian national pride as expressed in non-alignment. But with Sri Lanka it is now looking like Rajiv's preference lie, at the moment, with the man who is "193rd in this long and unbroken line of Heads of state" as the Sri Lankan President told the CHOGM meeting in the Bahamas. Even if one conveniently assumes that Lanka was always a unitary state, and JRJ — in an amazing compromise with Sinhala national pride — adds "Cholas and Telugus and British" monarchs on to the list, young Rajiv, being the third (some say fourth) Nehru down the Indian variation on the same theme, must surely find himself more comfortable with the Sri Lankan rulers than with the boys, who for the most part not being upper-class, are unable to speak fluent English and are generally untutored in the observances of the niceties of civilized intercourse.

Has Rajiv slowly but surely, backed down, if not out, of "traditional" Indian support for the Tamil cause? First came the assurance — never made by his mother — that India would never tolerate Eelam. This was followed by a statement to the effect that the Tamils could not expect a settlement in which a regional government would have greater powers than those given to states under the Indian constitution — when it was clearly evident that even the TULF wanted greater autonomy. And finally, the Indian Prime Minister has said that any settlement to the problem can only be made under the framework of the present Sri Lankan constitution — which would mean that the autonomy the Tamil people are likely to get, under a settlement Rajiv is likely to underwrite, will be nothing even remotely like the set-up the majority of the Tamil people in the north

and east, in the President's own admission, voted for in 1977. The working paper initialled by H.W. Jayawardene (has nobody noted the significance of the fact that the Sri Lankan government has finally signed a document on this matter?) which is ostensibly meant to be the basis for the next round of negotiations, actually looks like the maximum position of the Lankan government — and something which has, very importantly, the broad support of India. Little wonder then that the militants have rejected it. In all this, the militants have scored one small victory — the revoking of the deportation order on Balasingham, whom they must have surely and sorely missed at the negotiations / discussions. But then, allowing him back could also be due to the intense criticism Rajiv came under by the mainstream Indian press over the original deportation. Certainly his presence,

and the possible recall of Satyendra, would immensely strengthen the hand of the ENLF at the forthcoming negotiations. Right now, their tactic (and their strategy?) seems to be to play a game of 'wait and see' — staking their all on the belief that the Sri Lankan government would make a false move which would once again make them the good guys in the eyes of India. This does not seem very likely to happen. Then we just may see something no-one would have imagined even as recently as the beginning of the year: India trying to shove a settlement, not down the throat of the Sri Lankan government, but down that of the Tamil guerrillas. If that happens, the response Messrs Prabhakaran et al and the answer to our original question, war or peace, may not be at all difficult to guess.

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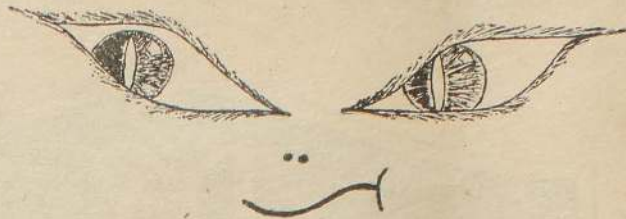
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CAT'S EYE



Liberalise Abortion

OUR English national dailies have always thought of the 'women's page' as leisure reading for middle-class women whose place is definitely in the home. These newspapers have concentrated on fashions, cooking, child care and beauty hints, also persistently carrying atrocious, sexist cartoons and comic strips — which are extremely offensive to women. Recently, some English dailies have reversed this trend and there have been serious articles and letters on subjects such as female circumcision (see L.G. of Oct 15) and on abortion.

The abortion issue has not been frankly discussed by Sri Lanka feminists who have perhaps been over-concerned not to offend certain religious groups. During the last months, the *Island* and *Sun* have given wide coverage to the issue and the debate (mainly among men) has raged ferociously on issue of the unborn child. The feminist viewpoint has not been heard very clearly, which is a pity, since it is **women who are the most directly concerned in the issue.**

Whatever the political leaders, mahayanayakes, bishops and other males in high places say, women who need abortions will resort to them — whether they be rich or poor, urban or peasant, Sinhala or non-Sinhala. It is an issue that cuts across ethnicity, class and region. But in all cases, there is one law for the rich who have abortions in hygienic conditions, and one for the poor (who risk their lives with back-street quacks). We also have no doubt that many of those males preaching against abortion would resort to it if their unmarried daughters or sisters had an unwanted pregnancy.

The feminist perspective on the issue is clear. It is for a **woman to choose or reject motherhood.** Motherhood should neither be imposed on any woman who does not desire it, nor withheld if she desires it. **Feminists are therefore in favour of liberal abortion laws and are also against compulsory sterilisation.**

The present abortion law in Sri Lanka is obsolete and not in keeping with other changes in society. Our law is still the old rigid British law which the British have changed long ago. We are still prosecuting doctors for performing abortions, whereas already in 1939, a British gynaecologist, Dr. Bourne performed an abortion on a 14 year old girl (who had been raped) after he had informed the police. He was tried and acquitted and the furor caused led to changes in the British law.

Liberalisation of the local laws are long overdue and it is for the women's groups to campaign further on the issue.

More Women in Detention

UNDER the PTA many women are being kept in jail without trial. Last week we reported the cases of 7 women in Negombo jail. We now have news of 5 women being kept in detention by the Army at the Boosa camp. They are **Rukmini**, aged about 30 of Batticaloa; **Chidambareswari** aged about 50 of Udappu; **Nithiyavini** aged about 38 of Mutur; **Meena** aged about 22 of Mutur and **Santhimathi** aged about 20 also of Mutur.

Prostitution

WE do certainly have some old weird laws in this country. One of them concerns prostitution,

and our jails are full of women arrested on charges of prostitution. Since, we presume, the illegal transaction also involved a male, why aren't the male clients put in jail too? And incidentally, in this paradise of male prostitutes have any of **them** been jailed along with their **foreign clients?**

Legal Aid of Women

THE *Voice of Women* at 25, Kirula Rd Colombo 5 has a legal aid advice service for Women. It was started in 1984 to advise women on their rights under the law and to help women who are victims of violence and injustice. For further details write to the secretary.

Believe it or Not

* Under our priceless colonial legal code, which our great nationalists have not bothered to change, it is illegal for a **woman to buy arrack.** It is, however, not illegal for a **lady to buy whisky!**

* A Tamil woman may not buy or sell her own property **without her husband's consent.**

* A Muslim woman may be divorced **without any reasons being given by the husband.**

* The pay of plantation women workers is usually collected on pay day by **their husbands.**

* The maternity benefit on plantations is **paid to the husbands** at the hospital after the delivery of the child.

* Borah girls are circumscised at the age of 7 or 8 in a more radical operation than that performed by other Muslims in Sri Lanka who circumscise girls a few weeks after birth.

(Continued on page 22)

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PEASANTS' STRUGGLE AT VELLASSA

A new stage of confrontation ?

Gamini Yapa

It is observed that a Multi National Corporation differs from a private company, in its willingness to persist in face of protracted opposition. The lifetime of a capitalist is short which hastens him to make a decision otherwise. But a multinational which can anticipate a longer term of life will not consider one or two or even five or ten years a long period. So to gain a foot hold it will strive patiently and adamantly for years in the face of resistance.

What happens at Moneragala bears testimony to this fact which depicts a characteristic feature of a multinational corporation. The Moneragala sugar company, the organization created by Meta International, which is a Bermuda based Indian multinational company, headed by one Mr. Murugesu at Bombay regional office, is still striving with all its might to push off the villagers and grab the land at Siyambalanduwa. The peasant unions created by the All Lanka Peasants' Congress, about twenty in number in the affected area, in which all villagers joined together irrespective of their political alignments, are carrying forward the struggle with the help and assistance of all peasant federations and organizations all opposition parties and other popular organizations of the country. This support comes through the Committees for Solidarity with peasants formed at Moneragala, Colombo and very recently at Kandy.

Firearms

But today the government and the sugar company have introduced fire arms into the struggle with organized armed forces to suppress the unarmed peasants. At present the activities of this multinational

are carried on with the help of 15 armed policemen brought from Badulla and Bandarawela in addition to another gun wielding security force of 12 persons hired by the company.

Haven't the peasants sought to bring senses to the high authorities who are responsible of this sell out? The peasant have met high officials of the government and expressed their protest. They have appealed to the Commissioner of Parliament and held discussion with him. At the beginning of this year the UNP branch union at Kivuleyaya has sent a memorandum to the MSA of the area and invited him to come to the village and explain to the villagers about the benefits of this venture. But they say that he has not dared to visit the area and face his own supporters to this day.

And one fact to show the genuineness of the peasant unity on the issue: **At Kivuleyaya, the president and treasurer of the UNP branch union hold the same offices in the ALPC branch union while the secretary of the SLFP branch union has become the secretary of the peasant union!** On 30th March 1985, when the peasants were summoned by the AGA of Siyambalanduwa and asked whether they would hand over their land in exchange for 6 acres at Kaluobbe in the close vicinity to each, of which 4 acres has to be cultivated with sugarcane to be supplied to the company and two acres to some other crop which they themselves would decide, spoke through 3 representatives and clearly expressed their dislike by signing a document.

And this year from the month of February the peasants started clearing the shrub jungle in the area on which they have worked in the past, in order to put up chenas for the coming seasonal crops. This time it was not an individual affair but had hundreds participating in for the common benefit. This was a significant step of collectivism with regard to their normal individualistic farming methods. But it should be mentioned that this year, the government, so as to allow the multinational to take over land, has not issued permits for chena cultivations and thus has dealt a severe blow to the peasants in order to weaken them into submission.

During the course of this year many things have happened at Siyambalanduwa. A big public meeting of protest, addressed by speakers of opposition parties and peasant organizations was held at Kodayanna in the centre of the affected area on February 20th. This meeting was organized by the Solidarity Committee at Moneragala and supported by the Solidarity Committee at Colombo. The All Lanka Peasants' Congress held their May Day rally with a demonstration at Siyambalanduwa this year organized by the district committee of ALPC, thus, boosting the morale of the peasants in struggle.

Last year the company was able to seize only 80 acres, probably very much below the target set by the annual global plan of the Meta International as dictated from Bermuda. So this year they intended to expand it to 400 acres as a nursery, though it will be a slight fraction of what they envisage as 12,000 acre central Zone. The



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peasants at Moneragala were facing hard reality when bulldozers came in last May to expand the existing nursery. The district committee of ALPC has taken a decision to confront them and on May 12th a group of people of Kivuleyaya, numbering about 100 of all ages marched to meet the bulldozers and protested. As the crowd advanced the officers at the nursery took the bulldozer off into the jungle and put it under cover.

Arrested

As we have heard, the officers then went to the police and lodged a complaint. The police did not seem to be interested. They were also speaking about the company violating the rights of the people. But the multinational got a very serious intervention from Colombo and was able to get the police mobilized by 18th May and several of the peasant leaders were arrested. Eighty three people young and old, men and women were charged at the courts on this incident. And it was revealed at the courts that the company officials at the nursery could not produce any document as to their ownership or tenure to these lands. The respected judge, turning down a request by the police to disallow bail for these 83 persons has remarked that this is a case of fundamental rights and he can not remand a village'.

Yes, it is a case of fundamental rights. One would pertinently ask what right does the leaders of the government have to alienate the ancestral lands of the people as their own private property? And when this question was raised we have heard lot of contradictory statements. Ministers for Land and for Agriculture would state that these 625 families of 23 villages have to be shifted to some other place. But the bureaucrats and company men swear to you that they would not take any land owned by the people. That was what the GA for Moneragala was telling the peasant delegations and also the Ministry high officials when met by the delegation for peasants at the Ministry on September 5th 1985. But on September 8th the Minister

for Agriculture Mr. Gamani Jayasuriya categorically stated in an interview by the Sunday 'Divayina' that it is true that the government has decided to shift these families so as to make room for the multinational.

The discussions held on September 5th at the Ministry was the highest level attained by the negotiations between the peasants and the government on this issue. This was also an outcome of a 'sathyakriya' staged by Maha Sanga led by Ven. Batapola Anomadassi Nayake Thero at Moneragala on 28th June 1985 which led to a discussion with the district minister and the MSA for Moneragala. These two politicians promised a discussion with the peasants on September 16th but then it was decided by the GA that government and company high ranking officers should meet the peasant delegation instead at Colombo. This discussion held in the ministry ended with both sides stating their opposing point of view and the peasants were thus brought to the utmost limits of protest through negotiations.

Uprooting

Meanwhile the locality was rife with different activities on both sides. After the peasants who confronted the bulldozer were brought to book, with this legal background the multinational hastened work and bulldozed another 20 acres to expand the nursery. The vigilant and active peasants again took collective action and entering the newly bulldozed area in hundreds planted plantain saplings, in those lands earlier worked by them. The next day the company came with the police and uprooted all these and bulldozed it again. And they planted the land with sugarcane saplings which they claim to have been brought from Hawaii for the purpose. Then again about 500 peasants from the affected villages gathered on 30th August and uprooted the sugarcane saplings in all these 20 acres.

But all these protests have not changed the attitude of the government. It seems the government leaders have no regard to protest whatever its form or magnitude

be. The government which claims itself the standard bearer of democracy is not concerned to the slightest extent about this almost hundred per cent opposition from the people.

Ecological damage

Gamini Dissanayake Minister for Lands, author of this land policy has enough time to run about to thank old ladies or school boys for their five or ten rupee donations to the cricket fund, finds his time too precious to go to Siyambaladuwa and meet this people who have brought a virtual crisis in his policy implementation. The government just want to chase the people away and hand over land to the multinational even if the people numbering about 3000 will be thrown into misery and deprivation.

This government which within two years since its inception effectively destroyed the thousands of acres of sugarcane farms of Moneragala peasants by importing unlimited amounts of sugar under its open economic policy, and which through mismanagements, corruption and waste allowed the Sugar Corporation to decay and deteriorate, is now mouthing phrases on 'self' sufficiency in sugar' and 'the benefits which will accrue to the people of Moneragala from the multinational sugar industries'. But this hypocrisy will be swallowed only by "intellectual" urbanites, not by the Vellassa peasants who know reality better. The so called advanced technology comprises nothing but processes devices to deprive the people of their means of production and subsistence and deplete natural resources bringing environmental destruction. The permanent damage which will be caused the operations of the MNC should not be under estimated. The Booker International at Pelwatte in its attempt to decrease moisture in the soil at some place are digging 20 feet deep holes in the ground so as to divert the fountains down deep into the earth, thus causing permanent damage to the water-flow pattern of this rich wet soil area which was once Vel-Iassa i. e. "the land of lakh of fields". and that is the technology which will produce the same result as in

Central and Eastern Africa where the mono-cropping systems and other techniques of Multinationals have caused prolonged droughts and expansion of deserts.

At the outset of this encounter with the Meta International, the peasants at Moneragala predicted that the meagre water resources at adjoining Muthukandiya reservoir will be diverted to the factory to be erected at Kodayanna, since there is no permanent source of water in the affected area. That prediction seems to come true since the company is now contemplating to lay a 4 feet diameter pipeline to conduct water from Muthukandiya. And surely this 'advanced technology' will crush down the Muthukandiya Project which even now is facing scarcities of water although highly financed by aid from Australian government.

Contractors

And the peasants at Moneragala know that all these promises of employment, housing facilities and better lives are sheer nonsense since they have seen how Booker is treating peasants at Pelwatte, where a peasant is urged to produce 67 tonnes of sugarcane from a land unit, with the threat of throwing out the peasant if he does not achieve this target. They ask whether there will be fair play when the whole system of employment in the country is corrupt and graft ridden.

Peasants at Moneragala are really annoyed with the utterances of ruling party politicians, who all the time neglected and ignored their educational, health and social needs, kept them in such a backward state and now all of a sudden, shed crocodile tears on their backwardness and try to sell their birth right to foreign monopoly capitalists. And they perfectly know that the problem has been created not by "opportunists" as stated by the Minister for Agriculture but by the betrayers of a nation under the name-board of 'self sufficiency in sugar' and 'development'.

The activity of the company at Moneragala is not confined to the

nursery alone. It has contracted about seven capitalists for felling trees and clearing a vast jungle area called Kaluobbe at the northern border of Yala sanctuary. The contractors who have joined in have been identified as popular actors, so called progressive journalists, government top politicians and government trade union leaders. They are now engaged in a happy process of making money by clearing and removing even tiny sticks in an area limits of which only they themselves know.

So today after the villagers have uprooted the sugarcane saplings the multinational has obtained 15 policemen and has started erecting a large barbed wire fence enclosing about 400 acres with lands worked and some by the villagers of Madugame and Kivuleyaya. Five houses and homegardens are also going to get enclosed in this expanded nursery.

MNC domination

To make matters worse, now it can be seen how the multinational comes to dominate all administrative and state machinery in the area. Making the Government Agent a mere officer in service they take all decisions at Colombo and dictate terms to all government officers and even to police. **Their payments are heavy and the grama sevakas and policemen serving them are getting attractive sums. It is suspected that some high bureaucrats are also on their pay roll.** And they have approached peasant leaders promising monthly four figure allowances so as to keep them silent. But all these would go under the name of investments, of which we are sure that not a cent has been brought from abroad but readily provided as loans by our own bankers who send our peasants to prisons on charges of default while running to the airport to hug and embrace the MNC gentlemen coming with empty pockets.

At the beginning of October, the AGA for Siyambalanduwa convened a meeting of the peasants and received an antagonistic res-

ponse from them. Then came another meeting on October 11th at Kivuleyaya by the Secretary to Ministry for Agriculture who is also the President of Moneragala Sugar Company the local facade of Meta International where the atmosphere reported to be extremely hot. These two meetings were actually convened to create a split in the ranks of the peasants with attempts to entice the feeble into the noose. But the villagers sensed and understood it and were extremely hostile to the government and company officials.

Violence

So now, the peasants are disillusioned with the process of negotiations which they followed for more than a year. The company and the government with all their arrogance are pressing the people to go out of their way. **There has arisen an imminent danger of violent confrontation.** And both sides know that the outcome of this conflict will significantly affect the politico-economic situation of the country.

But in conclusion I would add a remark on this issue. We can not forget how the all powerful UNP government before 1956, set the armed forces against peasants of Vellassa at Hambegamuwa in a so called Ganja eradicating campaign. **The atrocities perpetrated against the peasants then became a main issue at 1956 general elections which brought the collapse of UNP power.** And this time also the UNP again has raised its cudgel against Vellassa.

Will history repeat itself? And without a free and fair general election in the offing, what form will this take?

India's role in the Sri Lankan crisis

N. Sanmugathanan

Whether one is happy about it or not, India's role in the solution of the Sri Lankan Tamil problem has become decisive. From the position of being an honest broker who was trying to get antagonistic parties to a common table for discussion, India has today become a mediator, if not actual arbitrator, between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil militants fighting for a separate state of Eelam.

At one time, almost the entire Sinhala opinion in Sri Lanka looked upon India with suspicious, if not hostile, eyes and accused it not only of harbouring the Tamil militants in its southern state of Tamil Nadu but also of providing them with arms and camps for military training. Today, the Sri Lankan government and Sinhala opinion has veered round to looking upon Indian and Rajiv Gandhi as their saviour who would pressurise the Tamil militants into accepting a solution acceptable to the Sri Lankan government. They seem to have developed a child-like confidence that Rajiv would deliver the goods.

However that may be, there is no doubt that India is going to play an important role in the solution of the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. Let us, therefore, assess the foreign policy motives behind India's attitude to Sri Lanka.

When state power passed into the hands of the North Indian capitalist class at the time when the British quit, after having truncated India into two, the Indian bourgeoisie fancied itself as the inheritors of the British Raj not only in the subcontinent of India but throughout the whole of South Asia. They were never reconciled to the creation of Pakistan and, in 1971, succeeded in de-stabilising Pakistan and severing Bangladesh from it. Unfortunately for them,

Bangala Desh slipped out of their control.

They have systematically worked to destabilise Pakistan by indirectly supporting the non-Punjabi minorities near the North Western Frontier. India has effectively brought its three north-eastern neighbours — Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim — into its orbit — but without actual armed occupation. It tried to get a foot-hold into Tibet through its war with China but was defeated ignominiously. It is this policy that has been condemned as Indian expansionism.

India's ruling class had always cast covetous eyes over Sri Lanka. Opinion among the Indian ruling class has always considered that, if not for the accident of foreign occupation, Sri Lanka would, by now, have become part of the Indian Union. It is this hope that has motivated Indian foreign policy towards Sri Lanka.

1983 July

But, it could do nothing about it till the crisis over the Tamil problem developed into a guerilla struggle against the government and led to the virtual state-sponsored pogrom against the Tamils in July, 1983. This changed the situation completely and qualitatively. The stricken Sri Lankan Tamils fled in their thousands and tens of thousands across the straits to adjoining Tamil Nadu where they saw an immense reservoir of support and sympathy among the 53 million Tamils of that state. This support was genuine and fuelled because of close ethnic affinity between the two groups of Tamils. It was not a foreign policy stance.

India was able to make use of this situation. It allowed in over a lakh of Tamil refugees and turned a blind eye to the activities of the Tamil militants in Tamil Nadu. Irrespective of whether there were

or are military training camps for the Tamil militants in Tamil Nadu, there is no doubt that the support of Indian public, particularly in Tamil Nadu, and the fact that the Tamil militants could use Tamil Nadu as a sort of a base area helped the cause of the Tamil militants.

The Indian government knew that, as the pressure by the militants, on the Sri Lankan government grew the latter would have no alternative but to turn to India for help and mediation. Sri Lanka had no other choice. Not a single other big power was ready to come to its assistance. The stock answer of all powers to whom Sri Lanka appealed was: You are in India's sphere of influence. Therefore, you must accept its mediation.

Anuradhapura

As the guerilla struggle of the Tamil militants escalated and dealt heavy blows on Sri Lankan security forces and as a situation developed whereby virtually all civil government in the north and east were brought to a halt, the options facing Sri Lanka became restricted. But, the turning point came with the Anuradhapura killings. For the first time, the government and Sinhala opinion woke up to the prospect that the civil war could extend to Sinhala areas and that Sinhala lives had become vulnerable. Nobody believed that the army or the police could give them security. They had been made to look fools during the Anuradhapura incident.

Suddenly, all Sri Lankan attitudes changed. The Prime Minister stopped his anti-Indian tirades and started singing a different tune. Even the Maha Sangha came with a call for talks not only with Rajiv in Delhi but also with the government of Tamil Nadu and also with the Tamil militants. Having for several months dodged responding to Rajiv's invitation to come to

Delhi for talks, J. R. now journeyed to Delhi like a humble mendicant.

There can be no doubt that, at this Delhi summit, Rajiv forced J. R. to agree to certain foreign policy postures favourable to India. Chief of these seems to have been that Trincomalee would not be handed over to America. Certain other concessions also seem to have been agreed to by J. R. In return, Rajiv seems to have promised to put pressure on the Tamil militants to persuade them to agree to discuss a peaceful settlement. The result was the cease-fire and the Bhutan talks.

Bhutan

But, the Sri Lankan delegation to the Bhutan talks made a mockery of the whole exercise by putting forward the same old proposals which had earlier been rejected by the Tamils at the time of the All Parties Conference in late 1984. It was no wonder that the talks did not prove fruitful. Its only merit was that it had forced a Sri Lankan government delegation to sit down at the same table and discuss with people whom it had all these days labelled as terrorists and murderers and after it had declared that it would not negotiate even with the TULF unless it first repudiated the demand for a separate state.

India brought both parties again for another round of talks in Bhutan. The Sri Lankan delegation reenacted the same comedy. But, this time, in addition, the pitch was queered by serious cease-fire violations by the Sri Lankan security forces at Vavuniya and Trincomalee. The Tamil groups walked out in protest and refused to return to the negotiating table.

It was then that the heavy-handed diplomacy of India made itself felt. Bhandari was sent by special plane to Thimpu to some-how-or-other persuade or cajole the Tamil groups to return to the negotiating table. Bhandari is reported to have raved and threatened. He is said to have used the term "bloody hell" twelve times during his raving. But the Tamil groups remained adamant.

Then took place the most bizarre incident in recent Indian foreign policy. It was a silly action that

was to tar India's reputation. It was also in-explainable, except as a measure of appeasement of the Sri Lankan government. India deported three leaders of the militant groups without giving any explanation for its action. This was the first time that India had deported anyone who had sought refuge in her country.

The reaction was swift. Almost the entire Indian public opinion condemned the deportation while Tamil Nadu rose up in protest. The scope of the protest can be understood from the fact that Gandhi was forced to eat humble pie and to re-admit one of the deportees, Chandrasenan, into India within a matter of days. Later, the decision against another deportee, Balasingam was also reversed.

The scope and extent of the protest in Tamil Nadu must have been an eye opener for Gandhi. For the first time after Gandhi came to power, the slogan "Down with Rajiv Gandhi" appeared on the walls of Madras. Quickly, Delhi protested that it had no intentions of pressurising the Tamil groups and all that it wanted was that the negotiation process continue.

Rightwards

Clearly, Rajiv Gandhi was moving to the right and coming to the assistance of the Sri Lankan government. He had been increasingly worried about the radicalisation of Tamil Nadu politics as a result of the activities of the Sri Lankan Tamil militants in that state. Besides, the strident campaign of the Sri Lankan Tamils for Eelam tended to revive memories of the DMK's earlier slogan for a separate Tamil state — a slogan which the DMK dropped only during the Sino-Indian war. Rajiv would dearly love to clear the Sri Lankan Tamil militants from Tamil Nadu! But, he has to reckon with public opinion in Tamil Nadu which expressed itself in no uncertain way on September 24th. when a 12-hour hartal was observed throughout the state by all the political parties — including Rajiv's Congress (I).

At this point, I would like to discuss an important political point. What is it that makes the Tamil

militants vulnerable to Indian pressure and puts them at the mercy of the rightwing ruling class of India? It is simply the fact that the militants put all their eggs in one basket and relied exclusively on Indian aid to achieve their aims. They do not seem to have realised that India was not a socialist country and that it has not yet satisfactorily solved the problems of its own national minorities. Nor was the Indian ruling class a revolutionary force although, in its own selfish interests, it did play a progressive role in giving shelter to the Tamil militants.

Self reliance

All liberation movements must learn to accept that a natural and slow growth (even if it was painful) on the basis of relying on one's own strength is preferable to sudden and inflated growth with foreign aid. The latter collapses once the foreign assistance is withdrawn. The former can withstand all vicissitudes. That is why I re-emphasise Mao's teaching that a people must rely on one's own strength. If they do that and follow correct tactics, they will win eventually, even if they are weak and the enemy strong.

There is no doubt that, after the J. R.-Rajiv summit at Delhi, there existed a definite plan by which the Indian right-wing forces were to have attempted to scuttle the militants and to deprive them of a base in South India. That it did not materialise was entirely due to the ineptitude and bungling of the Sri Lankan government (particularly, its performance in Bhutan) on the one hand and to the support of Tamil Nadu for the militants, on the other.

The deportation of three militant leaders was meant to teach the militants a lesson. But it boomeranged to the extent that Delhi had to revoke its deportation orders. The militants, therefore, have to be very careful to safeguard their independence and their right to take decisions without being pressurised by India.

The discussions have reached a crucial stage. The Sri Lankan

(Continued on page 18)

Another look at Stalin

Reggie Sriwardena

Russia was, in fact on the verge of another new and crucial phase in its orientations towards the two worlds of Europe and Asia. I shall analyse this phase through the varying positions taken up by the three most important figures of the Revolution — Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky. I must add that I am treating these figures as the representative of various ideological trends, through their views and stances were not unconnected with their personal temperaments and cultural backgrounds. Of the three figures, it was Trotsky, the cosmopolitan and sophisticated intellectual, who was completely western in his outlook and most conscious of the backwardness of Russia as the terrible incubus that the Revolution had to carry. In an article written in 1912 he had used his eloquence to characterise in the most forceful manner the inferiority of old Russia to Europe: 'The Russian people were not less heavily oppressed by nobility and Church than were the peoples of the West. But that complex and rounded-off way of life which, on the basis of feudal rule, grew up in Europe — that gothic lacework of feudalism — has not grown on our soil. We lacked the life-matter for it, we could not afford it...A thousand years we have lived in a humble log-cabin and filled its crevices with moss — did it become us to dream of vaulting arches and gothic spires?' To the day when, in Mexican exile, he met his assassin, Trotsky was to insist that the Russian Revolution had to be rescued by the Western proletariat: if it remained isolated, it would perish, either by internal degeneration.

Lenin's shift

Lenin, in the first phase of Revolution, also looked hopefully to European revolution for succour and support for the Soviet Union. But by 1923 when the tide of revolution in the West had receded, he set

his face eastwards. In an article written just before his final illness and withdrawal from public life, **Better Fewer, but Better**, he said:

'In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so just in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the outcome of the world struggle will be.'

Stalin's contribution

However, it was Stalin, the Georgian and home-grown Bolshevik, who was from the earliest days of the revolution most responsive to the eastward current. As Deutscher has shown in his biography, Stalin's utterances with regard to the hopes of Western European revolution in this period sound like a perfunctory salute to Bolshevik orthodoxy; his own emphasis lay elsewhere. A year after October, he wrote two articles titled, significantly, 'Do not forget the East' and 'Ex Orients Lux.' **Ex Orient Lux** — 'light from the East': the words are strikingly analogous to Dostoevsky's 'That star will rise in the East.' It is perhaps not surprising that the fervent adherent of the Russian Orthodox Church and the ex-student of the Tiflis Theological Seminary should have chosen similar metaphors, though, of course, Stalin's 'East' was not only Russia but included the oppressed peoples of Asia. It was, however, after his rise to power following the death of Lenin that this aspect of Stalin's thinking found full expression. To controversy between Stalin and Trotsky on the issue of 'socialism in one country' was a kind of replay of the debate between Slavophiles and Westerners — though within new parameters. Trotsky

was, of course, the westerner, though his hopes lay in the culturally advanced European proletariat and not in Western liberal democracy. Stalin, for his part, was not seeking to conserve the pre-revolutionary traditions of Russia but he did endeavour through his slogan of 'socialism in one country' to awaken Russia's faith in her own independent destinies. Not that he openly discarded the Marxist rhetoric international proletarian solidarity and the goal of world revolution. It would be easy enough to compile from his speeches and writings an anthology of passages of ritual deference to this orthodox creed. But once again, his innovative contribution was in another direction. With the beginning of the endeavour towards a massive release of productive energies in the late 'twenties, Stalin appealed unmistakably to the imperatives of national survival. He was as aware as Trotsky was of the backwardness of Russia, rooted in her history, but he sought, by reminding the Russian people of this harsh reality, to stir their national pride and urge for self-preservation in order to close gap. Thus, in a speech made in 1931, during the period of the first Five-year Plan, he referred to the fact that old Russia had been 'ceaselessly beaten for her backwardness', and went on:

'She was beaten by the Mongol Khans, she was beaten by Turkish Bays, she was beaten by Swedish fendal lords, she was beaten by Polish-Lithuanian Pans, she was beaten by Anglo-French capitalists, she was beaten by Japanese barons, she was beaten by all — for her backwardness. For military backwardness, for cultural backwardness for political backwardness, for industrial backwardness, for agricultural backwardness. She was beaten because to beat her was profitable and went unpunished.'

You remember the words of the pre-revolutionary poet: "Thou art poor and thou art plentiful, thou art mighty and thou art helpless, Mother Russia."

Marxism & Nationalism

Not only the evocation of 'Mother Russia' but also the conflation of Tsarist history with the post-revolutionary situation marked a striking departure from strict Marxist doctrine. A decade later, the advent of the war and the German invasion of the Soviet Union impelled Stalin to make even more startling appeals to nationalist sentiment. In 1941, delivering his October Revolution anniversary speech in beleaguered Moscow, Stalin concluded with this unexpected peroration:

'Let the manly images of our great ancestors — Aleksander Nevsky, Dmitri Donskoy, Kuzma Minin, Dmitri Pozharsky, Aleksandr Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov — inspire you in the war. May the victorious banner of the great Lenin guide you.'

The collocation of Lenin with the warriors and heroes of Tsarist Russia was the apex of Stalin's amalgamation of Marxism with Russian nationalism. It is revealing that in the two most critical moments in the life of the Soviet Union — the organisation of popular energies for the economic 'take-off' and their enlistment in the struggle against the invader — Stalin thought it necessary to appeal to nationalist impulses. It would be futile and irrelevant to speculate whether he was merely manipulating these appeals or whether he had come to share some elements of the nationalist ideology himself. What matters is that when Marxism became the ruling ideology of a whole great nation, it absorbed — perhaps inevitably so — a deep colouration from national traditions and currents of thought and emotion.

The era when the Soviet Union isolated in a hostile Europe, had to make an arduous effort to survive has long ended. However, the continuing conflict with the West means that nationalism has not outlived its importance as a way of strengthening the cohesion of Soviet society and fortifying it in the global struggle. Given the fact that the Great Russian people still retain substantial political and cultural hegemony within the

Soviet Union, the Soviet patriotism of today incorporates a large component of traditional Russian nationalism. I should like to turn again to the literary sphere to document this fact, particularly because, as I have already indicated, literature can sometimes reveal ideological elements that are obscured in overt political discourse. Let me take the case of the current treatment of Dostoevsky by the Soviet literary establishment. This is an especially interesting subject because during the Stalin era, Dostoevsky's reputation was under a cloud, and some of his works were not even issued by State publishing houses. From the standpoint of Soviet cultural policy, this wasn't surprising in view of Dostoevsky's support of the monarchy, his adherence to Orthodox Christianity, his strong hostility to nineteenth-century radicals and his equation of socialism and atheism as Western heresies. Since the post-Stalin thaw of the 'sixties, however, Dostoevsky's standing has been steadily upgraded, and he has now been officially re-admitted into the pantheon of great Russian writers.

Dostoevsky

Some of the signs of this change of policy have been the re-issue of M. Bakhtin's brilliant study of the novelist, suppressed since the 1930s, the commencement in 1974 of a massive scholarly project by the USSR Academy of Sciences for the production of a 30-volume edition of Dostoevsky's **Complete Works** (now complete), and the national celebrations of the centenary of the Dostoevsky's death in 1981. From the tributes paid to the novelist at the time of the centenary and from other Soviet writings, it is evident that the Soviet literary establishment today values Dostoevsky especially for reasons: his compassion for the poor and oppressed — those whom he called in the title of his books, 'the insulted and injured' — and his faith in the liberating mission of the Russian people. On this second point, let me quote from the general introduction to the Academy edition of the **Complete Works** I translate: 'Dostoevsky was full of deep distrust towards landowner-bourgeois civilisation. What moved him, as he acknowledged, was

the fate, not of "one-tenth", but of "nine-tenths" of mankind. The great writer was convinced that "all the ninety millions of Russians (or as many of them as will be born then) will be at some time or other educated, humanised and happy", and that the Russian people by its fraternal example would help other peoples in the general movement of humanity to freedom and happiness. This vision of Dostoevsky was turned into reality by the Great October socialist revolution.'

Thus Dostoevsky's Slavophile conviction of the messianic role of the Russian people is re-interpreted as being in consonance with the Soviet Russian nationalism of today. Dostoevsky's conviction of the moral superiority of Russia to Western Europe (which he derived essentially from his faith in Russian spirituality) similarly finds acceptance among Soviet commentators today. The crucial texts of Dostoevsky in this respect are his account of his travels in Western Europe, **Winter Notes of Summer Impressions**, and his short novel **The Gambler**, which concerns a group of Russians abroad. The editorial commentary on these works in the Academy edition is very revealing. The commentary on the first of these two works surveys the theme of 'Russia and Europe', as treated by Russian thinkers and writers in the nineteenth century. It collocates Dostoevsky's views on this subject with those of radicals like Belinsky and Herzen, emphasising their common conviction that Russia had to take a different course from that of Western Europe, while underplaying their divergences on what that course should be. The editors underline Dostoevsky's critical comments on Western European political institutions and social values, such as his statement that in France 'liberty, equality and fraternity, have turned out to be loud-sounding phrases, and nothing more'. Clearly, these observations of Dostoevsky are meant to be seen as having contemporary force. From the commentary on **The Gambler** I should like to quote, in conclusion, this extremely interesting and symptomatic passage:

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US foreign policy perspectives

Bhabani Sen Gupta

The three pillars of the United States' policies in vital Third World regions are South Africa, Israel and Pakistan. Most Americans agree that the black protest movement in South Africa in the latter half of the 1980s will be very different from the earlier, feeble protest movement of the 1960s. The more than three million Afrikaners will not give up without a last-ditch fight on apartheid which is the foundation of white power in South Africa. In all likelihood, a prolonged militant polarization of forces will occur in South Africa. The younger generations of blacks will not be deterred by prospects of economic distress. **Americans have never understood, despite the repeated lessons of history of revolutions, that when people fight for their dignity, selfrespect and freedom, they would starve and hold the gun rather than be content with the crumbs of economic benefit their hated rulers throw at them in return for their sweat and tears.**

It is gratifying that the US state department is trying to nudge president Botha to turn South Africa away from the barren and burning terrain of apartheid and initiate explorations for power sharing with the blacks, leading eventually to black majority rule. It is somewhat heartwarming to find the state department trying to build its own tentative bridges to the African National Congress, **which is at this time undoubtedly led by Marxists.** But president Reagan himself remains committed to his impotent policy of "constructive engagement", and his utterances can be interpreted in the only way these are being interpreted in South and southern Africa: the US is, when it comes to the hustings, with the Botha regime, not with its liberal opponents.

True, the United States cannot change South African directions. Nor can influence them beyond a

certain limited limit. The Afrikaner elements will not follow Ian Smith of erstwhile Rhodesia into the limbo of defeat and despair. There will be another much longer and far more bloody Boer war in South Africa, in which the blacks will ultimately win, but after they have been utterly radicalized in the burning bushes. South Africa as a sentinel of American and Western interests in the Horn will have gone, as Iran went in 1979. Ronald Reagan will not see this happen during his tenure of the White House. But Mikhail Gorbachev may, because, as ex-President Richard Nixon has suggested, he may outlive as many as four American presidents.

Gorbachev will not have to send Soviet troops into South Africa. Nor Cuban troops. He and his allies will continue to extend arms aid to the fighting blacks. And, whatever the US may say, no African or Third World voices will be raised in protest.

Middle East

In the Middle East, Israel is in serious economic troubles, and is politically too divided to be able to pursue a strong foreign policy. Here too the state department has been trying to bring the Yassir Arafat-led PLO in the process of Arab-Israeli negotiation for the establishment of a national home of the Palestinians on the West Bank as part of the state of Jordan. Israel, however, is not prepared to sit with PLO representatives even as members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian team, and, wary of offending Israel, the US government itself has not so far met with the mixed PLO-Jordanian team. The Reagan peace plan for the Middle East thus remains hostage to Israel's political preferences. There is no evidence that the recent shuttle diplomacy of assistant secretary of state Robert Murphy broke new ground.

American spokesmen claim that the balance of power in the Middle East continues to be favourable to the US. Despite the considerable boost in Syrian influence since the Lebanese crisis of 1983-84. That may be true. What is perhaps truer is that there is no stable balance in the Middle East. The Soviets are not eager to play poker just now. Their attentions are rivetted elsewhere, on other, more urgent issues, and their interests in the region are not in jeopardy. The tenuous pro-American balance will come apart with a single pro-western state defecting. Allow a repeat performance of the anti-Neimeri coup in a single Middle Eastern state, and the current rickety political appletart will be no more. The political balance may be upset if the Saudis can no longer finance Saddam's war against Iran or Hosni Mubarak's near-bankrupt regime which is helplessly dependent on foreign, meaning American, aid. Or if king Hassan of Jordan, frustrated by American inability to pressure or persuade Israel to vacate the West Bank moves closer to the radical group of Arab states, and, therefore, to the USSR. Hassan's own peace plan, which he will make another effort to sell to the Reagan administration when he calls on Washington in September, includes an international conference on the Middle East presumably with Soviet presence. This is a prospect the United States has been avoiding since the 1970s as if shrinking away from a pestilence. Reagan himself has given his peace plan 1985 to succeed or fail. It will be a miracle if the next three months plant an American initiative firmly on the arid soil of the Middle East.

In the Persian Gulf, the two local powerfurs, Iraq and Iran, continue to consume themselves in a war which serves the interests of

both superpowers. What has begun to bother the US seriously is the political fallout of oil's declining price, while the Soviets have been scanning the Iranian scene for signals of the Ayatollah Khomeini's mortality. Not before the wasting war in the Gulf comes to an end and power alignments become clearer will this potentially conflict-prone region jump once again into the amphitheatre of superpower confrontation.

Asia

The blips of change coming from Southeast Asia are loaded with mixed messages. The Kampuchean situation seems to have begun to turn positive for the Heng Samrin regime. But for isolated guerrilla activities in several districts, the resistance backed by China and the US has all but ceased except for the border with Thailand. For the United States, the question mark is the Philippines, where Marcos continues to be in power despite largescale alienation of the middle class and the business community from his regime. Daring his opponents at home and his critics in America, Marcos has called another election, in which his supporters are certain to recapture a comfortable majority even if the opposition gains some more seats.

For the Soviet side, the Vietnamese have begun to pull out their troops from Kampuchea by slow stages, promising to complete the process at the end of the decade. The Vietnamese economy is urgently in need of large inflows of aid and investment from Japan, the World Bank and the West European countries, if not from the US for political reasons. The Soviet bloc has no surplus resources to pull out the Vietnamese economy from the abyss in which it found itself after 25 years of war.

The Southeast Asian situation, over all, is not likely to explode into a major international crisis in the remaining years of the decade. The political crux in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia lies in the changes that may occur in the superpowers' relations with China. Senator Patrick Moynihan complained to Deng Xiaoping early September that the Chinese were voting at the UN 86 percent of the time with the USSR and the

Third World countries out of step with the US. The US-Japan trade war, which is likely to intensify in the coming years, is also going to affect China. If the Chinese buy more from Japan than the US, as they have been doing, the US might be provoked to impose restrictions on the import of textiles from China, and that may sour the relationship. At what pace political relations between the USSR and China are likely to improve will be clearer after the 27th congress of the CPSU in February 1986. Mikhail Gorbachev, who, American experts on the USSR agree, is now in full command of the Kremlin's foreign policy, will probably frame the essentials of his China policy in the light of what happens, does not happen, and promises to happen at his November meeting with Reagan.

India

India is more directly concerned with America's relations with South Asia than with any other region. In my annual visits to the US since 1980 I have never seen the American stance on India as positive as it is now. The visit of prime minister Rajiv Gandhi appears to have left a durable imprint on the American mind. From my conversations with Americans within, or close to the foreign policy decision making process, it seems to me that in the remaining years of the Reagan administration, there will be four principal thrusts of US policy toward South Asia.

First, in order to confirm that Reagan meant his description of India as the "pivotal" power in South Asia, while welcoming Mr Rajiv Gandhi in the lush lawns of the White House last June, the United States will NOT enter into arms supply relationships with any of India's smaller neighbours — Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. There will be no American "ringing in" of India as Gandhi used to say.

Secondly, while the arms supplies and economic aid commitments to Pakistan will continue to be honoured, the Reagan administration will lower its political commitment to the military regime. An indication of this significant change was given by the State Department when it expressed its "dismay" at

the Pakistan government's decision to place Benazir Bhutto under house arrest and banned her political activities. This is the first time since January 1980 that the US articulated its disapproval of any domestic or foreign policy action of the government of Zia ul Haq. Anticipating Pakistan's transition to civilian rule in the next few months, the Reagan administration has evidently decided to build bridges publicly with the country's political leaders.

The third thrust of US policy toward South Asia will be a more accommodative attitude on the issue of a political settlement of the Afghan crisis. I came to understand from reliable sources that at the September round of the Geneva negotiations, being held under the auspices of the UN, the Pakistan side was more confident than before of US support if it could come to a satisfactory agreement covering withdrawal of Soviet troops and return of the Afghan refugees. The mellower US stance is presumably the studied result of an appreciation of the changing political scene in Pakistan and the rather quick souring of relations between Pakistanis and the Afghan refugees. Also, the US has been told by the Saudi Arabian government that, with oil prices tumbling, Riyadh cannot be expected to bear the bulk of the burden of the upkeep of the Afghan refugees indefinitely.

Fourthly, the United States will try to improve relations with India without demanding concessions that India cannot or shall not make.

The inauguration of India's second nuclear reactor capable of producing weapons-grade fuel did not provoke any damaging US reactions. American policy makers seem to like Mr Rajiv Gandhi's articulations on Pakistan's nuclear programme if these do not injure the India-Pakistan political negotiations for a better relationship. The Reagan administration has given up hope of selling arms to India in the next few years. It has recognised the durability of the India-Soviet friendship, and is even trying to understand the hows and whys of it.

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Fernand Braudel's conservatism

Joseph Fitchett

PARIS — The French historian Fernand Braudel honored the Academie Francaise by finally joining it after a decade of ignoring hints that he should apply for membership. Braudel, 82, widely considered the most influential historian since Arnold Toynbee, is the pre-eminent French cultural celebrity — far more famous than almost all the other members of the academy.

Even his new status as an "immortal" academician, however, is unlikely to broaden Braudel's public in France. His books are much less read than novelistic history-writing based on Braudel's approach — for example, best-sellers such as "Montaigne" by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, a former protege with whom Braudel has quarreled.

And his unwavering intellectual rigor — rejecting Jean-Paul Sartre's call for scholarship to be subordinated to political commitment — meant that Braudel never became a fashionable Latin Quarter intellectual.

With the help of his wife, Paule, known as Paulette, he has built a formidable power base in French academia, but international reputation (and substantial income) came only with his success in the United States in the early 1970s.

In the U.S. market, as in many other countries, the works of Braudel and contemporary French historians whom he influenced out-sell the books of French novelists, philosophers and sociologists such as Claude Levi-Strauss and Michel Foucault. The appeals of Braudel's brand of history are strong. His books are elegantly written frescoes in which famous events and heroes are rooted in rich details about the slowly changing cycles of everyday life.

Braudel was a historian for 25 years before publishing his first

important book, "The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II", in 1949. He composed it during five years in a German prisoner-of-war camp, drawing from memory on more than 10,000 notes from research over the previous decade.

The book established Braudel as the most brilliant practitioner of the French school of historians named for the magazine *Annales*. Their philosophy of history sought to retrieve the past in its totality. *Annales*, founded in 1929, attempted to incorporate into historical study the insights of the then-new social sciences: the structuralist analysis practiced by anthropologists and sociologists, the intuitions provided by Freudian psychoanalysis and, above all, Marxism's stress on economics.

*

IT is a type of history that provides such great panoramas as Braudel's "Civilization & Capitalism," published in French in three volumes in the 1970s. Practicing the broadest form of economic history, he developed the view that each historical era is dominated by a great trading city, always a port. From about 1380 to 1500, Venice was the center of world commerce and civilization. Amsterdam took over in the late 16th century, he says, succeeded by London during the industrial revolution and, in 1929, by New York.

His analysis of capitalism makes it the economic consequence of the emergence of elites, a phenomenon he believes is natural — deplorable perhaps, but inevitable. Asked by a Russian why he was not a Marxist, Braudel replied: "The only revolution worth believing in would produce equality, and none, including yours, has."

"Marx is wrong," he said in a recent interview. "Man does not

make history, history makes man." This conservatism, together with Braudel's passion for fascinating little facts sometimes verging on trivia, helps explain his success in the United States.

Braudel is finishing a three-volume history of France, which will surely be controversial, as it blames the French for many of the nation's troubles. In a disunited Europe, he said recently, France faces an era of decline in the face of industrial innovation in the United States and Japan.

In a more intimate tone, he has just published a little treatise on his favorite city, Venice, which he adores for its past epochs of power and pleasure. Like history, it is a place where the heirs of Western civilization can commune with their past, he writes: "When one is in Venice, one is free."

— IHT

US foreign policy . . .

(Continued from page 16)

While Indo-US trade will probably not be perceptively affected in the next few years by rising protectionism in America, there is just not enough surplus capital in America that can capture a large slice of the Indian industrial and service production market. With the dollar slowly falling and interest rates slowly declining, capital is not flowing into the US from Western Europe and Arabia at the rate of the last five years. India cannot therefore expect significant US private investment, nor foreign aid.

But American corporations appear to be getting more and more interested in tie-ups with Indian private or even public sector companies if the terms are found to be attractive. India's political leadership and stability is now definitely as economic asset in political as well as corporate American eyes.

A Flower of India

*Like a flower the reposeful face
Framed by a saree-edge of gold
Meets the people's anguished gaze.
(Assassin-torn body in marigold)*

*Eyes of millions turn to the martyr,
Mother to a struggling people
And the Third World's leader.
By duty strong, by nature gentle.*

*How can a far-off gang of men
Plotting the day's conspiracy
Against such a mass of men
Turn a nation's destiny?*

*The drum-beat taps steadily on
Mocking the frantic plotters' haste,
Confident in the rites of an ancient nation.
The efforts of the evil are a waste.*

*Incense of camphor, sandalwood,
A chant from time immemorial,
Saffron, jasmine from the wood
Indira's now an Indian perennial.*

Patrick Jayasuriya

The Cynical Soldier

*After we leave, no bayonet will poke fun
Those bones will be too putrid and plain
With still some carrion around.
Crows will now hover around or perch high
For a second assault, or a keener view
Of a priceless target, once rare.
A bargain has been struck
Between two motives, and two lives
At the end of a cynical soldier's gun.*

Tilak A. Gunawardhana

India's role . . .

(Continued from page 12)

government has now offered provincial councils for the northern and eastern provinces but with little power. It has rejected the demand for a single Tamil linguistic region i. e. the linking of the north and east. It has also refused to grant to the provincial councils power over land, land settlements and over law and order i. e. the police. These are steep obstacles to any settlement.

The only viable alternative to the demand for a separate state of Eelam can only be full regional

autonomy to a single Tamil linguistic region which shall comprise the northern and eastern provinces. Such autonomy envisages the setting up of a regional parliament, alongside the existing central parliament, and which exercises all powers in its territory except those of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Finance, which shall be reserved for the centre. Any thing else will be eye wash.

The progressive movement among both the Sinhalese and the Tamils should demand with one voice that the above suggestion be implemented as the only way to prevent separation and civil war.

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The destruction of America

Tissa Jayatileka

Very little in Jones's background is suggestive of the road he subsequently chose to travel on. Everett LeRoi Jones was born* in Newark, New Jersey, on October 7, 1934, into a lower middle-class family.¹ His own family was no different from most other lower middle-class families in Black America. As government workers, Jones's parents existed on a modest income: the mother, Anna Lois Jones, "was a social welfare worker" and the father, Coyt LeRoy Jones, "was a postal worker."² Most members of his immediate family circle were either preachers or teachers.

Jones was an exceptionally bright child and his parents did everything to encourage the development of his special gifts. For example, at an early age he had shown a fondness for making political speeches and had been coached in doing so by his father.³ He was a voracious reader, too, and in his high school days a writer of short stories. Upon early graduation from high school, Jones received scholarship offers from several reputable universities. Unfortunately, Jones's choice, Rutgers University, proved to be a disappointment. Because of his sense of alienation from the predominantly White community on campus, Jones soon began to feel

uncomfortable and out of place at Rutgers. Consequently, it became virtually impossible for him to participate in the extra-curricular activities this particular environment had to offer. Having endured this sense of isolation from his immediate environment for the better part of his freshman year, Jones decided to do something practical to overcome it: he bade farewell to Rutgers and entered Howard University. Here, he was to encounter discomfort of a different sort. Jones's discovery that the Blacks at Howard were being taught how to pretend to be White disturbed him acutely:

Howard University shocked me into realizing how desperately sick the Negro could be, how he could be led into self-destruction and how he would not realize that it was the society that had forced him into a great sickness....⁴

After Howard, Jones entered the Air Force. The experience here gave him an insight into what he felt to be the oppressive nature of Whites. Returning to Newark, New Jersey, upon completion of his tour of duty in the Air Force, Jones found employment commensurate with his academic credentials hard to come by. The situation was exacerbated, it appears, by discrimination on racial grounds.⁵ So Jones left for the big city, for Greenwich Village, to seek his fortune.

In the city he met Hettie Cohen, a White Jewish woman, who had written some poetry and worked in an editorial capacity

for *Partisan Review*. Being an independent-minded person with a keen interest in the arts, she was temperamentally very similar to the young Jones. Their relationship matured into marriage in the autumn of 1958, during a period when the non-violent Civil Rights Movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was in full swing; a period in which a conscious effort was being made by both Blacks and Whites to facilitate the achievement of interracial harmony within American society. Marriages between Blacks and Whites, if not actually encouraged, were not being looked down upon as was the tendency hitherto.

We are told that Jones's home was the scene of parties and get-togethers for young artists and intellectuals, both Black and White, who lived in the area at that time. These included, among others, Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, Franz Kline, Charles Olson, Theolonius Monk, and Ornette Coleman.⁶ Jones and his wife edited and published a literary magazine titled *Yugen* from 1958 to 1963. In 1960 and 1965 respectively Jones was the recipient of John Hay Whitney and Guggenheim Fellowships. During the period 1962-1965 he taught courses in post-1945 American Poetry at the New School for Social Research and at the University of Buffalo.⁷ Jones also did editorial work at the Totem Press and Corinth Books. Theodore R. Hudson considers *The Moderns: An Anthology of Modern Writing in America* to be Jones's major achievement as an editor during his stay in the Village.⁸ In the late 1950's Jones began writing drama. As has been noted in the introduction to this

1 In writing this chapter I have relied heavily on Hudson (see above, p. 27, n. 6) and on Brown (see above, p. 29, n. 9), the two foremost authorities on Jones's life. I have relied also for certain additional information on Professor Johnella E. Butler of the Department of Afro-American Studies at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, and on my classmates in the Graduate Seminar, "20th Century American Society and Culture," at Smith College, Spring, 1983. Hereafter I shall refer to the latter source as "Seminar, Spring, 1983."

2 Brown, p. 17.

3 Hudson, p. 8.

4 LeRoi Jones, "Philistinism and the Negro Writer," in *Anger and Beyond*, ed. Herbert Hill (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 51-52.

5 Hudson, p. 12.

6 Brown, p. 20.

7 Brown, p. 21.

8 Hudson, p. 16.

study, his best-known play, *Dutchman*, appeared in 1964. *Preface*, his first volume of poetry, was published in 1961 while his second collection of poetry, *The Deed Lecturer*, appeared in 1964. These volumes contained some of his poetry that had already been published in non-mainstream periodicals as well as in *Evergreen Review* and *Massachusetts Review*.

Jones's career up to 1964 has been referred to as his "Village period,"⁹ a period when Jones was the toast of the New York cultural scene. It was also, however, at about this time that Jones, becoming restless and listless, felt a pull towards producing work that would satisfy a deeper yearning. Despite the encomiums he received from the admiring literati of the day, he came to realize there were new and different feelings within him, feelings which he has explicated in "Home":

I have been a lot of places in my time and done a lot of things. And there is a sense of the Prodigal about my life that begs to be resolved. But one truth anyone reading these pieces ought to get is **the sense of movement — the struggle in myself, to understand where and who I am**, and move with that understanding... (emphasis added). And these moves, most times unconscious... seem to me to have been always toward the thing I had coming into the world, with no sweat: my blackness... By the time this book appears, I will be even blacker.¹⁰

Thus Jones had continued to nurse feelings of alienation from White America even while he was leading a racially integrated existence in Greenwich Village.

During this period when Jones was engaged in intense soul-searching, certain crucial changes

were occurring in the American body politic, changes which are discussed later in this study. We are still too close to the period involved to give it a permanent name, or even to assess it with authority. Nevertheless, we could with some justification refer to the post-1960 era as The New Black Renaissance.¹¹ The period has much in common with the New Negro (Harlem) Renaissance of the 1920's. Both experienced an unusual and startling literary and artistic upsurge; both emphasized the folk background and the African roots of the Negro heritage; both stressed the importance of strong pride in race; and both insisted that militancy of one kind or the other, not gradualism, was the way to first-class citizenship.¹²

Several important influences helped give shape to post-1960 Afro-American writing. The first was the spirit of the times. The period heralded by the youthful idealism of the "New Frontier", one of the most turbulent in history, was also one of the most turbulent periods in the Negro's history. The mid-50's and the 60's witnessed sit-ins, kneel-ins, pray-ins, and other defiant practices on the part of Negroes; the dangerous and effective voter-crusade marches in the South; the rise to prominence of two martyr leaders Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X; the bitter reaction to the Vietnam War; the appearance of the Black Panthers; the riots, burnings, and lootings in the inner cities of America. These were acts which told America in strong terms that Afro-Americans were fed up with promises, that they wanted equality without further delay.¹³ Much of the turbulence of the 1960's is reflected in the tone and in the subject matter of the era's literature.

11 Seminar, Spring, 1984.

12 Seminar, Spring, 1983. See also Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Inglewood, California: Kawaida Publications, 1982), pp. 294-320, and Johnella E. Butler, *Black Studies: Pedagogy and Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1981), pp. 45-58.

13 Seminar, Spring, 1983.

It was his involvement in the Black Power Movement of the 1960's that became the catalyst for the radical change in LeRoi Jones. It was this involvement that moved him to deal with his cultural anguish, with the discontent that had arisen, as has already been pointed out, out of his growing alienation from White America. Prior to his intimate association with this political movement, Jones's writing was on the whole, apolitical and introspective. Because he then felt that direct involvement in politics was outside of his responsibility as a writer, he had no intention of entering the fray. In his essay "Cuba Libre" (1961), he wrote, "I'm a poet... what can I do? I write, that's all, I am not even interested in politics."¹⁴ Four years later, by contrast, he could write:

The Black Artist's role in America is to aid in the destruction of America as he knows it. His role is to report and reflect so precisely the nature of the society, and of himself in that society, that other men will be moved by the exactness of his rendering and, if they are black' men, grow strong through this moving, having seen their own strength, and weaknesses; and if they are white men, tremble, curse and go mad, because they will be drenched with the filth of their evil.

The Black Artist must draw out of his soul the correct image of the world. He must use this image to band his brothers and sisters together in common understanding of the nature of the world (and the nature of America) and the nature of the human soul.

The Black Artist must demonstrate sweet life, how it differs from the deathly grip of the White Eyes. The Black Artist must teach the White Eyes their deaths, and teach the black man how to bring these deaths about.¹⁵

To be continued

14 LeRoi Jones, "Cuba Libre," in *Home: Social Essays*, p. 42.

9 Hudson, p. 16.

10 LeRoi Jones, "Home", in *Homo: Social Essays*, pp. 9-10.

“Repaying one's debt or starving one's children?”

Richard Jolly

The other requirement of macro adjustment policy relates to the total flow of financial resources in support of countries undertaking adjustment. Almost certainly, the protection of minimum human standards as part of adjustment policy in a highly constrained economy will require some additional financial support from outside and for such support to be sustained over a longer period to permit adjustment to be more gradual. Already, this is widely recognized in principle and provides the donors to provide such support. There are two organizational problems which need to be tackled, however.

First, in most cases, the negotiations with the IMF on adjustment policy take place before hand and separately from the broader discussions of development policy. At the best this leads to economic inefficiency in the sense that the adjustment parts of the programme are not fully integrated with the long term development parts and with the resources required and available to support them. But in the worst cases, demands for an adjustment process are set in motion and in an *ad hoc* and haphazard way, with different donors and voluntary agencies left **subsequently** to deal with the neglected human dimensions. A more coherent and integrated approach is primarily a matter of institutionalizing a coherent discussion of the human and development issues, at the time of and part of the original adjustment discussion. In practical terms, the consultative Group Meetings called by the World Bank and the round

table meetings organized by UNDP would be an appropriate forum especially if these meetings formally adopted a commitment to be concerned with the protection of minimum living standards as a part of their agenda.

The second and major omission of macro adjustment at the moment, is the inadequacy of the total flow of resources. In the case of Africa, the challenge is as much in decreasing the annual **out-flows** of interest and amortization payments on debt as in increasing of the gross **in-flows** of development support. It is not my purpose towards the close of this lecture to enter into full discussion of these issues. Much has been written and many proposals have been put forward. But I wish to underline the parallel between the minimum flow of finance required from outside.

There comes a point beyond which no variations in adjustment policy can succeed in **both** protecting the nutritional and welfare needs of the population **and** in maintaining the out-flow of foreign exchange required for servicing very high levels of debt. At that point a choice must be made. As President Nyerere has said, the choice becomes one of repaying one's debt or starving one's children.

Yet, as Barbara would have reminded us, there are examples in history where the need for a ceiling on debt repayments has been recognized. In the case of reparation the high levels of payments by Germany after the 1st

World War, Keynes argued eloquently but without success for a reduction. His failure to convince the authorities in time stimulated as many have recognized, the rise of Nazism and the inexorable moves to the 2nd World War.

In the 1930's, a number of Latin American countries called **force majeure** on debt servicing and some repayments were never completed. An interesting African tradition, known at least in West Africa, is for victors in tribal warfare to take cattle and property from the vanquished but never so much as to leave woman and children with too little to eat. How civilised compared with our institutionalized international arrangements at present!

I do not propose how the issue of debt restructuring, retroactive terms of adjustment increases in debt prices or increases in financial aid should best be tackled at the moment, especially for the poorest countries in Africa. All I know is that for so long such issues are debated and so little has been done. Must the efforts of countries to protect the nutritional standards of their population be abandoned through lack of international support?

Again Barbara would have reminded us of the benefits to the industrial countries, in terms of economic returns as well as of political stability, of concerted international action to increase support to the poor countries. She proposed a 20-year Marshall Plan for the Third World, which the Brandt Report further elaborated. The fact that this idea is still

not seriously on the international agenda reflects not lack of need and inappropriateness, but the current economic ideology of the dominant and the lack of vision and international leadership. And for this reason much of the Third World languishes. Yet the inadequacy of current inaction will in time be recognized in the North as already in the South, serious debate on forward movement will return. We, who are convinced of the need for change, should not falter in our convictions but be exploring how to turn vision into action.

I come finally to the last and most difficult part. What makes me imagine that any of those who would be involved have the slightest interest in a change in approach? The government in power, the international agencies, especially the Bank, the IMF — and the private international banking groups, and, hardly unimportant, those in the major industrial countries who exercise a dominating influence on the policies and approaches of the international financial agencies.

Let's not make it seem too easy a question of agreeing together and then imagining that the citadels of financial power will collapse or a change of policy will be agreed and implemented at the next round of meetings in September.

But nor should we make change seem impossible. History shows endless examples of power, and the wisdom of the day, resting on sand sometimes shifting sand, up sometimes sinking sand swallowing all before. The more uncertain the foundations, the stronger the protestations that the base is rock solid.

Keynes put it that the power of vested interests was vastly exaggerated compared to the power of ideas. Barbara more poetically "we learn from the visionaries, we do not learn from the practical men of affairs. They are marvellous, once the direction is set, but you will not find them in the forefront. They were not in the forefront in the 19th Century they are not in the 20th Century".

Certainly there is much questioning — sometimes re-thinking — on adjustment policy among those directly involved — in the international agencies and among bankers.

It is not difficult to think of Third World leaders struggling to protect or implement a more human-focused approach. Not every Third World leader is concerned — but why should we withhold support from those who do?

And there are industrial country supporters for a more human-focussed approach: government in a number of cases and probably a sizeable proportion of the population in many others especially if they knew the facts. The outpouring of popular support for Africa followed when the ordinary television viewer saw what was happening. The dramatic change of **government** policies and support **followed after that**. Would donor country government remain so unmoved on debt and adjustment issues if their populations realized what was really happening.

So stirrings are afoot in many quarters — but existing approaches, with only minor changes, remain in place. And the inefficiencies and absurdities continue — and the people suffer.

So what holds us back? Inadequate evidence? The adequacy of the present situation, the radical nature of alternatives? Everyday I become more convinced it is none of these but factors systematically ignored by social scientists and many others: vision values and leadership.

Here I must quote Babara again for she makes the points so much more eloquently than others. "Virtually everything that works began with a vision and with a group of idealists prepared to work for it. Things which would have seemed inconceivable in early days of history, began with as unlikely a group as the small quaker movement dedicating itself to the abolition of slavery. Everyone assumed that slavery was part of nature. Yet we have lived through a period in which slavery was

abolished. Or take the great events which started with the American revolution. Or who would have conceived in 1980's that imperialism would be dissolved in another hundred years".

"Our visionary perspective is the true realism and that is what we have got to pursue".

(Concluded)

Cat's Eye

(Continued from page 5)

Film on four women

A FILM by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies on "Four Women" an attempt to depict the lives of women from different ethnic groups who are trying to confront problems associated with crisis both in family and in society.

These four women have only one thing in common — they are urban working-class women who have been deserted by the men who fathered their children. In every other way they are different from each other. Each belongs to a different ethnic group. Nazeema is a Muslim, Sumitra a Sinhalese Buddhist, Supamma a Tamil Hindu and Stella a Sinhalese Christian.

There is a widely held belief that Sri Lankan women enjoy a high physical quality of life and they are equal partners at home and in the developmental process. The film attempts to contrast the perspective of women who have become victims of a strongly patriarchal legal and social order.

The case-studies are interspersed with (1) interviews of women academics, social activists and social workers who work with women, (2) interviews of judges, lawyers, policy-makers, politicians, and religious leaders whose attitudes condition the type of justice that women receive and (3) passages from the religious text concerning Woman's chastity and her role within the family.

Ms. Ein Lall, better known to her fellow Sri Lankans as Ein Kaleel, has directed and scripted the film.

Letters

The English . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Peradeniya's English Department refreshing. Ms Perera has gratuitously advised me that instead of irreverence "contumely" is the word I should have used in that context. Considering the nature of the authorities she is prone to quote, I don't feel inclined to accept her advice. Irreverence is precisely the word that conveys the exact shade of meaning I wished to communicate.

Peradeniya's English Department has certified Qadri Ismail as a first class student. Criticisms of the Department by such a graduate cannot be lightly dismissed. If Ms Perera has taken upon herself the task of defending the Department, she must come to grips with the criticisms that Ismail has made and refute them in detail. Just saying that Ismail is "baffled" will not do (L.G. 1 October).

Suggesting as Ms Perera has done (in Lanka Guardian, 15 August 1985) that Ismail's "intellectual infrastructure" is inadequate to write a critical evaluation of the Department in which he spent some four years, does even greater damage to the Department's reputation than attempting to defend it by quoting a well-known prostitute. For if indeed Qadri Ismail is so deficient intellectually, why did the Department award him a first-class?

Carlo Fonseka

The too heavy 'Kaduwa'

MR. QADRI Ismail has been trying to heave a 'Kaduwa' too heavy for him at all kinds of things he does not understand; one of these days he might do himself some grievous injury.

We have to take notice of his gibberish about English literature and how it's taught at Peradeniya because 'LG' has published it and because it proves that the Dept. of English for reasons which are obvious, has become less discriminating in selecting students for its course.

'After four years studying English literature at the University of Peradeniya' Qadri Ismail has not merely escaped the 'hegemony of the text' (he mangles a Pound two-liner), but fathers on Coleridge a poem every school child used to know, hasn't figured out what 'dating' (of texts) is all about and can't tell a canto from his elbow. As for his 'practical crit', well.

Who's to blame? It is difficult to teach somebody something he doesn't want to learn, but the Dept. should have helped channel him to a course he might have been better equipped to follow.

What's to be done? Going back to campus would take four years more out of his young life. Since he seems determined to be a journalist, he has to do something about the 'kaduwa' he chooses to

brandish. For a start, Samaranayake's "Practical English" should do nicely: subject-object-predicate, followed by exercises in comprehension. 'Composition' could come later. A trained teacher would be best.

Gamini Seneviratne

Colombo 6.

Dr. Carlo Fonseka & the Election Law

IN THE course of one short letter Dr. Fonseka uses the non-sequitur, the personal remark, self-contradiction and misrepresentation — almost every weapon in the armoury of the Professional paralogist. When I propose we take a certain view Dr. Fonseka suggests that I am "professing" to that view with the implication of insincerity. When I say we make too much heavy weather over election-time allegations he draws the conclusion that I am opposed to the limitation of presidential immunity. I am "a major jackass" for failing to see something or other and, at the same time, "too smart a man to fail to grasp" something else. He employs such sneering locutions as: "With the air of a very superior person...etc." Dr. Fonseka would do well to effect some repairs to his prose style. Dr. Carlo Fonseka knows nothing about my "class" just as I know nothing of his; and I certainly do not have anything to gain from the President's "immunity from election offences", whatever that is supposed to mean. Class, I suspect, is Dr. Fonseka's koka-tath thailaya to be rubbed on all whose views he disagrees with. When such a man speaks of "truly representative democracy" I must presume what he has in mind is the one man — one vote — one candidate — one party system of election that obtains in the workers paradise.

I do not believe that Dr. Fonseka and I share the same register of discourse.

V. P. Vittachi

Colombo 3.

Musicians seek to make a better world

Famed bluesman B.B. King performing before 78,000 people at the Farmaid benefit held recently in Champaign Urbana, Illinois., USA.

The current economic crunch has compelled increasing numbers of musicians, artists and writers to assist and defend those people

most affected by the crisis. Music events such as Liveaid, USA for Africa and the new anti-apartheid Sun City record are means to link up with the unemployed and hungry workers of the world in a common fight for a better life.

— Peoples' Tribune

The Sikh parallel

THE Sikhs have won the election held on 25-9-85 in Punjab province for the Punjab Assembly with a two third majority, defeating Mr Rajiv Gandhi's Congress I Party. Mr. Gandhi has said it was a defeat for his party but a victory for democracy and Mother India. On the same occasion he asked the Sri Lanka leaders to take note of how democracy won in Punjab province.

Let us compare how the two ethnic minorities — the Sikhs in India and the Tamils in Sri Lanka have fared.

(1) The Punjab Province, which the Sikhs densely occupy, has its legislative assembly which is in full charge of the province except for matters of all India concern like foreign affairs and defence. The Sri Lankan Tamils densely occupying the northern and Eastern provinces asked for nearly thirty years that they be allowed to manage their internal affairs like local government, land, education, health services and the like. Agreements were reached with both the major Sinhalese parties but not honoured.

(2) The Sikhs demanded greater autonomy and the demand for separation, Kalistan, was taken up by a growing number of Sikhs extremists. The Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest shrine of the Sikh religion, was used as a military base and it became necessary to clean it up by force. The Prime Minister, Indra Gandhi, who ordered the clean up was gunned down by her own long-standing Sikh body guards. The Sri Lankan Tamil militants, seeking to separate, gunned down no Prime Minister, inspite of the flower of their youth being gunned down, culminating in the holocaust of July 1983. Indeed the Tamil militants scrupulously avoided any attack on Sinhalese civilians, in or out of their provinces, for a number of years after the opening of the undeclared war against them.

(3) The assassination of the Hindu Prime Minister by her trusted Sikh guards so enraged the Hindu community that innocent Sikhs were attacked, chiefly in Delhi. The new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, the son of the slain Premier, went the very next day to Delhi and said: This madness must stop. To satisfy the Sikhs he has ordered a judicial inquiry. In Sri Lanka when the July 83 massacre began it was allowed to run its full course for a whole week before the President spoke. To this day no inquiry has been ordered, even about the slaughter of 52 Tamil militant leaders while in government custody, in the government's most secure jail.

(4) The Indian Prime Minister had discussions with the Akali Dal, the main Sikh party who put down several demands, including a capital city for themselves, instead of sharing it with the neighbouring province. They did not demand separation. After prolonged discussion agreement was reached, the Sikhs getting all the demands met including a capital city for themselves. In Sri Lanka the government has been unable for eight years to agree among themselves about the grant of any meaningful devolution of power to the Tamils of the North and East provinces.

(5) To ascertain whether the agreement reached with the Sikhs is acceptable to the people of Punjab province, where a large number of Hindus also live, the Prime Minister of India ordered a general election in Punjab province. He did not think it necessary to have a general election all over India. He felt it was the concern of only the people of Punjab province to vote how they should be governed. In Sri Lanka the government insists that any agreement with regard to how the Tamil problem in the Northern and Eastern provinces is settled must be approved by all the provinces in Sri Lanka.

(6) The people of Punjab have voted and even the Hindus who normally support Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's party voted for the Sikh Akali Dal party. In the recent by-election in Mulkirigala in Sri Lanka the chief plank of the contest between the two major contesting Sinhalese parties was who could eradicate Tamil 'Terrorism' more ruthlessly.

The people of Punjab, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, all can now get together and begin to develop strife-torn Punjab.

Rajiv Gandhi who loves democracy and mother India, though his party was defeated, is happy. He wants the Sri Lanka leaders to take a leaf from the Sikh experience of how a much more complicated ethnic minority problem in India was solved.

Dr. R. W. Crossette Thambiah
Jaffna

Another look...

(Continued from page 14)

'The characters of the French, German and English, in Dostoevsky's view, had in the course of the historical development of those countries been poured out into a certain completed mould; the Russian national character still found itself in the process of development; hence the externally "unformed" natures of Aleksei Ivanovich and Polina, hence too the striving, inherent in the Russian person, to overcome the narrowness of the social forms which had coalesced in the West. In this the writer saw the historical superiority of Russia — a guarantee that in the not distant future she would be able to seek out the road to higher ideals for all humanity. In connection with this intellectual-artistic conception of the novel the figure of the Russian "grandmother", Antonida Vasilyevna, which is not without its symbolic character, has important significance.'



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