

SPECIAL

RAJIV REGAINS THE INITIATIVE

— *Bhabani Sen Gupta*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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IF TALKS FAIL

I'll unleash the troops and wipe out this trouble in a month — JR warns

THE FINAL ROUND

- "IRA" war on Colombo
 - What does Tiger supremacy mean ?
 - Tamilnadu Pressures on Rajiv
 - Chidambaram and Functional Linkage
- *Mervyn de Silva*



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ANURA'S DEMARCHE

Of the political fall-out from the Chidambaram mission probably the most unexpected and yet highly significant was the encounter between the young Indian premier's latest envoy and Sri Lanka's young Opposition leader. Youth is not the only link between the present generation of Gandhis and the Bandaranaiques; the two families, as Anura noted in his speech in Parliament, have been friendly since independence.

What is more, their ideological outlook, particularly on foreign policy, has had many common features. Historically, too. It was S. W. R. D. who represented Ceylon at the first Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1941.

But Anura not only lashed out at Mr. Chidambaram and Rupavahini in a newspaper controversy over "training camps in Tamilnadu" but trained his guns on Mr. Rajiv Gandhi himself. As a result, the UNP and SLFP was caught in a sudden reversal of roles. When the UNP's chief spokesman in the parliamentary debate Dr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis referred to Mr. Gandhi as "an honourable man" who was nonetheless a politician who had to "work within a democratic framework", Anura snapped back "that's no excuse for trying to decimate our country".

FINANCIAL ANARCHY

Are Ministries publicly accountable for the public funds they spend? Technically they should. The Public Accounts Committee, the Auditor-General and the Treasury are the traditional watch-dogs. But the watch-dogs have gone to sleep or given a sleeping tablet by the mighty Political Establishment and a compliant bureaucracy.

But some at least have woken up to sound an alarm. The Auditor-General has done his job conscientiously but seems helpless to tackle the mess. The COPE Chairman, Mr. John Ameratunge, had some stern strictures to

make on State sector enterprises. And now the PAC, chaired by Mr. W. P. S. Dissanayake, MP for Gampola, has found the situation so scandalous that he has called for the enactment of a Public Financial Administration Act. His report refers to "numerous instances of fraud, error and other irregularities reported by the AG annually", and "heavy unauthorised excesses". When will accountability be restored? How many ministries spend 20% of the budget for the "maintenance" for which the monies are voted by Parliament?

THE LAST OPTIMIST

The CWC leader, Mr. S. Thondaman who watched with great satisfaction the UNP government solve the residual problem of 94,000 'stateless' plantation workers in only 16 days (Ambassador Corea told the US Congress this success deserved a place in the Guinness Book of Records!) remains an optimist to the end. While the Tamil leadership and people despair, and Tamilnadu shouts "genocide" and the Sinhalese leaders talk of 'decimation' 'Cyprus' and "the 2,500 year war", Mr. Thondaman told the ISLAND that the new, written proposals were "specific" and the Tamil leaders need not be concerned with North-East merger, if their 'pressing problems' (land, security, education etc) were settled.

TRENDS + LETTERS

Liberal Moralist or Political Turncoat?

Dr. Chanaka Amaratunga the self-proclaimed Liberal explicitly states that the deprivation of Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights in 1980 constitutes powerful evidence of the "tragic decline of Sri Lankan parliamentary democracy" (*Lanka Guardian*, 1 April 1986).

I write this only because Dr. Amaratunga has been attempting of late to conduct the equivalent of a political moral rearmament movement in this country through the medium of the Council for Liberal Democracy. If he wishes to be taken seriously he has some explaining to do. He professes to have been morally outraged by the deprivation of Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights in 1980. If so, how did he morally contrive to remain a member of the UNP's Propaganda Committee until almost the end of 1982? If he cannot satisfactorily explain that, he preaches political morality in

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WAR AND PEACE : THE FINAL PHASE (I)

NEWS
BACKGROUND

WHY COLOMBO WAS THE TARGET

Mervyn de Silva

It wasn't another Anuradhapura, which was a cold-blooded massacre on the grand scale in the holiest of Buddhist places of worship, and therefore a savage and stunning blow to the Sinhala psyche. Nothing is secure, not even the most sacred. The signature of the Tamil 'Tigers' was all too clear although the LTTE took some time over formal claims. Stunned, the Sinhala people did not react. Relieved, a deeply troubled government turned hopefully to Delhi, receptive to its urgent calls for negotiations. And so from the blood-spattered bazaar of Anuradhapura the path to peace led to the Himalayan heights of Thimpu, Bhutan.

But Thimpu today is represented only by two documents or 'accords' which failed to find common ground between the government and even the parliamentarist TULF, and even more strikingly failed to stop the war on the ground:

No, May 1986 was significantly different from May 1985. The airport and CTO explosions were more expertly planned, if less daring, and more coldly calculated in the choice of targets. These were classic one-two punches, one a deadly body-blow to the national economy, the other to an unprotected jaw, the communications centre right in the busiest part of the capital city.

None of the Eelam groups have claimed responsibility. In fact, all have rushed to the press with strong denials, with LTTE spokesman, Dr. Balasingham, not only condemning the attack but using the taboo term "terrorism" in an interview with the BBC. The National Security Minister has

accused EROS of the CTO blast which left more persons dead and injured than the explosion in the Air Lanka plane.

More important than 'Who dunit?' is 'Why?'. The Anuradhapura massacre, some commentators argued, was a direct, typically 'Tigerish' massive retaliation for a tough Security forces' operation in Valvettiturai, Prabhakaran's home town. The effect, anyway, was to push Colombo to the negotiating table.

What do the attacks on the first anniversary on Anuradhapura mean?

Pre-selected Targets

Mr. Athulathmudali is of course absolutely right when he stresses the economic factor in the 'Air Lanka' operation and speaks of a concerted rebel campaign to weaken the economy'. The immediate cancellation of bookings and hotel reservations confirmed the accuracy of that reading. Four and five-star hotels are already half-empty, in spite of a sharp price cutting competition among the city's recently opened luxury hotels. An already ailing tourist industry was the larger target, not just the hotels. The Japanese tourist market, a lately opened area for both 'Air Lanka' and Sri Lankan tourism, offers a striking illustration. Nearly 80% of Japanese tourists came to Colombo on their way to or way back from the Maldives. Colombo may not be such a popular stop-over anymore.

Communications is as strategic an area as air transport, the Ministry statement observes. Right again. The CTO is the nerve centre.

But that doesn't go far enough. The IRA-style attack has an IRA-type message. We can strike at the very heart of your capital. If one looks however at the history of the IRA, a much longer history than that of the 'Tigers' the IRA's accessibility to targets in the south, the strategic importance of the targets and the regularity of the operations, all show that the IRA's military capability is quite limited. The explanation of course lies in the relative strengths of British government and IRA. Precisely, because of the greater defence capability of the UK government, the IRA's successes, however dramatic the operations mounted, have been few and far between.

No Ulster Option

In short, London and the British government have the relative advantage of a physically 'contained' IRA whose reach and strike-power, can produce incidents with great, 'demonstration-effect' but can in no way disturb the tenour of life in the south. In sum, Britain has the comparative comfort of containment. Which is precisely why Mrs. Thatcher had the confidence to sign an agreement with the Irish Republic.

Partly because of size and geographic compactness, and partly because the relative military capacities are not so favourable to the Sri Lankan government, Colombo is denied the choice of "ulsterization". That is one of the principal lessons of explosion in the city. (SEE J. R. ON CYPRUS)

This still leaves us with the all-important question of 'Why?' unanswered.

(Continued on page 5)

The Politics of the LTTE's May Day Offensive

LTTTE criticism of TELO 'fund-raising' methods and other group practices, disputes over respective 'control zones', furious debates over which group was the more popular and the more disciplined, open clashes in the streets, mutual charges of doubtful 'foreign' patronage and infiltration by various foreign agencies, abductions and then killings, paved the way for a dramatic, perfectly coordinated LTTE offensive on TELO camps. Using their superior radio communications system, the LTTE captured or destroyed TELO camp after camp in the north until it finally mounted its own search-and-destroy operation for the TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam. He was found in Kondavil near Jaffna, gunned down promptly and cremated the same day.

At first, the LTTE denied all responsibility for the killings and TELO spokesmen in Madras were mum on his reported death. But by May 7, the truth was out. Sabaratnam was dead, at least 200 TELO fighters had been killed while other activists surrendered "en masse".

Will TELO disband and its surviving cadres team up with LTTE or will the search for a new leader, reported by the HINDU, succeed? On the answer to that question will depend how far the LTTE, the founder group of the Tamil armed resistance, can emerge as the undisputed guerrilla group in the north, leaving the eastern province to the rest.

The political importance of this new development cannot possibly be ignored. The TULF's reaction was revealing. Its politburo said "the fratricidal killings at this most critical period in our history could not but weaken the freedom struggle of the Tamil people" The TULF

appealed to the militants to stop fighting each other and work unitedly to achieve "our common goal".

Delhi's Diminishing Leverage

But what is 'the common goal'? The TULF's avowed goal is 'Eelam', the election slogan on which it swept to power in 1977. It then demonstrated once more its political supremacy in the north at the 1981 District Councils polls, in spite of the invasion of the peninsula by Sri Kotha 'storm-troopers' and their blatant attempts at Marcosian electoral manipulation. But "Eelam" remains for the TULF a maximum and largely rhetorical demand. Not so, evidently for Prabhakaran and his LTTE. For him, Eelam is still the basic, non-negotiable demand. And only direct pressure (or direct action) from Delhi can force the LTTE to settle for less. Whether Delhi could do so without the support of Tamilnadu is an open question and has very much to do with Delhi's leverage, perhaps fast diminishing leverage, over both Tamilnadu and the Tamil rebel groups. Considering the present political climate in Tamilnadu, direct action (the use of para-military forces for a massive crack-down) may be almost impossible. (SEE MADURAI MEETING)

Military supremacy in the north will present problems for both Colombo and Delhi. The left-inclined groups are more responsive to the idea of a political settlement than the fiercely nationalistic LTTE. This incidentally creates a special predicament for those UNP leaders who present the ethnic conflict and insurgency as an ideological "Marxist" threat to the Sri Lankan state than a secessionist threat.

For India, the LTTE's military ascendancy in the North also complicates the situation. It would allow the LTTE a much greater autonomy vis-a-vis Delhi, if not in relation to Tamilnadu.

The well-informed Delhi correspondent of the HINDU understood the implications of this new situation when he wrote:

"The big dilemma now is how to initiate this new dialogue and with whom to talk to in the light of fratricidal strife between the Tamil militants. The government of India can start off by talking first to the TULF leaders but no new dialogue can be initiated without the active participation or association of the militants".

Even if Delhi is finally convinced that the Sri Lankan offer is reasonable enough to persuade the TULF to accept it, can Mr. Gandhi win over PLOTE, TELO EROS, EPRLF? That would still leave the LTTE out.

Of course all these questions crop up only if the Sri Lankan offer is seen as acceptable by Delhi. (SEE CHIDAMBARAM'S ROUND).

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

vain. For in that case he would really be no better than my friend Dr. Neville Fernando of Panadura. As a member of the UNP Dr. Fernando voted for the deprivation of Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights. After he was sacked from the UNP for racism he joined the SLFP and campaigned for the restoration of her civic rights!

Carlo Fonseca

Faculty of Medicine
University of Colombo

Chidambaram's Round — merger or functional linkage?

The TULF leaders were invited to Delhi last weekend (May 10-11) for talks on the Sri Lankan government's latest proposals on powers for the provincial councils. This was the first sign that the India had been basically satisfied that the Chidambaram mission to Colombo had made a breakthrough in the deadlocked Indo-Sri Lankan negotiations on the ethnic issue.

But for President Jayewardene's personal last-minute intervention, Mr. Chidambaram, Mr. Gandhi's newest negotiator and his three-member team of experts, would have packed their bags and left for Madras-Delhi by Friday May 2. As it is, they left on Sunday after two more rounds of talks with President JR and Mr. Athulathmudali and Mr. Gamini Dissanayake. But for Mr. Chidambaram's patience, studiousness and pertinacity, the latest proposals would have lacked the clarity which they now possess. "The skeletal frame is now much clearer but more flesh and blood are needed" was the guarded comment of sources close to Mr. Chidambaram.

President JR's fundamental approach was summed up in the following words: (a) a readiness to compromise on the constitutional framework as long as the amendments did not require a referendum and (b) no North-east 'merger' as demanded by the Tamils.

The Ministers learnt a few days later that Sri Lanka had gone as far as possible and it was now left to Mr. Gandhi to do his best. The domestic political constraints on Mr. Gandhi were understood and appreciated. He presided over the world's biggest democracy and had to contend with political opinion in

Tamilnadu. He would not like to despatch para-military forces to quell disturbances in that large southern state. But if he failed, then Sri Lanka would have to rely on its own resources and safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity and security as best as it could.

The Indo-Sri Lankan discussions covered three broad, overlapping areas: the powers of the provincial councils, inter-provincial arrangements, and the constitutional framework.

Powers included four main topics; language, education, law and order (Police) and land policy, notably future settlements. The last two topics were the most knotty and the negotiations the most time-consuming. Two papers were prepared, with India more satisfied, surprisingly, over the offer on land policy than on the powers that would be given to the provincial police and the jurisdiction vested in the Chief Minister. The papers were drafted by the Lands Minister and the National Security Minister respectively.

The Indian delegation understood the government's reasons for its refusal to consider a North-east merger, although it made the point that since a referendum was ruled out, the fear of a Sinhala 'veto' was not in itself an irrefutable argument. The Indian team argued strongly for 'functional' rather 'structural' linkage between any two provinces with Inter-State Joint Committees in India as a useful pointer. There could be ways of permitting active coordination between provinces on specific subjects.

While terms like 'federal' and 'quasi-federal' are familiar to the debate the 'Guardian' in a recent editorial recommended a "con-

federal solution" just as Senator Edward Kennedy pointed to the 'American or Indian federal model'. But Sri Lanka regards anything other than 'unitary' totally unacceptable. Indian experts however have suggested the incorporation of a new Article to the 1978 constitution whereby Parliament can create provincial councils and vest legislative and executive powers on them. "Lists" of power, including a "Concurrent Lists" like India's could be drawn up.

Why Colombo . . .

(Continued from page 3)

By striking terror in this manner, what message did the men who planned the operation seek to convey and to whom?

(a) Was it addressed to the Sri Lankan government in an attempt to persuade it to quicken the pace of negotiation with via Delhi and to make a more substantial offer?

(b) Or was it an early warning to both Colombo and Delhi that the armed groups (or group) reserved a veto on any Colombo-Delhi deal?

The first question presumes that the men behind the operations are ready to accept a political offer as long as it meets the twin Tamil demands (i) substantial devolution of power to the provincial assemblies (ii) serious possibilities for inter-provincial coordination, if not 'merger'.

The second question shifts the focus to what went on in the north while the Indian delegation was engaged in talks with President Jayewardene and other government leaders, chiefly Mr. Athulathmudali and Mr. Gamini Dissanayake.

(SEE 'FRATRICIDAL FIGHTING').

Political Pressures on Rajiv

Evidently, some advance have been made by the Chidambaram mission in closing the gap between what Colombo will be prepared to offer what Delhi is ready to consider reasonable enough to persuade and pressure the Tamils to accept. This refers basically to the substance of devolution.

But fast-moving events pose an equally important and perhaps more urgent issue. Can Sri Lanka and the Indian mediators keep pace with the changing situation on the ground, mainly the emergence of the 'Tigers' as the unchallenged military force in the north, and political developments in India, chiefly the in-gathering of pro-Tamil forces in south India and among Indian opposition parties.

"It is high time we define our position and offer a clear-cut solution before it is too late" said Mr. N. T. Rama Rao, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister. NTR was addressing the Madurai conference organised by the TESO, the Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation. BJB President and former Indian Foreign Minister A. B. Vajpayee, DMK Leader Karunanidhi, Lok Dal chief H. N. Bahuguna, Akali Dal leader Balwant Singh Ramoowalla, Telugu Desam chief P. Upendra, and P. Unnikrishnan MP of the Congress (S) were among the prominent politicians who addressed a meeting attended by TULF, LTTE, TELO, EROS, EPRLF, PLOT and PROTEG. These are excerpts from a HINDU report:

The "Save Ceylon Tamils" conference, being held under the auspices of the Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation, began here today. Mr. M. Karunanidhi, DMK president, in his welcome address said the conference was being held to arrive at a consensus on the basis of which "we could mobilise public opinion across the length and breadth of the country.

Mr. Karunanidhi said there was a growing feeling that the rest of India was not paying enough attention to the Sri Lanka Tamils because it concerned only the Tamils. His hope was that the participation of these leaders would strengthen "our bonds of national integration".

The Government of India, he said, had failed to raise the issue in international forums. Last year when Argentina wanted to raise it in the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, India prevented it saying it was engaged in negotiations. India did raise it this year in Geneva. But it was done half-heartedly and no canvassing or lobbying was done. So it did not produce the desired effect. Since July 1983, the Sri Lankan army, para-military forces and police had been killing innocent Tamils. The Sri Lanka President Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, had declared in February last that he would seek a military solution. To demonstrate that he meant business, he had ordered aerial bombing of Tamil areas.

The DMK chief alleged that the Government of India had walked into "Mr. Jayawardene's trap" of conducting peace talks which had given him enough time to bring in foreign elements. Today, the Sri Lankan soldiers were being sent regularly to Pakistan for training. The Sri Lanka-Pakistan nexus was active.

Colombo's alibi: India's self-imposed restraint and vague good neighbourliness" had received the appreciation of outsiders but had not achieved anything. An Indian delegation had just returned from Colombo, but any level of talks would not produce result, unless the other party was equally serious and honest. Mr. Jayawardene being the man he was, would be the happiest to receive Indian delegations in Colombo to hoodwink the West of his earnestness for talks. "Every year before the international Aid Consortium meeting Sri Lanka wants an alibi

that it is seriously considering a political solution to the ethnic problem. India has produced the alibi for this year and Mr. Jayawardene would be thankful to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi for this favour" Mr. Karunanidhi said.

Solidarity for Tamils: Briefing newsmen after the closed door meeting of the political parties, Mr. Karunanidhi said the conference pledged solidarity with the Sri Lanka Tamils and expressed its deep national concern over the continuing intensification of the crisis in the island.

Unity of Tamils urged: He said seven groups of Sri Lanka Tamils — TULF, LTTE, TELO, EROS, ERRLF, PLOT, PROTEG, — participated in the conference. A request was made that all the Tamil groups should get united and work. Mr. Rama Rao, and Mr. Vajpayee had also advised the Tamil groups to join hands. The Tamil organisation had promised that they would abide by the request and assured the leaders to work in unity to achieve their common objective. It was proposed to constitute a national committee in Delhi to coordinate the work. All the political parties were requested to name one representative to the panel.

Mr. Karunanidhi said the resolution passed at the meeting also condemned the blowing up of an Air Lanka plane in Colombo yesterday and conveyed its sympathies to the bereaved.

'Centre's failure': The conference called upon the Government of India to raise the issue with vigour in international forums such as the U.N., NAM and CHOGM for prompt remedial action. The Centre's policy so far towards Sri Lanka and the Tamil question had failed to produce tangible results because it was "superficial, vacillating and incoherent". The mere fact that more and more people were being killed in Sri Lanka after India expressed its concern bore testimony to this, the conference char-

ged. The conference said that in spite of the Thimpu talks and the ceasefire, the solution seemed to be as elusive as in the beginning. Sri Lanka was acquiring arms from all over the world and moving towards a total military solution. The policy of trusting the Sri Lankan Government to achieve a negotiated settlement had, thus, proved to be sterile. Making use of the time gained by the "pretence of talks", Colombo had brought into the picture dangerous external elements unfriendly to India, adding a new dimension to the geopolitics of this region.

The conference called upon all aid international agencies not to give help to Sri Lanka which could be used to perpetrate the genocide of Tamils. It urged the Government of India to give up what it alleged the present casual attitude to the issue, and take up this matter not as a mediator but as a nation intimately and deeply connected with the fate of Sri Lanka Tamils. Also, it should reevaluate its policy and adopt realistic approaches to save the Tamils there.

The DMK leader said this was the first such conference to be

held and similar conferences would be conducted in various States to show to the people that the ethnic issue was not a problem concerning only Tamil Nadu but of the whole country. The next conference would be held in Andhra Pradesh and the last in New Delhi.

National issue: Mr. P. Nedumaran, president, Tamil Nadu-Kamaraj Congress and reception committee chairman in his address of welcome, said the Sri Lanka Tamils issue cannot be deemed as a problem confronting the Tamils alone. It was a national problem, and above all, it was a human problem. The TESO had decided to hold the conference to restate that the ethnic problem was a challenge to national security and integration and to stress the moral obligation of the Government of India to save the Tamils from genocide.

Mr. Abdul Rasheed Kabuli of the National Conference (Farooq), pledging his party's support to the struggle of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, said it was not a problem of Tamil Nadu alone, but of the whole country.

Mr. Balwant Singh Ramoowalia (Akali Dal) also extended his party's support to the Sri Lanka Tamils.

The BJP president, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, said India was directly affected by the issue. "The island Tamils are our kith and kin. "We want justice for the suppressed people of Sri Lanka". If the genocide continued, the peace and security of the entire region would be destroyed.

Mr. Vajpayee also criticised the Doordarshan for not covering the conference. "Doordarshan is the privilege of the Prime Minister," he added.

The Hindustan Front leader, Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, and Mr. B. Rachaiah, Karnataka Home Minister also spoke.

The Lok Dal leader, Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, criticised the Sri Lankan President, for not honouring his promises.

Mr. P. Upendra, Telugu Desam leader regretted that the pacts had been entered into between India and Sri Lanka had not been implemented by Sri Lanka.

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Sri Lanka may become a Cyprus — J R

Simon Winchester

The President of Sri Lanka, Mr Junius Jayewardene, has warned that unless the West gives him arms, money and moral support in his fight with the Tamil guerillas "my country will be divided like Cyprus." The problem in the island was no longer, he declared, 'an ethnic, or a racial problem. It is simple, naked terrorism. After the events of this week we have a clear decision. We either meet force, or we surrender. And we will not surrender.'

The 79-year-old President, who rebutted claims that he is too old and frail to deal with the growing crisis in the country, said that there was now no further possibility of a political compromise with the Tamils — many of whom want autonomy for the regions they dominate in the north and east of Sri Lanka. 'I have made proposals which go far beyond what my predecessors would have offered. I am prepared to give them some degree of federalism. But that is all. I will go no further. If these proposals are not acceptable I will unleash the troops. I can, and I will wipe out this trouble in a month.

"I want the English-speaking world, both black and white, to understand that they must help me to suppress the alarm and rebellion here. They must give us arms. They must give us money. I am having to cut down on development projects that would have benefitted both Sinhalese and Tamils alike, in order to pay for this battle. The outside world must help now, because this is now an international problem. Ours is a democratic country, and it is being destroyed by these people. Another few years of this and we will have bled to death, or we will be partitioned, like Cyprus, with United Nations troops guarding the frontier. This would be a tragedy for everyone."

The President, who spoke to the Sunday Times in a cavernous conference room in the old colonial parliament building, overlooking a sea whipped into a fury by the current monsoon, was alert — though gripped, it appeared, by a deep sadness. He had been 'terribly shocked' he said, by the bomb explosion aboard the Air Lanka jet last Saturday, and 'horrified' by the second explosion at the Central Telegraph Office near his own headquarters in the city. A total of 27 people had died, hundreds had been injured — tourism, a mainstay of the Sri Lankan economy, was virtually non-existent. "What would you do if you were in my position?" he asked. "If I give in to the terrorists' demands, my own, Sinhala people will rise. We will get Sinhalese terrorism then. If I refuse to give in to their demand for an autonomous state, they plant bombs, and become major world-wide terrorists, a menace to everyone. If I go in hard against them, then I am accused of genocide, and India threatens to come to the assistance of the Tamils. What can I do?"

The President was sharply critical of India's continuing support for the Tamil separatist groups. "The assistance which Rajiv Gandhi is giving, or which he is allowing to be given, is destroying/ and quickening the slide towards total separation of our country. He must be told that this aid must be stopped. Pressure must be brought on India by the western world — tell the Indians they should not help terrorists who are trying to destroy a free democracy. They should be made to realise that terrorism is an international menace. The bombs that went off at Colombo airport last week could go off in Indian airports tomorrow. These fellows know no boundaries. "I have to have a quick solution to this now. I still have some

optimism that the Tamil leaders will accept the proposals we have offered for a limited degree of federalism for the northern and eastern provinces. But I must warn everyone that if the proposals are rejected, then we have no option but to go for a military solution. And when we do that, it is important that you in the west, and India, know why we are going to end this thing by force. We have no other option, have we?"

U.K. Copter pilots in Sri Lanka: British helicopter pilots are operating against the Tamil militants in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

According to the *Sunday Times* three pilots, two Britons and one South African, have been seen manning helicopter gunships which regularly bomb rebel positions in and around Jaffna and Trincomalee.

Other unconfirmed accounts say that former special air service officers are leading ground raids against the Tamil hideouts. The paper said that the first direct evidence of the Britons' involvement came last week when they were discovered piloting Bell-212 helicopters for the Sri Lankan Air Force at Palali air station near Trincomalee.

It had been known for some months that men — usually former "SAS" soldiers or "RAF" pilots have been hired by a Channel Islands — based security firm, "Keeni Meeni Services," — for the Sri Lankan Government.

The security agency and the Government have always insisted that the men were being used for training programmes. "Now with the discovery that foreigners are taking part in, and even leading anti-guerilla missions, there will be calls for a full account of the operations," the paper said.

Towards peace and tolerance or tribalism and barbarism ?

— The Committee for Rational Development

Since its inception in 1983, the Committee for Rational Development has been advocating the need for a just political solution to our ethnic problem. It was our belief that the longer we delay, the more likely it was for the forces of destruction to express themselves in ways and means which would destroy the very fabric of our society. We recounted in detail how Sri Lanka is ill equipped to handle a "dirty war" and how the process of Lebenonisation will only escalate the violence leading to the creation of a security conscious garrison state where democratic values will be forfeited for repression and intolerance. The Tristar explosion and the bomb placed at the CTO are reminders of the immense cost of this war. As a society we have nurtured the habit of pointing out scapegoats and betes noires and cultivating a sense of injured innocence. And yet, we can never escape from the reality with which we are confronted. No rhetoric can detract from the fact that this undeclared war is taking a tremendous toll on all our lives and is tearing apart the foundations of our society. According to Samakali, a document put out by Women for Peace this war is costing us Rs. 17 million a day. There are about 150,000 refugees island wide — not to mention the 200,000 who have left the country — and it is costing the government Rs. 16 million each month just to feed them. The total number of dead and disappeared has yet to be counted. Despite all this we find ourselves in a no win situation.

In our earlier writings, The Committee for Rational Development has been especially critical of the government for stalling a political settlement and for wavering between political negotiations and an imposed military

solution. We still continue to believe that it is only the Sri Lankan government, in collaboration with the Indian government which can force through a solution to our conflict. It is only the Sri Lankan government which has the resources at its disposal to create a climate of accomodation which will make such a solution acceptable to the vast majority of people in this country. We accept the political difficulties faced by the government especially in light of the fact that the leading opposition party seems to be more concerned about catering to jingoistic tendencies. But, this does not detract from the fact that a political solution is imperative at this point in our history. It would also be naive to believe that peace will come to Sri Lanka the day after an accord is signed. We have to accept the fact the isolated acts of violence will continue for sometime after such an accord. However, we believe that only a political solution will begin to reverse the current process of destruction and only such a solution will help marginalise the more extreme and intransigent elements committed to what has been termed a "Pol Potish" solution to our ethnic conflict.

In our earlier statements, we have also criticised the behaviour of the Sri Lankan security forces and paramilitary units such as the home guards, especially in their campaigns in the North and the East. We did so in the recognition that modern nation states are limited in their actions by human rights norms, norms that have been negotiated at the highest international levels especially after the Nazi holocaust of World War II.

We felt that it was unnecessary for Sri Lanka to relearn the lessons of history that violations

The CRD, a group of concerned Sri Lankan academics and intellectuals, has issued statements, from time to time, on the ethnic conflict. Its recent publication on the issue was entitled "Myths, Realities and Perspectives". A Sinhala translation is in print.

of human rights especially in a politically conscious modern world, do not only shock the conscience but will only lead to resistance and rebellion by those who are its victims.

Recent history in Sri Lanka will serve to confirm our judgement. Aerial bombardment of the civilians of one's own country and the use of mercenaries who have no concern for this land or its people will only serve to accenuate the deep sense of grievance and alienation. Reports of International Human Rights Organisations which place Sri Lanka as one of the top ten offenders of human rights especially with regard to disappearances may be dismissed as untrue by the more nationalistic among us. But, we feel that such a response is only to escape from the realisation that something is fundamentally wrong with our society and that the tactics used to destroy a movement can actually be counterproductive and may help sustain conflict for many years to come. We must accept the fact that the excesses of the security forces and the nature of the security operations conducted in the North and East of this country have contributed to a great extent to the radicalisation of the Tamil population and to the rapid brutalisation of the present conflict. Whatever our nationalistic feelings, this is a dark and shameful period of our history and the excesses have been recorded for all posterity

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AIDE MEMOIRE

The Sri Lanka Government has consistently been desirous of achieving a negotiated political settlement. The Sri Lanka Government is prepared to re-examine the proposals contained in Annexure "C", and to adapt these in the light of recent suggestions regarding the suitability of a structure similar to the Union Territories system of administration contained in the constitution of India. While being prepared to make constitutional amendments to give effect to such a system, the Sri Lanka Government would not agree to any constitutional amendment requiring approval by a Referendum.

The provisions of the Draft Accord of August 1985 are substantially based upon the proposals contained in Annexure "C", except that the unit of devolution is designated as "Provincial Council" in the Draft Accord instead of "Regional Council" as in Annexure "C".

The two subjects which are yet controversial are —

- (1) Internal law and order, and
- (2) Land.

In regard to internal law and order, the Sri Lanka Government is prepared to pursue discussions along the concept of autonomous Provincial Police Divisions within the organisation of the Sri Lanka Police Force as has been suggested to it in the informal discussions that took place in Colombo in January

1986. Notes of these discussions have been handed over to H.E. Mr. J. Dixit, Indian High Commissioner, and Mr. R. Bhandari by H. E. Mr. Bernard Tilakaratna.

In regard to the subject of land, the Sri Lanka Government draws attention to the provisions of paragraphs 5 and 11 of Annexure "C" and the provisions of the Draft Accord. The Sri Lanka Government is prepared to consider the subject of land as one which can satisfactorily be dealt with using the concept of a "Concurrent List" as in the Constitution of India and other Constitutions.

A greater degree of devolution can be provided in respect of schemes other than those designated as major or national schemes.

The Government of Sri Lanka is prepared to set up a National Land Commission and forms of judicial inquiry to deal with any disputes relating to land policy and land settlement.

The Sri Lanka Government stands by the proposals made by His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene, President of Sri Lanka, on earlier occasions, including the proposals made to the All Party Conference in December 1984 which represented the views of the majority of the Delegations, and the Draft accord and the Clarifications made thereafter.

The Sri Lanka Government draws attention to the Draft Accord of August 1985 and the

Clarifications made thereafter. The Governments of Sri Lanka and India accepted the Draft Accord as a basis for further negotiations towards mutually agreed accord by the parties concerned. Unfortunately the TULF response which came nearly four months later was almost wholly unrelated to the Draft Accord. However, the Sri Lanka Government because of its earnest desire to reach a negotiated settlement, is prepared to examine those aspects of the TULF proposals which do not involve an amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution of such a character as would require a Referendum.

The Sri Lanka Government proposals, as agreed and accepted, have been within the context of the Unity, Sovereignty, Integrity and Unitary character of the Constitution of Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka Government will continue to implement the provisions relating to Language in the Constitution which provide that Sinhala be the Official Language, and Sinhala and Tamil the National Languages of Sri Lanka. The relevant provisions of the Constitution are annexed to this Aide Memoire.

With regard to the English language, the Sri Lanka Government is prepared to implement the proposals contained in the Address of His Excellency President Jayawardene to Parliament of Ninth February 1983.

Colombo,
14th April 1986.

Political...

(Continued from page 7)

Mr. P. Unnikrishnan, Congress (S) M. P., said a "civil war" between Sinhalese and Tamils was on. The Sri Lankan President wanted to send the Tamils out of the island.

Mr. K. Veeramani, (DK) felt no purpose was being served by holding talks or by sending teams to Sri Lanka. He wanted the

Centre to take some effective steps.

Mr. A. K. A. Abdul Samad (UML) regretted that despite several rounds of talks between India and Sri Lanka, no solution had been found.

The TULF Secretary-General, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, and the Eelam Tamil Leader, Mr. Chandrasaran, were among those who participated in the conference as special observers.

Near stampede: DMK volunteers, from all over the State started converging at the venue of the conference in lorries and buses from the morning itself. There was a near stampede at the venue, the race course stadium, tonight as the volunteers tried to have a glimpse of the leaders.

There was a large crowd and the police had a tough time in controlling it.

Sri Lanka - India citizens discuss ethnic problem

A group of concerned citizens from Sri Lanka and India met in Bangalore on April 15 and 16, 1986 to ascertain through an exchange of views as to how best they could assist in the effort to restore peace in Sri Lanka and move forward to a just and equitable solution of the ethnic problem. The following persons from India and Sri Lanka participated in the discussion:

India:

- Dr. R. R. Diwakar, Chairman Gandhi Peace Foundation.
- Mr. C. Subramaniam, Former Union Minister and Vice-President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- Mr. P. S. Kailasam, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India.
- Mr. Thomas Abraham, Former Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.
- Mr. Rajmohan Gandhi, Resident Editor, INDIAN EXPRESS, Madras.
- Mr. S. Ramakrishnan, Executive Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.
- Mr. S. R. Venkatachalam, Hon. Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore.

Sri Lanka:

- Mr. Godfrey Gunatilake, Director, Marga Institute.
- Mr. Charles Abeysekera, President Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality.
- Mr. Olcott Gunasekara, Formerly Ceylon Civil Service.
- Mr. A. M. M. Shabdeen, Formerly of the Ceylon Civil Service.
- Mr. Mervyn De Silva, Editor LANKA GUARDIAN.
- Mr. M. A. M. Hussain, Former Member of Sri Lanka Judiciary.
- Mr. P. Devaraj, Director, Congress Labour Foundation.

The participants reviewed the situation in Sri Lanka and expressed grave concern at the continuing escalation of violence on the one

hand, and the stalemate in the political negotiations on the other. Sri Lanka is facing its most serious crisis since independence. Sri Lanka's situation is also affecting India, particularly the State of Tamil Nadu where it is having important political, social and economic repercussions.

An early political settlement which can end the ethnic conflict is vital for Sri Lanka's future.

At the same time, Sri Lanka's political stability and well-being is of great importance to India. It is an essential condition for the peace and security of the region as a whole.

The meeting emphasised that there can be no military solution of the present conflict. All the involved parties need to recognise and accept this reality. They should act on this realisation and accelerate the process which would lead to a lasting political settlement. The first step in this direction is the effective cessation of violence by both sides and the re-activation of the negotiating process in a spirit of mutual confidence.

The political settlement has to take place within the framework which preserves Sri Lanka's integrity as a nation. An independent state of Eelam is neither viable nor politically realistic. Provincial autonomy has now been proposed as the framework of devolution. What is of primary importance is the substance of devolution, the powers that are conferred to the unit of devolution and the extent to which the people in the unit are empowered to administer and develop their unit through their elected representatives. Within the framework, which ensures the unity and the national integrity of Sri Lanka, these powers may be devolved to the fullest extent possible, in a system which applies to the country as a whole and to all communities alike. A process of this nature where there is full participation of the people will be the surest means of ensuring the rights of all and restoring commu-

nal harmony. Questions relating to the constitutional form that the devolution has to take, the size of the unit or the merger of the units, are problems that can be resolved, if there is a clear and unambiguous agreement on the substance of devolution.

The demand for the merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces has posed an intractable problem in the way of a settlement. A single region comprising the Northern and Eastern provinces is fraught with many dilemmas, in view of the special characteristics and ethnic composition of the Eastern province. Here the guiding principle should be democratic and should take into account the desire and preferences of the people concerned. Perhaps, a better approach to the problem in the context of a substantial degree of devolution, is to design institutions for inter-provincial co-ordination similar to inter-state councils in India or joint committees formed by two or more provincial assemblies. These mechanisms would enable provinces to collaborate on activities and development projects where the interests of more than one province is involved. Similarly, it should be possible to agree on basic principles regarding the vexed questions of law and order and land policy. These principles would have to take into account the security requirements of the provinces on the one hand and the overall security requirements of the country as a whole, on the other. In the case of land settlement, these principles have to ensure that there would be no serious alteration of the ethnic balance and at the same time make possible the equitable distribution of national resources.

Any political solution would have to take into account the deep-seated fears of both the Sinhalese and Tamils regarding implementation as well as the future consequences of devolution. The Tamils must be assured that the agreement will not be abrogated as has

(Continued on page 14)

Government must go

— S L F P

Nine years of rule by the United National Party made-up of a legitimate six years following the General Elections in 1977, and three years of an on-going extension of Parliament through a Referendum that violated the basic tenets and rules of democracy, has brought our country to the edge of irreparable ruin.

The blasting of an Air Lanka Carrier at the Katunayake Airport which is one of the highest security points does no credit to the Government, notwithstanding all the sympathy it has evoked. Vulnerable points of attack have been discussed and catalogued even in the drawing rooms in Colombo yet the fact that there could have been a concentration of terrorist interest to destroy the Airport did not seem to have dawned in the minds of the authorities. All the recent tragedies seem to point to the fact that the rampant corruption in the Jayawardena Government has brought forth a monumental complacency, incompetence, and inefficiency in its administration.

How this particular terrorist act came to be timed with the arrival of another Peace Mission from India is another matter that should concern us; and now just after their departure, another point of high security interest in the C.T.O. is blasted with bombs leaving a trail of destruction. The nation had hardly recovered from the shocks of the inferno at the Petroleum Corporation's Bulk Depot at Anuradhapura following a bomb blast, the explosion of bombs at the Wellawatte Police Station and the Kantalai Dam Disaster. While the two former incidents are again attributable to the inefficiency of the Government symptomatic of its overstay, the latter appears to have an additional contributory factor — that is, the unwise decision to construct a Pumping Station on the bund of an ancient tank in

order to supply in haste the water demands of Prima, a multi-national Company, and of Foreign Companies that were to be set-up in Trincomalee, the Petroleum Farm Tanks, and facilities for R & R of visiting Naval and Airforce personnel. The water now diverted was originally and primarily for our poor peasant cultivators in the Dry Zone.

Another aspect the Government should have endeavoured to know is whether an internal or external problem that it has to deal with; whether it is purely an ethnic problem or whether the problem arises from a consistent denial of the democratic rights of the people to live in peace, without fear or victimisation, and more importantly to elect their own representatives to Parliament in regularly held General Elections, which is the very essence of what is known as the rule of law. Where the rule of law does not manifest itself in the daily life of the people, there is invariably a pervading discontent among all sections of the people whether they be Sinhalese, Tamils, or Muslims. Today, after 9 years of so-called Five Star Democracy, it can be said without the slightest doubt that there is a crisis of confidence in this country coupled with the deeper crisis in management.

The Government has lost sight of the fact that its strength and power should be derived from the people. The devoted support of the whole people has to be harnessed to combat a divisive and calamitous time as the present; but even in the negotiations that have been going on between the Government and the Indian authorities as well as others who participated in the haggling, the basic stance of the Government has been that the people will not be consulted either for the immediate constitution of Provisional Councils or at any proper Parliamentary

opportunity for the expression of their wishes on the general principles of solving the problems involved. This is clearly because the Government fears to place the facts before the people for their verdict. Equally, it is clear that the people distrust the Government and fear that its intention is merely to cling on to power by any method, at any cost, in flagrant disregard of their wishes and welfare. And, it does so with impunity and arrogance.

In the International scene, our country enjoys the status of only of a meretricious mendicant in a despicable plight. In this situation the numerous calamities and disasters that have been the daily experiences of our people in recent times, would appear to be the perfect foil for the false claim that we are a practising democracy. As a Western observer had quite accurately stated, Sri Lanka in fact has only a "Democracy in Chains" with a showy facade before the world which too has begun to slowly shed off parts of some of its brittle exterior.

The President, who is the Minister of Defence and the Minister of National Security are answerable for the loss of innocent lives following the bomb blasts and the explosions. Similarly, the Minister of Lands and Land Development cannot shrink away from the responsibility for an act of criminal negligence on the part of the Department of Irrigation. But under the UNP administration, nobody in authority accepts responsibility. Instead, through a deluge of half-truths, confusing and distorted reports, it makes a weak attempt to avoid any responsibility but perhaps, not this time.

Innocent people have died also on account of earthslips, chlorine gas, pollution of drinking water and numerous other types of "Accidents" while UNP high-up, abuse their powers and illicitly fell timber, cultivate ganga, run Casinos and Video-Parlours, under-

take trips abroad visiting children, and relations, and organise tamashas and carnivals, even in the midst of national calamities. No Government has displayed such callousness and contempt for the people. This must stop. The people cannot tolerate this unprecedented abuse of power for the enrichment of a few and the damnation of the vast majority.

The SLFP demands that all calamities and disaster be thoroughly investigated. It demands an Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Kantalai Disaster with at least two Irrigation Engineers as members. And it demands that the findings be made public within one month.

The gravest tragedy of the United National Party Government of J. R. Jayawardena is that it has neither the goodwill nor the capacity to wield the nation into a

single community of people marching towards a single goal. It has lost its claim to remain in office, if it ever had a claim after 1983.

There is no alternative. It must go.

Sri Lanka-India . . .

(Continued from page 12)

happened in the past. The Sinhalese should be assured that the devolution would not eventually lead to separation. Mere constitutional safeguards are not likely to be adequate to set these fears at rest. The questions of guaranteeing the terms of the final accord to the satisfaction of both the parties, therefore, need to be pursued.

The solution of the ethnic problem does not lie exclusively in devolution. This can lead to segregation of the minorities if it is

not supported by an institutional framework which provides for an equitable sharing of power at the Centre, in a parliamentary democracy which is fully reflective of all interests. This is essential if Sri Lanka is to evolve a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society in which all communities and religious-cultural groups share in, and contribute to the development of Sri Lanka as a whole. This is all the more necessary when we consider the fact that significant proportions of each of the ethnic minorities will be living inside the Northern and Eastern Province.

The discussion at the meeting were conducted in an atmosphere of friendship and cordiality and the participants, as a whole, have agreed to maintain contact and meet again when the situation warrants. They have further agreed to keep their respective governments informed of their deliberations.

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More or less about English

Arjuna Parakrama (Second Class, Lower Division)

I am reminded of Professor C. R. de Silva's claims for television in his article in *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* (London, 1984) apropos the Referendum,

"The opposition, nevertheless, had certain advantages. **First**, with six parties arrayed against the amendment and only two supporting it (the UNP and the CWC), the opposition obtained three times as much time on official television as the government" (my emphasis).

Another example of Qadri's privileging of English is his concern for those who wanted to study a more useful subject than 'Classics' (as subsidiary) — say Economics, Political Science or Sociology" which fails to discern that English itself cannot be deemed immune to the criticism levelled at Classics. It seems to me that English is considered *sui generis* and somehow exempt from this censure.

Qadri answers Eagleton's question as to the political significance of literature with reference to Sri Lanka today by saying that it has been a tool of the ruling classes "which gives the **kaduwa** they wield so successfully a sharper cutting edge." I'm not sure what he means here, unless it is simply that he thinks that their English is improved. Is the exploiter armed with Shakespeare worse than any other? Or does literature, qua literature, have little to do with it? In his reply to Seneviratne and Jayasuriya of November 15th, Qadri opines that "Being a radical Sinhalese, Seneviratne should defend the right of the people of this country to communicate in English rather than use the **Kaduwa** to cut them down." My first response is to ask whether such a defence would be analogous to a hypothetical Marie Antoinettesque defence of

the people's right to eat cake, but perhaps a more crucial question would be whether any defence of the rights of the privileged few would in fact necessitate the further exploitation of the many. Can there be any studying of English literature (or literature via English) in this context which is non-elitist or non-alienating?

Qadri admits, albeit gratuitously, that Halpe's avowed task was/is "basically Lankanising Leavis," a task which Qadri feels sympathy towards. I must admit to being somewhat uneasy about this valorization of Leavis, the more so if it be selective since as I have shown above the selections make me uncomfortable. What precisely is the nature of this endeavor? Elsewhere Qadri talks of the "demystifying (of) English literature (which) inevitably would involve demystifying the English language as well."

Is there a universal demystification of English literature or are these demystifications tied to time and place, to context? Do both language and literature have the same mystery surrounding them, or are they different? I realise that Qadri is only using current jargon and is not individually culpable, but it may be important to note that notions such as the mystification of language/literature (as opposed to more precise concepts such as reification of fetishization) become obfuscatory.

This demystification cannot take place within the present societal structure according to Qadri, nor can it, by implication, until "writing of all forms (though obviously with a tricontinental bias) is critically studied" in our English departments. It would seem then that this task is specific to Sri Lanka today, or at any rate that it has distinctive features in our context.

I am especially wary of the misplaced "scientific" notions that seem to bedevil Qadri's search for an adequate definition of literature. Qadri associates the lack of a proper definition of literature with a lack of clarity. If it is indeed a fact that literature lacks a satisfactory definition, this very lack says something of the nature of literature itself. Does it, for instance, worry us that a perfectly well understood concept such as "dusk" is, in fact, **understood clearly** by people who will have great difficulty in defining the term?

Much of the so-called post-structuralist literary theory is unquestionably elitist, and Barthes is even here, I feel, the thin edge of the wedge. Susan Sontag in a sympathetic introduction to a collection of his essays writes, "Still, Barthes is in an evasive relation to politics, and he is one of the great modern refusers of history." He certainly would not bemoan the lack of a fixed definition for literature, nor would he advocate any form of socialised reading.

Eagleton on the other hand is quite right in his criticism of liberal humanist "non-political" uses of literature as self-deceiving. As he says, "it is not a question of debating whether 'literature' should be related to 'history' or not: it is a question of different readings of history itself." His privileging of Discourse Theory or Rhetoric as the only viable form of literary analysis is, however, by his own admission, thoroughly traditionalist. Besides, one must needs be sceptical of a man who includes himself as one of the greatest literary theoreticians of all time!

I am convinced that "English Departments" need to become components of Departments/Pro-

(Continued on page 20)

High Level of Investment and Growth

Jayantha Kelegama

The declared economic policy of the government was to force the pace of development by means of an ambitious investment programme far exceeding the country's internal resources. Figures show that investment in the period 1978-83 was at a much higher level than in the previous six years. Thus gross capital formation in 1978-83 formed 28.5 per cent of the G.D.P. (or 31.3 per cent of GNP) in contrast to 15.8 per cent of the GDP (or 17.3 per cent of GNP) in 1971-76. Figures further reveal that 19.6 per cent of the total resources (GDP + Imports) were utilised for investment in the latter period as compared to 13.1 per cent in the former period.

It was the government's intention to finance this substantial investment programme without reducing consumption. Domestic savings in 1978-83 formed 12.7 per cent of GDP which was only slightly higher than in the previous period when it was 11.2 per cent. In 1971-76 however investment being only 15.8 per cent of GDP, domestic savings financed about 71.5 per cent of the investment. In 1978-83 on the other hand, investment constituted 28.5 per cent of GDP and domestic savings, though slightly higher than in the previous period, financed only 44.5 per cent of total investment. Thus the greater part of investment i. e. 55.5 per cent. In 1978-83 was financed by external resources as compared to 28.5 per cent in 1971-76. External resources amounted to 15.8 per cent of GDP in 1978-83 as compared to 4.5 per cent in the previous period.

The higher level of investment and the greater reliance on external resources are illustrated clearly in Government expenditure in recent years. Capital expenditure of government in 1979-83 was nearly eight times that in 1972-76. Capital expenditure in 1978-83

This is the second part of a review of the economic strategy and performance of UNP government in the light of policies under the 1970-77 United Front government.

amounted to 14.9 per cent of GDP as compared to 7.9 per cent in 1971-76. About 57 per cent of the capital expenditure in this period was met out of foreign aid as compared to 31 per cent in 1971-76.

Import liberalization on the other hand resulted in an unprecedented increase in imports to the country. Import volume in 1971-76 was about 26 per cent less than in the previous six years 1978-83, import volume was 242 per cent of that in 1971-76 or nearly two and half times larger. This massive influx of imports, it must be admitted, put an end to shortages queues and consumer dissatisfaction in the earlier period, but it was financed, not by earnings, but by external aid. Exports financed only 58 per cent of the total imports in 1978-83 as compared to 81 per cent in 1971-76 indicating that the enlarged flow of imports

was financed by substantial foreign aid and borrowings.

The overall result of the high level of investment, import liberalisation and other measures flowing from open market policies discussed earlier, was a high level of economic growth of 6 per cent per annum as compared to a lower rate of 2.7 per cent in 1971-76. Gross Domestic Product in real terms rose by 42 per cent between 1977 and 1983 whereas it increased by only 17 per cent between 1970 and 1976 as shown in Table II; gross domestic product per capita in real terms which increased from Rs. 1054 to Rs. 1125 or by 7 per cent between 1970 and 1976 rose from Rs. 1153 to Rs. 1481 or by 28 per cent between 1977 and 1983. Substantial increase in production appears to have taken place in paddy, fishing, construction, trade, transport, electricity, gas and water, banking and insurance and public administration.

Towards . . .

(Continued from page 9)

in the annals of the United Nations and other international organisations. To accept national responsibility for these acts is perhaps a coming of age for the Sri Lankan nation-state.

The CRD in its previous statements has also commented on certain actions of the militant groups. The question of whether violent dissent is ever justified and at what point, and to what extent, is an age old historical debate and CRD does not wish to pursue this inquiry at this present juncture. However, we are all united in condemning blatant acts of terrorism where civilians are the only targets of

attack. Any group which engages are the only targets of attack. Any group which engages in such activity loses legitimacy especially when it puts itself forward as representing the sovereign will of a civilised people. The CRD has always stood for the position that the Tamils of Sri Lanka have a just cause and that substantial devolution of power in the form of regional autonomy is the only solution which will satisfy their aspirations. We have condemned the excesses of the security forces and the determination of the government to pursue a military solution to what is essentially a political problem involving one large section of our population. We have stood for these positions

(Continued on page 24)

Table II
ECONOMIC GROWTH — SECTORWISE
1970-76 and 1977-83
(GDP at constant 1970 factor cost prices - Rs. million)

Sector	1970	as % of G.D.P.	1976	as % of G.P.D	Change %	1977	1983	as % of G.P.D.	Change %
GDP	13,187	100.0	15,431	100.0	17.0	16,078	22,824	100.0	42.0
1. Agriculture, forestry & fishing	3,732	28.3	3,894	25.2	4.3	4,299	5,498	24.1	27.9
1. Tea	423		392		-7.3	416	357		-14.2
2. Rubber	233		232		-0.4	213	198		-7.0
3. Coconut	535		455		-15.0	423	528		24.8
4. Paddy	951		720		-24.3	290	1,456		47.1
5. Other	1250		1772		41.8	1,935	2,455		26.9
6. Fishing	160		170		6.3	179	297		65.9
2. Mining & Quarrying	95	0.7	571	3.7	501.0	515	800	3.5	55.3
3. Manufacturing	2,197	16.7	2,371	15.4	7.9	2,357	2,978	13.0	26.3
1. Export Processing	893		860		-3.7	823	769		-6.6
2. Factory Industry	1085		1214		11.9	1,227	1,720		40.2
3. Small Industry	109		185		69.7	189	290		53.4
4. Other	110		113		2.7	118	199		68.6
4. Construction	744	5.6	685	4.4	-7.9	619	1,023	4.5	65.3
5. Electricity, Gas & Water	101	0.8	122	0.8	20.8	131	274	1.2	109.2
6. Transport, Storage & Communication	1,258	9.5	1,425	9.2	13.2	1,498	2,172	9.5	45.0
7. Wholesale & Retail Trade	2,533	19.2	2,928	19.0	11.6	2,999	4,502	19.7	50.1
1. Imports	540		400		-25.9	513	1044		103.5
2. Exports	754		716		-5.0	663	796		20.1
3. Domestic	1239		1812		46.2	1,823	2,662		46.0
8. Banking, Insurance & Real Estate	152	1.2	246	1.6	61.8	295	548	2.4	85.8
9. Ownership of Dwellings	399	3.0	467	3.0	17.0	475	625	2.7	31.6
10. Public Administration & Defence	517	3.9	760	4.9	47.0	791	1,439	6.3	81.9
11. Services n. e. s.	1,459	11.1	1,962	12.7	34.5	2,099	2,965	13.0	41.3

Part II

Nationalism : Sinhala and Tamil Myths

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Many Tamil social scientists have argued in private that this new phase in Tamil nationalist writing is an attempt by the middle-class, expatriate population to capture momentum and give ideological direction to the Tamil nationalist movement which for the most part has relied on general concepts of freedom from oppression and the right to self-determination. However, impugning motives to expatriate scholars, and thereby dismissing the influence of such writing may underestimate the power of such ideology which draws sustenance only from ethnic loyalty. There is no doubt, that these writings have become an influential part of the ideological debate and it is therefore necessary to analyse the political implications of such myth of dissemination.

The evolution of these nationalist myths can only be understood in the context of Sinhala nationalist ideology to which it is a political response. Sinhalese social scientists such as Kumari Jayawardene, R.A.L.H. Gunewardene, Gananath Obeyesekere etc... have outlined these Sinhalese myths in detail. Drawn from Sinhalese chronicles, Sinhala nationalism sees Sri Lanka as the home for the Sinhala, Aryan race and the Buddhist religion. This identity has with time become a pan-class identity. Though it has been pointed out that social analysis which attempts to understand nationalism only in term of myths and symbols is inadequate, the experience of Sinhala nationalism points to the fact that a nationalist ideology which appears to certain types of myths and symbols has a powerful internal dynamic which cannot be understood by analysing material forces of production alone.

Tamil myths as currently espoused by some Tamil expatriate scholars appears to have the following elements. Firstly, Tamils of Sri Lanka are the heirs to an old and ancient civilisation which has its roots in Mohenjadarro and Harap-

pa, civilisations which had been destroyed by less developed Aryans from West Asia. Secondly, Tamils are the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese are actually Tamils who came later to the island and became Sinhalese after adopting Buddhism as their religion. Thirdly, the Tamil language spoken in Sri Lanka is its purest form; it is Tamil as spoken during the Sangam renaissance of the ninth century. Fourthly, Saiva Siddhanta is the religion of the Tamil people and has a special homeland in Sri Lanka because of the teachings of Arumuga Navalar.

There are many aspects to the creation of this Dravida, Saiva Siddhanta identity which are rather disturbing. In the first place, the sources used to argue the Tamil case, especially with regard to ancient times, are the very same sources that have been proved to be historically unreliable by critical Sinhalese scholars. Generally most Tamil scholars accept the Mahavamsa only as a source of legends. S. Ponnambalam in fact calls some Mahavamsa stories "nothing but a tangled web of cleverly contrived fiction".⁴ However, this does not prevent a few Tamil scholars from using the Mahavamsa as a source when convenient. For example one of the arguments put forward to prove that the Sinhalese are of Tamil descent is a quotation from the Mahavamsa that Prince Vijaya, after rejecting Kuvenci, married a princess from Madurai, and his courtiers married Tamil women of nobility. Writes Satyendra:

"The Sinhala chronicle, the Mahavamsa, also records that a few years after his arrival in Sri Lanka, Prince Vijaya and his followers married Tamils from the Pandyan kingdoms in South India."⁵

It is therefore asserted that from the beginning the Sinhalese were a mixed race. The fact that most ethnic groups as they exist today are mixed races is perhaps correct,

*From the forthcoming volume
Facets of Ethnicity in Sri Lanka
by the Social Scientists' Association.*

but using the Mahavamsa as a historical source, whether by Tamils or Sinhalese, poses major problems of interpreting historical reality. In some cases, Tamil writers have used the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as sources to show an early Tamil presence in Sri Lanka:

"The Mahabharata and Ramayana the two great Indian epics written in Sanskrit before the Sixth Century B. C. mention the Naga kingdoms and their conquest by Ravana, the Tamil Yaksha King of Sri Lanka."⁶

This type of history, which uses legend as empirical fact, must be challenged and discredited, regardless of the author or text.

The dravidian race and myths of origin:

Ashis Nandy in his recent book on colonialism outlines two forms of contemporary dissent. The first accepts the worldview of the oppressor and dissents from within the value framework. The second accepts the oppressor's definition of the other but glorifies the very values which are anathema to the oppressor. Tamils living in Sri Lanka have been constantly subjected to the Sinhalese version of the "Aryan" myth; Anagarika Dharmapala's noble Aryan race has been rammed down their throats ever since independence was achieved. As a reaction to glorification of the "Aryan", there is an increasing Tamil tendency to speak of the noble Dravidian past. Mohenjadro is said to be the world's oldest civilisation which was destroyed by less than civilised Aryan hordes. The remnants of this old and majestic Dravidian civilisation can only be found in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka... so the argument goes:

(Continued on page 20)

Prime Minister Recaptures Political Initiative

Babhani Sen Gupta

FOREIGN
NEWS

After staging a retreat almost all along the political front in the face of a spate of criticism in the press and by politicians including many of his own party, the prime minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, appears to have swung into action to recapture the political initiative. He has appointed a second one-man commission, chaired by justice Venkaramiah of the Supreme Court, to determine and specify the Hindi-speaking areas to be transferred to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh. The areas to be transferred must be other than Abhohar and Fazilka. This commission is to begin its work on April 18 and submit its report to the Union Home Ministry by the last day of May. The prime minister's initiative has been interpreted by an English daily that has been highly critical of the Punjab accord as the Union government's determination to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab "regardless of consequences in Haryana." A more objective interpretation is that the appointment of a second commission with clear-cut terms of reference manifests Mr Rajiv Gandhi's determination to implement the accord he signed with Sant Harchand Singh Longowal bringing the Akali-Centre conflict to an amicable settlement.

Mr Gandhi has also taken a second political initiative of more than usual significance. He got the G. M. Shah ministry of Jammu and Kashmir dismissed by the Governor, and subsequently made it clear to the parties concerned that election would be held in the state within six months. According to reliable sources, Jammu and Kashmir will go to the polls in August. The belated dismissal of the Shah ministry was Mr. Gandhi's final censure of the monstrosity perpetuated in Kashmir's political life by the Congress-I in 1984, when it put

the defector G. M. Shah to power in order to cut Dr Farouq Abdullah down to size. Dr. Abdullah's National Conference is certain to win a handsome plurality of seats in the legislative assembly. The Congress-I will lose yet another state, but India will win one more victory for its democracy.

Mr. Gandhi allowed much valuable time to lapse before he recaptured political initiative in two strategically-located frontier states in the north. The Union Home Ministry's failure to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab on January 26 weekend the political stature of Chief minister Surjeet Singh Barnala and gave an immediate spurt to extremist politics among the Sikhs. Worse things followed. For a time it appeared that the Union Home Ministry was in league with chief minister Bhajan Lal of Haryana to persuade Mr Gandhi that implementation of the Punjab accord would mean the loss of Haryana, and perhaps Utter Pradesh, to the ruling party in the elections scheduled for 1987 and 1988. The prime minister seemed to be under strong pressure from his party colleagues to back-track on the Punjab accord. For several precious months, Mr Gandhi's political leadership appeared to have frozen.

The stakes in Kashmir were of a different nature. Jammu and Kashmir had not been ruled by the Congress party except for a very short while and that too in coalition with the National Conference. It was one of the signs of Mrs Gandhi's faltering leadership in the 1980's that she was finally persuaded by the Congress-I leaders of Kashmir, men of dubious political integrity and vascillating secular commitments, to bring about the indecent coup

against Dr Farouq Abdullah, G.M. Shah had never been a man of strong secular convictions. His moral and political integrity has seldom been above question. Burning political ambitions unmatched by political acumen led him betray his own brother-in-law, and split the National Conference in order to escape the rigours of the Anti-defection Act. The state Congress-I stooped to the nadir of its political integrity when it backed the Shah ministry and kept it in power for so many months. During this period, the Muslim population of the valley, especially the youth, got more alienated from India than any one seems to be ready to acknowledge. The last months of the Shah regime plunged the valley into communal tensions and conflicts which it had never known before.

It was only after G. M. Shah had totally lost control of law and order in Kashmir, that Governor Jagmohan, who had placed him in the office of chief minister, was compelled to dismiss him under orders from Delhi. At this stage the prime minister took charge of the Kashmir issue. He dismissed all ideas of a rump ministry formed by a coalition of Congress-I legislators, the majority of Shah's followers who deserted him the moment he lost the gadi, a number of independents. Mr Gandhi instructed the Home Ministry to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir in six months of Governor's rule.

In Kashmir, the electoral process will restore the government of the National Conference headed by Farouq Abdullah. The Congress-I is in no position to challenge the NC's supremacy in the valley. G. M. Shah, who has now publicly parted with secularism, has formed a rapidly com-

munal "political party", but it is unlikely to make scratch on the post-election equation of power.

In Punjab, however, the success of the prime minister's new political initiative is by no means certain. Already, the Delhi newspapers have been reporting the "dissappointment" and "dismay" created in Haryana by the appointment of the Ventakaramiah commission. It is being suggested that the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab would mean Congress-I defeat in the 1987 election. Bhajan Lal is not a man to easily submit to his inevitable fall from power. It is to be hoped that the commission's award would generously compensate Haryana for the "loss" of Chandigarh. In any case, much more important for Haryana than a cluster of villages is a fair share of the life-giving waters of the Sutlej. Barnala played his trump card by going slow, abysmally slow, with the construction of the Sultej canal, which is part of the Punjab accord. Bhajan Lal may have been persuaded that with waters flowing into Haryana through the canal before the end of the year, he should be able to convince the Haryana voters that they have gained more than they may have "lost" from the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab.

The prime minister needs to focus all his attention on quick implementation of the Punjab accord. That alone can confirm in the public mind the credibility of his political leadership. Once he has seen through the implementation of the Punjab accord, it will be relatively easy for him to put down the many disorders in the Congress Party. Without firm political leadership, affirmative as well as assertive, it will not be possible for Mr Gandhi even to implement his new economic policy. Change calls for continuing political initiative especially in a country like India where every other person is a petrified defender of the status quo.

More or less . . .

(Continued from page 15)

grammes of Critical and Cultural Studies, at least in the so-called First World, if they are to justify their existence. I hesitate to include those of the Third World (whenever we use this label we must surely be conscious of its less than dubious origins; conscious that it is not a "neutral" description) since their problems are quite different, even perhaps insurmountable, and one must resist the temptation to globalise here. At any rate I feel that insufficient attention has been paid to the Volosinov/Baxtin insight that language is in fact the site of the class struggle, thereby laying emphasis on the tensions both within and without language that language itself refracts. How these notions have to be modified in order to fit into a project such as that which Qadri is proposing I do not know. I just offer these ideas as the constructive part of my critique.

I would have had somewhat more respect for Qadri's *bona fides* if, in the course of his criticism, he had acknowledged his complicity as a student with much of which he now derides. In 1983 Qadri wrote,

"Time was when our universities produced thinking beings who would influence and change society; in Sri Lanka today the converse has occurred. Our universities are not ivory towers separate from the mainstream of society, they represent the mainstream of society. The same values (or lack of them), the same ambitions (employment being the first, second and third priority of every undergraduate) and the same lack of idealism (money being the only motivation) pervades the campus."

I recall a long discussion with him on the subject of ivory towers, where he maintained, despite its derogatory connotations, that this was his ideal of a university. It may, of course, have been a trap, or even a slip-trap, but we must await his verdict on this.

If his position has changed now, surely the university deserves some credit? My own fear is that it hasn't changed enough, and that implicit in his entire denouement is the idea that the *proper* study of English (or World) literature (and this too more new-fangled than Marxist I'm afraid) etc., can "apart from an iniquitous social system" change the world. It is precisely this privileging of (L)iterature over the other disciplines, albeit presented as a criticism of the functioning of a particular period of time, that I find difficult to accept.

Nationalism : . . .

(Continued from page 18)

"The Tamils of Sri Lanka are an ancient people . . . It was a Dravidian civilisation which traced its origins to the people of Mohenjadaró in the Indus valley around 2,500 years before Christ"⁸

A concept of Aryan as a racial category has been dismissed by scholars from around the world. Max Meuller accepted in the end that he used the term "Aryan" to describe certain languages. The extension of this linguistic concept to convey a sense of race was a contribution of the German nationalist movement, especially in its Nazi phase. R. A. L. H. Gunawardene in his article on 'The People of the Lion' shows that the term Aryan was not used in the traditional chronicles of Sri Lanka.⁹ Aryan as denoting Sinhala racial identity is therefore false. The cry of Dravidian is equally mythical. Dravidian is a linguistic category, not a racial one, and it is highly unlikely that the Tamils living in Sri Lanka are the lineal descendants of the citizens of Mohenjadaró.

(To be Continued)

FOOTNOTES

4. S. Ponnampalam, p. 10
5. N. Satyendra, p. 85
6. S. Ponnambalam, p. 17
7. Ashis Nagdy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Self Under Colonialism*, New Delhi, 1983.
8. N. Satyendra, p. 85
9. R. A. L. H. Gunawardena, "The People and the Lion: Sinhala Identity and Historiography", *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, Colombo 1979.

CAT'S EYE



END THIS DESTRUCTIVE WAR NOW SAY WOMEN

Women's organisations from both the South and North of Sri Lanka have voiced their protests against the violence and horrors of war, against the excesses of the combatants, against the abduction of children and rape of women, against their sons, father and brothers being brutalised by participants in a destructive conflict which causes increasing bloodshed and wanton destruction on both sides. Now it is time for the women to not only voice their protests against insensate bombings as occurred recently, but also to raise their voices against the war and to bring all possible pressure for a solution to this fratricidal conflict.

"Women for Peace" has issued a new leaflet in time for May Day this year, which was distributed at the major political party rallies on May 1st. Called "Women Violated", the leaflet seeks to illustrate the threat to all women in Sri Lanka inherent in the creeping — or rather galloping — militarisation and brutalisation of our society. It relates, on one side the story of a 16 year old Sinhala schoolgirl in Ratnapura, who was sexually assaulted and tortured by two policemen; and on the other, the story of a Tamil mother of 4 children, who was gang-raped by nine Home Guards in Trincomalee. Both incidents took place in the latter half of 1985.

Several incidents of rape in the North and East, by Security Forces and Home Guards, have been reported by the Jaffna Mothers 'Front and Citizens' Committees. Victims have usually been reluctant to make formal statements, through fear either of the

social stigma which attaches to rape victims (not their assailants) or of reprisals: victims of rape and their families have been threatened with death, if they were to report these incidents. Where attested cases have been made the subject of special deputations to the highest levels of the government, little or no follow-up action has resulted. In a few cases of rape by Home Guards, enquiry has been followed by dismissal of the men concerned. However, this is totally dependent on the integrity and courage of individual officers in charge; there is no institutionalised procedure for assuring justice — or even an enquiry — to the victims of rape. Especially in cases involving the Army, the government appears reluctant to take action, for fear of the effects upon army "morale" and, ironically, upon army "discipline"!

The rapes in the North and East are one particularly brutal aspect of the war which the state has unleashed upon the Tamil population living in these areas.

The case from the South, of a Sinhalese girl sexually assaulted by Sinhalese policemen indicates, in a different form, that violence has become established, even legitimised, as the means of settling disputes, resolving power struggles and influencing outcomes in general. **Increased violence against women is an integral part of the whole culture of violence which has pervaded our society;** for example the attempts to intimidate the judiciary, violence at elections and at cricket matches, and so on. Each instance of the abuse of power and position which the government not only allows to pass unpunished but actually condones and rewards

(such as the promotion of the policemen involved in the "Pavidi Handa" and Vivienne Goonewardene fundamental rights cases) renders it more difficult to implement punitive action regarding the next one, always supposing that there exists the will to do so.

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

"Women for Peace", an organisation which unites women from all communities in working towards a **just, negotiated settlement** of the war, condemns atrocities against women by persons entrusted by the State with the protection of the civilian population.

The events described here are symptomatic of the general culture of violence which has escalated with the intensifying militarisation of our society.

BATTICALOA WOMEN PROTEST

The Eastern province has recently seen an increase of violence against the civilian population and especially against women at the end of April, the women of Batticaloa, for the first time marched in procession, protesting against the disappearance of 175 youths who had been taken into custody. The women marchers who are mainly the mothers and wives of these 'disappeared persons' took a petition to the Government Agent asking for the whereabouts of their missing relatives. The memorandum also demanded that the harassment of women and young girls be stopped.

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THE AQUINO PARALLEL

The irrelevant analogues of Mervyn and Carlo

If the burden of Professor Carlo Fonseka's missile is that there must be a sufficient number of analogous personal characteristics for a political leader to hope to emulate another, he is arguing on the basis of irrelevancies such as age, gender, height, weight, education and class background. He ignores the socio-economic context in which events are likely to materialize. Granted, the context can never be replicated in toto: each context requires the inclusion or exclusion of factors which, though significant in one case, may be inconsequential in another, or vice versa, or irrelevant in both. In the case of Marcos, apart from his grosser acts of peculation, transfer of illegally begotten wealth abroad, exploitation of sugar plantation workers on a scale unknown in the Lankan tea estates, impoverishment of the urban workers and middle classes owing, inter alia, to inflation, compounded by the common knowledge that elections would be rigged in Phillipine style. There is no need to resort to thuggery, impersonation or defamation. Returning officers are the President's men and are instructed to announce that the government candidate has won, irrespective of the actual count. There is no provision for challenging the result, and rectification by an aggrieved candidate is possible only through the prolonged process of filing action in the Courts. The commendable measures of Marcos' "New Society" when first elected, particularly his ban on carrying firearms, were negated by his subsequent nepotism, corruption and megalomania.

Do we not see a similar situation emerging here? It matters not that a political leader has been deprived of his or her civic rights if the actions which constituted the offence "abuse of power" pale into mere peccadillos in comparison with the grosser abuses of power and callous unconcern for the public

interest and popular sentiment by his or her inquisitors. Why did Sir John Kotelawala suffer an ignominious defeat in 1956? His promise to transfer his private house to a Children's home announced in **An Asian Prime Minister's Story** was not respected after he lost the election. His egregious self-confidence and the full weight of the powerful Lake House newspapers failed to counter the exposures by what were considered to be journalistic rags like **Attha**. Why did education Minister Iriyagolla lose his seat in Kuliyaipitiya in 1970? The Higher Education Act of 1967 did incur the wrath of university staff and students, but there were deeper reasons. Man does not live by education alone. The position of the voter was that the Minister was not dispensing charity from his own purse. Why was Ms. Bandarnaike, having led the SLFP to a landslide victory in 1970, routed in 1977? As the veteran politician Doric de Souza told me, "swing is swing". The seven-year scourge had to end. The illusion of democracy becomes evident when a rotten oligarchy arrogates to itself powers and privileges not conferred by popular consent.

It is impossible to make ends meet on static or sluggish salary levels, in the face of unprecedented inflation, and the only alternative is to leave ends unmet and borrow at usurious rates of interest, even the state lending institutions emerging in place of the wolf of the detested Afghan moneylender though in sheep's clothing, as a respectable state Savings Bank. The "progressive" legislation of the colonial bourgeoisie to protect impecunious borrowers, has no equivalent in the **dharma** set-up. The NSB has drastically reduced its interest rates, while the cost of living index has progressively increased: the prudent lender is now subject to a crippling withholding tax, but gets no interest if he withdraws his capital for some urgent purpose

such as channelling a doctor or proffering a bribe, while the NSB summarily reduces its interest rates without so much as issuing a fresh voucher. The unbearable burden of progressively increasing cost of living has reduced the working and middle classes to desperation and destitution. For the majority on shoe-string budgets, no discretionary spending is possible. For the purchase of a soft-cover-book or going to the theatre, spells financial ruin. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs fails to realise the truth of Galbraith's aphorism that culture is possible only after society has had its dinner. For the desperate worker, there is nothing to lose by the wild-cat strike.

Dare any government reject a demand for a mere Rs. 1000 by dentists and 750 by nurses, when their own salaries and other benefits, let alone illegal gratifications have been increased without even a request from them, and without popular sanction. Would the government have been elected had these selfish motives been declared in their election manifestos?

Dare any government resort to unashamed nepotism even in the echelons of higher learning, where political appointees in control carry on regardless of the seething discontent in their institutions at the offer of benefits to a coterie of their loyal lackeys, even sponsoring their candidature to apparently impartial bodies such as the Academy of Sciences.

Dare any government permit the conspicuous consumption of a lumpen bourgeoisie, graduating from the slums of Kotehena to the environs of Colombo 7, spending their newly acquired wealth on imported luxuries in supermarkets, while half the population is at starvation levels, languishing on food stamps.

Dare any government officially promote sports such as cricket at state expense, for the delectation of privileged mustangs, philistines who have never matu-

red, intellectually or emotionally, since their schooldays. Under the delusion that the whole country is intently following these matches between well-fed youths, taking time off during working hours to listen to radio commentaries, even the regular SLBC programmes being interrupted without notice, for ball-by-ball commentaries of the **pandu** as it is officially described by commentators in the Sinhala medium.

Dare any government permit a first generation immigrant to flout all cabinet conventions and organize civil disobedience campaigns, while the son-of-the-soil (SOS) to display a black flag is considered treachery, treason.

This is the context in which I see the unremitting escalation of violence, terrorism (no attempt has been made to ban the carrying of firearms, although in colonial times it was a crime even to carry an open knife) forgery, theft and fraud. Those who have no hope of survival, still less of maintaining a conventional level of prodigality, by legitimate means turn to crime, including drug and arms peddling. Others seeking to escape from harsh realities find solace in drug addiction, alcoholism, or self destruction (one can commit suicide indirectly by living dangerously, the commonest mode being to drive motor vehicles recklessly, killing others before ending one's own life). For the law-abiding the only means of obtaining a living wage is through strike action. Nurses do not see why they must wait until September when already overpaid politicians were given immediate increases. Even the "independent" candidate, like the buyer of lottery tickets, hopes that by some miracle, he will join the ranks of the affluent political lumpen bourgeoisie, gaining a pension after five years in power.

In certain socio-economic contexts the tolerance of frustration is high. North Indian relief workers toil long hours in the furnace heat of summer, to earn a pittance to buy an inadequate portion of grain. They do not complain, just as the hovels of construction workers interspersed

between the palatial mansions of the rich, cause no resentment. It is not so in Lanka, where the Karma-syndrome is weaker. No government can reverse the rooted image of a "good" government as a generous dispenser of charity to the people it is privileged to govern. And it has to be unrequited giving. Nothing should be expected in return. An imbalance of reciprocities result in a very low tolerance of frustration. Pervasive and endemic frustration can hardly be reversed by the provision of free textbooks (ironically proposed in the first manifesto of the LSSP, but forgotten when the party joined the Centrist coalition). Everyone knows that the free books are not financed out of the generous incomes of politicians, and they owe no gratitude to government. Village upliftment and the million houses project, in imitation of the Korean "saemaul" movement is equally vain. The cash inflows bring vast commissions to the sponsors, and again the people owe no gratitude to the government. Moreover a house is not a home.

The last straw is that people can no longer ventilate their grievances by resort to the ballot. Who won the Mulkirigala election last year? Will the public wait until 1989 or resort to extra-parliamentary agitation, even supporting Parties of Catastrophe.

In the frequency and increasing rancour of strikes, the high incidence of crime, drug addiction, alcoholism etc, I discern a widespread **anomie**, a breakdown of norms which held society together in the old culture, but have now led to the disintegration of all institutions and associations. Even the family is in peril and in the larger society there is the frightening prospect of a Hobbesian war of each against all. It will be recalled that Hobbes considered that the appointment of a ruler would end internecine conflict, the normal condition of a hypothetical state of nature, and would be replaced by voluntary acceptance of the restraints of civil society. The reciprocities of the **purana** village are no more, and the peasant reset.

tlement schemes of the Mahaveli Project can hardly find appropriate rural social forms, the "turnout groups" being a bureaucratic subterfuge. In urban areas there are hardly any voluntary neighbourhood groups. The perverse actions of a corrupt leader have created a revolutionary mood in the Philippines, spearheaded by the Church, which found in Cory Aquino the obvious leader. The circumstances in Lanka may not be quite the same. But comparisons of age, height, education are irrelevant. Since every revolutionary movement has been led by a radical bourgeoisie (Lenin, Mao Tze Dong, Castro and others) class background is as irrelevant as dress (Mrs. Bandaranaike's sari vis-a-vis Aquino's western dress). The bugbear of a "Marxist state" peddled by apologists of Vulgar Capitalism is on a par with the infantile disorder of left-wing communism of Vulgar Marxism, which never gained acceptance in this country.

E & O E
RAPIER

Towards. . .

(Continued from page 16)

even in the most hostile of climates and despite the hysteria of racialism which has often conditioned political debate in the South. However, we are convinced that attacks such as the one against civilians in Anuradhapura, or against the Air Lanka Tristar or against the personnel at the CTO are inexcusable and debase any political cause which is fighting for social justice. Such acts only send us further down the road of tribalism and barbarism. As a society we have been forced to accept an unprecedented proportion of brutality and violence and no community is innocent of this bloodletting. And yet, though one must insist that the government carries the major responsibility for instituting and implementing the processes of peace, we are also of the belief that the time has come for all sections of our society to begin to work for the values of humanity, peace and tolerance without which no society can survive.

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