

*Special to the
Guardian*

Gorbachev and the New Russian Revolution — *Bhabani Sen Gupta*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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Can Indian diplomats build a Bailey bridge?

— *Mervyn de Silva*

CRD's plan on North-East 'linkage'

Pakistan Opposition for Provincial Autonomy

— *Ahmed Rashid*

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FIDEL on the revolutionary and the romantic

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Can the military option work — *Vyvyan Tenorio*

Sri Lanka, SAARC and the South-South dialogue

— *Mahinda Werake*

Also: **Ramani Gunawardena, a tribute
Womens' Groups on arrests and
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DISTASTEFUL PARADISE

The U.N.P.'s great White elephant in the sky has at last crash-landed. A Special Commission is sitting. So the Board has been disbanded, for reasons which are not too difficult to divine. "Air Lanka", with its famous advertising legend 'A taste of Paradise', may have made its mark in the international travel trade for its lavish hospitality, but in the eyes of all informed Sri Lankans, save the Club-class privileged few blessed with Sri Kothan patronage, it represented the other, seamier side of the "new society" that the UNP created post-77.

It spent money like an oil sheik by borrowing money here and abroad. What's worse it was not accountable to Parliament, Treasury or public opinion. It was a little empire run by a man, once an Air Ceylon captain, who seemed above the rules which apply to any business built on public money; a man who appeared to be more powerful than any Cabinet Minister.

How is 'Air Lanka' amassing debts here and abroad, operate for so long without the customary checks? The colossal extravagance of 'Air Lanka' and its present plight cannot be laid at one man's door. What of the Board of Directors, all hand-picked men with high professional reputations, and a few of them, the UNP's 'best and brightest', the think-tank types and the Sri Kothan whizz-kids. Among them were Mr. G. V. P. Samarasinghe, a top CCS commissar and Cabinet Secretary, no less. Another notability was Mr. D. C. (Chandi) Wijesekera, chartered accountant and Sri Kotha jack-of-all trades, (Last job — Competent Authority Times, with membership in so many corporations and advisory committees and Boards).

The financial operations of 'Air Lanka', and certain allied organisations, became such a stench in the civic nostril that

a high-level Commission of Inquiry was finally appointed. Criticism had come from both the World Bank's Asia Director David Hopper and Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, whose own Permanent Secretary was a Board member. Perhaps the most consistent critic however was the Sun for whom the en masse resignations (Nov. 21) was a major victory. But the question remains: How was this 'white elephant' allowed to go on its rampage for so long?

INDIVISIBLE RIGHTS

Fundamental human rights enshrined in the constitution and making all citizens equal or trade union rights won through protracted struggle uniting all members, regardless of race or religion, have been undermined by the 'ethnic conflict' and its deadly divisive power. Yet events sometimes contrive cunningly to bring home these truths to those who have forgotten them. The Sinhala Bala Mandalaya of the U. K., not just a vociferous anti-Eelam campaigner but a stern critic of those international human rights agencies who accuse the regime of human rights violations against Tamils, has issued a strongly worded statement on the recent amendment to the Special Presidential Commissions Act which can lead to

(Continued on page 10)

TRENDS + LETTERS

TRINCOMALEE

Appadurai's book on "Government" was a textbook for matric, and varsity entrance students many years ago. Colonel Wickremasuriya is now quoting Appadurai as quoted by Mettananda, and Tammita in their anti-Tamil propagandist pamphlet on so-called Tamilnadu designs to 'grab' Trinco.

The importance of Trincomalee to India is clearly stated by far more learned Indian historians and other scholars like Dr. Pannikar and later on by Admiral Kaul. But they do not speak for Tamilnadu but for India and India's aims as an Indian ocean power. We must not confuse these different objectives. Our obsession with Madras can make us commit mistakes.

T. B. Ekanayaka

Kandy

Kotmale — correction

While thanking you for publishing my article on the Kotmale project, I would be grateful if you kindly publish also the following corrections:

(Continued on page 9)

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A Bridge Too Far...?

(towards a 'Danzig corridor')

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Over the Thondamannar Bailey bridge, built by Army Engineers, a triumphant National Security Minister led 16 of his UNP parliamentary colleagues as T.V. cameras recorded the visit for islandwide audiences that same night. The camera crew was on the ground, not in a helicopter hovering above—a sign that the Army was in charge. How long for, nobody knows.

But the object of the demonstrative exercise as the visiting MP's moving from army camp to Buddhist temple and to detained Tamil youths was clear. It was a symbolic re-assertion of Colombo's authority, very necessary to boost morale in the South, improve the government's image in eyes of the Sinhala constituency, and to prove that the Minister knew what he was saying when he spoke of 'negotiating from strength'.

India warns Sri Lanka of offensive

By John Elliot in Bangalore

India last night warned Sri Lanka not to launch a fresh army offensive against Tamil guerrillas in the north of the island as this could damage attempts by India to help negotiate a solution to the ethnic conflict.

Mr Narayan Datt Tiwari, India's Foreign Minister delivered the warning last night at a meeting with Mr Shahul Hameed, his Sri Lankan counter part and it will be repeated today when Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister meets Mr Junius Jayawardene, the Sri Lankan President.

The two leaders are in Bangalore for the second summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation which was founded last December.

India is also warning Sri Lanka not to over-interpret the signifi-

And the negotiations were in a delicate and critical stage. The LTTE, the other groups and the TULF stuck to 'merger'/linkage of north and east, while the Government's best offer is 3 Provincial Councils—Trinco, Batticola and Ampara—in the East, a Boundaries Commission which would report on the possibilities of redrawing present borders in 6 months.

It was not the Sri Lankan army but the Indian diplomats who have to build a bridge over that yawning gap. The Indian team of constitutional engineers is evidently led by Mr. P. Chidambaram, Mr. Gandhi's trusted Tamil Nadu aide, a trained lawyer, and the man whose 5 day visit to Sri Lanka paved the way for the Government-TULF talks in August.

Up to Bangalore, it was the LTTE, and the other groups in the East, which had the military

cance of raids on about 1,000 Tamil activists in the southern Indian state of Madras last weekend. India is stressing that the raids were local police actions, although 10 to 15 political leaders of militant groups had been put under house arrest.

Last night there were reports from Madras that the house detention orders had been cancelled, although the Indian Government had been expected to keep those involved in detention until it was clear whether they were willing to join in peace talks.

Mr Gandhi is expected to urge Mr Jayawardene to make further improvements to his proposals for a peace deal. He wants some concession made on linking parts of Sri Lanka's eastern province to the Tamil majority area of the northern province. (F.T.)

initiative. They were trying to alter the situation on the ground so rapidly and so effectively that the 'gap' between the two negotiating parties would have been far too wide for the mediator to bridge. Thus, the Indian crackdown on the militants, correctly timed for the SAARC summit, where the most contentious issue was a SAARC resolution on "terrorism".

Whether it was a Tamil Nadu move or a joint Delhi-Madras initiative or a personal intervention by Police Chief Mohan Das, (a Keralaite, now under fire by Tamil Nadu press) the result was doubtless welcome to all. The 'Tigers' had to learn (or be taught the hard way) that they must yield ground in order to help the all-important mediator, Mr. Gandhi, and improve his chances of success as the 'honest broker'. As the Financial Times (London) correspondent covering the summit reported (see India warns) there was of course the danger that this crackdown would be seen in Colombo as an opportunity for a military offensive in the north to make at least symbolic, morale-boosting, if not lasting military, gains. Hence the Indian warning to Colombo, and a strong hint that the crackdown should not be "over-interpreted".

In the face of an adverse opinion build-up in the Sinhala South, it would be naive to imagine that Colombo, its confidence stiffened by new arms and better trained troops, would not make a serious bid to plant the Lion Flag in Jaffna. Negotiating from strength, not from weakness—that would be the government's vital message to its constituency. Delhi, on the other hand, realises that an army holed up for so long and humiliated by a military impasse would be tempted, with the first smell of military

success, to advance from the limited objectives to the much more rewarding goal of re-taking Jaffna, whatever the human price.

And then there was the Israeli President's visit. It was time for Delhi to place a restraining hand once more, but on the Sri Lankan Government now. Thus, the flying visit of Messrs Chidambaram and Natwar Singh.

But why the rush? Why did Mr. Gandhi decide to despatch the Natwar Singh-Chidambaram two-some before the weekend, get Colombo's greenlight on Sunday, and send them on Monday in an Indian airforce aircraft that could take them back to Delhi on Monday night? A popular short answer to the question is "Gorbachev". They had to return in time to take their places in the receiving line for the CPSU General Secretary, who by the way, was accorded a reception which

old hands in Delhi's diplomatic enclave say was "quite unprecedented".

If that was the case, why not wait till Gorbachev leaves? The urgency of the "urgent consultations" is what needs explaining. Intelligence reports reaching Delhi, directly and via Madras, suggested that there could be a major confrontation between the Armed forces and the L.T.T.E.-dominated guerrilla forces in Jaffna. The LTTE had already asked the residents to move out of Jaffna town and take temporary refuge in the homes of relatives and friends elsewhere. And this had in fact made the Jaffna population restless and tense, with some of its 'senior citizens' wittingly or unwittingly creating near-panic conditions.

What is more, the "boys" were getting ready for a face-to-face, fight-to-the-death battle. The government's own operations in

the north, from the Thondamanar bridge-building exercise and the media build-up for the visit of the 16 UNP MP's, strengthened Indian anxieties.

Military experts say that if the government deploys 6 to 8 battalions in Jaffna, the chances of regaining effective control are quite good. Then the "symbolic" demonstration (the MP's visit) of Colombo's authority would become a physical reality. The steady increase in the number of army camps (from 15 to 25), some of which were 'inspected' by the MP's and the better training facilities together with the new equipment, would then pay good dividends.

There's a catch, though. Casualties. First civilian casualties, which could provoke Tamilnadu, and have adverse international repercussions. Second, army casualties. How much can the army

(p. 5)

Joint Plea to Centre to help end sufferings of Tamils

NEW DELHI,

Human rights violations

Representatives of many national political parties have joined to sign a statement calling upon the Indian Government to "bring all legitimate and moral pressure on the Government of Sri Lanka to terminate acts of oppression against the Tamil people" and to take immediate and urgent measures to end the sufferings of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

The statement which expressed concern at the "total indifference of the Government of Sri Lanka to the sufferings of the Tamil people in permitting the army atrocities" was signed by Mr. L. K. Advani (BJP), Mr. P. Upendra (Telugu Desam), Mr. Indrajit Gupta (CPI), Mr. S. P. Malaviya (Lok Dal), Mr. A. G. Kulkarni (Cong.-S), Mr. Saifuddin Soz (National Conference), Mr. Bapu Kaldate (Janata), Mr. Nagen Saikia (AGP), Mr. V. Gopalaswamy and Mr. N. V. N. Somu (DMK), Mr. Aladi Aruna (AIADMK), Mr. Chitta Basu (Forward Bloc) and Lt. Gen. Arora (Akali Dal).

The indiscriminate killings through search and destroy operations, the strafing and shelling, the indiscriminate mass arrests of Tamil youth, their being tortured and held incommunicado, the destruction of houses, schools and hospitals and the total destruction of Tamil villages were cited as evidence of the continuing violations of human rights in the statement. It accused the Sri Lankan Government of deliberately cutting off food and medical supplies to Tamil areas, of depriving Tamil refugees of relief and ignoring the reports of international humanitarian agencies like the Amnesty International which had sought to draw attention to the human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

The statement was released at a press conference convened by the PROTEG and the Friends of Eelam at the conclusion of their relay fast which had been intended to focus attention on the continuing human rights violations on the island.

"Not sincere"

Expressing his appreciation of the support received from the national political parties as embodied in the joint statement to be presented to the Prime Minister, Mr. S. C. Chandrasena, president, PROTEG, said the offer to split the Eastern Province into three, made by the Sri Lankan President in Bangalore had already been rejected by the TULF in its second round of talks with him in Colombo and for Mr. Jayewardene "to spring this offer as if something new" showed his insincerity. "We do not feel this meets in any way the aspirations of the Tamil people and the fact that despite the efforts of the Indian Government, he has not come out with anything more, shows he is not sincere".

Further proof of insincerity, he said, was the fact that just before the SAARC summit, the Sri Lankan armed forces had begun a major offensive against the Jaffna peninsula, bombarding it from the sea. "It's a totally unprovoked attack, no Tamil militant activity had preceded it," he said. (HINDU)

take in the way of casualties without unpredictable, and possibly dangerous, consequences?

The consequences could include strong reactions **within** the army, and political turbulence in Colombo.

What in other words, were the limits of 'acceptable damage', and what the threshold of 'unacceptable damage'? Nobody is ready to quantify these strictly military considerations, applied to a hypothetical situation.

In India's view, if the worst happened, Tamilnadu could "explode", years of diplomatic effort would come to nought, and there will be shouts in Parliament for 'action' (see **Joint Plea**) just when the entire policy-making apparatus is busy on the Gorbachev visit. It was necessary to talk to Colombo.

European Parliament on peace in Sri Lanka

The following is the resolution on the present peace efforts on Sri Lanka adopted by the European Parliament at its last session held recently.

Deeply concerned at the continuing civil strife in Sri Lanka between certain militant Tamil organisations and the Sri Lanka security forces which, since 1982, has resulted in a great number of deaths, including many civilians;

Having regard to the latest proposals of the Government of Sri Lanka for a devolution of power to elected provincial councils, which have emerged as the result of a series of negotiations held since 1983 between the various parties involved;

Noting the good offices continuing to be provided by the Government of India;

Noting that these proposals will be discussed at a Conference to be held in the near future, to which all Sri Lankan political parties, as well as the militant Tamil organisations, would be invited;

Notes that the present proposals of the Government of Sri Lanka have evoked positive responses from several

political groups in Sri Lanka, including the Tamil United Liberation Front;

Hopes that an agreement will be reached at such a Conference on the basis of these proposals, certain aspects of which still need to be discussed;

Hopes, moreover, that such an agreement would be accompanied by a lasting cease-fire between the Sri Lankan security forces and the militant Tamil groups, would provide a just, lasting and harmonious peace for all the communities in Sri Lanka, and would respect democracy, the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of that country.

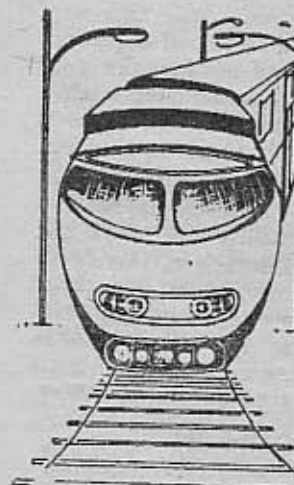
Calls on the Foreign Ministers meeting in Political Cooperation to express their support for a negotiated settlement to the present situation in Sri Lanka and to provide such support as may be needed and requested to facilitate a full settlement;

Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Foreign Ministers meeting in Political Cooperation and to the Governments of Sri Lanka and India.

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Units of Devolution : CRD's Compromise Formula

1. The euphoria created by the President's visit to SAARC has begun to fade because it appears that neither side to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict can agree on the units of Devolution in the North and East.

THREE PROVINCES, NO MERGER, NO LINKAGE

2. The Sri Lankan Government proposals appear to be as follows:

- (a) that the Eastern province be divided up into three provinces — Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai. Each would have their own council. Batticaloa would be regarded as the Tamil province.
- (b) a boundaries commission will be set up with terms of reference to demarcate the Tamil areas of Amparai and Trincomalee. The Commission would be expected to give its conclusions in six months. There is a possibility of linking these Tamil areas to the Tamil Eastern province of Batticaloa, once the Commission finishes its deliberations.

The scheme envisions the creation of four provinces in the North and East

(taken from Newspaper reports in the 'Island', 'Sun' and 'Daily News' November 17 — 24)

TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS, MERGER OF NORTH AND EAST

3. The position of Tamil groups, shorn of rhetoric, appears to be the following:
 - (a) six months deliberations of a boundary commission and the "possibility" as opposed to reality of merger are uncertain factors for negotiation of such a vital issue. The boundaries and merger issues should be solved first, before the final negotiation of the devolution package;
 - (b) the North and the East are the traditional homelands of the Tamil. There should be one unit for both provinces. The Sinhala areas may be demarcated and then merged with the North Cen-

tral Province or Moneragala. (taken from 'The Hindu' of 17 — 24 November)

LINKAGE AND REDEMARCATION

4. On the face of this, the positions appear to pose an unbridgeable gap. However, it is the CRD's position that if the Government concedes the possibility of a *de facto* "Tamil Ethnic Region" (as opposed to a Linguistic Region involving the Muslims) to be demarcated out of the North and the East, the impasse may easily be overcome. It must be remembered that the B — C pact did envision such a possibility as early back as 1958. Given the fact that the Government has accepted the need to ethnically demarcate the East to solve the current crisis, we feel that accepting a *de facto* Tamil Ethnic region is not too extreme a proportion and the only way to bridge the impasse. The need to demarcate the East ethnically arises not only out of the need to meet the demands of the Tamils but also because of the Muslim factor and the need to give the Muslim community a measure of autonomy in the areas where they are a majority. In addition we would like to point out, that as it stands given the tension in the East, the Provincial Council of Trincomalee is likely to collapse before its first meeting, leading to infighting and violence even before the Boundary Commission submits its deliberation. The unit demarcation should attempt to contain conflict not create it.

CONTIGUOUS UNIT, WITHOUT MERGER

5. Accepting the possibility of a Tamil Ethnic Region, however, does not imply a North — East merger. Such a region would include only the Tamil majority areas of the Northern Province-Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai.

The CRD feels that with a little geographic imagination, a contiguous region can be drawn to include many of the Tamil

majority areas of Trincomalee Batticaloa and Amparai. The government has and GSD's. If one looks at the same map with "AGA" in mind, the picture looks completely different.

Trincomalee Port would of course be a Central Government function. Muslim areas of Amparai could remain as a separate province. The Sinhala areas of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai can become a separate province or merge with the North Central Province.

6. In this regard, the committee for Rational Development put forwards the following suggestions for resolution of the current impasse:

- (a) A Boundaries Commission be set up immediately with representatives from the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Groups. A cessation of hostilities should also be negotiated.
- (b) The Commission be given 3 — 4 weeks to demarcate the Tamil majority areas, the Sinhala majority areas and the Muslim majority areas of the Eastern Province.
- (c) The Tamil majority areas of the East be merged with the North to create one provincial unit. The Sinhala and Muslim areas be created into separate provincial councils.
- (d) Detailed terms of reference be worked out for the protection of minorities within provincial councils. This is absolutely important, given the nature of demography.
- (e) Direct negotiations be conducted which will work out the final details of the devolution of power, package in terms of constitutional issues at the same time as the Boundary Commission deliberates on demarcation.

REFERENDUM IN TAMIL MAJORITY AREAS

7. There are many arguments being put forward against this solution which accepts a Tamil Ethnic Region:
 - we should not entrench ethnic boundaries;
 - the Tamils of the East have different problems and aspirations from the Tamils of

(Continued on page 7)

Lecturer detained, women's groups appeal

Womens organisations and human rights groups in Sri Lanka have expressed deep concern over the detention for nearly a month under the PTA of a Kelaniya Univ. Asst. Lecturer in Western Classics, the first woman to be arrested in the South in such circumstances. Ms. Pulsara Liyanage (28) was an active member of the Campaign for the Release of Political Prisoners (CROPP) participated in the protest campaign for Nirmala Nithyanandan, the Tamil writer, and in the "Women for Peace" demonstrations.

Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunge, President of the S.L.M.P., Ms. Vivienne Gunawardene, of the LSSP Women's Front and former Deputy Minister in the U. F. government, Ms. Kusala Abhayawardana, ex-MP and Secretary of the International Volunteer Service for Peace, Ms. Manouri Muttetuwegama, Attorney at Law and Gen. Secretary, Sri Lanka Women's Front, Dr. (Mrs) Florence Aluwihare (Womens International League for Peace and Freedom) Ms. Menike Wijenaike on behalf of the Gen. Sec. of the Public Services United Nurses Union (PSUNU) Ms. Bernadeen Silva (Women's Education Centre) Sister Angela (Socio-Economic Development Centre) Shirani Samarasinghe (Kantha Handa) Leena Haputhanthi (Women and Media) Nimalka Fernando (Negombo Women's Committee) Ms. Audrey Perera (National Christian Council) Ms. Tissaranie Gunasekara (Socialist Womens Study Circle) Hemamala Gunawardana (Progressive Women Front) Ms. Frances Tissara (Womens League NSSP) Sriyani Perera (Pacific Asia Womens Forum) and Ms. Padmini Weerasooriya (Womens Centre Jaela) are among the signatories to the appeal submitted to the National Security Minister.

The following statement was issued by C.R.O.P.P. Ms. Liyanage has now been transferred to the Jayawardenepura Hospital. The statement reads:

The government arrests Pulsara Liyanage

The process of arrest and detention of citizens by the army and police is continuing unabated in both the north and south. According to reports in the press, the police has taken into custody number of persons last Saturday. Among them was Ms. Pulsara Liyanage an activist of CROPP. An assistant lecturer in Western Classics at the University of Kelaniya she is also very active in various mass organisations.

Ms. Liyanage was taken into custody by the CID on the morning of Saturday 1st November 1986. The CID officers who arrested her did not produce a detention order or any kind of authorisation. She was initially taken to the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) office at Longden Place, Colombo, and then to the anti-terrorist unit of the CID headquarters, the "fourth floor". Since then she has been transferred to the Slave Island police station.

On the first night at the fourth floor, she had to sleep on the ground and was bitten by a rat and had to be medically treated. At the Slave Island police station she had to sleep on a stone slab. This police station does not even have proper toilet facilities. CROPP has been constantly agitating about the conditions of detention at these places. If those undergoing interrogation are treated so badly, one can imagine the situation of those in prisons and detention camps. The state seems to take no interest at all in their welfare.

CROPP would like to draw your attention to Ms Liyanage's state of health. She underwent a major womb operation this March and has still not recovered from it fully. Furthermore she suffers from low blood pressure. CROPP insists that when people with known ailments are taken into custody, they should be properly looked

after. Such has not happened in this case. We wonder whether the police are here using a subtle but insidious form of torture. CROPP has always protested against the torture of prisoners and do so once more, vehemently.

CROPP suspect that the sudden arrest of Ms Liyanage does signify the government's intention to crack down on democratic and human rights organisation like ours. While on the one hand, it points to the existence of organisations like CROPP as an example of democracy in the country, the arrest of an activist in our organisation can only mean that their intentions are quite the contrary.

We protest against the arrest of Pulsara Liyanage who fought against injustice and for the fundamental rights of the people of this country and demand from the government that she should be released immediately.

Redley Silva
Secretary (CROPP)

Units of . . .

(Continued from page 6)

the North and they should have their own province.

CRD believes that the first argument is no longer valid given the realities of the present conflict. Ethnic boundaries are entrenched both in real life and psychologically. The question is how to contain the conflict from becoming endemic. Recognising the boundaries that exist and allowing autonomy within will give the country the breathing space it so desperately needs. As for the second argument, if necessary a referendum may be held in the Tamil majority areas of the East as to whether they wish to merge with the North. In this way the linkage would not be an imposition but a democratically chosen alternative of the Tamil people of the East.

(Reggie Siriwardena for C.R.D.)



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C. M. U. Resolution on political settlement

"The 19th Delegates' Conference of the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) held on October 17th.

DECLARES that the conflict in the Northern and Eastern provinces should be brought to an end by the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Tamil-speaking people of the North and East, and the negotiation of a political settlement on that basis, with their representatives, including representatives of the groups of Tamil youth who are engaged in armed conflict.

RESOLVES that the Union should make every endeavour to mobilise opposition amongst the working people to the war policy that the Government is pursuing in the North and East, which is not only continuing to cause death to Tamil,

Muslim and Sinhala people as well as destruction of property and untold suffering amongst the Tamil-speaking people living in those areas of the country, but is also being used as a pretext for maintaining a State of Emergency and repression throughout the country, and the heaping of ever-increasing economic burdens upon the people.

NOTE

A vote by ballot was taken on the above resolution, on a recommendation made by the Executive Committee of the Union, which submitted it to the Conference on two weeks' notice to all Union branches. This exceptional procedure of voting, instead of the usual method of doing so by a show of hands, was adopted because of the controversy prevailing in the country in relation to the conflict in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

The overwhelming majority of the delegates were from Union branches in the Western province, and Sinhala-speaking. So were the delegates from the branches in the Southern, Central and North-Central provinces, who were present when the resolution was taken up, on the third day of the Conference (Sunday, 19th October). The delegates from branches in the Northern and Eastern provinces, who were Tamil-speaking, represented just over 4.5% of the total number of delegates present on that day.

The result of the ballot showed that 70% of the delegates present had voted for the resolution, while 12% of them had voted against it. Of the remaining 18%, 13% were neutral and 5% abstained.

(CMU release)

MIRJE pleads for political prisoners

The Movement for Inter Racial Justice & Equality, as well as all other organisations committed to the preservation of civil and democratic rights of all citizens and ethnic groups, has been continually drawing the attention of the State to the problem of political prisoners in our society,

We continue to believe that all those taken into custody by the State under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and under the Emergency Regulations are in fact political prisoners, in that they become the victims of the State in their pursuit of political aims. According to figures given by some organs of the State, the number of such persons is approximately 3000. Among them are persons who have languished in custody for periods of over 30 months, even though the maximum detention period under the Prevention of Terrorism Act is 18 months, a period that was deemed far too long when the Act was first promulgated.

Today, the 21st November, 1986, we wish to draw attention to the plight of these persons and particularly to the case of Indika Gunawardena, the Secretary of MIRJE in 1985. It is exactly a year since he was taken into custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We are not aware of the specific nature of the grounds on which he has been taken into and kept in custody; however a year is surely sufficient time for the State security authorities to conduct and complete their investigations and decide whether their original suspicions were well founded. If so and if the material exists for a prosecution he should be indicted before the judiciary and given the chance of defending himself. If not he should be released forthwith. It is indeed the duty of the State to keep any person in custody on suspicion for as short a time as possible.

Today we reiterate this demand on behalf of Indika Gunawardena as well as of all other detainees

who have been in custody for long periods: Bring them before the judiciary or release them.

Charles Abeysekera
(President, MIRJE)

Letter. . .

(Continued from page 1)

The figure in the preamble should be 75% not 90%.

In practice, this would still mean a huge cut in Swedish aid.

The penultimate paragraphs must therefore be altered to read:

"This means a cut from well above S. E. K. 200 million a year to about 60 million, the sum that S. I. D. A. has set apart for development aid to Sri Lanka after Kotmale. This represents 50% less than the pre-Kotmale period. S. I. D. A. stands for the Swedish International Development Authority.

Thomas Bibin

Ramani Gunawardhana

(a personal appreciation)

Death of Ramani Nangi came as a shock to all of us. She was the leading light in my mother's elder brother's family. In our society where family links are still very strong, first cousins do influence each others lives very significantly. This compels me to make a personal appreciation of our lost cousin.

When my uncle Toddy married a member of the Papi-liyane, Jayawardhana family; though they were related for generations, for a Bandara-gama Kotalawela, it was a step towards the urban society. Ramani, was enterprising enough to make use of all the advantages offered to her by this family link, to break out of the traditional norms forced on a female. She studied electronics at Katubedde Campus and was able to acquire an important position in the Ceylon Transport Board during the previous government.

I can still remember so well how she had first taste of political work. In 1975, we as the "Left Sama Samajists" thought we should contest the Colombo North by-election against Mr. J. R.

Jayewardene. We did not agree with the boycott idea of the Sama Samaja leadership. Comrade Siritunga Jayasooriya was our candidate, and we were campaigning against many odds. One day, Ramani Nangi came clad in red with few of her friends to help us. No doubt our ideas, dedication and sacrifice moved the head and the heart of these young women.

However she never accepted our ideas as totally correct. When ever we met she used to argue and she differed clearly with our position on the National Question. Thus even prior to her marriage to Dinesh her ideas were close to that of the MEP. Irrespective of our differences, I admired her ability to break out of tradition to lead an independent life as a person with a clear mind.

By joining the famous Boralugoda family she added fame to her family. For me not only did I gain personal association through her link with the pioneers of Sama Samaja movement, but also my closest comrade Vasudeva was made a relation of mine!

Even though she did not come into open politics, her contribution during the '83 by-election was considered to be great. With her backing Dinesh could fight the entire UNP machinery and win the election. One of the few who could do so.

Amidst the great sorrow on the day of the funeral, momentarily I felt happy walking all the way to Kanatte, with Vijaya Kumaratunge and Indika Gunawardhana on my side. Indika, who is under house arrest under PTA since March, was given this freedom for that occasion. I thought to my self that the entire revolutionary potential of this country brought together near me in this funeral march. It should go beyond her grave.

Buddha said, Things are impermanent, ever-changing, changing into the very opposite in the end. We Marxists do agree completely on that life, full of energy will end in decay and death. With that we must bear the sorrow for our lost cousin.

Dr Wickramabahu Karunaratne
(The writer is General Secretary of the N.S.S.P.)

TRENDS...

(Continued from page 1)
the loss of the civic rights of any Sri Lankan who tries to 'coerce or unlawfully influence' an M. P. etc.

It is no secret that this was a pre-emptive move against the Movement for the Defence of the Motherland which was threatening to 'lobby' UNP MP's and persuade them to refrain from voting for the proposed P. C.'s Bill. It is no secret that the Bala Mandalayas and some other

overseas Sri Lankan organisations which were in the forefront of defending not just the 'fair name' of Sri Lanka but of the government have now switched sides. They are now anti-UNP. The awakening to the indivisibility of fundamental rights, though delayed, is a happy sign.

As for Trade Union rights and worker solidarity, over and above ethnic differences, the GMOA gave us a commendable demonstration of "unity" by its actions on the Jaffna hospital

and the complaints by its members in Jaffna. So has CMU where a 95% Sinhalese membership voted boldly for a honorable and just settlement of the ethnic issue at a recent meeting (See News)

NO EXECUTIONER

Beating his breast, wringing his hands, Finance Minister intervened in the budget debate to make this plaintive protest — "I am no Lord High Execu-

(Continued on page 19)

Sri Lankans doubt military can end war

Growing numbers want negotiations to resolve ethnic conflict

Vyvyan Tenorio

Colombo, Sri Lanka
Sept. 22.

In the last few years, Sri Lanka's ethnic war has transformed parts of the gem-shaped island — known for its spectacular beaches — into scorched battlefields or stark scenes of slaughter.

Over this period, too, the country has seen the transformation of its military forces from largely ceremonial soliders into fierce combat troops. Now, equipped with sophisticated weapons, the military is motivated with a purpose — to wipe out the country's Tamil insurgency.

But many Sri Lankans — government officials, military men, and civilians — have apparently begun to believe a military solution is not possible. Continued allegations of military abuses or massacres of Tamil civilians have raised doubts about the wisdom of Army offensives.

Within the military hierarchy itself, there are those who advocate a negotiated settlement to the island's Tamil-Sinhalese strife, even as both sides remain locked in a virtual civil war.

"There has to be a political solution," says Maj. Gen. N. Seneviratne, commander of the Sri Lankan Army. "The military cannot bring about a solution to the problem, although we have to play our part in maintaining law and order."

Tamils, who make up roughly 18 percent of the country's 16 million people, began waging a sporadic guerrilla war in the late 1970s. Armed rebels, now estimated to number between 5,000 to 7,000, demand a separate homeland in the northern and eastern parts of the island, where Tamils constitute a majority. The violence has escalated since July 1983, when a Tamil ambush that killed 13 soldiers sparked violent reprisals

from the Sinhalese, the island's main ethnic community.

Sri Lankan President Junius R. Jayewardene, analysts here say, has been made increasingly aware that a military solution — a threat he has held out in the past, if peace talks were to fail irrevocably — would not be feasible. Sources say that when Army officers requested the Finance Ministry to increase defense allocations earlier this year, they admitted that the military could at best maintain a holding pattern — and only temporarily.

Analysts also doubt that the country's economy can sustain prolonged military operations. Defense expenditures have risen from about \$30 million in 1977 to over \$350 million this year, a huge increase for an economy hit by low exports and falling foreign investment.

Nonetheless, there are concerns that if Indian-brokered peace negotiations fail, the Sri Lankan government will be forced to mount military offensives that it can ill afford. After the collapse of a cease-fire late last year, India has again managed to get the Jayewardene government and the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front to a negotiating table. India is reportedly trying to persuade the more radical Tamil guerrilla group to join in the next round of talks.

"If proposals are not accepted, there is no alternative but for the military to take drastic action. There will be further bloodshed which would be devastating for the country," Seneviratne says.

Faced with the Tamil insurgency, the military has had to beef up its ranks, arsenal, and morale in a short period. Though relatively small in absolute terms, its numbers have more than doubled in the last 15 months alone, experts say. The Defense Ministry does not release figures, but some

analysts estimate the armed forces strength at 30,000 to 40,000, including 4,000 members of the Special Task Force, an elite unit of police commandos and active reservists. A 4,000-man Navy patrols the 20-mile wide Palk Strait where guerrilla arms traffic passes through from islands off southern India's coast.

In addition to the military and police forces, there are an estimated 15,000 "home guards" or civilian troops, mostly farmers and villagers, who are issued arms with little or no military training. Deployed by the Home Ministry, their role is controversial, particularly in the northeast where many have reportedly carried out indiscriminate killings of Tamil civilians.

With the modernization campaign in the last two years, the military has expanded its material capability with massive purchases of arms — from Israel, South Africa, Britain, Singapore, Pakistan, and China.

According to National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, Israeli intelligence experts were brought in for a few months in 1983 to train security forces in counter-insurgency methods. Western defence experts say some Israeli advisers still come in from time to time.

While their morale may have improved, the security forces have fast gained a reputation for atrocities against civilians in retaliation for guerrilla attacks, say local and international human rights organizations. In 1984, following the death of two military personnel in a land mine explosion allegedly planned by guerrillas, security forces reportedly went on a rampage in a northern town, setting fire to homes and businesses, and killing several civilians.

Last week, the government reported that a car bomb in the eastern city of Batticaloa killed 13 civilians. But residents, giving a higher toll, claimed six civilians died in Thursday's blast and nine were killed in a subsequent reprisal by government forces. No one claimed responsibility for the explosion.

Critics blame the government for allowing widespread indiscipline among the ranks to go unpunished. The government claims that since 1982, it has dismissed about 300 soldiers, including officers. But it says no court-martial cases have been filed for lack of evidence.

Part of the problem seems to lie in the ethnic composition of the security forces. Including new recruits, experts say, up to 98 percent of the military is Sinhalese. Among police ranks, Tamils account

for only about 5 to 7 percent. Tamils claim discrimination against them in recruiting. But authorities say Tamil applicants and their families are threatened by guerrillas if they join the Army.

"An essentially Sinhalese Army," one international human rights group warned, "inevitably identifies the terrorist guerrilla groups as Tamils and therefore sees its role not as a neutral force but to defend the Sinhalese..."

Another problem is that the security forces' powers of arrest and detention have widened under the 1982 Prevention of Terrorism Act. This has led to abuses and torture, according to civil rights groups.

Earlier this year, a military campaign to wrest control of the

northern city and district of Jaffna from Tamil militants, achieved only limited success. The government "unilaterally suspended" its bombing of the area in April, Athulathmudali says.

But analysts say the bombings ceased due to pressure from abroad, notably India, and rumblings from within the military. The campaign, they say, helped convince Army leaders that, contrary to the government's political rhetoric, elimination of the rebels was not possible—especially while the rebels maintain sanctuaries in southern India, where there is a large Tamil population.

Even if a political settlement is eventually reached, observers say, Sri Lanka's program of militarization may prove difficult to reverse.

— Christian Science Monitor

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PAKISTAN

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FOREIGN
NEWS

The opposition unites on a call for provincial autonomy

Ahmed Rashid in Lahore

The question of provincial autonomy has once again become a burning political issue in Pakistan. For the first time the majority of the country's opposition parties have reached a consensus on substantial decentralisation in government. The recent formation of a new leftwing party will also increase demands by ethnic minorities for greater devolution of power.

In June the major opposition alliance, the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD), which boycotted last year's parliamentary elections, agreed that it would work to give greater power to the provinces and provide safeguards against unwarranted meddling by the central government. The MRD said that the central government should retain jurisdiction in only four areas: communications, defence, foreign affairs and the issuing of currency. It called for the other aspects of government to be handled by the provinces.

The only major opposition party not involved in the demand for devolution was the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami. Observers were surprised that among those which reached the consensus was Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). One of the PPP's main demands is the full restoration of the 1973 constitution, framed by Benazir's father, the late prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. However, the MRD's new agreement makes it clear that the 1973 constitution will have to be amended in the light of this consensus, if the PPP came back to power. Despite its overwhelming popularity, the fact that the PPP has conceded the need for greater provincial autonomy indicates the importance of the issue, according to political observers.

The sense of deprivation felt by Pakistan's ethnic minorities was aggravated after martial law was imposed in 1977. In Sindh, the crushing of the MRD-led civil-disobedience movement in 1983, leaving hundreds dead, fuelled Sindhi nationalism. In the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan the presence of nearly 3 million Afghan refugees has increased resentment against what are seen as the policies of the Punjabi-dominated army and bureaucracy. The military crackdown in Baluchistan during 1973-78 and the hanging later of many Baluch militants gave a boost to Baluch nationalism.

THE smaller, provincially based parties in the MRD are jubilant at their success in finally persuading the larger, national parties of the need for greater provincial autonomy. However, ethnic nationalism poses as much of a threat to the nationally popular opposition parties like the PPP, as it does to the government. "We have laid the basis for agreement on autonomy among all the parties" Rasul Bux Palejo, secretary-general of the Sindh-based People's Movement (PM) told the REVIEW. "I do imagine some parties (like the PPP) not wanting to implement this agreement if they come to power, but at least they have made a commitment on paper to provincial autonomy and we can take them up on it."

The autonomy issue is also the main platform of a new leftwing political party called the Awami National Party (ANP). For the past six months, four small Left-of-centre parties have held talks leading to their merger and the formation of the ANP. The four component parties are the Punjab-

based Mazdoor Kissan Party; PM; Ghaus Bux Bizengo's Pakistan National Party with its base in Baluchistan, and the National Democratic Party of Abdul Wali Khan which has strong support among the Pathans of the NWFP. The new party will remain a part of the MRD.

The birth of the ANP is probably the most important initiative taken by the Left in more than 15 years. In the 1950s-60s, the National Awami Party, led by Baluch and Pathan nationalist, was the main leftwing platform in the country. In the mid-1960s, the Left was badly splintered by the Sino-Soviet dispute and later a number of these groups joined the PPP, only to be thrown out after the PPP came to power in the early 1970s. Since then the leftwing movement has been bogged down by personality clashes and factionalism.

However, the new unity of the Left will from now on make it possible for these groups to operate on a national scale. The ANP could also provide an effective leftwing critique of the policies of the PPP within the folds of the MRD, as well as boost the autonomy demand by the smaller provinces. The ANP will recognise five separate nationalities in Pakistan: Punjabi, Pathan, Baluch, Sindhi and Saraiki. "If more nationalities insist on separate recognition, they will also be acknowledged," said Sardar Shauket Ali, convenor of the ANP. Leftwing leaders told the REVIEW that their work for the rights of the minority nationalities would take priority over class struggle.

The government of Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo is unlikely to grant the demands for

(Continued on page 24)

BANGALORE SUMMIT - II

Trade should be included in regional Cooperation

Mahinda Werake

However, as we know, Sri Lanka finally decided to participate in the Bhutan meeting and since then has not allowed its fluctuating relationship with India to affect the workings of the association. The Article X of the SAARC Charter, which was signed at the Dhaka Summit, confirmed the decision of the first meeting of the Foreign Secretaries that the decisions of the SAARC at all levels should be taken "on the basis of unanimity" and, "bilateral and contentious issues" be kept out of the deliberations of the group⁶.

The Dhaka Summit was a success from the point of view of Sri Lanka, for, both the Charter and the Declaration stipulated in no uncertain terms that the SAARC opposed the interference in internal affairs and the "use of threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of the other states."⁷ The joint statement issued at the conclusion of the Summit approved the idea to "set up a study group to examine the problem of terrorism" with a view to seeking cooperation of the member states to solve it⁸. Hence, it can be said that the SAARC which began primarily as an organization to promote cultural and economic cooperation, by the Dhaka Summit had expanded its scope to include political issues also within its purview. In fact President Ershad of Bangladesh, who is also the present chairman of the Association went to the extent of even announcing that the SAARC could help to solve the bilateral problems affecting the region⁹.

President Jayewardene used the Summit to mend fences with India. He and Mr. Gandhi went together to see the cyclone affected areas in Bangladesh and at the opening

sessions of the Summit Mr. Jayewardene even suggested to the other leaders that being the leader of the most powerful and biggest country in South Asia, Mr. Gandhi should take the leadership of the region. It may well have been a gesture to placate Mr. Gandhi who did not have a close relationship with Mr. Jayewardene until then. Nonetheless, it is true that the personal relations between the two leaders have improved after the Summit notwithstanding the fact that the Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq visited Sri Lanka soon after the Summit and Sri Lanka has developed a special relationship with Pakistan particularly as a result of the ethnic crisis.

The Dhaka Summit clearly demonstrated that Sri Lanka is once again firmly committed to the success of the SAARC. President Jayewardene urging the member states to work "hand in hand" to promote the ideals of the organization hoped that "there would be no mutiny aboard the SAARC ship" which was set afloat that day. Mr. Jayewardene went on to say,

We have launched the ship today. May it travel around the world, enter the ports of hunger, poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, and seek to provide comforts to these ills... the twilight comes, the dew drop slips into the glittering sea. SAARC ship has slipped into the glittering sea. May it sail long for the welfare of humanity.¹⁰

Mr. Gandhi made an equally strong plea for the success of the SAARC hoping that it build a region of peace and a haven of harmony while protecting the "indomitable sovereignty and independence of the member countries."¹¹ President Zia of Pakistan thought

that the Summit made a definite contribution towards the consolidation of "personal relationships of the seven Heads of States or Governments."¹² President Ershad of Bangladesh was of the opinion that the fears and mistrust prevalent in South Asia was reduced as a result of the Summit.¹³ Thus the general consensus of the participants including Sri Lanka was that the Summit was a success. It would have played some part in the improvement of relations between Sri Lanka and India during the current year.

While Sri Lanka as well as the other small countries in South Asia still suspect India of adopting a "big brotherly attitude" towards them, it appears that have a lot to gain by actively participating in regional cooperation with her. Perhaps, as President Gayoom of the Maldives remarked during the controversy over the Alam Khan Incident, "smaller nations could gain more from regional groupings than the bigger nations."¹⁵ In the context of South Asian regional cooperation it would mean that smaller countries such as Sri Lanka could benefit more from bigger countries in the region such as India and Pakistan which possess more resources for development. As a matter of fact, during its brief period of existence, the SAARC has made slow but steady progress in the direction of science and technology, health, telecommunications, culture, sports, and quite recently, women's affairs. In November 1984, the first South Asian Games was held in Kathmandu. At the present time there are regular meetings of member nations in different fields that come under the purview of the SAARC.

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned the two main areas in which its association with the SAARC could

bring substantial benefits are economy and diplomacy. It is regrettable that the association has not been successful in including trade to the list of areas which are assigned for regional cooperation. At present, the volume of intra-regional trade among the South Asian countries is not much. Due to reasons such as protectionism and lack of economic development, the scope for its expansion remains restricted. Further, India being the leading industrialized and technologically advanced country in the region, it remains to gain by any change of policy concerning trade among the SAARC countries. Nevertheless, India's initial advantage would gradually diminish with the economic development of the other countries. Since Sri Lanka and Pakistan are the developing countries compared to the other relatively underdeveloped countries of the region, they could expect to get rid of the trade disadvantages earlier than the other countries. However, it should be pointed out that even at present India enjoys a favourable balance of trade with most of the countries in South Asia. Therefore, it would be necessary to persuade her to open its internal market for the products of other member countries than before if this strategy is to become successful. Given the present interest shown by India towards the SAARC a joint call by the other member countries could bring some significant result.

Aside from expanding the export trade into India, another important area which should be exploited would be to attract Indian surplus capital and advanced technology into other countries of the region. In this connection Sri Lanka could gain more than others, for, it has already developed the infrastructure for foreign investment under the Investment Promotion Zone Scheme. Since Sri Lanka has not been able to attract foreign capital from the developed countries as expected, the idea to lure Indian capital to fill the vacuum may be a matter to be given serious consideration. In addition, Sri Lanka should try to get Pakistanis also to invest here. Under the South Asian regional cooperation, it may be possible to find markets for the

finished products of such ventures in South Asian countries at least to some extent.

The South Asian regional cooperation could also be effectively utilized by Sri Lanka to get both India and Bangladesh, the other two major tea producing countries in the region to come to some understanding concerning taking some joint action to protect the tea market by controlling the volume of tea exports to the world market with a view to stabilising the prices. Such an agreement may be difficult to reach through bilateral negotiations. However, in the spirit of cooperation that could be generated within the SAARC group it may be possible to make it a reality.

In view of the gloomy picture of the future of our economy Sri Lanka would be well advised to harness the full potential of the SAARC to its advantage. At a time when the North-South Dialogue appears to have been a failure and the demand for a New Economic order has not brought any significant result, the other alternative that remains for the third world countries is to promote the South-South Dialogue. Regional Cooperation in South Asia could be a part of the effort. In fact, all South Asian countries are members of the non-aligned movement as well. Admittedly, there are many practical problems that have to be surmounted making it a reality. Nonetheless, it is a worthwhile effort for Sri Lanka to be engaged in. In this context, it should be mentioned that Sri Lanka has become excessively dependent on the West and Japan in its economic relations particularly after 1977. It would be to Sri Lanka's advantage in the future if meaningful steps are taken to strengthen its economic ties with the countries of South Asia.

Politically, too Sri Lanka has much to gain from taking an active part in fostering closer cooperation among the South Asian countries. As indicated above, the Dhaka Summit apparently helped towards a better understanding between Sri Lanka and India. On one hand, frequent consultation among the representatives of member states

during the meetings at different levels helps to clear many misunderstandings. Most important of all, at the Summit Meetings the leaders could find time and opportunity to understand each other's point of view and problems better in a favourable setting. Since there will be annual Summits of the leaders of South Asian countries in the future, it is expected that there would be a significant improvement of the inter-state relations among the countries of South Asia.

In this regard, a word may be said concerning the justifiable fear among smaller countries of South Asia about the "big brother" of the region, India. While it is true that at times India has behaved in an arrogant fashion in dealing with its neighbours, however, lately she appears to have changed that attitude somewhat and under the Premiership of Rajiv Gandhi aspires to be the leading power in South Asia through diplomacy. With increased commitment on the part of India to the cause of the SAARC she can be expected to behave with more restraint and responsibility in her dealings with the neighbouring states of South Asia. Incidentally, India is expected to take over the Chairmanship of the SAARC organization this year after the Second Summit scheduled to be held in India in November. The SAARC spirit may prompt India to seek peaceful solutions to its outstanding problems with the neighbours. On the other hand, the other member countries of the Group could help India to overcome the sense of insecurity which has plagued her thinking on international matters from the very inception of her nationhood in 1947 by providing guarantees against outside interference in India's internal affairs and making the safety of her borders. In this manner a solution might be found to reduce tension between India and her neighbours.

Moreover, it may be wise for the smaller states such as Sri Lanka to recognize India's predominant geo-political position in the region and not to engage in activities that would unnecessarily

(Continued on page 24)

A Revolution of Rising Expectations

Bhabani Sen Gupta

"If there is a revolution of rising expectations anywhere in the world today, it is in the Soviet Union," declared my companion, a young scholar of 31, not a member of the Soviet Communist Party, as we were aimlessly walking Moscow's exquisite Arbat Street region one rain-soaked day last week. "People are not only expecting real change, they are working for it," he added.

But Mikhail Gorbachov, who has been seated at the driver's seat of the world's largest country, has not promised his comrades and countrymen a garden of red roses. He has promised *uskoreniye*, that is, a great economic, social and moral upturn; *sotsialisticheskoye samoupravleniye* of socialist self-government; and *demokratiya*, meaning democracy. These three have become the catchwords of Soviet life in the 15 months of Gorbachov's leadership. They unbubble up in each conversation a visitor has with a Soviet man or woman. They punctuate the language of Soviet television. They are on the lips of the youth, the factory worker and the collective farmer.

Not every Soviet person is a changer. "There is resistance to change from the top to the bottom of our society," said politically powerful academician. "There are people who talk loudly about change, but in practice do nothing or even oppose change," added a deputy director of a leading research institute. "Push, push, push!" this is what Gorbachov and his men are doing for 15 months, remarked his counterpart in another equally prestigious academic establishment.

What is truly remarkable is that Soviet people talk about the need for change, criticise their leaders and enterprises, even identify no-changers by name loudly, collectively, and in public. The thickly printed pages of *pravda* spit fire on laggards, name people in high

positions who have been found guilty of corruption, who have cheated the system for years and got away with it. Soviet television, directed by former ambassador to Poland, offers animated debates on what democracy and socialist self-government mean in Gorbachov's Russia, how the system can be revitalised. Ministers face telephone questions in TV studios from members of the public and have to answer them. There are frequent press conferences, something that even two years ago was a rare event. American, British, West German political leaders speak directly to Soviet television audiences explaining their countries' perspectives on major world issues including nuclear weapons. In short, a wind of change is blowing over the land of the Soviets, more far-reaching in its political, economic and social effects than Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation drive.

Gorbachov, however, is not seen by his countrymen, nor does he project himself, as a reformer. *Reforma* in Russian means the harbinger of fundamental change. Gorbachov is rather described as an accelerator, as *priyabrazvaniye*, or all round improver. There are men in the Politbureau who are more radical than Gorbachov, and who are amongst his principal team-mates. Boris Yel'tsin, for example, who at 55, is secretary to the Moscow City Committee of the CPSU, and who replaced the disgraced once-powerful Grishin, who has been dropped from the Politbureau for alleged corruption. Last week Yel'tsin, an alternative PB member (non-voting), came out with a blistering attack on party, government and enterprise leaders in the Moscow region for lagging behind, and pulling back, the national race for change. Indeed, at the 27th CPSU congress in February this year, several republican or city committee secretaries, such as Dzhambar

Patiasvili, of Georgia, Vladimir Kalashnikov, of Volograd, and Yuri Petrov, of Sverdlovsk, went much further than prime minister Ryzhkov, second general secretary Ligachev, and planning minister Shkabaridya in demanding faster and more radical change.

Gorbachov's own direction of change has become clearer and gathered considerable momentum in the nine months since the party congress. With the help of the Institute of State and Law, the party decisions have been translated into laws and most of the laws have been approved by the Supreme Soviet. Implementation of the laws will begin in January. 1987 will be the real beginning of the Gorbachov era in the Soviet Union.

There is always a beginning before the beginning. In the 15 months of preparation, a number of significant successes have been achieved. For instance,

* Compared to July 1982 when I visited Moscow last, there is a much larger supply of consumer goods, meat, including beef in the many stores that I visited. Packaging of certain goods — soaps, toothpaste, beauty-aides for instance, has improved, with technology imported from Eastern Germany. Food packaging however is as poor as in India. Goods are not delivered in plastic bags; even paper bags are scarce.

* Salaries have been raised all along the line by about 33 percent. Salaries of urban and rural workers are now equal for the same level of work. Prices remain what they were in the 1940s. People have too much money. There is much greater demand for consumer durables than there are goods available.

* But, even then, considerable improvements have taken place. A married couple does not have to wait for more than a year to get an apartment (the rent is

about 2-3 percent of salary). Any one can buy big size refrigerators on the counter at prices about 50 percent higher than in New York. So is the case with large (and ugly-looking) television sets. The wait for medium size refrigerators and a very popular television set with a Japanese screen is about a year. For a car, three to five years. The USSR has now more than ten million passenger cars for its 275 million people; Moscow has 800,000 for its ten million inhabitants. The state's target is 33 cars for 100 families, to be achieved at the end of the decade. Soviet society will not live on wheels, and most Russians regard this as a blessing.

* Alcoholism has vanished from the streets, pubs, restaurants and public places. The production of vodka has been cut by 33 percent; that much cut has taken place in liquor consumption. No one under 21 is sold even beer. Students cannot drink. In 1982 I could see drunken men wobbling on Moscow's streets, slouched in the spotlessly clean metro platforms or staircases. Not a single of them anywhere this time. Women are happy. Family life is better and stronger. "About ten to fifteen percent of the average family's budget used to be spent on liquors," said a middle-aged woman. "We now have that much more money."

* People work harder. With truly amazing quickness, Gorbachov has restored work discipline among people who had been overtaken by sloth and inertia. In 1982 the television set in my hotel room did not work. I complained several times, but nothing happened. This time, the TV set was working, but suddenly went dead. I made a complaint. Within two hours a man turned up to fix it. People turn up for work punctually. Work for full eight hours.

As a result, the economy's growth rate in 1986 is going to be 5.6 percent, more than double that of last year, and substantially higher than the 12th plan target for the year. Productivity is slated to rise by 5.5 percent. Giving these figures to a West German weekly last week, prime minister Rhyzkov hastened to add that the

rise was entirely due to better human performance. The other inputs of production speed-up — better technology, more economic use of manpower and resources, better management, automation — are still to be introduced. This will begin in 1987.

The changes that will be introduced next year include the following:

* Enterprises and collective farms will be given a large measure of autonomy to determine production lines, market goods, and reshuffle personnel. Enterprises will be required to show profits. A fairly large number of managerial personnel will be "elected" by workers. Already thousands of managerial personnel have been removed because they do not enjoy workers' confidence.

* Within the budgets to be fixed by the central planning authority, managing directors of many enterprises will have the freedom to raise salaries and introduce other incentives for good work.

* The central planning authority will supervise overall direction of development and monitor performance. A great deal of responsibility will be transferred to enterprises, industrial as well as agricultural.

* Different economic ministries and large conglomerates will have the power to enter into foreign collaboration agreements and joint projects on their own responsibility and initiative. Hitherto this was the prerogative only of the central planning authority.

* There will be a series of rewards and incentives for good work. Laggards will be punished. Enterprise heads will be accountable not only to the central authority but also to workers' bodies.

* Small-scale private enterprises will be allowed. Individuals, a family, or a group of families will be allowed to run small businesses as long as there is no exploitation of labour. Collective farm workers whose performance is good will be given larger private plots to grow vegetables and fruits and allowed to sell them to consumers at market prices.

The institution of work contracts is under active discussion.

* On all major public questions, public debates will be encouraged, and public opinion taken fully into account. There will be referendums on major issues and the Party will abide by popular verdicts.

* Under active consideration is a proposal that voters will be given a plurality of candidates for election to all representative bodies, from the local soviet to the supreme soviet.

* The local soviets have been activated. These will be the basic units of socialist democracy and self-government.

The list of changes a-coming is incomplete. The re i are endless continuing debates about many other changes that people believe are necessary to make Soviet society more dynamic. The stagnation of the last ten years of Brezhnev's leadership stares everyone in the face.

But, as noted, resistance to changes is still strong and widespread. I was told by highly placed persons that the political spectrum stands divided (but by no means polarised) between pro-changers and no-changers. A member of the Central Committee said pro-changers constituted "roughly 65 percent" of the leaders and cadres. In the Politbureau, Gromyko represents the no-changers or slow-changers. Gorbachov stands somewhat left of the centre. At least three PB members are more radical than Gorbachov. Ligachev, the second man in the PB, and Rhyzkov are believed to be at the centre. Gorbachov therefore has formed a coalition with moderate and radical changers to isolate or win over the no-changers and slow-changers.

In 15 months, about 40 percent of the Party and government leaders at top to medium levels have been replaced; the greatest turn-over in Soviet history since the time of Stalin. Gorbachov's strength is derived from the

(Continued on page 24)

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Jaffna's War-time Economy

Paul Seabright

Agriculture: The Jaffna peninsula is a dryland region with no rivers and poor drainage. Nevertheless it has a sophisticated dryland agriculture with most land irrigated by kerosene or diesel pumpsets, and most ploughing operations performed mechanically, with either tractors or (more commonly) power tillers. Draught cattle are very few. Shortages of fuel have therefore had a severe effect upon cultivation of principal crops: last year's paddy production for the Maha (winter) season was approximately 60 per cent of normal,⁴² and rice imports to the peninsula began in October 1985 instead of as usual, in December. Estimated area under paddy for the present Maha season is 10,800 hectares,⁴³ a mere 34 per cent of the area sown two years ago.⁴⁴ Yields per hectare are likely to be reduced by shortages of fertiliser and other inputs (the fertiliser supply situation has eased due to some government consignments by sea, but it is unlikely that farmers will have had access to fertiliser in sufficient time). They will also be affected by heavy flooding in Jaffna during November 1985, the extent of the damage from which has yet to be assessed. The repercussions for overall rice supply in the country will be discussed below.

In the minor food crop sector, both acreages and yields have been correspondingly hit. The CBRE indicates that production of red onions in Sri Lanka (nearly all produced in Jaffna) was in 1984 at only 12.2 per cent of its 1983 level,⁴⁵ due to a 67.8 per cent fall in area sown and a 60 per cent fall in yield. National production of potatoes was just over half that in 1983,⁴⁶ are under cultivation in Jaffna district having fallen by about 80 per cent.⁴⁷ National production of manioc, red chillies and groundnut, other principal Jaffna crops, also recorded large falls in 1984,⁴⁸ though it should be emphasised that other factors are doubtless

at work here besides disturbances in the North, and that in any case statistics for this sector are of poor reliability. In 1985 these trends can only have worsened, with unavailability of kerosene during the Jaffna curfew and deterioration of security in other areas on the North and East. The ceasefire has led to a small resurgence of cultivation of minor crops in Jaffna itself,⁴⁹ but not on any significant scale, and the marketing difficulties experienced this year may well discourage optimism even if direct constraints on production have been eased. Notably it is among the perennial crops (grapes, mangoes, coconuts), whose cultivators paid most for scarce irrigation fuel and resisted acreage reductions, that the greatest fall in producer prices has occurred this year, and the lesson has not been lost on other cultivators. "We used to pray for a good harvest", reported one farmer. "Now we have to pray that we can get it to market too".

As a result of these developments, real incomes in the agricultural sector have been seriously reduced. I have no way to estimate the size of this effect on farmers, but about earnings of agricultural labourers there is better information. The Rural Labourers' Union, an association of some 2,000 landless labourers (and a few small tenant farmers), reports a fall in average monthly earnings of some 60 to 70 per cent since before the summer of 1983⁵⁰. Days of work per month are reported down to between ten and fifteen on average from 25 to 30 before, the nominal daily wage has not, however, been reduced out remains at its previous level of Rs. 40 per day for men and Rs. 25 for women. But there has been a fall in incidence of contract labour, which prior to 1983 was a widespread phenomenon, earning men between Rs 50 and Rs 75 per day⁵¹. Contractual arrangements, which inter-

alia protect employers against the risk of labour shortage at the times of crucial operations, have apparently become superfluous to them after the emergence of a labour surplus. This surplus has not, however, been severe enough to change the force of customary practice in setting the daily nominal wage (the rise in the open-market rice price has of course meant some real wage decline).

(To be continued)

Notes

42 a s reliable.

43 Ibid.

44 CBRE, Table 14.

45 CBRE, Table 15. The text comments phlegmatically that "this drop in production was mainly due to the fall in average yield per hectare and reduced extent under cultivation", p 31.

46 Ibid.

47 a s reliable.

48 CBRE op cit.

49 a s corrected.

50 hereafter cited as RLU.

51 RLU.

TRENDS...

(Continued from page 10)

tioner"! It was an innocent man's "Not Guilty" plea in the face of gravest of charges levelled against him by the *Daily News* and the *Sun*, loyal defenders of the Share Market. "Death Blow" screamed the *SUN*; the share market 'stays dead' cried the *'Daily News'*.

They had both got it all wrong, the Minister protested. His proposal in the budget to levy a tax on capital gains from share transactions had caused needless confusion. Far from being Lord High Executioner, it was he, de Mel, who had given the kiss of life to Colombo's "bogos". Earlier, the Colombo Sharebrokers Association had been an "exclusive little club playing inside games". It was all 'hocus pocus'. He had revived the share market, protected the small man and checked the corrupt and the wheeler-dealers. He would do more. He would soon introduce a Securities Council Bill.

FIDEL :

The revolutionary as Don Quixote

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From the preface by Rep. Mervyn M. Dymally, who with Jeffrey M. Elliot conducted the interview. 276 pages, \$7.95

JEFFREY ELLIOT: Earlier you mentioned *Don Quixote*. I wonder if there's anything about *Don Quixote*, the character, with which you specially identify?

FIDEL CASTRO: Well, I think that revolutionaries are the closest thing to *Don Quixote*, particularly in his desire for justice, in that spirit of the knight errant, of righting wrongs everywhere, of fighting against giants.

It has been said that *Don Quixote* was written to ridicule the romances of chivalry. I believe it was written very ingeniously or using a good pretext. In fact, I think that it is one of the most marvelous exaltations of man's dreams and idealism and, above all, it's interesting. We have the two characters: Sancho, with his feet on the ground, looking at all the problems and giving advice, a model of caution, who considers all worldly details; and the other, who's always dreaming about a noble cause to defend.

I believe that a revolutionary would identify with *Don Quixote*. Why not? Many times revolutionaries are called *Quixotes*. *Don Quixote's* madness and the madness of the revolutionaries are similar, the spirit is similar. (LAUGHTER)

I believe it's an honor for a revolutionary to be compared to *Don Quixote*. I like that character very much. I'm sure *Don Quixote* wouldn't have hesitated to face the giant of the North.

JEFFREY ELLIOT: Most men, some time in their lives, question themselves, doubt themselves, wonder whether they can rise to the challenges which face them.

Most people view you as immensely confident, extremely strong, powerfully determined, but I wonder whether, like other men, you've ever questioned yourself, doubted yourself, wondered whether you're up to the challenge.

FIDEL CASTRO: Really, to the question of whether I've ever had doubts about what I'm doing... Let's start from the moment I took up political, revolutionary activities. Let me say in all frankness that I can't recall ever having had doubts or a lack of confidence, I've never had them. That may be good; that may be bad. Because if what you're doing is objectively bad then not having doubts is bad; if what you're doing is objectively correct, then not having doubts about what you're doing is good. I try to explain to myself why I've never

The Dec. 2nd landing of the ship 'GRANMA' was the first page in the most romantic revolution of modern times.

had doubts. Well, ever since I conceived my first ideas and set myself a line of work and struggle, I have always persevered. I must admit that, at a given moment, even pride might have influenced that attitude toward difficulties, toward obstacles; and if the truth be known, I encountered very great obstacles. But once I had clear ideas about what I had to do — and I had very great confidence in those ideas — throughout my life I have been encouraged by the fact that the premises have been borne out. In order to understand this you must consider the fact that when the struggle against Batista started, all I had were ideas; I didn't have a cent, a single weapon or an organization. Then I began to work on the basis of certain premises.

I don't think that success is in any way a measure of whether you're right or not. People often say; he was right, the facts have proved it. And yet, I'm convinced that we could have been defeated, and, if that had happened, it wouldn't have proven that we were wrong. Throughout this struggle there have been times when chance alone allowed us to survive. There were times when our group could have been wiped out — more than once. If this had occurred, it wouldn't have meant that we weren't right or that what we were doing wasn't correct. This didn't happen; quite to the contrary. There are men who are right, independently of their times and of circumstances. Sometimes chance may make someone look as if he weren't right, but other men in other circumstances and times — and perhaps with greater luck — show that the one who wasn't successful was, nonetheless, correct.

This has taught me that success isn't proof of the correctness of the undertaking; the success achieved isn't what persuades me

that what we were doing was what should have been done. I have a lot of evidence and proof that our ideas were correct in themselves, even if we hadn't triumphed. We faced very great difficulties, very difficult moments. One was after the 26th of July 1953. We'd worked hard on a plan to seize the Moncada Garrison, and accidental factors prevented our success. Then came the time in prison, beginning again, the trip to Cuba in 1956 and the conditions under which we made it and seeing our forces once again dispersed and disorganized. Those were very hard trials.

I remember — and this could have been a moment of great doubts — that we were attacked by surprise and our forces were totally dispersed. This, in fact, was accidental. I'm referring not to the causes that can lead to difficulties but rather to ideas, a state of mind. I was left with two comrades — three men and two rifles. I remember that it was a hard day, a very hard day. The planes caught us by surprise, and it was a miracle that we weren't all wiped out. We were walking through a field of sugarcane that had just begun to grow; we didn't know what the range of visibility of a reconnaissance plane was at 500 or 800 meters. Later on, I learned that, at that distance and at a certain altitude, you could even see a bird on the ground. It was broad daylight, we'd been surrounded and the area was crawling with soldiers. And then, all of a sudden, fighter planes appeared and attacked us directly. In the midst of heavy strafing, we moved into a field of cane that was taller and covered ourselves with the dry leaves. It was to be expected that enemy soldiers would arrive at any minute. The reconnaissance plane kept circling over our heads.

As a result of many days of tension and exertion, I became extremely sleepy, I was sure I was going to fall asleep, no matter how hard I tried not to, and I remembered the time that same army had captured me asleep, at dawn, with no one on guard, the soldiers aiming their rifles at my

chest some days after the attack on the Moncada. I couldn't forget that moment, but I just couldn't stay awake, I was going to fall asleep. I wasn't carrying a pistol but a rifle with telescopic sight, impossible to manipulate if I were caught sleeping. I lay down on my side, placed the barrel of the gun under my chin and the butt between my legs, took off the safety latch and fell fast asleep.

Several hours went by I think I slept around five hours. I'd fallen asleep around midday. When I woke up, the sun was setting. No one knows if the soldiers came near by to see the result of the strafing and to look for bodies. Undoubtedly that was the hardest day. After that, I could've contemplated two things: it's impossible to continue this struggle under such circumstances; we've got to get out of the country and organize another expedition. Then, at that moment, I told myself: "Well, we've had a setback; we've been dispersed, but the idea was correct. We've got to press on and reach the mountains." At that moment I had only two rifles with which to continue the struggle, but I decided to continue convinced that the conception was correct, that the idea was just.

Days later, I made contact with some of the other comrades who'd been dispersed. All told, we had seven rifles. We pressed on, and when we reached the wooded areas of the Sierra Maestra, I said, "Now we've won the war." At that time, there were 12 of us. Some of those who survived, recalling that moment years later, even joked about that apparent excess of optimism. I was convinced that what I had said was right.

We've come through some hard trials here, some very difficult days, but we've prevailed. I think that particular experience explains — can help to explain — why we never had any doubt about what we were doing. You can analyze whether you did things well, better or worse; whether you made mistakes or should have done one thing or another at a given moment; but that has nothing to do with the essential idea, the essential aim, the correct line you are

following. So far, up to this very moment when we're talking, I've never had that kind of doubt and I hope I'll never have them. Day by day I become more convinced of what I'm doing. Now I don't think there's much room for having doubts.

But it's quite another thing to have a critical, self-critical spirit, asking yourself if you're doing your best, if you've done things the best possible way, if each decision was the best, if you've been sufficiently demanding of yourself. You have to keep analyzing what you've done at each turn, you have to be rigorous, hard on yourself, and never feel complacent about the things you've done.

Sometime, on reviewing the different stages of the Revolution, I've said, "I'm amazed by the inexperience with which we began to do things, the ignorance with which we set out along this road." It's now possible, for example, to analyze the entire process since the triumph of the Revolution, and, when we compare the experience we had then with the experience we have now, it's rather amazing. This happened in the war, too. We can compare what we knew when we started it with the experience we had gained when it ended, and it surprises us to see how ignorant we were when we engaged in that task. However, learning how to make a social revolution was a longer and more difficult proposition than waging a war. We had some basic ideas about what we had to do — ideas that were fair and correct, no doubt — but no experience and not even a precedent to indicate how to carry it out under the specific circumstances of a country such as ours.

If you were to ask me what we were like during those early years, I'd say that, as may happen in any victorious revolutionary process, we had a somewhat iconoclastic spirit and — even though totally unaware of it — we were a bit know-it-all and arrogant. While a revolutionary must always be arrogant in the face of the enemy, we were sometimes arrogant with friends, too. There was a tendency to magnify our own achievements in comparison with

other revolutionary processes. We felt capable of interpreting the doctrines and postulates of Marxism and socialism more accurately and faithfully than others. That led to an insufficient understanding of the historic merits of other revolutionary parties and countries, and of the enormous obstacles they'd had to overcome, and to an underestimation of their experience. Our critical appraisals weren't always sufficiently serene, reflective or profound. This may even have had something to do with certain idealistic tendencies and expressions of a phenomenon that is very difficult to eradicate from this world: exaggerated national pride.

Today, while we're certainly happy about our work and the contribution that Cuba has made to revolutionary praxis and theory we have a broader view and deeper appreciation of the enormous contributions made by other revolutionary processes.

I honestly believe (and this can indeed be cause for legitimate pride) that we stopped being know-it-all, arrogant, idealistic and even chauvinistic — which we may have been in the early years of the Revolution — a long time ago.

I think that we now have a better understanding of both the historic processes and the men and women who are side by side with us carrying out the Revolution in Cuba, a greater understanding not only of their virtues but also of their limitations and faults.

I believe that my admiration what man is capable of doing — for his enormous potential for sacrifice, solidarity and nobility — and my understanding of his human limitations have grown. I believe that many years of having great responsibilities and authority can corrupt a man but I also believe that they can improve him. I've tried to be less and less jealous of those powers; to share them more and more with others; to regard myself as ever less indispensable; and, with every passing year of my life, to view with greater clarity the relative value of individuals and the immense merit of the legion of anonymous heroes who constitute the people.

To sum up, I've never had any doubts but neither have I been completely pleased.

MERVIN DYMALLY: Let's for a moment shift to El Salvador. Your critics claim that Cuba is working to overthrow the newly-elected government of President Duarte in El Salvador by supplying military arms to the rebels,

FIDEL CASTRO: Well, I don't know where this notion of the legal government, of the legality of that government comes from. Everybody knows that there was a civil war there; everybody knows that over the last six years more than 50,000 people have been murdered there by the death squads and by the Salvadoran army itself; everybody knows that true genocide had been going on there and that Duarte has contributed to that genocide. He's actually been a conspirator and accessory to those crimes and he can't shirk his responsibility for what has been going on there over the last five years.

Everybody knows under what conditions the elections took place: amid the most ferocious repression, terror and war; everybody knows the electoral campaign was planned by the United States. They presented this type of elections to the people as a way out, as a hope for peace in El Salvador — actually a false hope. They promised the people that there would be peace after the elections, knowing, of course, that the people want peace and are ready to do anything in the search for peace. This was gross and vulgar deceit. It was the road to war — the plan to do away with insurgency — not the road to peace.

This government and all other allegedly legal bodies are the result of all that manipulation and all those maneuvers by the United States. The revolutionaries never accepted the legality of those elections because they were really bloodstained elections which cannot be justified politically or morally. Who are they going to fool now with the alleged legality of the Salvadoran government?

Pinochet could also say that his government is very legal after the fascist constitution was imposed upon the people in an alleged ple-

biscite in which nobody but he and his constitution took part, and even more so after Motley stated that West had to feel grateful for Allende's overthrow and death. Actually, one can't help wondering how the United States considers the El Salvador elections to be legal and, in turn, considers the Nicaragua elections absolutely illegal. In spite of the fact that the elections in Nicaragua were sabotaged by the United States, the people turned out to vote with enthusiasm granting the Sandinistas and the left more than 70% of the votes. This was witnessed by more than 1,000 people from all over the world: representatives of governments, political organizations and parties, and journalists from everywhere.

Then, at the same time that they talk about the legality of the Salvadoran government, they challenge the legality of the Nicaraguan government. I'm not concerned in the least about charges against Cuba in relation to our solidarity with El Salvador, and we have stated that the United States knows perfectly well that sending weapons to the Salvadoran revolutionaries is very difficult, in practice almost impossible; but I have no interest whatever in clarifying anything in this sense because I consider that morally, it is absolutely fair to help the Salvadoran revolutionaries. The Salvadoran revolutionaries are fighting for their country. You can't ask the revolutionaries to lay down their weapons, to give up fighting and surrender.

I believe the Salvadoran revolutionaries are actually showing great heroism, great fighting capacity, resisting the huge amount of weapons sent by the United States: helicopters, planes, sophisticated hardware; and the tactics designed by US advisors; they have demonstrated their ability to resist indefinitely. The Salvadoran revolutionaries have in fact proved that they can resist indefinitely without receiving any supplies from abroad. We ourselves waged a war against Batista, whose army numbered 70,000 men; everyone knows that we waged that war with the weapons we took from Batista's army. What I can assure you is

(Continued on page 24)

A continuing debate

THE DIFFICULT DIALOGUE:
MARXISM AND NATIONALISM,
by Ronaldo Munck (Zed Books Ltd., 184pp., 1986).

The epigraph to this book is the following quotation from a veteran Belfast Republican, who says:

'The strongest thing' in Ireland is nationalism. I suppose it's the strongest thing in the world; there's millions of men have died for nationalism in various countries, in England, in Russia, in Germany, America, countless millions of people have died, but very few have died for socialism. My experience is that throughout the world men will die for their country but are not prepared to die for an "ism".

This quotation leads into one of the main arguments of Dr. Ronaldo Munck's book — that Marxists traditionally have underestimated the power and the tenaciousness of nationalism. This underestimation goes back to a primal error in the thinking of Marx and Engels — the assumption that capitalism was unifying the globe by drawing all peoples into the world market and thus making national frontiers archaic. What Marx and Engels failed to foresee — even within their own framework of thinking — was that the process of capitalist development was uneven, and that by accentuating differences between regions and states, it would give a fresh lease of life to nationalism.

Munck in his opening chapter brings out the extent to which Marx and Engels originally depreciated nationalism by drawing a distinction between what they termed 'historic' and 'non-historic' nations: the former were those who were in the mainstream of historical development and progress, and the latter those who had lagged behind and were incapable of building viable national states. This distinction could be used to support expansion by the former at the expense of the latter: thus Engels could argue that it was in the interests of 'civilisation' that California had been raked away from 'the lazy Mexicans' by 'the energetic Yan-

kees'. Later, however, the reality of the Irish struggle against British rule and of the subjected peoples in the Russian Empire brought the two founding fathers of Marxism to modify their position on nationalism, but it remains true that what they left to their heirs was, as Munck brings out, an ambiguous and self-contradictory legacy.

Lenin is usually credited by orthodox Marxists with the achievement of having worked out the 'correct' Marxist position on nationalism. Munck acknowledges that Lenin for the first time in Marxist discourse recognised 'the relative autonomy of the national question', but he brings out clearly the limitations of Lenin's thinking on nationalism. He did not give a coherent theoretical formulation to the theory of nationalism, because for him it was a pragmatic question of political practice. Fundamentally, for him oppressed nationalities were significant only as necessary allies in the class struggle, and nations were transitory phenomena, which would disappear under socialism. Moreover, there was an inherent bent in Lenin's thinking in favour of the centralised and larger state as the vehicle of historical progress.

The potential contradictions in Lenin's position on nationalism surfaced after the Revolution, when Ukrainian and Georgian nationalists wished to exercise the right of self-determination and secession which the Revolution had guaranteed them. Faced with the possibility of a disintegration of the Soviet republic, the Bolsheviks intervened militarily, but Munck brings out the qualms which Lenin felt about this intervention. The sequel to the suppression of the independent (Menshevik) Georgian republic was the conflict between Lenin and Stalin on the eve of the former's death over policy in Georgia. Crippled by his illness, Lenin left the task of combating 'Great Russian Chauvinism' at the

Twelfth Party Congress of 1923 to Trotsky, but the latter failed to carry out this mission — and one of the reasons, as Munck indicates, was his own lack of sympathy with nationalism.

All in all, Lenin's efforts to reconcile national self-determination with the building of a socialist state must be regarded as a failure: the codifier of his theory on the national question became also the most ruthless centraliser of the Soviet state under Great Russian hegemony. Munck does not, to my mind, adequately explore the reasons for this failure: apart from the limitations in Lenin's thinking on nationalism described earlier, we have to face the fact that no democratic policy on minority nationalities was ultimately viable within the framework of monolithic one-party rule — and that, a party which was strongly centralised in its internal structure too.

It can reasonably be argued that all victorious 'socialist' revolutions since 1917 — which have taken place within the third world — have been fundamentally wars of national liberation (in the case of Russian Revolution, the nationalist element became dominant in the post-revolutionary era, and was oppressive rather than liberating). The later chapters of Munck's book are devoted to the relations between Marxism and nationalism in the third world: he surveys here the paradoxical phenomenon that the nations whom Marx and Engels regarded as 'non-historic' have come to be seen as the bearers of the socialist cause. However, the reversal of the earlier Eurocentric standpoint within Marxism has been accompanied by the fact, disturbing for Marxists, of rival and contending nationalisms within the socialist world, culminating in the wars between China, Kampuchea and Vietnam. Confronting this situation, Munck says: 'Ultimately nationalism is not a sufficient explanation of the Indo-China wars, any more than it was for the First World War... There is no evidence of antagonism at the level of the people between the various nationalities, which after all had a long history of common struggle against colonialism.' (p. 140) He ultimately

concludes that these wars were in the interests only of the bureaucratic castes of these countries. However, this comforting conclusion is at odds with the recognition elsewhere in the book that 'whatever political strategy is adopted, Marxists operate within the framework of specific nation-states, workers feel their particular nationality as something real, and nationalism has immense power as a historical force.' (p. 159)

Although this book is not a profoundly original study of its subject, it is a well-informed and, in the main, objective treatment of it. Munck is a Marxist but not a dogmatic one, and he seems to have no sectarian allegiance to any particular school of Marxism. My principal criticism of the book would be that while Munck in theory recognises the 'relative autonomy' of ideological and cultural factors, he does not give sufficient weight to them in analyses of particular historical situations.

A share of . . .

(Continued from page 13)

provincial autonomy which will involve the amending of the constitution. Moreover, the army has always been the main advocate of a strong centre and will clearly not allow power to be devolved. The Junejo government is, however, attempting to placate the smaller nationalities by economic development programme, especially in the least-developed areas. The success of such programmes remains questionable, asserts the opposition, until real political power is devolved.

Trade should . . .

(Continued from page 15)

provoke her suspicions and hostility. The recent experiences should make the Sri Lankan policy makers prudent enough to understand this reality and adjust their foreign policy accordingly. It is not a defeatist or meek approach, but a practical and tactful diplomatic approach aimed at safeguarding

our national interests and independence amidst adversity. In that context South Asian regional cooperation becomes a meaningful option for Sri Lanka. It is more realistic to cultivate regional cooperation with our neighbours in South Asia than seeking allies elsewhere for our survival in the future.

NOTES

6. *Asian Recorder*, Vol XXXII, no. 3 op. cit.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Sun*, December 10, 1985
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ceylon Daily News*, 11th May, 1986

The revolutionary . . .

(Continued from page 22)

that in fact the main supplier of the Salvadoran revolutionaries is the Pentagon through the weapons given to the Salvadoran army. That also happened in Vietnam; the revolutionaries there seized huge amounts of weapons delivered by the United States to the puppet army.

I really don't know who could feel morally entitled to criticize Cuba for alleged supplies of weapons of the Salvadorans when the United States admits supplying weapons to the Somoza mercenaries to overthrow the Government of Nicaragua.

A Revolution . . .

(Continued from page 17)

overwhelming support he enjoys at the medium levels of Party workers and the population at large. In the last six months, he has changed from a "technocrat" into a "political leader" his style is a combination of populism, zest for change and experimentation, and a Khrushchevian touch of confrontation with his critics and opponents. Recently he has taken several issues directly to the people through television especially the all-important matter of resisting and sabotaging change from within.

There is an upbeat mood in the Soviet Union. People speak more freely and openly than ever before since the days of Lenin. A number of persons told me, "Gorbachov is the best leader we have got since Lenin". His broad humane world visions have infected the common Soviet man and woman, at least in Moscow. In his second year, Gorbachov has incorporated in his economic thinking lessons drawn from the varied experiences of Hungary, East Germany and China. He has even incorporated some of the thoughts of economist Tat'yana Zaslavskaya, whose "secret note" on the ills of the Soviet economy was published in the West in the summer of 1983. He talks not only about *reforma* and *prod-nalog* (the Leninist tax-in-kind), but also of *rynok* (market), while some eminent economists freely push the concept of *interes* (interest). Gorbachov also invokes Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP).

At the 27th congress, Shkabardnya, now the planning minister, conjured up a mythical man reminiscent of Gogol's tales. The man's name is Ike Igrekovich Zetov. He is the covert opponent of reform and change, who works in the bowels of the Soviet system. Said Shkabardnya, "Our enterprises have to follow an instruction book 200 pages long containing 208 plan indicators. Behind each one there lurks an official named Ike Igrekovich Zetov, who will fight for each indicator because his job depends on it. Ike Igrekovich won't give up without a fight, don't imagine otherwise".

Ike Igrekovich Zetov is still everywhere in the Soviet system. From the PB down to the smallest enterprise. He is cornered, but by no means overcome. "There is a bit of Zetov in most of us," confessed by young companion. "We have developed a mind-set this is now challenged by the compelling need for change." Whomever I met in Moscow talked about change and in the same breath mentioned Zetkov. But the new refrain is, "We have no alternative but to change fast. There's no other way."

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