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Pravada in contemporary usage has a range of meanings which includes theses, concepts and Propositions.

AN OPPOSITION OPPOSING ITSELF

'Opposition in disarray' - an oft-repeated cliché, yet one that tells us the simple truth about an important aspect of the political crisis in Sri Lanka that has many and varied implications: that the opposition parties are in a state of confusion from which they have yet shown no capacity, or desire, to extricate themselves. A weak and politically misdirected opposition is perhaps the best asset that a regime, whose popular support is in constant decline, can dream of. Thanks largely to the opposition, Mr. Premadasa and the ruling UNP are sitting pretty; they may yet see Sri Lanka pass into the twentieth century under their unhindered stewardship.

Our concern about the plight of the parliamentary opposition does not emanate from any partisan considerations. Rather, we are mindful of the implications that a weakened and disintegrated opposition will have for the institutional basis of competitive, parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka.

The problems with which Sri Lanka's opposition have been beset for the past fifteen years have been an extension of the various crises that the main opposition formation, the SLFP, has been going through. The SLFP under the Bandaranaiques represents the accumulation and condensation of all the contradictions that beset the parliamentary opposition in the South: a lack of a political program and direction; a feeble and ineffective leadership with a proclivity towards personal control of the party; an inactive, unenergised and therefore largely introverted second-level leadership; and finally a highly demoralized membership and support base. These are some visible manifestations of the decline of the SLFP

as a political party. The decline of the main opposition party has also extended to the entire parliamentary opposition, crippling its effectiveness. It may not be unkind to say that the SLFP has abdicated its right not only to be the alternative ruling party, but also to be in the opposition at all.

In a way, the present SLFP is a victim of its own electoral victory in 1970, and not necessarily of the crushing defeat in 1977. That victory made the SLFP, initially supported by the two Left parties, a truly authoritarian political formation with party power concentrated exclusively in the hands of Mrs. Bandaranaike and her immediate kin group. 'Family bandyism' was the term used in the mid seventies to describe this development, or rather the decay, in the SLFP. Even as a capitalist party, it could not broaden its capitalist class base and constituencies while in power, because of the highly regulatory state capitalism which it implemented for seven years. Its peasant and middle class social base was meanwhile encroached upon successfully by the UNP under Jayewardene and Premadasa while the JVP kept the educated youth away from the party that was held responsible for the bloody crack-down on the 1971 insurrection. The SLFP's professed socialism that never was—closely associated with food scarcities, bread-queues and enormous economic hardship for the masses—is still an unerased memory for a whole generation, an image which is diametrically opposed to the previously nurtured mother image of Mrs. Bandaranaike. The SLFP leaders in power from 1970 to 1977 in fact sowed the seeds of discontent among almost all social layers and minority communities



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and they have not yet finished reaping the bitter harvest. An angry Ronnie de Mel thundered in parliament in 1977 comparing the Bandaranaiques to the Bourbons; he would find his historical analogy equally apt in 1992.

The bitter leadership crisis of the SLFP sometimes appears macabre and surreal; the dispute-drama is enacted by three members of the same family—mother and son, the mother being supported by a daughter. The mother-son/brother-sister rivalries have been surfacing, with devastating effect, from time to time ever since the SLFP lost power in 1977. The tenacious grip of this rivalry on the party has been so strong that it has not allowed any other leader to evolve, within or outside the clan, so that the quarreling Bandaranaiques could have been sent on compulsory retirement.

This is unfortunate for a political party that emerged in 1952 to break an existing mono-party system, ushering in a competitive two-party capitalist system of democracy into Sri Lanka's political arena. Although the left suffered as a result of the meteoric rise of the SLFP in the early fifties, the existence of two strong capitalist parties was the basis of the resilience that Sri Lanka's parliamen-

tary democracy could boast about for quite some time. More than the UNP, it was also an effective social shock-absorber in the sense that it successfully incorporated within its electoral program extremist social and ideological groups in Sinhalese society.

The disintegration of the SLFP that is now taking place is an act of self-destruction, not a result of being rejected by its constituencies. If the SLFP is rendered irrelevant by the very circumstances of politics, then it should logically create space for another bourgeois political formation. Meanwhile, the Democratic United National Front (DUNF) of Messrs. Athulathmudali, Dissanayake and Premachandra, which could have made political capital of the declining SLFP, has not yet been able to come out with any vision or programme which would enable it to become a force to be reckoned with. However, the UNP appears to treat its new rivals with grudging respect. Judging by the way the Lake House press has singled out the DUNF for attack, the Siri Kotha strategists no longer appear to think that the SLFP is the 'main enemy.'

There is however a larger, and more fundamental, question about the DUNF: to begin with, it is a party which does not seem to know why it ought to exist. The DUNF was created as the recognition of a blunder and failure to remove Mr. Premadasa from his high office and the party. Therefore this dissident party still carries its genetic trait—the pathological resentment of Premadasa. This is a singularly wrong reason for any political party to exist. It is true that the DUNF leaders talked a lot about democracy, clean politics and so on; but all these political arguments were just epiphenomenal to the subjective factor of politico-personal animosities.

Indeed, at the time when the DUNF was created, there certainly was ample political space as well as the need for an authentic bourgeois democratic party. Both the UNP and the SLFP, the two conventional capitalist parties, had moved away from being bourgeois-democratic political formations. In the objective political conditions in Sri Lanka, there was an urgency for a bourgeois-democratic **political** program to be brought to the fore of a reform agenda. A political

settlement to the ethnic question, democratic reforms of the state, corruption-free governance, dissolution of the recently emerged repressive organs of the state, protection of human rights, regime accountability, and an economic development programme with minimal social-dislocationary effects could have constituted the broad programmatic outline of a new political vision. Yet, schooled in the UNP under J. R. Jayewardene's authoritarian tutelage and forced to leave the UNP in the context of a power struggle, those who formed the DUNF stood well outside the main task of the day. Hence its continuing irrelevance as an authentic bourgeois opposition party.

Talking about the bourgeoisie, can Sri Lanka produce a bourgeois political formation of the classical mould at all? Probably not, because the recent changes in Sri Lanka's economy and politics have led to the expansion of a wide stratum of rentier capitalists whose lack of a political civic culture is as astounding as their ability to accumulate quick wealth. Paradoxically, bourgeois democracy in Sri Lanka is a project sans an authentic class backing.

The political confusion created by an opposition in disarray can also have other serious political implications for Sri Lankan politics. As we observed in the previous issue of *Pravada*, counter-state JVP violence is most likely to re-emerge in the context of a weak, disintegrated and fragmented opposition. In Sri Lanka, counter-state politics has always tended to launch its first assault on the opposition in order to impose its hegemony over oppositionist formations. There is hardly any reason for the UNP to rejoice over the SLFP's present predicament, because a fallen SLFP will be ideal ground for the next wave of JVP politics.

It is true that neither the SLFP nor the UNP will make their political calculations along these lines. Intra-party rivalries are so bitter that a Hobbesian state of nature is constantly re-enacted in the political debate. Both the government-controlled and opposition press give expression to the chaos they are in. The only saving grace of this crisis is that the polity is so fragmented that no 'adventurist on horseback' will dare to ride into the present quagmire of politics. **P**

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Elections, Soon?

Current political speculation in Colombo points to the possibility of snap parliamentary polls in or soon after April, 1993.

The year 1993 will in any case mark the beginning of an election era. Unless dates are advanced or postponed, Provincial Council polls are due to be held next year, followed by Presidential and parliamentary elections in 1994-95.

While the SLFP is still trying very hard to further complicate its own internal disputes, Mr. Premadasa's UNP appears to have already launched its campaign for elections. The 200-garment factories program, initiated in the aftermath of the politically under-successful *janasaviya* programme, is a key indicator of Mr. Premadasa's concern about the rural vote. Television viewers are treated to Mr. Premadasa's speeches at opening ceremonies of garment factories, practically every night. These ceremonies are well-orchestrated public spectacles; the speakers make campaign speeches. The UNP's electoral machine is well-oiled and activated.

Which particular election will take place first is a question that Mr. Premadasa has not yet hinted at. But, some analysts in Colombo argue that he is most likely to hold parliamentary polls before provincial councils polls, although the former is due only in early 1995. If held first, the PC elections, according to this analyst, might prove to be in favor of the DUNF, because the UNP will have to field its 'B team' against the DUNF's 'A team' which consists of a couple of powerful political figures. It will, however, not be a case of the UNP losing badly, but one of the DUNF gaining strength in a number of Provincial Councils, and even the control of one or two. The UNP leader, so goes the speculation, is unlikely to give any such chance to the DUNF.

Whether this particular reading of the UNP's strategy is correct or not, holding parliamentary elections while the SLFP continues to be in a deep crisis will certainly be to the immense advantage of the UNP. With no opposition unity in sight, the anti-UNP vote will also be split among two or more lists. With a strong showing at parliamentary polls and the possibility of Athulathmudali and Dissanayake et al back in parliament (the latter will not vie for Chief Ministerial positions in the Councils) the

UNP can comfortably go to the provincial polls from a position of strength.

There is also the possibility of yet another scenario. Given the fact that there is no legal bar for Provincial Councils elections being held on a staggered basis, the UNP may first opt for a mini election for a few safe PCS. The UNP can then go for the big thing on that strength. The rest of PC elections could then be held with a returned UNP majority at the central legislature.

War in the North: Dissension and Desertions

Much to the chagrin of the war lobby in the South, the Colombo press has begun to publish reports, stating quite openly that everything is not all that quiet at the front. Two themes have received wide media coverage recently : (a) differences of opinion between Service chiefs and top officials of the defence ministry, and (b) large scale desertions from the armed forces.

The strategy of the war in the North-east, according to press reports, is the bone of contention among the top brass. In March this year, the heads of armed services and the police were put in charge of all military operations, a function that was earlier the prerogative of the Joint Operations Command (JOC) in Colombo. This decision was taken by the President after receiving a memorandum from the services chiefs to their Commander-in-Chief, that the war could be ended in six months, if they were given a free hand to conduct it. After six months and many debacles, the war does not show any sign of coming to a victorious end; in fact, the military suffered stupendously heavy losses during this period, including the loss of the entire Northern high command. This was at a time when the supply lines of the LTTE are supposed to have been cut off. This has led to serious bickering among the military command, which the President has tried to overcome by bringing the Services under the JOC again.

According to an essay published in the usually pro-war daily *Island*, differences among the top brass regarding the military strategy have already had demoralising consequences. There is a new school of thought among officers, observes the 'Old Timer' who wrote this candidly informative essay, to argue that troops should no longer be concentrated in the peninsula; instead, they should be

deployed in the Vanni jungles and in border regions to provide protection to Sinhalese and Muslim civilians.

Desertions are meanwhile increasing, the number being over 8000 since the war started in 1983. According to a military spokesperson, in August this year alone, 502 soldiers have deserted the military.

Increasing desertions are coupled with another problem; the reluctance of youth to join the forces. At least until two years ago, there were long lines of young men in Colombo in front of the military camps, whenever new recruitment was advertised. Some zealous nationalists saw it as a sign of great patriotism among the youth; yet the fact of the matter was that the armed forces provided job opportunities for the educated, yet unemployed, youth. However, when the numbers of the dead and seriously injured increased, and the stories of political use of the war by politicians of all persuasions abound, the armed forces have ceased to be attractive to the youth even as a means of employment.

The cost of the war is meanwhile staggering. As reported recently in the *Sunday Times*, the estimated defence expenditure for the year 1993 would amount to a massive Rs. 42 million a day.

Command Economy?

To the reported satisfaction of the World Bank and the IMF, the Premadasa administration is well on its way to fulfil all the major aspects of the Structural Adjustment Programme. The SAP's most visible component, the privatisation of public corporations, is almost complete, despite opposition protests. Protests did indeed compel the regime to somewhat alter the pace and mode of privatisation in regard to banks and plantations. Instead of selling all assets to private capital, only the management of these two politically sensitive sectors are de-statedized at the moment.

The privatization policy, ardently advocated by the Bank and the Fund, has a simple economic goal; let the market be freed from state control. In this age of free-market capitalism and market-socialism, command economies are supposed to be a thing of the past. Or is it, really?

No Sri Lanka watcher would have failed to notice the resurgence of late, of a kind of command economy in this island which has been described for the past 15 years as an exemplary test case for the many whims and fancies of the two neighboring international financial institutions in Washington D.C.!!! Case or not, President Premadasa's project of setting up 200 garment factories in rural areas smacks very little of free-marketism.

It is true that private industrial capital has always been extremely reluctant to move into districts outside the Western Province. In such a situation, the state might use its persuasive powers to locate industries in the peripheral regions. Yet, what is happening now is industrialization for electioneering. Stories that come out in private conversation (despite the 'freedom' in the market, crucial economic policy information is still the privileged domain reserved for private chats) tend to suggest that the state has been using little more than persuasion—coercion would be too strong a term—to obtain the consent of manufacturers to open up factories in new locations. Who decides the location, the size of the factory, the size of the labour force, and even the actual men and women who should be employed? Not, according to rumour, by 'capital unbound.'.... (Exercising the right of self-censorship, we will not complete this paragraph.)

We have commented, more than once, on the peculiarities arising from the fact that in Sri Lanka World Bank-IMF policies are being implemented by a populist regime. Regime populism is further strengthened by electoral imperatives; when politics subsumes economic policies, priorities follow suite. Only political feasibility studies matter then. The Samanalaweva disaster, in that sense, may not be an isolated blunder of monumental proportions.

Despite the overarching grid of sovereign power, the state constitutes a variety of multiplicities; in India, the state at the local level symbolizes itself often in microfascism of power; while the nation-state celebrates its commitment to the rule of law it also allows space even for surplus repression or reign of terror. It is historic fact that rule of law does 'peacefully' co-exist with the reign of terror.

Similarly, there is no nationwide human rights movement; there are only human rights movements. The trajectory of resistance to undemocratic practices of power, entailing profound violations of human rights is yet to be fully traced and understood. India is yet to find her own history, and historians of human rights.

Upendra Baxi

NAM IN A CHANGING GLOBAL CONTEXT: ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

Saman Kelegama

Ever since the end of the cold war there has been a debate as to the validity of having a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At present, to many people, the role and purpose of the NAM appear to be ambiguous. It is thus necessary to look at its broader objectives in order to assess whether it has any role to play in the present-day world.

The notion that the NAM was formed merely to represent a group of countries 'non-aligned' to the two great super-powers is not quite accurate. For the NAM, non-alignment has always meant a positive stand for peace, human rights, and an economically equitable world. Its primary objective has been to promote collective action by member states and the South bloc against what they perceive as both economic and political injustices of the North bloc. To this extent, therefore, the NAM's existence is justified. But if it is to play an effective role in the future, it will have to change its agenda to meet the new challenges of the global environment.

During the last 32 years of its existence, the NAM has not been taken seriously by the North. In its own right too, the movement proved to be less effective as a political force. For example, its unbending stand on the problems of South Africa and Palestine remained only on paper with insignificant impact in terms of reform. The NAM's ineffectiveness in regard to the Indo-Pakistan conflict, Iran-Iraq war, the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, etc., is well known. Its total ineffectiveness as a political organisation is apparent by the fact that it is the countries of the North that are intervening in the present crisis of the former Yugoslavia.

Though the historical experience of the last two decades and the cessation of the cold war have removed the *raison d'etre* of NAM as a political body, in the current global context, the NAM can play an important and useful role as an economic organization. As all the non-aligned countries are also developing countries, an organization such as the NAM could help protect and promote the economic interests of these countries, and thus the Movement too could be given a new lease of life.

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As developing countries have until now been collectively protecting and promoting their economic interests in international fora through the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement can now make its voice heard in a similar capacity. Indeed, it would be more effective if the Group of 77 and the NAM could merge under one name without dissipating their energies as two separate bodies, thus enhancing its influence and countervailing power vis-a-vis the North. However, such a move may not prove practical because some members of the Group of 77 are not members of the NAM and the approach of the Group of 77 differs from that of the NAM. Notably, there is no difference in the economic programmes of both these organizations. Thus, given the practical difficulties of merging, these two organizations must exert pressure on different issues at different fora to realize their common objectives. Such a move is particularly important today when the developing countries of the South are compelled to 'open up' their economies to the international market.

The developing countries cannot always depend on the developed countries to be the engine of growth, particularly in a recession. Nor can the developed countries absorb all the growing exports of developing countries. This underlies the need for greater Economic Corporation among Developing Countries (ECDC) to expand mutual trade by sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional arrangements. It must be emphasized however that ECDC will not be easy to achieve because:

- (a) only a few sub-regional and regional trading arrangements have succeeded in expanding mutual trade in recent years;
- (b) some developing countries are already joining with developed countries to expand trade, e.g. Mexico with USA and with Canada in NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association); and East and South-East Asian countries with USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan in APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation);
- (c) most developing countries, lacking resources, need to deal directly with developed countries and reach agreements with them to expand their exports and increase their aid;
- (d) some regional arrangements can reduce



domestic initiatives for innovation and modernization of products which in turn would make such products uncompetitive in the world market. For example, as a result of Indo-Soviet economic cooperation, Indian goods that came under the programme remained uncompetitive in the world market.

These factors however do not diminish the need for more cooperation among developing countries. Greater economic cooperation among developing countries is all the more necessary today as the global economic integration process that is taking place may well link up the major economies which trade increasingly with each other. Further, the advances that are being made in science and technology will reduce the need for both the manpower and the products of the developing countries and, as a result, marginalize them in the long term. In the short run, the persistent recession in the developed countries has increased protectionist measures and curtailed the demand for exports from developing countries. The World Bank predicts a fall in commodity prices in the next two years. The developing countries of the South also fear that the developed countries will be more interested now in assisting in the rehabilitation of Eastern Europe, and that benefits to them will be reduced.

Effective cooperation among developing countries (that takes into account the impediments for such cooperation) should therefore constitute an indispensable and integral element of any strategy aimed at restructuring the world economy. Indeed, concrete and expanded forms of South-South cooperation will strengthen the position of developing countries, raise their credibility, and increase their bargaining power in any dialogue with the North and in actual negotiation and cooperation. Thus South-South cooperation itself must form an important part of the economic agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement. The main interest of the developing countries is the creation of a favorable international environment to ensure an adequate flow of resources through trade and capital flows. This will ease their national efforts to accelerate economic growth. The major elements which constitute this environment are favorable conditions in the following areas:

- (a) Debt service burdens,
- (b) Capital flows,
- (c) Market access, and
- (d) Commodity prices

At present, the position in regard to these areas is as follows:

Debt service: As many countries of the South have had to comply with harsh IMF and World Bank's conditionalities and structural adjustment policies, the

debt service payments to these two institutions have reached phenomenal levels. The net flow of resources from the World Bank to developing countries has become negative in recent years, while a net outflow of resources from developing countries, as a whole, to the IMF has been taking place since 1986. During the 1986-1990 period, the net repayments to the IMF by developing countries amounted to SDR 2,560 million per year; adding their payment of interest, the yearly net transfer from these countries amounted to SDR 4,700 million per year, or US \$ 6,300 million.

Debt service payments of all developing countries have exceeded their capital receipts over the period 1984 to 1991 by US \$200 billion. There has thus been a net outflow of resources from developing countries and not a net inflow as it ought to be; this has imposed great hardship and retarded economic growth in these countries.

Commodities: One of the most salient features of the adverse external economic environment in recent years has been the virtual collapse of commodity prices. Most developing countries are still very dependent on their primary commodities exports, and the continuous decline in prices of these commodities in the world market has affected their economies drastically. During the 1989-91 period, the prices of export commodities of developing countries declined by approximately 20 per cent. Prices of aluminum, tin, cocoa, sugar, tea, and cotton have been at almost their lowest level in recent times. Coffee, which (after petroleum) is the second largest primary export of developing countries has experienced a 50 per cent reduction in its export earnings, with a loss estimated at US \$ 4 to 7 billion per year.

There is no proper scheme to tackle the problem of depressed commodity prices, the utilization of the Integrated Programme for Commodities and the Common Fund has been abandoned; many Commodity Stabilization Agreements have been dismantled; nor is there a coordinated supply management on the part of producing countries.

Capital flows: Overseas Development Assistance from OECD countries to developing countries has been approximately half of the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP of the developed countries. Flows from international financial institutions and private investors are inadequate to finance the growing development requirements of developing countries

Market access: Recession, protectionist measures, failure of the Uruguay Round to liberalize world trade, increasing regionalization of trade, etc., appear to threaten a single, unified, open, and non-discriminatory global trading system which will best promote the interests of developing countries.



There are of course new issues which concern all countries such as the environment and social and human development. The developed countries are attempting to substitute these issues for the 'hard' issues of money, finance, and trade in international negotiations. It needs to be pointed out to developed countries that, although such issues are important they cannot supersede the 'hard' issues, and cannot be treated as any kind of trade-off for the basic issues of economic development. In fact, (a) developing countries are responsible only for a small proportion of the pressure on the global environment, (b) social and human development are not separable from economic development and, it would appear that international concern for social and human development is only a substitute for action on the basic issues of trade and development.

The favorable international environment to achieve the above outlined objectives should be created mainly by the North and there is an urgent need therefore to revive the North-South dialogue which has stalled for several years. The North needs to be pushed by the South consistently for this purpose. The developing countries, acting together under one umbrella organization such as the NAM, could help reactivate these talks. Recently, Singapore's Prime minister, Goh Ckok Tong, stressing the relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement in today's context said: "Half of humanity cannot be denied a voice on global issues. Industrialized countries meet either in the G-7 or in the OECD to discuss their common interests. The third world too must have a forum where their collective point of view can be put across."

A new consensus on two major issues is now needed in a North-South dialogue, viz.

- (a) A new development consensus or a new partnership between the North and the South on the basis that one needs the other for development and trade; and that the prosperity of the South will lead to prosperity in the North as well.
- (b) Restructuring of international institutions in order to maintain and strengthen the role of the UN in economic affairs. This is essential particularly because there is a fear that much of the problems of policy makers of the South will be moved from the UN to institutions such as the World Bank, The IMF, and the GATT, where the South does not have quite the same strong voice.

In the broad context of the above two issues, the NAM should devise a practical programme of action which would encompass the following:

- (a) a solution to the debt problem,
- (b) a study of policy options for increasing net

transfers of capital to developing countries and for the relaxing of conditionalities of lending institutions,

- (c) a study of stabilization of commodity prices by:
 - (i) coordinated supply management of producing countries,
 - (ii) negotiation of new commodity stabilization agreements,
 - (iii) revival of the common fund for commodities,
- (d) measures to expand trade among developing countries by preferential and other schemes,
- (e) to consider the establishment of an International Financing Facility to assist exporters of developing countries (an idea which has been mooted in the South Commission Report).

The draft final document on economic issues of the NAM Summit in Jakarta (September, 1992) is only a repetition of the resolution of the previous meeting of the Group of 77. It is conventional and there is nothing new. It mostly contains requests or appeals to developed countries to improve the external environment for the success of the national development efforts of developing countries — as in all past UNCTAD resolutions—and reaffirmation of the need for South-South cooperation. It is so repetitive of previous UNCTAD resolutions, so general, so devoid of specific goals for which concrete action is needed (other than the formation of working groups on various issues) that one cannot but ask the question why such an extravagant summit was necessary to repeat the platitudes and resolutions of previous conferences. It would have been more to the point if the Jakarta Summit focussed its attention on one or two major issues, and formulated a programme of action, instead of passing resolutions on 96 issues. Such diffusion of attention is hardly conducive to concrete action.

The developing countries must show the world that they can cooperate with each other and work together to achieve common goals. If they succeed in doing this, the North will be more willing to negotiate with the South. As long as disunity prevails among developing countries, the North can have its own way with the South, often at the cost of the South's interests. Annual summit meetings of Heads of Government serve no useful purpose; Their resolutions remain only on paper and are repeated year after year with no concrete action being taken for implementation. The NAM should demonstrate that it can take an independent stand. Let it take up one major issue—for instance, expanding mutual trade—and prove itself a more effective organization. At present, one is constrained to come to the conclusion that the NAM, in the furtherance of its objectives, has not shown sufficient sincerity of purpose, nor unity of action.

LINGUISTIC ETHNO-NATIONALISM: CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Stanley J. Tambiah

In terms of current international relevance for the so called 'ethnic conflicts' raging in South Asia, Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the phenomenon of linguistic ethno-nationalism is an urgent case to study. What are the relationships between a language, its native speakers, and the cultural capital and the social reality they construct?

Linguistic ethno-nationalism asserts a consubstantial identity between a collectivity of people and the language they speak and transmit. The people in question share a strong sense that their language and their oral and literary productions—poetry, myths, folklore, epics and philosophical, religious historical, even scientific texts—are intimately, integrally, and essentially connected with them as owners, creators and sharers of that legacy. Such potent exclusivist identity, that overlooks and suppresses exchanges, borrowings and interactions between languages and their speakers and the migrations of peoples, becomes even more divisive and intense when the heritage of language is conflated with ethnicity and race, religion, territory and homeland.

Linguistic ethno-nationalism, a strong motivator and advocate of claims of collective entitlements and preferential policies in 19th and 20th century worldwide politics, has a weighty bearing on the double question of how a language relates to the world (to reality) and also how it relates to its speakers, the relation between words and things and between words and human beings. These are questions that engrossed both Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers and philosophers of Europe as well as poets, grammarians, and religious reformers of many Eastern and Western Countries. It however, relates to many other issues regarding the interconnections between people, language, and the social and cultural worlds they construct and according to which they live and act that were not posited in earlier times and are critical to the expanded horizons of later times, especially in the epochs of nationalism and ethno-nationalism from the late 18th century to the present.

Herder's Philosophy of Ethno-Nationalism

Johann Gottfried Herder¹ as the philosopher of 'Volksgeist', was Europe's most sympathetic 19th

century theorist of a historicist and romantic conception of 'ethno-nationalism'. He was "one of the leaders of the romantic revolt against classicism, rationalism, and faith in the omnipotence of scientific methods—in short, the most formidable of the adversaries of the French philosophes." Herder opposed the universalist stance, stemming from France in the 18th century, and its belief in scientific rationalism and progress. He was disenchanted with the terror and militarism that followed the French Revolution, including Napoleon's military humiliation of Germany. In short, Herder's conception of *Volksgeist* was in substance and spirit against the conception of the nation-state as a universal project and held in abhorrence the centrality that it gave the state as the organizer of life.

A recent commentator remarks that Herder's voluminous work, *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (printed in Riga in the years 1784-91), "was destined to become the romantic manifesto of ethnic or Volk identity in Eastern and Central Europe, the bible of a nativist cultural rebellion against Frenchified cosmopolitanism and a political assault against the dynastic empires—Russian, Austrian, Prussian and Turkish—that had emerged in the medieval world."²

In contrast, Herder's ethno-nationalism held that the whole cultural life of a people is shaped from within the particular stream of tradition that comes from a common historical experience. This historicist perspective also inspired Herder to champion a people's particularist experience which gave it its 'organic' patterning:

Herder maintained that every activity, situation, historical period, or civilization possessed a unique character of its own; so that the attempt to reduce such phenomena to combinations of uniform elements, and to describe or analyze them in terms of universal rules, tended to obliterate precisely those crucial differences which constituted the specific quality of the object under study, whether in nature or in history.³

As might be expected, for Herder a people's language and its literature were integrally involved in the shaping of that people's cultural consciousness. He held that human groups are 'made one by common traditions and common memories, of which the principal link and vehicle—the



very incarnation is language'.⁴ As Herder himself eloquently put it; "Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwell its entire world of tradition, history, principles of existence; it's whole heart and soul."⁵ This is necessarily so because humanity thinks in words and other symbols; thought, feelings and attitudes are incorporated in symbolic forms, whether it be poetry, worship or ritual.

Thus, Herder's advocacy of the historical and cultural distinction stems from his view of ethno-nations, that they develop and employ different linguistic genres, and that nuances in linguistic use are pointers to different forms of collective experience.

Now, the remarkable feature of Herder's conception of Volksgeist, or of 'ethno-nationalism' in my jargon, was that while being deeply infused with historical, cultural, linguistic, collective memories and consciousness, it was, according to Isaiah Berlin, not political in orientation, and was totally opposed to the aggressive nationalism of the nation-state. Herder denounced every form of centralization of political power and the coercion and violence that went with it. 'Nature' creates 'nations', not 'states', and the basis of the state is conquest. Herder apparently did not forgive Rome for crushing the cultures of the peoples it had conquered. Rome's Holy successor was no better.

Berlin selects three cardinal ideas from Herder's thought, which while they went against the main stream of thought of his time, nevertheless have exercised great influence for two centuries. These ideas Berlin labels as Populism, Expressionism, and Pluralism. Populism is the belief in the value of belonging to a group or culture, which for Herder at least, was not political, but was to some degree anti-political and different from, even opposed to, nationalism. Expressionism is the doctrine that "human activity in general, and art in particular express the entire personality of the individual or the group and are intelligible only to the degree to which they do so."⁶ The works of human beings and the objects they create cannot be detached from their makers and are part of the living process of communication between persons. (This orientation corresponds to what I myself have called 'participation' in my book *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality* [1990].)

The third cardinal idea is Pluralism, which is the belief firstly in multiplicity of values and moralities, and secondly, in the possibility of the incommensurability and incompatibility between them which may be equally valid and defensible in their context. Such a pluralistic and even relativistic conception repudiates the classical notion of ideal man and of an ideal society as incoherent and meaningless. These Herdian ideas are "incompatible

with the central moral historical, and aesthetic doctrines of the Enlightenment."⁷

Let me underscore the point that Herder's conceptions of 'organic' peoples, internally constituted and set apart from the external universalism of the Age of Enlightenment, necessarily foregrounds the notion of 'cultures' as historically constituted and is opposed to the notion of Culture hitched to a unilinear development of progress in Universal History culminating in European civilization. Herder's focus on social process and practices which shape specific and distinct 'ways of life' is also for many anthropologists the effective point of reference for cultures in a comparative sense and its necessary entailments of plural cultures.

Distortions of the Romantic Hederian Vision

Herder's vision of a people fused into some kind of organic whole by historical memory, language and literature and cultural productions was, as we have underscored before, not a conception of a political nationalism coupled to a territorial bounded state but of pluralistic "cultures" of "organic" collectivities following their own historical development.

But it took only a certain twist for this notion of a distinctive people to be transformed in the hands of National Socialism and its Fascist Nazi propagandists to a demonic philosophy of Aryan racial superiority and to discrimination against allegedly dangerous and sinister minorities living among majority populations and their expulsion from the fatherland or their extermination in death camps. The politicization of ethno-nationalism and the imposition of an ethnonationalist state representing an intolerant majority on a pluralistic terrain spawns violence and warfare. Though Hitler and his associates were the arch exponents of this pathological philosophy of racial superiority and special destiny, leading eventually to imperial expansion and subordination of "inferior" peoples, some of these same attitudes and conceptions of ethno-nationalism have been operative among many of the ethnic nationalities of Eastern Europe and the former USSR, and are today breaking out in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania (which are in the process of fragmenting) and in many of the previous Soviet republics among which the Armenian-Azerbaijani hostilities are the most vicious.

Among the many horrors of the Nazi Regime is one that touches us as academics and scientists intimately, namely the practice of 'racial hygiene' under whose banner, practitioners of bio-medical science, genetics, biology and (biological) anthropology actively participated in



sterilization, in terminal experiments of bone grafts and limb transplants, and in medical and final solutions to the "Jewish question," handicapped children, psychiatric patients, all in the name of propagating and maintaining a pure and superior race.⁸

The 'organic vision' of Nazi racial science is given an unforgettable literary exemplification in Siegfried Lenz's *The Training Ground*.⁹ Herr Zeller, the owner of a nursery receives a directive that all his oak seedlings, one hundred thousand of them, should show proof of German pedigree. To Zeller's chagrin, the dealer from who he had bought seed corn, and who he expected would give a guarantee of approved stock, had gone to Rumania and bought seed there at a favorable rate. Although the Rumanian oak seedlings and the pure German stock could not be told apart, Zeller was ordered to uproot and destroy his young trees. He uprooted them, loaded them on a trailer, and set fire to them in front of the town's council offices. Zeller was muttering to himself as the flames gained height, crackling, spitting, throwing up sparks: "Never trust any one who preaches genuineness and purity, the apostles of purity bring us nothing but disaster."¹⁰

So it seems that the flower garden of Herder's ethnic collectivity can become in certain contexts the poisonous swamp of intolerant ethno-nationalism.

Eastern Europe, allegedly undergoing liberation and liberalization through the introduction of democracy and market economy, has already spawned the horror of recently liberated minorities in turn discriminating against and expelling and killing their own minorities living within their newly-formed national republics. Yugoslavia is a case in point that illustrates these issues. Yugoslavia was artificially constituted from two unwieldy empires, the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman. Since the second world war, Yugoslavia, a satellite of the former USSR, was held together by a centralized communist party regime.¹¹ When the communist regime collapsed in 1990, the country reasserted the fact that it was actually a mosaic of different nationalities, religious allegiances and different historical pasts. (I am using Yugoslavia as a parable to contemplate our own situation in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in South Asia).

Slovenia and Croatia were originally part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Serbia part of the Ottoman Empire. Yugoslavia had in 1990 six republics and two autonomous provinces. An ethnically diverse country of some twenty four million people, the main ethnic groups are Slovenes, Croates, Serbs, Muslim Slavs, Albanians and Greeks (in Macedonia). Croatians and Slovenes are Roman Catholic; They also in large measure collaborated with the German Nazi regime during the

second world war. The Serbs are affiliated with the Eastern Orthodox Church, and sided with the Communists in the War, and afterwards came to dominate the Communist government that was established. The Croats and Serbs speak a common language but use different scripts-the Roman and the Cyrillic, respectively. The memories both groups have of the second world war are bitter, and with the break of Yugoslavia today, the Serbs and Croatians are aggressively following their aggrandizing policies in the name of ethno-nationalism, opposing each other and also participating in the dismemberment of Bosnia.

There are many divisive allegiances and interests that plague the different ethnic peoples and the multiple republics of Yugoslavia. What I want to highlight here is that while Yugoslavia's ethnic groups have their geographical concentrations in different republics, (Slovenes in Slovenia, Croats in Croatia, Serbs in Serbia), sizeable numbers are also dispersed outside these boundaries and constitute significant minorities elsewhere. The largest ethnic group, the Serbs, who dominate the federal government and are concentrated in Serbia, have however some 50,000 of their people located in Slovenia and a much larger number 2,000,000, living in Croatia, most of them in its southeast. (The mix of ethnic nationalities in the republics and provinces other than Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia is greater.)

I need not rehearse here the recent parliamentary elections in the republics, and the declaration of independence by Slovenia and Croatia, which have repudiated communism, the resistance put up by pro-communist Serbia which controls the national army to secessions, and the Serbian invasion of Croatia allegedly to secure interests of fellow Serbs in danger there and on whose behalf Serbia demanded special guarantees. Now consider what is at stake in Kosovo province in Yugoslavia, ridden with tensions between Serbs and Albanians. Serbia has also annexed this province, where Albanians outnumber Serbs by more than 10:1. And most recently, the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has exploded in violence as it pursues its independence in the face of resistance offered by Serb-led army garrisons. Bosnia and Herzegovina have the deadly mix, in a total population of 4.3 million, of Muslim Slavs, who make up 44% of the population, Roman Catholic Croats, who make up 18%, with the remainder, Eastern Orthodox Serbs, constituting 31%. The UN peacekeeping troops have already arrived to defuse the strife in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but so far with little success. Serbian troops, both local and governmental are now engaged in attacking Sarajevo and driving out or decimating the Muslim Slavs. There are also signs that old enmities are breaking out in Macedonia. I have no space here to give other illustrations such as



the warfare between Christian Armenians and Shiite Muslim Azerbaijanis relating to the interstitial Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region, in which Armenians outnumber the Azerbaijani, but which is administratively assigned to the Azerbaijani Republic. The back and forth cycles of violence recently peaked in the attack on Khojaly city in which scores of Azerbaijanis were killed. I can, however, project from the dissensions in Yugoslavia these general points about the out-break of ethno-nationalist politics at the very time of the dismantling of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

What I want to do is to remind you briefly of the problems engendered by ethno-nationalism. The repudiation of communist authoritarianism and the alleged right of 'self-determination' of ethnic-nations to form their own new nation-states do not automatically usher in the victory of Democracy (with all the conventions and guarantees of equal citizenship of all members of a territorial state that go with it), even though electoral politics and representative government are introduced. In Eastern Europe, where there is a plurality of ethnic-nationalities in most polities, there is the grave danger that, under the cover of so called democratic electoral politics that sanction the rule of the majority, majorities (previously minorities within larger republics) now threaten to discriminate against, and to dominate and inferiorize, their own minorities. (Similarly, the repudiation of the communist centralized 'planned economy' does not automatically bring into new bloom a 'capitalist market economy' as that is understood with its conventions and institutions.) In Yugoslavia already the problem of 'minorities within minorities'—that is the discrimination against minorities in the newly independent republics which were formed to affirm the legitimacy of ethno-nationalism—has produced ideological justifications that remind us of the dangerous transformation of Herderian conceptions into the 'racial' rhetoric of the Third Reich.

As illustration, consider the philosophy of political ethnonationalism propounded by Franjo Tudjman, who is currently President of Croatia. In a text published in English in 1981 under the title *Nationalism and Contemporary Europe*,¹² Tudjman binds the *narod* (ethnic nation) explicitly to the *state*; the ethnic nation is imaged as a collective individual defined by shared physical substance, a far cry from the theory of individualism that is the cornerstone of the West European nation-state. This collective ethnonationalism entails the view that all persons share in one homogenized ethnic identity. The rights of political self-determination are vested in the collectivity, and it is this collective entitlement that constitutes national sovereignty. The positing of a "total

national sovereignty" of this kind is the high road to nation-state chauvinism.

Tudjman's own words are unambiguous about *narod* as the amalgam of collective homogeneity and sovereignty. He writes:

Nations... grow up in a natural manner... as a result of the development of all those material and spiritual forces which in a given area shape the national being of individual nations on the basis of blood, linguistic and cultural kinship.¹³

And again:

Every nation, no matter what its size or character, has the natural and historic right to its sovereignty and its place in the human community, just as the individual has in society... only a free and sovereign nation, like a fully developed and free human being, can give its full contribution to the world.¹⁴

Tudjman's views are not unique or peculiarly Croatian. Many other ideologues of different ethnic affiliations saying similar things can be cited. Tudjman's major opponent, President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, also rallies his people in the name of an inflammatory ethnic nationalism. Milosevic, and his Serbian associates, in their latest assault on the Muslim Slavs of Bosnia and Herzegovina (who comprise 42 percent of the population), have begun to preach the deadly policy of "ethnic cleansing"—that is the slaughter and driving out of Muslims so that in the end there will be only Serbs in areas that were once mixed. The Serb strategy is aimed first at forcing Muslims out of mixed towns, and then isolating the remaining pockets of Muslims. As of July 31, 1992, some 700,000 people have been driven out of Bosnia since the war began earlier this year. The horrors perpetrated in Bosnia in the name of ethnic cleansing should twinge the consciences of other ethno-nationalist groups in other countries who in the name of a fictive racial purity or of being equally fictive sons of the soil or of an invented exclusive homeland drive from their midst, neighbors of a different ethnic identity. What is ironic and myopic about these assertions of ethnic homogenization and cleansing as fact and as a nationalist goal is the occurrence of numerous mixed marriages, and mixing and borrowings of tradition between one another, in the East European milieu. "Even in the most homogenous republic, Slovenia only 73 percent of the children listed on the 1981 census issued from 'ethnically pure' Slovenian marriages, while in the most bitterly contested areas of Croatia (e.g., Eastern Slavonija) as many as 35 percent of the 1981 children were from mixed Serb-Croat marriages."¹⁵



Or again, as Hobsbawm has devastatingly put it: "the genetic approach to ethnicity is plainly irrelevant... The precise mixture of pre-Roman Illyrians, Romans, Greeks, immigrant Slavs of various waves of central Asian invaders from the Avars to the Ottoman Turks, which make up the ethnicity of any people in Southeastern Europe, is an eternal matter of debate."¹⁶

Despite the facts on the ground, advocates of ethnonationalism of the Tadjman and Milosevic kind, in so far as they are determined to impose ethnic homogenization as a nationalist goal, will be faced with three choices: "the territorial truncation of the state [i.e. secession], or the expulsion of disloyal minorities,"¹⁷ or their genocide.

As historians we may easily show up the pretensions, inventions, and fictions of ethnonationalist separateness, boundedness, and continuity, but the theoretical task awaits us to subjectively understand and to chart the social practices and communicational processes by which ethnonationalist claims and identities are repeatedly constituted and replicated in many parts of the world, and used as charters for political action.

Notes

1. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder, Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976) p. 145.
2. Frank E. Manuel, "A Requiem for Karl Marx," *Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, The Exit from Communism 121.2 (Spring 1992):12-13.
3. *Ibid.* p. 145.
4. *Ibid.* p. 165.
5. Cited by Berlin, *op.cit.*, p. 165.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
8. For an informative discussion see, for example, Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
9. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1991, translated by Geoffrey Skelton. The novel was originally published in Germany in 1985 under the title *Exerzieplatz*.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 385-92.
11. Underestimating the power of nationalism and ethnicity as a militant psychic force in modern political consciousness was the flaw in the Marxist vision of man that, more than any other deficiency, sapped the vitality of the doctrine in Central and Eastern Europe. Manuel, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
12. Boulder, CO: Eastern European Monographs, 1981.
13. Tadjman (1981), p.10. I am indebted to Robert M. Hayden's "Constitutional Nationalism in Yugoslavia, 1990-1991," a paper read at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Nov. 23, 1991, Chicago, for these quotas.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
15. Hayden, *op.cit.*
16. Hobsbawm, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-64.
17. Hayden, *op.cit.*, quoting from Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), p. 134.

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WHITE WOMEN, ARRACK FORTUNES AND BUDDHIST GIRLS' EDUCATION

Kumari Jayawardena

The Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka has been represented as a predominantly male movement with emphasis on charismatic patriarchs such as Bhikku Migettuwatte Gunanada, Colonel Olcott and Anagarika Dharmapala, with fleeting appearances by Helena Blavatsky and Annie Beasant. As a result of neglect—if not gender bias—we know little about either the role of women in the movement or of their efforts to promote Buddhist female education. This article brings together issues of gender, ethnicity, race and class in a preliminary attempt to delve into the beginnings, one hundred years ago, of a modern education for Buddhist girls.¹

One of the most important aspects of the Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka in the second half of the 19th century was its emphasis on education. As a counter to the education offered by missionary schools, it spoke of the necessity of giving Buddhist boys an education based on Buddhist values and in a Buddhist atmosphere.

The education of girls did not receive the same emphasis; early efforts to give girls of the Sinhala Buddhist bourgeoisie a modern education had a chequered history and even led to bitter controversies and quarrels in the Buddhist Theosophical Society.

In the movement for female education, race became a crucial factor; since there were few Buddhist women with formal education, and no local women graduates or trained teachers were available to sustain a school, appeals had to be made to foreign Theosophist women to come to Sri Lanka as teachers and principals. Many of them were the early beneficiaries of women's university education in the West, who had given up Christianity for Theosophy and Buddhism. As qualified white principals, they gave immediate 'status' to Buddhist schools; but there was also a subversive element in their very presence and in their activities in the context of race and gender in colonial society. For they were unusual in their rejection of the conventional role of carriers of the white woman's ideological and political burden; some like Annie Besant had even been imprisoned (in India) as seditionists and Mrs. Marie Museaus Higgins came under suspicion of the police in Colombo during the First World War because she was German. At a time when 'white women' were being demonised by nationalists as *Suddis*, ('immoral, promiscuous, and shameless white women'), foreign women Theosophists like Higgins were cast as *sudu ammas* ('white mothers') who were giving Buddhist girls an education in

English, and rescuing them from the clutches of the missionaries.

The education of Buddhist women also had an important class content. The availability of finances for Sinhala Buddhist women's education was determined by the nature of Sri Lankan capitalism of the period. By the late 19th century there were wealthy Sinhalese, both Christian and Buddhist, who had made capital accumulations in the liquor trade, plantations and graphite. Their daughters went to prestigious mission schools and convents; but they were only prepared to make modest donations for Buddhist girls' schools. Important advances were made in Buddhist secondary education for females only after the intervention, in 1917, of a pioneer Sinhala woman entrepreneur, with access to large liquor and plantation profits.

"We Want Companions"

In 1881, the literacy rate for women was 3%. Some girls went to government mixed schools (in Sinhala and Tamil) and single sex schools for girls run by missionaries and nuns. Even after the formation of the Buddhist Theosophical Society in 1880, and the establishment of the first Buddhist boys' English school (later known as Ananda College) in 1886, wealthy Buddhists desiring a modern education in English for their daughters had no choice except the Catholic and Protestant schools such as Good Shepherd Convent, Colombo (started in 1869), the Methodist Girls High School, Colombo (1886), the Girls' High School, Kandy (1879), and many others established subsequently.

The lack of Buddhist schools for girls was noted by Colonel Olcott (the founder of the Theosophical Society), who often spoke of the need for schools where girls could be educated in a Sinhala Buddhist atmosphere, based on the view that "the mother is the first teacher" (*The Buddhist*, 24 Oct. 1890 & 6 Dec. 1894). By the late 19th century, Buddhist middle-class men were also complaining that they did not want to marry "ignorant" women; "We want companions who shall stand shoulder to shoulder with ourselves" (*The Buddhist*, Oct 3, 1890).

The more national-minded Buddhist intelligentsia and especially the middle level Sinhala Buddhist shop-keepers and traders were concerned to have their daughters educated in a Buddhist environment. Marrying Chris-



tians or non-Sinhalese was held to be a threat to Sinhala Buddhist identity. While deploring the frequency of inter-marriage, Buddhists also lamented that “young men... imbued with European customs and manners” had difficulty in finding “girls among Buddhists to suit their tastes” (*The Buddhist*, 13 March 1891). There was much discussion on the need for educated Buddhist wives, presentable in bourgeois and colonial society, as well as educated mothers who would reproduce and correctly socialize the next generation of Sinhala Buddhists. Thus local Buddhists and foreign Theosophists formulated the demands for female education not in terms of women’s emancipation, but in terms of religion and the need for good wives and wise mothers (See K.Jayawardena: 1992).

The Womens’ Education Society and the Sanghamitta School

A turning point was the formation on March 30th 1889 of a Women’s Education Society (*Nari Shiksha Dana Samagamaya*) by Buddhist women; its membership had increased to 1800 by December 1891 (*The Buddhist*, 2 Feb.1894:25). The president was Mrs. Weerakoon and Miss M.E.de Silva was secretary; support came from the Buddhist Theosophical Society and some foreign sources. For example, in September 1889 *The Buddhist* published a long letter “To the Young Ladies of Ceylon” by Sarah A. English, a Theosophist from Massachusetts (who later taught in Sri Lanka); she spoke of the importance of education for women, described the progress of women’s education in the U.S.A. and urged Buddhist women to resist Christianity; “If women of Ceylon were educated, they would be able to do more to protect their ancient philosophy from the inroads of a noxious faith, than men possibly can.”

In its first year, the Womens’ Education Society started four small schools teaching in Sinhala at Wellawatte, Kandy, Gampaha and Panadura and in 1890 one in Ambalangoda, but its ambitious project was the Sanghamitta School (teaching in English) started at Maradana with 20 pupils. Among the 1000 persons present to inaugurate the school were 400 women; the guests included Colonel Olcott, P.Ramanathan other leading luminaries of the Buddhist revival: Rev. Hikkaduve Sri Sumangala, Pandit Batuvantudave, A.E.Buultjens, Dr.Bowes Daly, Tudor Rajapakse and Anagarika Dharmapala. The grounds were decorated and the motto at the entrance, reflecting the prevailing view on female education, was “From daughter to wife, from wife to mother” (*The Buddhist*, 2 Feb. 1894).

The school was run mainly by foreigners and Burghers. The principal for the first six months was Miss A. J. Ferdinands. After six months, a foreign woman, Miss

E. Neile, became the temporary principal; she was succeeded by an Australian Theosophist, Kate Pickett whose death by drowning in June 1891 was a setback. In recognition of her contribution to girls’ education, there was a crowd estimated at 6000 at her cremation (*The Buddhist*, 20 Nov. 1891). Olcott who had recruited Pickett was instrumental in getting Marie Museaus Higgins (1855-1926) a German, (widow of an American Theosophist, Anthony Higgins) to become the next principal. The head teacher was Louisa Roberts and the other teachers included Viranjini Kumarasinghe of the Women’s Education Society. Olcott also campaigned abroad for the school and spoke about it in London to the Women’s Suffrage Society (*The Buddhist*, 6 Dec.1891); there is record of a donation of 44 and “goods for the use of the Society” by an “English lady” (*The Buddhist*, 18 Dec. 1891).

Support had come mainly from outside Ceylon and “the Sinhalese Buddhists themselves have contributed but little” remarked the *Buddhist* (1893:84). The Women’s Education Society lacked sufficient funds, personnel and publicity. P. Ramanathan, who supported the Society, gives us a glimpse of its limitations: “These dear ladies had done their work in silence and modestly without public clamour. In fact so quietly, that... no one suspected what was going on” (*The Buddhist*, 3 October, 1890). Although there was some male patronage and moral support, there was little financial backing, resulting in a continuous crisis for the school.

Serious problems arose in the Women’s Education Society mainly because of the “want of hands to cope.” Olcott stepped in to help in the reorganization and a new president, Mrs. Livera, took over, with Louisa Roberts as the secretary and Mrs. Higgins as advisor: a standing committee of 15 “respectable Buddhist gentlemen” was appointed, with four Buddhist businessmen as trustees—U.D.S.Gunasekera, N.S.Fernando, H. Don Carolis and D.D.Pedris (*The Buddhist*, 18 Dec.1891). By 1893, Mrs. Higgins was the Society’s president, raising Rs. 2,611 for the building fund. At the prize giving in 1893, (presided over by P.Ramanathan), the manager of the school, A.E.Buultjens, spoke of the progress of the school, which by then had 111 pupils.

Sanghamitta Vs Museaus

There were serious differences of opinion over the running of the Sanghamitta school, chiefly between Buultjens and Peter de Abrew, which reached a point of crisis in 1894. Higgins then left to start another school, Museaus College, on land donated by de Abrew. With her went some students and teachers (including the foreigners Sarah English, Dr.Susan English and Miss Alison) as well as a piano “subscribed for in America” (*The Buddhist*, 1894:182). Museaus College was able to

sustain itself, while the Sanghamitta school was unable to attract large donations from the leading Sinhala Buddhists. Each month, subscriptions had to be raised for teachers' salaries. Monthly commitments were made through subscriptions of Rs. five or ten from the best-known Colombo Sinhala traders and wealthy Buddhists; H. Don Carolis, N.S.Fernando, C.Mathew, C.Batuvantudave, R.A.Mirando and D.D.Pedris were among them. In one month in 1894, Rs. 643/- was obtained by way of donations ranging from Rs.50/- to Rs.5/- from 31 persons; the pledges had been increased to overcome a crisis, and as the *Buddhist* noted: "If it were not for the timely help of these gentlemen, the Sanghamitta school would have been closed, as its enemies had expected" (*The Buddhist*, 1894: 182-3).

The fortunes of Sanghamitta School fluctuated. In 1896, its management was transferred to the Buddhist Theosophical Society, and in 1898 to the Mahabodhi Society (founded by Anagarika Dharmapala). The Sanghamitta School became more religious and conservative and was linked to a religious order started by one of Dharmapala's friends, Countess de Souza Canavarro, an American (married to a Portuguese); she had renounced the world and proclaimed herself a Buddhist in 1897, and travelled to Sri Lanka with Dharmapala to found a Buddhist religious Sisterhood.

Calling herself Sister Sanghamitta, Countess de Souza took on the title of 'Mother Superior' of the school, with Miss C. Shearer (Sister Padmavane) as the 'Head Sister', and Miss S.La Brooy (Sister Dammadina) as 'Manager of the Household.' There were also two local *dasa sil upasikas* attached to the school to teach Sinhala. The object of the Sisterhood was "to educate and elevate the Sinhalese women and spread the doctrine of enlightenment." A boarding school, orphanage and poor school were established with a 'convent' for the Sisterhood. The Sanghamitta School adopted a "graceful uniform" for girls, described as a "slight modification of the sari" (*The Buddhist*, 2 Oct. 1898), in response, no doubt to Dharmapala's criticism of the dress of Westernized Sinhala women. But there was a breakdown of the friendship between Dharmapala and Canavarro; the Sisterhood was disbanded but the Sanghamitta School continued.²

However, the rival breakaway school, Museaus College, became the more fashionable one for Sinhala Buddhist women. Having given her own maiden name to the school, Marie Museaus Higgins had a personal stake in its success. In 1907 she started a Sinhala Teachers Academic Training College for women and in 1908, a boarding school with 80 students, catering to middle-class Buddhists in the provinces. There were a few early academic successes; by 1897 Elsie de Silva passed the Junior Cambridge examination and Lucy de Abrew was the first Sinhala woman doctor, entering Medical College

in 1902, also winning the Jeejeebhoy scholarship (Denham, 1912:426). With the Sanghamitta School stagnating, Museaus College for many years remained the main English girls school for middle and lower middle class Buddhists- a situation which Mrs. Higgins' critics found intolerable.

Renewed Agitation

By 1913, the need for a good Buddhist girls' high school, on the lines of missionary schools, was discussed again; a Buddhist Education Board was set up to promote "fully equipped girls' English schools in the important towns of Ceylon." This move may have been influenced by the example of Ramanathan College, started with a big fanfare in 1913 by P. Ramanathan to give Jaffna Hindu girls a modern education in a Hindu environment with Florence Farr, a Theosophist and ex-actress from the London stage (close friend of Shaw, Yeats and Ezra Pound) as the unusual choice for 'Lady Principal.'

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, however, the Buddhists abandoned their project. But it is revealing that Buddhist women continued the discussion showing some feminist awareness; *The Buddhist Companion* of 1914, for example, had a dialogue between two women critical of the Sinhala classics: "Our Sinhala men are still trying to confine us to the kitchen. They are not interested in teaching us anything beyond that." In 1916, *The Buddhist* deplored the fact that in all the large and small towns, Buddhist girls were still being educated in Christian secondary and high schools. Sinhala Buddhists were again castigated again on this issue; "that sense of responsibility... which characterised the ancient Sinhalese seems to have departed from amidst their descendants who have proved to be unworthy of even the name they bear" (*The Buddhist*, 22 Jan 1916). Hints of twenty year old rivalries were seen in the editorial in *The Buddhist* where Museaus College was somewhat derogatorily described as a "middle school" run by Mrs. Higgins, "where she claims to impart English education to Buddhist girls' (*ibid*).

Selestina Dias and Visakha Vidyalaya

While most of the leading Buddhists were content merely to deplore the lack of good Buddhist girls' schools, Selestina Dias stepped in to change the situation. Born in 1858, she was the daughter of Solomon Rodrigo of Panadura, a leading liquor merchant and land owner of his time. She married Jeremias Dias of Panadura who was a member of the powerful Arrack Syndicate which dominated the liquor market, and a leading plantation owner of the late 19th century. After her husband's death in 1902, she took control of the business, "the manufacture of arrack in all its forms, in addition to

the management of the estates" which included tea, rubber, coconut and cinnamon (A. Wright, 1907:678). It was unusual at the time for women to run businesses, but she did so very effectively, and was known popularly as 'Rainda Nona,' (Lady of the Arrack Rents).

Jeremias Dias had already contributed generously to Buddhist temples in Panadura, but it was Selestina Dias who saw the need for extending support for Buddhist education. She had earlier given Rs.12,000 for a laboratory for Ananda College, following this with the unprecedented "handsome donation" of Rs.100,000 to the Theosophical Society for girl's education. Significantly, while Mrs. Dias was praised for her munificence, a "Buddhist gentleman who had donated a large sum for the repair of Ruanwelisaya" was criticised for spending money on monuments that could have been better spent on education (*The Buddhist*, 20 May 1916). The Sinhala Buddhist press was also lavish in their praises of her. There were no words adequate to describe her generosity, said the *Sarasavi Sandaresa* of 16 May 1916, upholding Mrs. Dias as a wealthy, meritorious person whose example should be followed by other rich Buddhist women. Many referred to Mrs. Dias as *Mahopasikava* (Great Lady Devotee) and compared her to Visakha, the famous benefactor of Buddha's time, also the wife and daughter of leading merchants.

With the Dias money, the Buddhist Girls College was begun in 1917 with 47 pupils; Dr. Bernice Thornton Banning, an American Theosophist (with an MA and Ph.D) was the principal for the first year. The art teacher was Florence Mason, who had studied at the Slade School of Art; she later became the Secretary of the Ceylon Society of Arts.³ A "sumptuous garden party" was held to celebrate the school's inauguration, "to which those in high society flocked in gay attire" (*The Buddhist*, 21 July, 1917). It was clearly an important, though overdue, day for the Buddhist bourgeoisie.

By 1922, the new school had 107 pupils of whom 66 were boarders; there were two local trained teachers, Miss Ada Rajapaksa (later Mrs. E. M. Wijerama) and Miss Dharmasena. In 1927 the school changed its name to Visakha Vidyalaya and moved to new premises, costing another Rs.150,000; this was also funded by Selestina Dias. By the time of her death in 1933, she had contributed Rs.450,000 to the school. She was awarded an M.B.E. by the British government in recognition of her generosity (S. Saparamadu, *Dinamina*, 16 Jan 1992). But not surprisingly, the main hall at Visakha Vidyalaya was named after Jeremias Dias and not his wife.

While a concern for Sinhala Buddhist identity was never far from the minds of Buddhist ideologues, they continued to be fairly liberal and eclectic in their approach to the employment of foreigners. In the period up to 1933,

Visakha Vidyalaya had a succession of eight foreign principals, one of whom was Miss Hilda Westbrook, later Kularatne, (1920-21). From 1933 to 1945, the principal was an American, Clara Motwani, nee Heath, married to an Indian Theosophist; she was succeeded by Susan George Pulimood of Kerala who was principal from 1945-67. It was only in 1967 that the school had its first Sinhala Buddhist principal, Mrs. Hema Jayasinghe, even though qualified Sinhalese women had been available for some time.⁴

But why did it take 40 years after the beginning of the Buddhist revival for the first high school for Buddhist girls to appear? The reasons may lie in the nature of local capital. To the emerging Buddhist trading class and petty bourgeoisie, female education was desirable but not affordable; and moreover, some Buddhists were content to get a "free ride" from missionaries, taking advantage of the good education in Christian schools, while rejecting Christianity as superstition. In any case, the profits or wealth of this group of urban Sinhala traders and shopkeepers was not comparable to those entrepreneurs who had made their initial capital accumulation in retailing arrack and toddy, and later investing in plantation and graphite ownership. The majority of these capitalists were Christians. Their sons where possible went to Oxford and Cambridge and prestigious medical schools, while some of their daughters had foreign governesses at home, or went to mission school. But it was the Buddhist element of this class that was faced with a real dilemma; for if they sent their sons abroad for higher education, there were few well-educated Buddhist women for them to marry.

Nationalism was in the air in the early 20th century, and the rich Sinhala Buddhists were also on the verge of making political gains, through electoral and constitutional reform which would bring more representative government. With the prospect of power, identity came to the fore and this was also a gendered identity, where Sinhala Buddhist womanhood had to be equipped to play its role. Since large sums of money were not forthcoming for Buddhist female secondary and higher education from male benefactors, it was left to Selestina Dias, a woman of this class, to dip into her fortune and make a spectacular gesture, thereby creating a school in Colombo which would continuously supply educated wives for the Sinhala Buddhist bourgeoisie.

Notes:

1. This article is part of an on-going study of Buddhist women's education.
2. I am grateful to Tessa Bartholomeusz and Elizabeth Harris for the information on the Sanghamitta Sisterhood.
3. One of Sri Lanka's best-known woman artists, Maisie de Silva (nee de Mel) who in 1917 left a Christian school to join the Buddhist Girls College, was a pupil of Florence Mason.



SCRIBES, PHARISEES AND JUDGES

Corpus Delicti

The rate of change in the body politic is so rapid that the contributor of articles to learned journals often finds that his scribblings have been overtaken by events. Thus it was that the chronicler of Aryanam Kshatra found that the mythological was overtaken in strangeness by the concrete. And he was much discomfited by this, though he plunged on nevertheless.

How mundane appeared the actions of the deities, demi-gods and immortals of Aryanam Kshathra in comparison with the activities of the mortals of the world below! The great clashes of the Vaspuhran¹ of Indraprastha were dwarfed by the cosmic forces unleashed by the incantations of the denizens of the mortal domain.

For what profiteth the chronicler if his works do not match the faith of the superstitious? Even the almighty gods must shiver when the multitudes invoke the primitive dravidic forces of the earth. The heavens shake when the wailing invective of the thousands of mortal mothers are directed through the personification of blood, vengeance and the pox, mother Kali. The skies are rent by the counter-curses of thousands of other mothers calling upon Pattini, the mother.² But the chronicler must gird his loins for the unequal struggle and relate the puny doings of the Aryan gods; and so shall he proceed:

It was the Immortal of the King's Party who brought about the great changes. For his pilgrimage to Alexandria released the cosmic power which the Gods themselves hold in awe. Thus were the doings of the Deities of Aryanam Kshathra humbled.

And it came to pass that the Kshayathiyanam Kshayatiya felt it incumbent upon him to bathe in the milk of asses. And attending unto him in that great absolution were

seven handmaidens. And Akhenaton propitiated the cosmic forces with the offerings of capricorn.

Now were the multitudes bewildered. 'Are the powers of the cosmic forces greater than those of mammon itself?' they asked in puzzlement.

And lo! Aryanam Kshatra was visited upon by plagues. Firstly was the plague of virgins, which carried off the maidenfolk and the boyfolk. Then came the plague of tomb robbers. And to cap it all came the direst of plagues, the plague of political tablets.

For it came to pass that there was a clash of eagles, and the eagle was Janus-faced: it appeared as its nemesis in the Berinda Pakshiya, the two headed pseudo-eagle. The frescoes of Bacchanalian apsaras adorned the tablet of the pseudo-eagle, juxtaposed with the image of Mithra. Thus did the God of Shelter do battle with Varuna.

For it was said by wise men that the maw of Varuna was of equal dimension to the aqueduct mouth of Akhenaton himself. Indeed, the jaws of Vayu himself were pitiful in comparison with the gigantic size of the verbal mechanisms of these invective adversaries.

Now, it had come to pass that Vayu had extended the monotheistic heresy of Akhenaton. Not content with his holy coprophiliac vows, he placed himself beyond the position of the messianic prophet.

'I am Anubis' he declared, the incarnation of the dog-headed god, the faithful acolyte of my god emperor'.

'More like a running dog' quoth the infidels, 'truly is it the day of the jackal'

Continued from p. 16

4. Other Buddhist girl's schools also had foreign principals in Colombo, Ananda Balika Vidyalaya, (the sister school of Ananda College) was started in 1925 with a British Theosophist Hilda Kularatna nee Westbrook as principal; she also began the Maha Maya school in Kandy. Another British Theosophist Elizabeth Preston had come to Colombo in 1918 as a teacher at Museaus College, started Alethea School in Colombo in 1928, which pioneered the Montessori system in local schools; Sujatha Vidyalaya from 1930-1932 and Ananda Balika from 1933-1936 had a British Socialist, Doreen Wickremasinghe, nee Young as Principal. The principal of Sri Sumangala school Panadura for many years was Lu Vinson, a British Theosophist and Cambridge graduate. (See K. Jayawardena, 1991: *Doreen Wickremasinghe - A Western Radical in Sri Lanka*, Womens Education and Research Centre.)

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Now Vayu was sore taxed; the parthenon was assailed on all sides by the scribes of the political tablets which poured scorn upon it and all its works, yea and upon the person and works of Akhenaton himself. And the pantheon was sore vexed; and divine retribution was soon forthcoming.

For Indra, Mithra and Varuna went forth amongst the multitudes, declaring 'we shall cast a curse upon Akhenaton, and the names of the curse shall be as the sand upon the shore.' And lo! The scribes accompanying them were set upon by demons from the paatala world. And the demons stole the very papyrus and stylus from the hand of the scribe. The scribes were sore vexed and went unto the Angels of Dharma, placing their plaint before them and demanding restitution. But Vazgurd Framadar said unto the scribes: 'lo! the multitudes turned upon their tormentors'. And the scribes were even sorer. 'The hand of the scribe is not free on his stylus' they declared.

Now it came to pass in those days that Sohrab slew Rustam. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth among the multitudes of Aryanam Kshastra. And much stoning of the uncircumcised; among the unstoned was Kavir the Smith, for it was rumored that he was of the triad of Indra, Mithra and Varuna.³ And the multitudes rent their garments and rent the garment of the Magus of the Bitten Leg.⁴ The multitude left no stone unturned, yea, they set upon the gods of the pantheon with the very bones of their forefathers. And verily was it the day of the jackal, as the air was filled with hoots of derision. And all of Aryanam Kshathra was in ferment.

Now, the artist of truth, the disciple of Loki, had drawn frescoes of Akhenaton on the truth tablets. And a god of the pantheon was displeased: 'who will rid me of this pestilential beast' he cried. and lo and behold! the demons of the paatala world emerged from the depths and the artist of truth found the black spy upon his doorstep. And the vengeful imps of patala playfully drove their daggers in between his ribs.

There were those of the multitude who bore witness, but the Angels of Dharma said unto them: 'Thy witness, for it is not so written'.

But the scribes were not of good humor. For those that had assailed them that accompanied the Triad were not of their station. And the scribes ascribed the assault on the artist of truth verily to an assault upon all artists and scribes. And the scribes assailed the angels of Dharma, 'Thy protection is like unto a racquet'.

'For did we not write down the tears shed by Nefertiti, the divine consort, at the great festival of Tel-el- Amarna? And did we not bear witness to the words of Akhenaton when he assailed the unbelievers? But are not the scribes faced by the barbs of patala? Are they truly protected by the angels of Dharma?'

Then did it come to pass that the pantheon gathered together the scribes and spoke to them. 'It is not meet that the scribes be assailed by the demons of patala' quoth the scribes. And Kavir, who presided upon this assembly, was sore discomfited. And the scribes asked 'Did not Vayu spread the false word?' And Vayu said 'My words were clouded by Maya, but what I spoke might have been truth in relation to circumstances other than those that prevailed'. But the scribes were sore vexed and did storm out of that assembly.

Now it came to pass that the artist of truth inscribed an epistle to the scribes of the tablet of the isle. And the scribes of the tablet of the isle brought forth a tablet bearing the epistle of the artist of truth. And lo! the scribes of the tablet of the isle had visited upon the attentions of the angels of Dharma, saying "it is not meet that Akhenaton be blasphemed". But the scribes answered unto them that it was not blasphemy, but a mere transcription of the words of the artist of truth.

And all the scribes were sore vexed.

Now, the tablet of the Chronology of Ra⁵ announced to the multitude that the Dastevar of Yama, the immortal judges were to be protected and defended by the angels of Dharma. And the lakeside palace replied that such was not the import of the decision of the Pantheon. And the multitude said unto themselves "Lo! The Judges of Yama have decided! Yea! The decision shall not be to the advantage of Pruthuvi."

It had come to pass in those days that the forces of Pruthuvi were allied with those of Chandra, and opposing them were the forces of Soorya, arrayed with those of the Elamites. And Chandra stood forth and said, 'It is meet that Turya should join with Turya', but the Elamites held otherwise. And Pruthuvi said that the elevation of the Immortal of the King's Party to the high-priesthood of the Holy Family was not to be vouchsafed. And Soorya said that it was not to be considered that a tool of Chandra become the High-priest.

But it came to pas that those of the middling amongst the Holy Family cried 'A plague on both your houses, though it be verily but one house; pray do not bring upon the mortals your sins and the results thereof. And they spoke unto Soorya and Pruthuvi, saying 'behold, the judgement of the Dastevar of Yama is nigh! Withhold your judgement until there is revelation of the judgement of the judges'. And Soorya and Pruthuvi so acquiesced. And there was verily a truce within the Holy Family.

Now, Mammon was stirred to impose upon the Pantheon its conditions for the fulfillment of the promise of Vazgurd Framadar's Pilgrimage to Mammon. And these were that the silver Talent of Mammon be bartered for a full fifty Darics; that the fodder of the kind that drew the carts of the mortals should change hands bushel for



bushel with the fodder of the horses that drew the carriages of the Vaspuhran of Indraprastha; and that mortalization should proceed forthwith.

And Akhenator and Vazgurd Framadar were sore vexed! And they pleaded with Imf and Worlb, the archangels of Mammon, to stay their hand until the judgement of the judges of Yama be forthcoming. And Imf and Worlb gave them that which they asked.

And so, the multitude, the mortals and immortals all, awaited the Judgement of the Dastevar of Yama with baited breath.

Notes:

- 1 Great Houses, inmates thereof.
- 2 The prognostications of the chapati makers of 1857 bore a short-lived fruit. The blood that ran in that red year was more the blood of the chapati makers than that of their accursed enemies. The guns and lances of the God-empress put paid to the chapati. Nonetheless, the chapati did put paid to the Company Bahadur.
- 3 Kavir the Smith, incidently, was the offspring of the immortal scribe himself, he that inscribed the speeches of the great Jackass upon stone.
- 4 The political tablets expressed the joy of the scribes at the disrobing of one of their number, for they said he was no scribe but a jaded individual, a condemned character and a yellow scribe.
- 5 The Tablet of the Chronology of Ra was of the variety of Osiris, for it died and was resurrected, in much the same manner as the second coming of its masters, earlier the major-domos of the Lakeside Palace.

MODERN SCIENCE - WESTERN, PATRIARCHAL MYTH?

Part II

THE GREEN REVOLUTION AS WESTERN, PATRIARCHAL AND ANTI-NATURE AGRICULTURE

Meera Nanda

This part of the essay will examine a typical example of the populist critique of science-based development projects: the much maligned, "western patriarchal myth," the Green Revolution. Given her propensity for a total critique, Vandana Shiva spares nothing. All physical inputs, farming practices and social relations of production associated with the Green Revolution are examined, compared with traditional peasant agriculture and without exception, declared deficient. Even worse, Shiva holds them directly responsible for the sad lot of women, peasants, the animals and the good earth of India.

Shiva's critique of the Green Revolution strategy is replete with some very questionable assumptions that, unfortunately, are widely shared by a cross section of environmentalists and leftist critics of modernization. The emotion and anger that spews out of Shiva's attack on the Green Revolution begin to make sense if read as the lament of a defender of an older, and supposedly more just social order, the so-called "moral economy" of pre-capitalist, pre-industrial peasants.¹ Very briefly, the moral economy argument maintains that pre-capitalist relationships and institutions (based on patron-client bonds between elite landowners and smallholder and landless peasants) protected the peasantry against

hardships and starvation. It is these pre-existing forms of insurance and subsistence guarantees that are destroyed by capitalism. Moral economists and proponents of new social movements, like Chipko, believe that this breakdown of subsistence mobilizes the peasantry (mostly the middle peasantry or the family farmers) against capitalism. But the goal of this mobilization is not socialization of means of production, but simply a restoration of the pre-capitalist order. Since moral economists view the earlier order as "moral" and just, this struggle of the peasants to restore the *status quo ante* is assumed to be "progressive" and worth supporting.

It is amazing how, despite the disasters in Tanzania and China, this faith in traditional peasant societies as communitarian by preference is still adhered to with almost religious zeal by populists like Shiva. She views the modernization of agriculture as an invasion of alien and destructive forces - that of capital and commodity relations - in the wholesome communities of peasants. These good, hardworking peasants worked communally owned resources to produce food and other goods not for sale, but simply for subsistence. They apparently lived in a world without markets; a world where the subsistence needs of all community members, and not the mar-



ket, decided how the social product would be distributed. This assumption is no mere romantic nostalgia. It provides the essential underpinning of moral economy.

The problems with this view are legion. Historical research affirms that in pre-colonial India, there was trade, there was commerce and widespread use of money in exchange of commodities.² The entire thesis of moral economy has been subjected to sharp criticism by Samuel Popkin who shows that relations in peasant society are based on the same calculus of risks/gains that operates in all pre-capitalist and capitalist societies. Furthermore, Popkin shows that these societies are not particularly just when it comes to distribution of social surplus or moral when it comes to providing insurance for all its members.³ Tom Brass has recently shown that this overall moral economy world-view meshes in well with the other idealistic assumptions of post-modernism.⁴ Thus, Shiva places the "violence" of the Green Revolution in the very "epistemology and reductionism of western patriarchal anti-nature model of agriculture." Secondly, she presents the traditional and modern sectors of agriculture as two exact opposites with no overlap: the former solely devoted to need satisfaction and ecological stewardship, the latter solely concerned with profits and ecological destruction. Next, Shiva assumes the virtues of traditional farming practices both as ecologically more sustainable *and* socially more harmonious without examining how the price for the former was often a denial of the latter.

Two other annoying assumptions continually hover in the background. The first assumes that traditional Hindu practices like cow and tree worship (which she consistently keeps equating with *Indian* practices) can be understood by citing ancient Sanskrit texts. Apart from the fashionable chauvinism of subsuming "Indian" under the category of "Hindu," Shiva has also appropriated many ecological practices of tribal people and forest dwellers as a part of "Indian" (and "Hindu") practices.⁵ The second presumes a vile conspiracy on the part of western capitalists. Reading her critique of the Green Revolution, one would end up believing that it began and is sustained by no other motive but a desire on the part of multinational corporations and white male scientists to extract profits out of poor Third World peasants. The conspiracy appears so total and sinister as to lead one to wonder if the 850 million people of India are mere puppets on a string. It is truly amazing how close this thinking, prevalent among "racial" populists and dependency theorists, resembles the old racist orientalist myth of Asia and Africa as lands whose people had no history and creativity.

Green Revolution is Patriarchal

This claim is based on a number of analytical distinct theses:

a) *Commodification of farming "devalues women"*: Production for profits and commodification of farm inputs leads to a "decline in their status in society and within the household."⁶ I find this to be one of the most questionable and intellectually dishonest claims Shiva makes in her entire book. It goes against the findings of almost all the important studies on this subject and is based on thoroughly metaphysical and romantic assumptions about what women themselves and the larger society value in their lives and their work. Following Bina Agarwal's well-known work on the impact of the Green Revolution on women's status, Shiva admits that female participation in wage labor has increased since the Green Revolution technology was introduced in India.⁷ But given her advocacy of the "feminine principle," she puts a greater value on the women's "invisible" work (along with earthworms and such) in "partnership with nature." Increase in visible, wage earning, income-generating work is written off as a sign of devaluation of women and nature for it apparently breaks some organic bonds ("links involving partnership") between them.⁸ Similarly, the control and ownership of land, the other factor that objectively enhances the status of women is trivialized in favor of a romanticized "non-property relation of cooperation with the earth."⁹

Once Shiva establishes, to her satisfaction, that employment for wages and food production for profits devalues women, she goes on to present the higher incidence of discrimination against women in Northwest India as an apparent "result" of the Green Revolution. Quoting Agarwal, Shiva writes:

The north west states of Punjab and Haryana rank among the highest in terms of the adoption of new Green Revolution technology.... However, it is precisely the north western regions where discrimination against females is most noted both historically and in recent periods (p.118).

What Shiva does not tell her readers is that Agarwal was not using this co-relation between the two trends as a cause and effect. Unlike Shiva, Agarwal was trying to examine how the introduction of this technology has impinged on the *pre-existing* gender differences sanctioned by culture and traditions in different regions of the country. One of the main aims of Agarwal's paper cited by Shiva was to examine how the state's agricultural and natural resource use policies relate to "the pre-existing



patterns and class and gender relations in the rural community and the changes if any resulting from state policies."¹⁰

Agarwal, accordingly, gives due attention to the history of female infanticide prevalent in the north-west and examines cultural factors that legitimized it (e.g. hypergamy, heavy dowry expenditure, and prevention of land fragmentation. She also explores other cultural practices peculiar to the region to understand why the Green Revolution in this region has led to a resurgence of vicious anti-female practices. Similarly, Pranab Bardhan, another major scholar who has studied this issue systematically, also carefully examines the history of female infanticide in the Green Revolution areas.¹¹

Any analysis of pre-existing, traditionally-sanctioned anti-female bias is completely missing from Shiva's account of the Green Revolution, indeed from her entire book. This omission is very significant. For if one takes into account the fairly long and culturally-sanctioned history of violent discrimination against women, then all one can say about the Green Revolution is that it has not, so far, succeeded in alleviating it. One can even grant that the new technology is leading to changes in class structure, encouraging some forms of discrimination generally associated with upper classes and castes (withdrawal of women from the workforce, and the increase in dowry, among others).

The frightening increase in amniocentesis tests in the Green Revolution areas can then be properly viewed as a technologically sophisticated continuation of the traditionally-sanctioned, age-old practice of female infanticide, in this case carried out even before female fetuses have a chance to grow into infants. The Green Revolution did not create this fatal bias against women; it has only created conditions of relative affluence that allow the growing class of newly-rich peasants, aided by modern technology, to mimic the practices long followed by the upper and middle classes. By suppressing the history of the traditionally-sanctioned, patriarchal practices, Shiva passes off the co-existence of the Green Revolution with cruel and violent forms of discrimination against women as if the former caused the latter. Such an interpretation serves her political end of portraying this situation as the bloody result of modernity itself.

Suppression of history is not all. Shiva's thesis that commodification of food production and participation in wage labor devalues women is completely at odds with all other empirically supported studies of the gender dimension of the Green Revolution. Pranab Bardhan, Bina Agarwal and Ursula Sharma have all found women's status to be positively linked with their ability to command wages or to have independent rights to income-generating assets like land.¹² Agarwal in fact places

the "visibility" of women's work at the center of her analysis:

The question of visibility of women's work is especially important as it does not appear enough that women and girls do productive tasks but also that the work is *socially recognized* as valuable. Agricultural field work which is physically more visible and which brings in earnings, which is economically more visible than say "free" collection of fuel wood, fodder and water appears to be given (by no means justifiably) a higher social valuation.¹³

Bardhan's hypothesis that survival chances of the female child are related to the expected employment or earning opportunities of female adults has been found to be empirically valid. (Bardhan proposed this hypothesis to explain the higher female to male sex ratios in paddy-growing regions in the South as compared to the wheat-growing regions of the north west. Paddy cultivation is more labor intensive). Bardhan concludes:

Expanding employment opportunities for women or lowering the male-female wage differential in rural India is not just another "feminist" cause: it may actually save the lives of many little girls in rural households.¹⁴

To Shiva such a way of assessing the worth of work and workers itself is a sign of the morbidity and crass materialism of modernity: "In a world dominated by capitalist patriarchy, cash is the only measure of worth - of women as of everything." One could ignore it simply as a nostalgia for some paradise lost when material possessions supposedly did not play any role in defining status. But unfortunately, this kind of emotional thinking has gained a substantial following and if allowed to direct political action, it has some real and dangerous implications. It diverts attention from where the real struggles are. As Agarwal shows, women agricultural workers are paid less than half of men's wages and the wage differential has been increasing over the last ten years in six out of 15 states studies, and is the highest in Punjab.

Progressive struggles must focus their energies on improving the share of labor in the gains made through the Green Revolution, create more opportunities for paid employment in both agriculture and non-agricultural sectors for women and help women workers get an equal share for equal work. The policies that follow from Shiva's focus on women's special relation with nature and subsistence can only demand, if they are to remain consistent, that women be further pushed into productive but socially invisible work inside the home or on the family farm. The kind of work, in other words that women have always done, everywhere, without any material



rewards and recognition. This will only further hasten "feminization" of the subsistence sector, another of Shiva's worries that we examine next.

b) ***Feminization of subsistence farming:*** The claim here is that modernization of farming based on the Green Revolution inputs has split the farming economy into "a cash mediated masculinized sector and a subsistence, food-producing 'feminized' sector" (p.113). And since all the state-funded institutional support (aid, credit, extension service) go to the masculine "chemical intensive and mechanized, capital intensive agriculture," it is far out-pacing the feminine subsistence sector. Shiva claims a "world wide" recognition of this phenomenon but gives no empirical evidence to support that this split is in fact taking place in all societies where the Green Revolution technology is introduced. She refers to a study from Africa and gives no evidence from India or any other part of South Asia for this phenomenon.

The feminization thesis as applied to Africa has come under critical scrutiny. According to a recent article by Ann Whitehead,¹⁵ this thesis was put forward by Ester Boserup in 1970 who used it to popularize the idea that sub-saharan Africa was initially a female farming area and that modernization had captured men (for income earning export crops) and had left women behind to grow food for their families. According to Whitehead,

... research has shown this idea to be wrong. Production data show that export crop production and food production tend to rise and fall together. Both are produced by a wide variety of techniques. Food crops are also grown as cash crops. Research on the sexual division of labor has shown that Boserup overstates the extent of female labor in African farming and underestimated the involvement of women in "modern" sectors of economy (p.55).

Whitehead believes that the thesis of feminization of subsistence farming is based on stereotypes of sexual politics in Africa in the 1940s and 1950s. These stereotypes do not take into account the change in gender relations brought on by commercial agriculture. She also points to the problems with a category like "rural African women" that completely obscures the economic and other differences between them. Whitehead also cautions against remedies that assume women as tied to subsistence alone for they put an artificial limit on the opportunities for them. These critical remarks should be heeded and categorical statements proposing neat divisions between male and female economies should be tempered with actual empirical studies.

c) *The Green Revolution displaces and devalues "women peasants as experts, as plant breeders, as soil scientists,*

and as water managers" (p.98). There is no denying that many environmental issues are localized and that the peasants have a fund of useful, situation-specific knowledge. Their knowledge is valuable and must not be allowed to die out. But does Green Revolution farming really rule out local knowledge? Contrary to the critics, there are sufficient areas of overlap between the new seeds and the old knowledge. As the next section will show, farmers can in fact usefully combine their good soil husbandry practices with the high-yielding seeds. The two are far from being mutually exclusive as the critics have long held.

The Green Revolution is Anti-nature

No other idea enjoys such unquestioned allegiance from the populists and environmentalists in general as the view that the Green Revolution has worsened or, even led to, the massive environmental problems of Third World countries. It is taken for granted that the new agricultural technology is the main cause of soil erosion, desertification, pesticide and fertilizer pollution of water and food and erosion of genetic diversity.

These charges stem from an understanding of the Green Revolution as a "package deal" that requires high use of chemical inputs (fertilizers, and pesticides) which end up in water, soil and food as poisons. The genetic diversity of crops, in turn is supposed to be eroded by the pressures for mono-culture and the "multinational control of seeds." It is alleged that the HYV seeds have tied the farmers to multinational seed and chemical industries and this unholy trinity of "power, profit and control" (Shiva, 134) is held to be responsible for the Green Revolution which begins to appear like a grand conspiracy against the peasants.

However, the "package" deal is not built into the nature of HYV seeds. They can combine the labor intensive and non-chemical methods of traditional fertilization and pest control and still out-perform traditional seed varieties. The seeds of major food crops like rice and wheat are not hybrids and do not need to be freshly purchased every year. Only crops like maize and sorghum have hybrid seeds but new strategies are now available that can circumvent the need to purchase new seeds even for these crops.

Shiva holds the Green Revolution responsible for the "death of soils" (due to chemical fertilizers, waterlogging, soil-mining and the abandonment of women's soil-building methods), pesticide poisoning (which breed pests and destroys the feminine methods of non-violent pest control) and so on. I will not go into the details of these trite and tired charges, for Shiva brings no new empirical evidence or insights. I will only point to the problems



with a critique that focuses so single mindedly on the technology alone.

Given all their talk of "holism," the populists' exclusive concern with the technical aspects of the Green Revolution makes their critique closer in spirit to technological determinists they so love to condemn. Populist techno-pessimists fail to provide a more complex and nuanced framework for analyzing India's ecological problems that can do justice to historical, cultural and political-economic factors under which the Green Revolution technology has been used in India. Such a framework must take into account the role played by India's traditionally low yielding, extensive agriculture whose roots lie firmly in the class and caste relations sanctioned by the traditional Indian cosmology.¹⁶ The loss of forest cover - half of India's forest cover has been lost since the last century - is a result largely of low-productivity, traditional practices of extensive farming. Moreover, the extremely high cattle to human ratio (1:2 as compared to 1:10) in China) - another traditionally sanctioned practice - has played a significant role in soil erosion.¹⁷

In the context of these enormous pressures on land, the land-augmenting feature of the new technology has a significant potential for ecological preservation. Populists are reluctant to admit this potential because of their general anti-science stance. The concerns about excessive and unwise use of dangerous pesticides and fertilizers and waterlogging are real. But these problems can be corrected and controlled through legislation (an outright ban on dangerous chemical pesticides and a vigorous search for safer chemical or organic alternatives) and better, location-specific technical support and extension services to farmers.

It is time to take up two myths accepted with almost religious faith by the critics of the Green Revolution:

a) *The myth of the HYV "package"*: This states that HYVs are not really high yielding but only HRVs or "high responding varieties" because without a heavy input of chemical fertilizers and water their yields are comparable to or even lower than the traditional varieties (Shiva, 122). It is time to discard this myth. It is based on a thorough misunderstanding of the scientific principles on which the high yielding varieties are selected. It also ignores the advances in plant breeding that have produced HYVs of poor people's crops (sorghum and millet) that outperform traditional varieties without any chemical fertilizers at all. As Michael Lipton makes it clear in his recent book,¹

... modern varieties are designed to make better use of nutrients *irrespective of the source* [i.e., chemical or organic] and hence normally turn

them into more grain than do traditional varieties, even if no such nutrients come from chemical fertilizer (p.43) [emphasis added].

It is true that earlier varieties (like IR-8 rice) sometime did worse than traditional varieties on unfertilized soils - hence the package myth. But newer varieties of maize (produced at CIMMYT), pest resistant wheat, rice (e.g. IR 36) and even poor people's crops like sorghum and millet (e.g. the Indore series widely used in Karnataka) have been shown to out-perform the traditional varieties "even under unfavorable conditions" including zero external fertilizer input.¹⁹ HYVs, furthermore, are not chemical dependent for they can make equally good use of organic fertilizers used by traditional farmers: compost, inter-cropping, biological nitrogen fixation. As Lipton argues, "plants do not live off nutrient sources (e.g., fertilizers) but off nutrients" which can be provided by a variety of sources. In principle, there is no reason why these varieties cannot be grown using ecologically sound techniques, an option that is now being aggressively pursued by some IARCs (International Agricultural Research Centers). There is a danger of soil mining with traditional methods as the HYVs use up some important micro-nutrients at a higher rate than organic fertilizers can supply but that can be remedied with appropriate inorganic additives.²⁰ While Lipton by no means suggests that chemical fertilizers are irrelevant to performance of the HYVs, or that a dependence on them has not been problematic to small farmers, he cautions, however, against "naive ecologism" or "... the view that even economically justified and scientific modernization of farming methods are almost certain to threaten sustainable environments."

Apart from opening up new research on non-polluting and labor-intensive biological fertilizers that can be used along with new seeds, the recognition that HYVs can be "un-packaged" has an enormous ideological significance. It cracks open the essentialism that characterizes all populist critiques: that the new seeds are inherently chemical dependent; and that they were designed to be chemical dependent; that such dependence is encoded into the western mode of thinking, and so on. An open-minded assessment of the evidence should convince populists that the Green Revolution "package" does not exclude ecologically sound practices. If that is so, the local knowledge of women and peasants can be fully integrated with the yield advantages of HYVs. Shiva's worry about science's arrogant denial of people's knowledge systems is exaggerated, at least in agriculture.

b) *Seeds as Commodities*: Shiva also argues that the Green Revolution has commercialized seeds and forced the farmer to buy new seed supplies every year, an



assumption widely shared and repeated *ad nauseam* by the critics. This is a striking example of how a half-truth can gain the status of a first principle by mere repetition.

The critics do not make any distinction between the inbreeding (self pollinating) nature of the major Green Revolution seeds (wheat and rice; also barley and oats) and the out-breeding (cross pollinating) nature of crops like maize and sorghum. The former produce stable varieties that do not need to be rejuvenated every year. The farmer can keep the rice or wheat HYV seed and almost all the offspring from the seed will show the same features as their parents for many years.²¹ It is only with hybrid crops (maize and sorghum) that seeds need to be purchased afresh every year. Only recently have plant breeders in China and Philippine's IRRI succeeded in producing hybrid varieties of rice and wheat. If commercialized, these seeds can create the kind of problems the critics have been worrying about. I chose to focus on the seeds to show how a disregard of basic scientific facts of the matter has led the populists into blind alleys. For their critique to retain some teeth, they will have to do some serious, dispassionate study of the scientific work going on in research laboratories around the world.

What is keeping critics like Shiva from accepting the legitimate need for agricultural modernization in India is their adherence to assorted theories of "moral economy" that supposedly characterized pre-capitalist societies. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, these theories are ahistorical and romantic descriptions of peasant societies. The pre-capitalist social order was ruled by scarcity, the cruelest forms of patriarchy and inegalitarian social relations. And in modern societies where the state itself has, at least in principle, assumed the role of providing a minimum income, it makes perfect sense for the peasants to engage in yield and profit-maximizing behavior. With technical means made available by modern genetics and plant sciences, it would indeed be irresponsible not to try.

Conclusions

Populism is a deeply flawed philosophy as it sets up false boundaries between an essentialized "west" and a "Third World" equally frozen in time and "nature"; between "Eurocentric" discourses of natural and social science (including Marxism) and a more "authentic" self-understanding of Third World societies; and between the interests and aspirations of stereotyped "Third World women" and women in the west.

While this article has taken issue with each of these divisions, its major conclusions can be summarized as a call to action:

(i) *Against "Science is nothing but..." ism*: This increasingly popular and radical rejection of science lies at the heart of the populist critique of development. Such attempts to reduce the theoretical content of scientific ideas to their social origins alone are riddled with major philosophical lacunae.

While it is legitimate to study the production of knowledge both as science and as ideology, the two studies should not be confused. There are clear criteria for determining which is which: in so far as methods are used to allow the mechanisms present in the intransitive object to determine the results of an inquiry, it is science and in so far as the relations of power in a society determine the results, it is ideology. The latter may, and often do, guide the broad focus of a field of inquiry but do not provide the criteria for justifying a scientific finding. For instance, elements of Newton's world-view might have led him to ask certain questions about gravity but his law of gravity does not stand or fall by his personal beliefs. Newton's law of gravity becomes a law by having withstood rigorous testing by his peers and thousands of physicists since his discovery.

(ii) *Against anti-technology utopias*: Populists have not shown convincingly with science and technology are irrelevant to the project of development. This article has attempted to defend Marx's insight that emancipation from oppression is absolutely dependent on increasing human power over nature. That alone will make it possible for everyone to have the leisure and education for self-development and self-government. Even such human emancipation as has already taken place is dependent on increased power over nature through application of science in industry. Indeed, to vote for relinquishing human power over nature through science and technology, as radical science critics and eco-feminists would have us do, is tantamount to voting for the *permanent oppression of the many by the few*.

The populist rejection of technology is gaining ground because of false premises about the role of science in human societies. Growth of scientific knowledge and technological control over nature by itself has not and indeed cannot bring increased prosperity for all of humanity. But apart from technology aficionados, no one ever promised instant, come-what-may salvation. Like all other human and societal interventions, science and technology have to be democratized. Our troubles with science stem from the fact that while our power over nature had increased, our power over that power has not kept pace. The former does not necessarily preclude the latter. There is nothing in the character of scientific ideas themselves or in the processes of arriving at them that preclude their appropriation by the people, for the people.



Populist intellectuals like Shiva, furthermore, are guilty of hypocrisy and double standards. While they spare no effort in shredding the very idea of science and progress to pieces, they fail to acknowledge that their own growth as intellectuals and activists owes a tremendous debt to the products of these ideas.

(iii) *Against anti-socialism*: Socialism is essential for taming the power of science. The threat to human survival comes not from the augmentation of power as such, but from the division of that augmented power between competing capitals, classes, and nation-states. The economic and political unification of the world, and the working people, through socialism is the only alternative. These are old truths that need to be reasserted in the face of the growing irrationalism and parochialism on the left.

Notes:

- 1 This thesis dates back to the Russian populist Chayanov who projected independent smallholders - the middle peasants - to be a class that can reproduce itself through family labor and self exploitation under any social system from feudalism to capitalism or indeed socialism. This eternal middle peasant and his social world has been enshrined in the theory of "moral economy" whose leading exponent is James Scott in his famous *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*. Yale University Press, 1976. This line of thinking is also advanced by historians working within the subaltern studies perspective and activists of new social movements like the Chipko.
- 2 See Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Chapter 6 passim.
- 3 Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979.
- 4 Tom Brass, "Moral Economists, Subalterns, New Social Movements, and the (Re-)emergence of a (Post-) Modernized (Middle) Peasant", in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol.18, No.4, (July 1991).
- 5 D.N., another critic of Shiva has taken her to task for claiming the "forests have been central to India's civilization." He points out that "mainstream India" has appropriated these practices from forest dwelling tribal communities whom it has subjugated. "Far from the sacred groves being created and maintained through out India, the destruction of these groves and their replacement by temples is the expression of the mainstream Indian civilization's subjugation of the tribal," *EPW*, April 14, 1990.
- 6 A constant reference to the scriptural sources of "Indian" civilization appears to be a new fashion in populist writing. And it comes to me, an old fashioned secularist, as a bit of a shock. It disturbs me no end to find the "Hindu" so "naturally" extended to all things Indian. Moreover, what purpose do such references serve? I would like to learn instead what they actually meant to real men and women over history, how they conditioned social relations between classes, castes and genders.
- 6 Shiva, p 114-120. For a full flavor: "the penetration of capitalism and the money economy has led to a marked and devastating erosion of the productive power of land and the power of women" (p.113); "Commodification either destroys the basis of women's work or devalues it. With the decline in the perceived or real productivity of women is associated a decline in their status in society and the household" (p.117):

- 7 Bina Agarwal, "Neither Sustenance nor Sustainability. Agricultural Strategies, Ecological Degradation and Indian Women in Poverty," in Bina Agarwal (ed), *Structures of Patriarchy*, Zed Books, 1988. From 1961 to 1981, the percentage of rural women classified as agricultural laborers doubled from 25.6 per cent to 49.6 per cent. On the question of agricultural labor, I found Kalpana Bardhan the most illuminating ("Agricultural Growth and Rural Wage Labor in India," *South Asia Bulletin*, Vol.9, No.1 (1989).
- 8 "Traditionally women are productive in precisely those links in farm operations which involve a partnership with nature and are crucial for maintaining the food cycle - in the soil and in the local food economy. And it is these cycles that are broken when cash crop, Green Revolution agriculture replaces subsistence agriculture. There are two disposessions of women implicit in such a shift. Firstly, women's role shifts from the ecological category of being soil-builders and primary producers of farm productivity to the economic category of subsidiary workers and wage earners on an agricultural assembly line" (Shiva, p.114).
- 9 "Although they appropriate nature, their appropriation does not constitute a relationship of dominance or a property relation. Women are not owners of their own bodies or of the earth, but they cooperate with their bodies and with the earth in order to grow and make grow" (p.43).
- 10 Agarwal, p.84.
- 11 Pranab Bardhan "Sex disparity and child survival in rural India," in T.N.Srinivasan and Pranab Bardhan (eds.), *Rural Poverty in South Asia*, Columbia University Press, 1988, pp.473-483.
- 12 Ursula Sharma, "Women Work and Property in North West India," in Hamza Alavi and John Harris (eds.), *Sociology of "Developing Societies:" South Asia*, Monthly Review Press, 1989.
- 13 Agarwal, p.93
- 14 Bardhan, p.478
- 15 Ann Whitehead, "Food Crisis and Gender Conflict in the African Countryside," in H.Bernstein et al (eds.), *The Food Question: Profits v. People*, Monthly Review Press, 1990.
- 16 See Barrington Moore, Ch.6.
- 17 The beginnings of such a framework can be found in C.H.Hanumantha Rao, "Agricultural development and Ecological Degradation: An Analytical Framework," *EPW*, Dec 24, 1988, p.A142-146.
- 18 Michael Lipton, *New Seeds and Poor People* John Hopkins University Press, 1989. Lipton is concerned with answering one central question: given its pro-poor biological features, why have the poor not made larger gains from the Green Revolution? His goal is to suggest how plant breeders and international research organizations can better design varieties that have pro-poor biological features. The book offers an excellent survey of recent literature.
- 19 Lipton, p.44-45
- 20 According to Lipton, HYVs do not by themselves call for inorganic sources of nitrogen. Instead, attracted by the promise of bumper crops and government subsidized chemical fertilizers, farmers tend to give up the traditional soil building practices (like mixed cropping with legumes, composting etc).
- 21 Lipton, *ibid*, p.36-37. A similar point is also made by B.H.Farmer, "Perspectives on the Green Revolution in South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies*, 20, 1 (1986), p.175-199. Farmer states: "Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, none of the released HYVs of wheat and rice are F1 hybrids which do not breed true for good Mendelian reasons and thus demand the purchase of fresh seeds every year; rather they are stable hybrids. But it is true that F1 hybrids of maize and jowar have been issued to the great delight of seed merchants who no doubt wish all HYUs were F1s" (P.183).

SENDERO LUMINOSO IN PERU: A DARKENED PATH

Jayadeva Uyangoda

The capture and imprisonment of Dr. Abimael Guzman, the Chairman of the Peruvian Communist Party (popularly known as *Sendero Luminoso* or Shining Path), has drawn new attention to a movement that remains one of the very few communist guerilla groups in the world today. The New Peoples' Army in the Philippines is perhaps its closest parallel. In El Salvador where a major Left-wing guerilla war was conducted by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the conflict ended late last year after international mediation resulted in a peace agreement between the guerrillas and the government.

Dr. Guzman was arrested by the Peruvian police on September 12, along with seven of his colleagues. Television viewers all over the world watched the bearded guerilla leader, in prison uniform, unrepentant and shouting revolutionary slogans at reporters. This was a particularly surprising sight in an age where rebel leaders rarely remain alive following their capture. President Fujimori of Peru vowed to pass the death sentence on Guzman, also known as Chairman Gonzales, although Peruvian law allows no more than life imprisonment to convicted rebels. After a brief trial by a military tribunal, Dr. Guzman was given a life sentence.

An elated Fujimori and the Right-wing American press predicted a quick end to the Sendero movement. Since Guzman was arrested, more guerilla leaders have fallen into the police dragnet. Given the extreme social and economic conditions that exist in Peru, coupled with the brutalities of the state, it is too early to foresee an early collapse of this reportedly highly organized and determined rural guerilla movement. What is necessary for Sendero for its long term political presence is a radical shift of its strategy, from the sectarian and 'ideologically purist' guerilla politics of the old mould. That would however require a self-critical internal debate within the movement. The paradox, nonetheless, of most guerilla movements is that the discourse of armed struggle very rarely leaves discursive space for other alternatives.

A comparison of Sendero's recent setback with the fate of Sri Lanka's JVP would be useful. When Wijeweera and almost the entire membership of the JVP's Politbureau and Central Committee were captured and eliminated in late 1989, the movement had already lost a large number

of its members. After Wijeweera's and Gamanayake's deaths in November 1989, the task of the armed forces was more or less a mopping-up operation. Shocked and leaderless, the remaining cadres of the JVP could not continue their campaign due to one fundamental reason: till the news of Wijeweera's death was out, they were operating under the unreal assumption that the capture of state power by them was imminent - a matter of just a few weeks. A false optimism about an impending collapse of the old order prevented the second level leadership, as occurred in 1971, from having a fall-back strategy, for example, aimed at a political measure to save the movement and the lives of the remaining cadres.

The case of Sendero Luminoso however, may be different. Although as violent and ruthless as the JVP, it is a rural guerilla movement with a significant support base among the peasantry, particularly among the highland Indians in the Ayacucho province. Significantly, the Sendero movement has an ethnic base too as its appeal has been specifically wide among these native Indians in the backward mountain regions. Therefore, uprooting the Senderistas from the rural areas would not be as easy as the relatively quick elimination of the JVP. One should, meanwhile, not forget one important comparison; economic and social conditions among the rural and urban poor in Peru are infinitely harsher than they are in Sri Lanka.

Origins of Sendero

The origins of both the JVP and the Sendero Luminoso show some close parallels. Both were products of the crisis within the pro-Moscow Left in the early sixties. Originally a break away group from the Peruvian Communist Party, the group led by Guzman embraced Maoism. Guzman was at that time a teacher of philosophy at a provincial university in Huamanga, Ayacucho. This was a period of student radicalism. The Huamanga university's student population was predominantly native Indian, children of poor peasants who were able to receive higher education due to educational reforms carried out from the fifties. Guzman worked with them and had also established close links with the National Teachers' Union.

After forming the Maoist faction of the Communist Party, Guzman visited China, where he spent nearly a year



during the cultural revolution. On his return, he began to train his cadres in the Maoist style following the cultural revolution. He sent student cadres to the countryside 'to learn from the peasants' and provide direct services to the poor Indian population who had been consistently neglected by the central government. Like the JVP's Rohana Wijeweera, Abimael Guzman remained an independent Maoist in the sense that he was not affiliated to the global Maoist network, headquartered in Peking. He claimed to have developed a uniquely Peruvian doctrine of native agrarian communism.¹ Wijeweera's own claim to originality, quite interestingly, was also a similar one; that he, instead of 'parroting Maoism', had 'adapted Marxism-Leninism to apply to the specific conditions of Sri Lanka.'

The name Sendero Luminoso signifies the nativism of this Guzman brand of Marxism. The full name of Guzman's organization is *Partido Comunista del Peru, Por el Sendero Luminoso de Mariategui*, which means, the Communist party of Peru, following the Shining Path of Mariategui. Who was this Mariategui whose 'shining path' the Peruvian Maoists profess to follow?

Jose Carlos Mariategui was a Peruvian Marxist who made an important contribution to Latin American Marxist debates in the 1920s and the 1930s.² He founded the Peruvian Socialist Party in 1928, and a few years later, the Peruvian Communist Party. Christobel Kay notes that Mariategui was the first outstanding Marxist to apply Marxism to the concrete conditions of Latin America. His insightful analyses of the Peruvian situation is said to have led to the revision of some Marxist theses accepted at that time. Some even regard him as a Latin American Gramsci. In 1928, he published a major Marxist study on the Peruvian situation, titled *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*. Two of his theoretical ideas have had a lasting impact on Left wing politics in Peru.

The first is the notion that feudal and capitalist relations in Peru were part of one single economic system and did not constitute two separate economies as argued by another contemporary Peruvian Marxist, Haya de la Torre, in his dualistic thesis. He saw imperialist capital as linked to and profiting from pre-capitalist relations and that the development of capitalism would not eliminate surviving feudal relations. The political conclusion he drew from this analysis was that the socialist revolution could not wait until capitalism had fully developed in Peru and that the indigenous peasant communities could constitute the germ of the socialist transformation in the countryside.³

The second was somewhat related to the first. It concerned the indigenous Indian population and the ethnic question. Challenging the prevailing view that

the 'indigenous question' was merely a racial and cultural issue, Mariategui asserted that the problems of the Indian people and their emancipation were rooted in the land question, i. e. in the system of private land ownership and the predominance of feudalism. He concluded that finding a solution to the Indian problem was not only necessary for emancipating the Indian population, but also for solving the national question and achieving national integration.⁴

In its political analysis, however, the Sendero Luminoso appeared to be more in line with Maoism of the thirties than Mariategui's ideas developed at the same time. After entering the path of armed struggle in 1980—the latter being 'the only way of beginning to define and resolve Peru's development problems'—the Senderistas presented 'eight theses' concerning the Peruvian revolution:

1. Peru is a dependent, semi-colonial, semi-feudal country, in which the peasantry is the main potentially revolutionary force and the countryside the site of the principal contradiction.
2. In a country like Peru there cannot be democracy or even bourgeois institutions except in caricature.
3. The military regimes that ruled Peru from 1978 to 1980 were fascist.
4. From 1968 to 1980 Peru was in a situation of stalemated revolution but since 1980 it is in a situation of unfolding revolution which presents the people with a choice between the 'democratic road' and the 'bureaucratic road.'
5. The revolution does not build its strength in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country by participating in the electoral process or utilizing bourgeois legality. Those leftist forces that attempt this are opting for 'bureaucratic cretinism.' The only true leftist force is built by armed struggle.
6. The Peruvian revolution must be national and democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal. Its social base is the worker-peasant alliance, but the peasants are the principal motor force while the proletariat is being formed and developing into a leading class.
7. The only form of revolutionary struggle to take power and form the new democratic state is armed struggle. People's war starts in the country and advances to the city. The People's war is a peasant war or it is nothing.



8. The party is forged and developed in the course of the armed struggle and, as a political organization, seeks to convert the armed struggle into a true people's army.⁵

These eight theses indicate the specific style of revolutionary politics preferred by Guzman and his party. They were violently sectarian. Considering themselves to be the only true revolutionary force in Peru—the JVP too had a similar self-assessment and follow-up action—Senderistas not only refused to form an alliance with other left groups, but also directed their armed violence against all other left parties and organizations. The mainstream Communist party leaders and cadres were specifically targeted for assassination. Until very recently they did not make an attempt to organize the urban workers and the poor, although conditions in the proletarian districts in urban Peru were as miserable as in the country side.

The revolutionary strategy mapped out by Guzman was aimed at the goal of mounting a general uprising in the Andean highlands, which would, in turn, bring about the collapse of urban society and ultimately destroy the regime in Lima. Here the old Maoist strategy of surrounding the city by the countryside was in action. To establish revolutionary authority in the countryside, Sendero systematically eliminated government authority in rural areas under its control. The power vacuum thus created was filled by the Sendero cadres. After carving out so-called 'revolutionary zones,' they began to establish their own administration under which wealth was re-distributed, 'class enemies' eliminated and 'revolutionary justice' administered. On this score, the Sendero were more in line with Naxalite politics in India in the late sixties than with Sri Lanka's JVP. Although the JVP did practice the rather macabre policy of killing the 'enemies'—labelled 'traitors'—and administered 'justice' by means of summary trials and on-the-spot executions, there was no political strategy of re-distributing land; nor were there 'liberated zones' as prescribed by the Maoist People's War school. Interestingly, many private land owners in rural districts were reported to have prevented their land being 'peopled' by the JVP by donating large sums of money to rebels.

Unlike both the Naxalites and the JVP—they suffered decimation at the hand of the enemy—Sendero has in a number of occasions demonstrated a remarkable ability to survive in situations of concentrated military offensive by the state. In this sense, Sendero offers an analogy with the LTTE. When their rural Andean base was attacked by the military in the mid-eighties resulting in heavy losses, Sendero revised their strategy of locating themselves in the countryside and moved to the cities. They also de-centralized their organization and the com-

mand structure into five autonomous strategic zones under military leaders who could act independently. The second instance was in 1986 when nearly 300 of Sendero cadres were killed in jail when the Peruvian military quelled riots in three prisons in Lima.⁶ Among the killed were some top military leaders of the guerilla organization. This loss was amply compensated politically when a backlash of sympathy was generated for the party among students and the revolutionary Left, expanding its base for recruitment in the city.⁷ Following this incident, Sendero in fact made a major strategic shift, from protracted rural warfare to an accelerated, urban-based revolution.

The spread from within the Left of a highly sectarian armed guerilla formation, using violence as the main strategy of mobilization and dedicated to a project of state power through armed revolution posed an acutely problematic challenge to other Left parties. In this sense, the Naxalites in India, the JVP in Sri Lanka, the NPA in the Philippines and the Sendero in Peru have a remarkable similarity. The problems that occurred particularly in Peru and Sri Lanka for the Left are very similar. They can be summarized under three categories:

1. Threat to the life of leaders and cadres of the Left (threat of extermination), not, or not only (as in Peru), from the repressive agencies of the state, but immediately from an underground guerilla organization, claiming to be Leftist, or anti-state,
2. Near total closure of the space for reformist Left and even for competing radical Left formations. All varieties of the Left discourse, other than that of the 'true revolutionary party,' would be invalidated not by means of debate and polemics, but by means of an armed critique.
3. The problem of relating to the state which alone has the means and capacity to confront guerilla violence that is directed not only against the state, but also most, if not all, political formations.

Sendero and the Rest of the Left

When it comes to fragmentation, the Peruvian Left is no exception to the general pattern on the Left worldwide. Petras and others, as far back as 1983 estimated thirty five Left 'parties' in Peru, with splits and regroupments occurring on a regular basis.⁸ Left unity has been an illusive theme in Peruvian Left politics too. There are two main Left centres that evolved in the eighties, the United Left (IU) and the Socialist Left (IS). The IU has a fairly significant support base in urban



Peru. At the municipal elections in June 1986, it emerged as the leading opposition party. At subsequent elections, the IU's vote went down as the newly formed Right-wing coalition FREDEMO (Democratic Front, led by the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa) gained considerable voter support.

The IU—*Izquierda Unida*—is a front of six Left parties and many 'non-party Leftists.' The pro-Moscow Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) is the leading member of this coalition. Its radical faction is composed of three parties—the pro-Chinese Communist Union of the Revolutionary Left (UNIR), the Unified Mariateguista Party (PUM) and Trotskyist Worker, Peasant, Student and Popular Front (PSR). Senderista's guerilla warfare and the extremely violent counter-insurgency measures of the government led to a major debate within the IU in 1988-89. The alliance, consequently, developed two tendencies, moderates and radicals. The moderates—Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Marxist Revolutionary Communist Party—advocate a non-violent, electoral path to power.

The radical Left too has given rise to an armed guerilla movement called Revolutionary Movement of Tupac Amaru (MRTA). It was formed in 1983 by radical sections from mainstream Left-wing parties. Their main objective was to create an alternative to Sendero Luminoso. Basically an urban-based movement, MRTA's main slogan is: "For the cause of the poor, with the masses; up in arms." It has also engaged in many armed actions, but unlike the Senderistas, they have carefully avoided actions that would instil fear among the people. They have preferred spectacular armed attacks and hold-ups to attract attention and publicity. One of their favourite actions is to hijack food-trucks and then to distribute the loot among the poor in urban slums. This 'Robin Hood' image has helped the MRTA to attract to its ranks the disaffected youth of the urban middle classes. However, Sendero Luminoso has not accepted MRTA as a fraternal organization. On the contrary, at Sendero's national congress in February 1988, the MRTA was denounced as "the principal enemy of the revolution... that must be confronted because there can not be the triumph of two revolutions."⁸ Despite its militancy, the MRTA, unlike Sendero, has been conciliatory towards the mainstream Left. Neither has it ruled out the necessity and possibility of taking part in electoral politics.

Violence, Democracy and Political Change

The bloody guerilla and counter-guerilla war that has been raging in Peru for the past several years has taken its toll in many ways. One prime victim is democracy. One of the poorest countries in Latin America, it has had

a history of military oligarchic rulers. Bourgeois democracy has not taken root in Peru, although regimes of the liberal-Right, allied with Western capital, have emerged from time to time. Free-market economic strategies implemented in the eighties have had a disastrous effect on the rural as well as the urban poor. Sendero claims to liberate people through its bloody guerilla warfare; yet the result so far has been the increasing repression brought on the people by both the government and its self-proclaimed liberators. Sendero's rather insane policy has been to make the state more and more repressive in the belief that people will ultimately turn to them for 'liberation.' The JVP too shared this senseless tactic of 'exposing the enemy to the people.' The response of the state has been to counter guerilla violence with infinite ferocity and brutality. For the past several years, Peru has been one of the worst examples of disappearances, torture and summary executions carried out by government forces. Most of the victims of these competing campaigns of terror have been innocent civilians. Sendero have shown little or no concern for this dimension of human predicament. Like Sri Lanka, Peru too provides an acutely negative example of political violence which begets still more violence.

Protracted counter-state violence represents a specific political discourse which reduces revolutionary political processes into a narrow project of seizure of state power. As the examples of both Peru and Sri Lanka testify, this power project totally obliterates voluntary mass participation in the emerging political process. Mass participation is artificially and forcibly induced by means of threat, intimidation and coercion. Indeed, the JVP's appalling technique of organizing 'general strikes' and *hartals* through threat and punishment in 1988-89 proved so counter-productive that once the news of Wijeweera's death in army custody was out, people began to openly express an unmistakable sense of relief. Violence may be useful to mobilize some sections of society against the state, because in any society there is limited space for counter-state violence; yet it is hardly a durable and viable means of mass mobilization.

The concern for human suffering in situations of political conflict is a major ideational force that has indeed subverted the moral legitimacy of counter-state armed struggles of the conventional type. In today's world, political movements can hardly claim the 'liberationist' mantle so long as they remain oblivious to human suffering brought about by their own actions. Protracted armed struggles and prolonged suffering can perhaps be withstood by the dedicated cadres of underground political groups, but not by the people whose entire social being is ferociously disrupted by competing forces of terror. As the recent experience of Sri Lanka's North and the South exemplifies,



people in desperate situations tend to prefer one agent of terror to multiple agencies.

The other issue concerning the politics of armed struggle relates to the stand towards the formal institutions of democracy—parliament, the electoral process etc.—however much they may be seen as being manipulated by ruling groups. The magic of elections in any political system, notwithstanding varied forms of electoral malpractices that may exist, is that they offer an opportunity for the people to express their political will and make their choices with minimum risk and danger.

The Sendero Luminoso has a history of disrupting elections. Just before the 1989 municipal elections, Sendero declared a 'Red October,' specifically to disrupt the electoral process. In five weeks, there were 420 killings attributed to Sendero; nearly 300 candidates withdrew from the election in fear of being killed. They stole polling cards, killed voters, bombed electoral centres, and cut-off ink-marked fingers of voters. At the Presidential elections held in 1989 too, they went on a killing spree. The JVP in Sri Lanka launched similar campaigns to interrupt elections held in 1988 and 1989. Unlike in Sri Lanka, however, something else occurred in Peru; all Peruvian political parties staged a 'march for peace' to encourage voter participation at the elections.

Quite apart from the question of atrocities committed by Sendero and the like, there is a fundamental issue concerning political strategies: is armed struggle an effective means of achieving political and social change? The accumulated experience of all forms of counter-state armed struggles in recent times—Left-wing, radical, nationalist, patriotic etc.—has been so negative that

'revolutionary violence' no longer evokes the political romanticism it did in the past. One major drawback in armed counter-state movements today is that their violence is directed against civil society as well. This prevents them from becoming moral forces of a new civilisational order. Guns and bombs may demoralize the enemy, but would also rob the 'agents of liberation' of their claim to moral authority over the enemy. As the experience of the JVP in 1988-89 amply illustrates, it had lost the moral war long before it was militarily crushed by the state; and it was a self-inflicted defeat. No political movement can, in the contemporary world, conceivably replace the existing state—however corrupt, fraudulent, and exploitative the individuals who run the state may be—unless the emerging movement can claim politico-moral superiority over the adversary.

Notes:

1. Sandra Woy-Hazleton and William A. Hazleton, 1990, "Sendero Luminoso and the Future of Peruvian Democracy," *Third World Quarterly*, April 1990, p. 22.
2. My source of information on Mariategui and his work is Cristobel Kay's exceedingly informative book, *Latin American Theories on Development and Underdevelopment*, 1990, London: Routledge. Also see Kay's essay on Latin American Marxism in this issue of *Pravada*.
3. Kay (1990), pp. 16-17.
4. Kay, p. 17.
5. Quoted in James Petras, Morris Morely and Eugene Havens, 1983, 'Peru: Capitalist Democracy in Transition,' *New Left Review* 142, p. 54.
6. Hazleton and Hazleton, *ibid*, p. 23.
7. Petras, Morely and Havens, *ibid*, p. 45.
8. Cited in Hazleton and Hazleton, *ibid*, p. 26.

If the [the Bolsheviks] succeeded in making their expectations and promises come true, it would be a tremendous accomplishment for them and for the Russian people and, indeed, for the entire international proletariat. The teachings of Marxism, however, could then no longer be maintained. They would be proved false; but, on the other hand, socialism would gain a splendid triumph, the road to the immediate removal of all misery and ignorance of the masses would be entered in Russia and pointed out to the rest of the world. How gladly I would have believed that it was possible.... The most powerful, best founded theory must yield when it is contradicted by the facts. However, they must be facts, not mere projections and promises.... [M]y expectant benevolence did not last long. To my chagrin, I saw ever more clearly that the Bolsheviks totally misunderstood their situation, that they thoughtlessly tackled problems for the solution of which all conditions were lacking. In their attempts to accomplish the impossible by brute force, they chose paths by which the working masses were not raised economically, intellectually or morally, but on the contrary, were depressed even deeper than they had been by Tsarism and the world war.

Karl Kautsky, *Bolshevism at a Deadlock*, 1931.

LATIN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO MARXIST THOUGHT

Cristobal Kay

The diffusion of Marxism in Latin America received an initial impulse with the formation of socialist and communist political parties during the first decades of this century (Liss, 1984). The official Marxism which espoused in Latin America was Eurocentric and Marx's few, ill-informed, and superficial writings on Latin America (which have been collected in Marx and Engels, 1975) did not help (Lowy, 1980). The recognition of Marx's break with his eurocentrism as revealed in his writings on Ireland, China, Turkey, and the Russian commune, among others, has appeared late. Jose Arico has done much by means of his writings (1980) and editorial work in propagating Marx's changed position on the peripheries of capitalism. Various generations of students throughout the Spanish-speaking world have learnt Marxism from the Chilean Marta Harnecker who has written the popular Marxist textbook (1969). Her brand of Marxism is a structuralist-Althusserian one.

The first Latin American Marxist who began to read Marx from a Latin American perspective was Jose Carlos Mariategui (1971, originally published in 1928). His writings were the first major challenge to official eurocentric Marxism in Latin America which in turn paved the way to a Latin American Marxism (Franco, 1981). Mariategui's analysis differed from official Marxism in a variety of ways. He rejected the deterministic as well as the social democratic revisionist strands in Marxism, and argued that the development of capitalism in Latin America differed from the classical European model in that it did not eliminate pre-capitalist social relations of production and only intensified the domination of imperialist monopoly capital. Imperialist capital was linked to, and profited from, pre-capitalist relations. Furthermore, Mariategui saw no scope for the development of an autochthonous or independent national capitalism as the national bourgeoisie in Latin America was unable and unwilling to perform the progressive role it played in Europe. In his view the socialist revolution could not wait until capitalism had fully developed.

Mariategui was also one of the first Marxists who highlighted the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. He held that the indigenous peasant communities could form the germ of the socialist transformation in the

Peruvian countryside. His pioneering analysis of the Indian issue challenged the prevailing view that the 'indigenous question' was a racial and cultural one, arguing that it was instead rooted in the land tenure problem. In short, Mariategui foreshadows some of the central issues of, and debates within, Latin American Marxism articulating a position which from today's perspective is sometimes labelled as Neo-Marxist or national Marxist.

Despite the pioneering writings of Mariategui it was not until the 1960s that official Marxism (whose principal guardians were the Communist parties) began to lose its dominance, being challenged by the Cuban revolution and the rise of Neo-Marxism. This new Marxism in Latin America made a major contribution to the theory of revolution and transition to socialism, to the analysis of internal relations of exploitation and domination through, among others, the conceptualisation of internal colonialism, to Marx's theory of population through the concept of marginality, to the debate on modes of production, and above all to the theory of imperialism by means of the dependency theory.

A key contributor to the theory of revolution and transition to socialism is Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, the most legendary Latin America Marxist (Losy, 1973). He was a revolutionary fighter in Cuba and elsewhere ('the heroic guerrilla'), a Marxist thinker, as well as a policy maker in the Cuban revolutionary government. In his theory of revolution for the Third World he stressed the need for armed struggle and the importance of the peasantry. He argued that the insurrectionary guerrilla group (the *foco*) is the catalyst which would bring about all the necessary objective and subjective conditions for the revolution. Similarly, with regard to the transition to socialism, he argued that it was necessary to forge a new consciousness (create the 'new man') which in turn would accelerate the development of the productive forces, and not the other way round as held by orthodox Marxists. For Guevara, material incentives were secondary to moral incentives in the building of the new society. It is of interest to note that Mandel sided with Guevara in Guevara's debate (1969) with Bettelheim on the transition to socialism.

With regard to internal colonialism Gonzalez Casanova (1969) finds that many of the factors which defined a situation of colonialism between countries also exist *within* some independent Third World countries. It is this similarity which prompted him to coin the term

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'internal colonialism' when referring to the latter. The analysis of internal colonialism challenges the dualism of modernization theory and criticizes the orthodox Marxist theory for its failure to explore the links between class, ethnicity and region. At first colonial and class relations appear intermixed, with the former being dominant. With the subsequent development of capitalism, class relations increasingly entered into conflict with colonial relations. Internal colonialism, by maintaining ethnic divisions, impedes the development of class relations as ethnic consciousness overrides class consciousness (Stavenhagen, 1969).

The Marxist view on marginality originated as a critique of the modernization view on marginality and as a debate within Marxist theory. Nun (1969) created a new category - 'marginal mass' - which he differentiated from the Marxist concepts of 'relative surplus population' and 'industrial reserve army of labour'. Likewise, Quijano (1974) proposed the concepts of 'marginal labour' and 'marginal pole of the economy' and wrestled with their relationship to existing Marxist categories. Quijano and Nun pinpoint the problem of marginalisation as originating from the increasing control of foreign capital over the process of industrialisation in Latin America accentuating its monopolization. Nun argues that the penetration of multinational corporations into Latin America has created such a large relative surplus population that part of it is not only afunctional but even dysfunctional for capitalism. This part of the relative surplus population does not perform the function of an industrial reserve army of labour as it will never be absorbed into this hegemonic capitalist sector, even during the expansionary phase of the cycle, and therefore it has no influence whatsoever on the level of wages of the labour force employed by the hegemonic sector. Thus, in Nun's view, a new phenomenon unforeseen by Marx has emerged in the dependent countries. For this reason he feels justified in coining a new concept, i.e. 'marginal mass'.

Quijano's and Nun's theory of marginality has generated a lively debate largely from a Marxist perspective (Kay, 1989). The discussion has centred on three major issues: (i) the extent to which the marginality concepts differ from Marx's industrial reserve army of labour; (ii) the contribution of marginals to the process of capital accumulation and their articulation to the dominant mode of production; and (iii) the relationship between marginality and dependency. With regards to (i) the critics query the need for new concepts and hold that existent Marxist categories are adequate. With regard to (ii) they argue that the marginals' contribution to capital accumulation is far greater than suggested by the *marginalists* who are criticized for underestimating their significance for the reproduction of capitalism. The critics also put greater emphasis on analysing the social relations of production

of the marginal sector which they characterize as being largely non-capitalist but functional for capitalist accumulation. Finally, with regard to (iii) they stress that marginality depends as much on internal as external factors.

In dependency theory at least two key positions can be differentiated: reformist and Marxist. The reformist dependency approach is best seen as a further development of the Latin American structuralist school originating in CEPAL (the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean or ECLAC). Within the Marxist dependency camp are the writings of Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotonio Dos Santos, Andre Gunder Frank, Oscar Braun, Vania Bambirra, Anibal Quijano, Edelberto Torres-Rivas, and Alonso Aguilar, among others. The emergence of a Marxist theory of dependency arose out of a realization that Marx never fully considered the colonial and post-colonial societies. While the classical Marxist theory of imperialism addressed the new stages and aspects of capitalism, it was mainly concerned with the imperialist countries and had little to say about the underdeveloped countries, a gap which the Marxist *dependentistas* sought to fill. Furthermore, they are critical of the classical theories' progressive view of capitalism in Third World countries. For these reasons the Marxist *dependentistas* are sometimes referred to as neo-Marxists.

Amongst the Marxist dependency writers Marini (1973) has made the most systematic theoretical effort to determine the specific laws which govern the dependent economies. Marini's central thesis is that dependence involves the over-(or super-) exploitation of labour in the subordinate nations. This over-exploitation of labour in the periphery arises out of the need of capitalists to recover part of the fall in the profit rate as a consequence of unequal exchange. In turn this over-exploitation of labour hinders the transition from absolute to relative surplus value as the dominant form in capital-labour relations and the accumulation process in the periphery, thereby underpinning their dependence. According to Marini the circuit of capital in dependent countries differs from that of centre countries. In dependent countries the two key elements of the capital cycle - the production and circulation of commodities - are separated as a result of the periphery being linked to the centre through the over-exploitation of labour. Production in the Third World countries does not rely on internal capacity for consumption but depends on exports to the developed countries. Wages are kept low in dependent countries because workers' consumption is not required for the realization of commodities. Thus, the conditions are set for the over-exploitation of labour.

Let us now look at the most famous writer on dependency. Frank's main contribution to dependency analysis



occurs before he actually uses the term dependence (1967), but is found in his central and well-known idea of 'the development of underdevelopment'. Although the concept of dependence is best-known to an English-speaking audience through the work of Frank, he is a reluctant and short-lived *dependentista*. In retrospect Frank's writings can best be considered as belonging to the world-system perspective. Thus it would be a mistake to consider him as the dependency writer *par excellence*.

The book by Cardoso and Faletto (1979) is considered by many as the key dependency text, but it is a matter of debate to what an extent it can be situated within Marxism. They seek to explore diversity within unity of the various historical processes, contrary to Frank's search for unity within diversity. Dependence is not regarded simply as an external variable as they do not derive the internal national socio-political situation mechanically from external domination. Thus, they do not see dependency and imperialism as external and internal sides of a single coin, with the internal reduced to a reflection of the external. They conceive the relationship between internal and external forces as forming a complex whole and explore the ways in which they are interwoven. In contrast to some other dependency writers, such as Frank and Marini, Cardoso does not regard dependency as being contradictory to development and to indicate this he coins the term 'associated-dependent development'.

Cueva's analysis (1976) provides an entry-point into the discussion concerning the Marxist nature of the Neo-Marxist dependency perspective. He regards their writings as non-Marxist. Furthermore, he does not believe in the existence of a dependent mode of production and regards orthodox Marxist theory as adequate for analysing Latin America. In denying that any specific laws of development are operative in the Third World, Cueva challenges the very core of dependency analysis.

The debate over the feudal or capitalist nature of Latin America's mode of production acquired a new life with the publication of Frank's book on Latin America (1967) in which he boldly and assertively argues that Latin America has been capitalist since the European conquest in the sixteenth century. The ensuing debate bears similarities to the Marxist polemic on the transition from feudalism to capitalism whose main protagonists were Dobb and Sweezy. The most influential critique of Frank is made by the Argentinean Ernesto Laclau (1971) who castigates Frank for overemphasizing the importance of exchange relations while ignoring production relations. In Laclau's view "the pre-capitalist character of the dominant relations of production in Latin America was not only not incompatible with production for the world market, but was actually intensified by the expansion of the latter" (1971, p.30). The significance of Frank's intervention was mainly political. By arguing that capi-

talism was the cause of Latin America's underdevelopment and responsible for its continuation, he challenged the orthodox Latin American communist parties, who argued that Latin America was still feudal and therefore the popular forces should support the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary task which, in turn, would advance the socialist revolution. For Frank, and the Marxist *dependentistas*, the Latin American bourgeoisie is only perpetuating the development of underdevelopment and therefore, following the example of the Cuban revolution, capitalism itself has to be overthrown as only socialism can eliminate underdevelopment.

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RIGOBERTA MENCHU: NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR 1992

Rigoberta Menchu, a Guatemalan woman, member of the Quiche Indian community and tireless crusader for the rights of the indigenous people of her country, has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1992.

Her parents and a younger brother were brutally killed in three separate incidents during the early 1980's, when the military government of Guatemala launched repressive assaults against the indigenous population of this Central American country.

The people of the Mayan tribes of Guatemala constitute almost sixty per cent of the country's population, but have been systematically decimated through years of attack and repression. Many Guatemalans have fled abroad, and Rigoberta Menchu herself has lived in exile for many years. Through her life experience, and through her commitment to the struggle for social justice and democratic rights for her people, Rigoberta Menchu has come to symbolize the coming together of several strands of popular struggle.

Rigoberta Menchu's experience of racism and of the oppression and exploitation of peasants by landlords led her to an understanding of the many facets of the struggle for social justice in a situation such as hers. Coming from an impoverished peasant community, her childhood was a difficult one, but also one full of experiences of the many different ways in which the absentee landlords of Guatemala milked the peasants dry, and robbed them of their land. Her parents were involved in the formation of the United Peasant Committee (C.U.C.) in 1977.

Having worked on the land, and as a domestic servant in the home of a rich landlord for years during her childhood, Rigoberta, through her involvement in the CUC became a community organiser and a spokesperson for her people. She taught herself Spanish, the language of the colonisers of Guatemala, in order to communicate with the outside world, as well as with other indigenous communities in Guatemala, who were divided on the basis of ethnicity and language.

Working within a context in which the ancient Mayan beliefs in the sanctity of the land and of natural resources have mingled and merged with Catholicism, (the religion of the majority of the Guatemalan people), Rigoberta Menchu has become a symbol of the struggle of oppressed communities all over the world for social justice, blending a commitment to democracy and human rights with a concern for the environment and for the specific oppression of women in every aspect of society and the community.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1992 to Rigoberta Menchu can be viewed as a public acknowledgement by the international community, not only of the stature and achievement of Rigoberta as an individual woman, but also of the on-going struggle for democracy and human rights in Guatemala. In the same way, the award vindicates the struggles of many others like her, in other countries and other communities throughout the world.

Sunila Abeysekera

EDITORS' NOTE

Some readers of *Pravada* have asked us why we have been re-producing material already published elsewhere. We have done so, because we feel it important that the journal also acts as a link between its readers and intellectual movements outside Sri Lanka, particularly as quality journals and books published abroad are relatively inaccessible to Sri Lankan readers. However, readers may have noticed that we have been, and are, extremely selective and discriminating in our choice of material for re-production in *Pravada*.

CAPTAIN COOK AS FALLEN DEITY

Gananath Obeyesekere, 1992, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Myth making in the Pacific*, Princeton University Press and Bishop Museum Press. xvii + 251 pp.

Gananath Obeyesekera's anthropological voyage started in the sixties with a study of land tenure in a Southern Sinhalese village. His most original work—in terms of ideas and concepts—was to come a little later with some path-breaking investigations into the transformation and re-constitution of religio-cultural formations in Sinhalese society.

Obeyesekera's latest book is a critical examination of a different cultural formation, namely, the European intellectual culture that has mythified encounters with non-European peoples and societies. Was captain James Cook really deified by the Hawaiians who killed him? The received wisdom in Europe as well as in Hawaii says he was, but Obeyesekere says 'no way.'

The Apotheosis of Captain Cook can be read at two levels. And indeed, the text itself has a two-level architectural design. Firstly it is a critical disengagement with Marshal Sahlin's structural anthropological reading of Hawaiian culture and a refutation of post-enlightenment academico-intellectual imagination concerning the peoples, societies and cultures in the Pacific. Secondly, it is a critical re-construction of Captain Cook's life and time in the Pacific, a project achieved by means of a close reading of shipboard journals of Cook himself and his colleagues and of some later biographies of Cook.

What is it about Cook that ignited Obeyesekere's own anthropological imagination? Popular as well as scholarly belief points out that when Cook reached Hawaii, the Hawaiians thought that this white man was their god

Lono. As soon as Cook and his men went to the shore, so goes the belief, a group of Hawaiian priests welcomed him ceremoniously and in a subsequent sacred ritual his deification was formalized. Obeyesekere rejects this assertion:

I question this "fact," which I show was created in the European imagination of the eighteenth century and after and was based on antecedent "myth models" pertaining to the redoubtable explorer cum civilizer who is a god to the "natives." To put it bluntly, I doubt that the natives created their European god; the Europeans created him for them. This "European god" is a myth of conquest, imperialism, and civilization—a triad that cannot be easily separated (p.3).

Obeyesekere's critical enterprise thus becomes a site for another imagination, meant to interrogate cultural theories as well as "facts of history" that are born out of a canonized imagination of the colonial. It is a pity that Obeyesekere does not deal with the question of how the European imagination turned their civilizing conquerors into gods. Treating the deificatory imagination of the European bourgeois and middle classes as a mere imperialist state of mind is not enough. The question of why and how European colonialism had to invent its own colonizing deities—Cook in Hawaii and Cortes in Mexico are the most well-known instances—requires an answer which may be found in the discursive history of European intellectual cultures and political transformation. An inquiry into this issue will require Obeyesekere to move beyond his preferred theoretical window of psychological anthropology which he has implicitly suggested in the text.

J.U.

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THE INFANT REVOLUTION

Pregnant Mothers

Trotted around the streets for years
Carrying their precious cargos
Who refused to be born

Abortions failed

The unborn banged on the walls
Of their mother's wombs
And sprayed the gyneacologists
With multi-odor fluids.

The infant revolution

Had begun ... at last.
We shall not be born in to a world
Where humanity wages war
Against itself
Where idiots reign
Where scholars and clergy
Have gone blind

Hunched mothers to be
Still strutted along the streets
Their gray hair floating in the air
And the rebels in their wombs
Still refused to be born

Sasanka Perera