

**SPECIAL** Sri Lanka's economic plight — R. H. Green

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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**The Tiger, the Lion and the Elephant**

— A tale — *Mervyn de Silva*

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**Vasu and Mini-Polls** — Shanta de Alwis

**Modern Indian poetry** — A. K. Ramanujan

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**The peasant in Thai society** — Victor P. Karunan

**The Tamil question** — S. Jeevan

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## THE ESMOND MEMO

With the Finance Minister and his top advisers packing their bags for the Aid Group meeting in Paris, the devaluation debate was really hotting up. Confronting each other, sometimes by proxy, are the Treasury and the Central Bank. The Treasury is backing the IMF line to the hilt — 26/- to the dollar. In fact there are a few Treasury whizz-kids whose heart and hearth are in the good ole U. S. of A., who think devaluation is the best medicine for poor relations in the Third World and 40/- to the dollar is just hunky dory.

While the guys in the Central Bank building's top floor are playing mum or neutral until they know which way the cat will jump, at least one outspoken (if sometimes impetuous and garrulous Bank official) is evidently patriotic enough to ask whether this country is run by the I. M. F. Devaluation leads to inflation and further devaluation, he argues. Yes, devaluation is good for exports but what on earth have we got that we can export at competitive prices, asks another C. B. economist.

The decision of course lies with President J. R. and his views are known. "24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30.....how long can we go on devaluing?" he asked a foreign correspondent.

But the most interesting point that came up at a recent verbal bash-up between the two schools, with a VVIP as umpire, was the impact of free imports on local industries. "This has become a junkyard for imported goods" said one of the participants, echoing arguments made by Sri Kotha "think-tank" Esmond Wickremesinghe in a memo submitted to the working Committee as early as 1980.

### V.O.A.

President J. R. and the Foreign Ministry are also standing fast against heavy US pressure on the V. O. A. negotiations. Washington's own voice is Senator Charles Percy, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and therefore heavy cannon.

Percy wants the 1951 agreement reviewed. Sri Lanka is only prepared to extend that agreement with a few modifications. But the fundamental issue is national sovereignty. Sri Lanka has to surrender that if the VOA is to be allowed to broadcast freely in regional languages to our neighbours without the slightest editorial control or monitoring by us. What if India protests? Says the Senator blandly: "You are the landlord but we are the tenants and you can blame us.....!". The Senator has been politely reminded that the national interests of sovereign states cannot be conceived in terms of tenancy laws.

## NEW PATTERNS

A bodyguard for Mr. Amirthalingam and bombs for Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam. Fortunately the bombs hurled at Mr. Ponnabalam's Colombo 7 home did only a little damage to the building. Nobody was hurt. The most interesting aspect of the incident is the comment made by a top police officer. "The pattern is different from the other attacks in Colombo".

Also different, and markedly so, is the behaviour pattern of the **Caylon Daily News** which the L. G. had occasion to commend recently for its moderation in reporting news of a communal character. The CDN published the speech made by Mr. Ponnambalam to the Lions Club **months** after the event! Besides, another newspaper had already reported it, and there had been comments on it and so forth. The CDN sub-editors really surpassed themselves in giving this old speech an unusually attractive display.

The CDN's behaviour pattern continues to puzzle journalists who are sometimes given to sermonising on professional integrity and honesty. The CDN carries on its foreign news pages editorial comments from certain embassies on the news of the week. It also publishes items from sources which for reasons best known to the Editor remain unidentified.

## TRENDS + LETTERS

### N. S. S. P. and Polls

Chintaka has left me wondering whether he was referring to himself in the title 'Prophet Disarmed', to his letter published in your issue of 1. 5. 83. In the article quoted by him I had made no prophetic statements. I had merely stated the NSSP's principled position regarding alliances with the bourgeoisie. The prophetic utterances were all his, and in the manner of all street charlatans, he attempts to distort the facts when his predictions are falsified.

The NSSP's position on the by-elections should be clear to any dispassionate observer. It has in no way compromised its principles and has made no programmatic concessions to anybody.

(Continued on page 2)

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**Letter. . .** (Contd. from page 1)

Nor has it entered into any 'parliamentary alliances'. As soon as the resignations of the former MPs to these 18 seats for which by-elections are to be held were accepted, the NSSP announced its intention of contesting Eheliyagoda, whether or not anybody else was contesting. Then when it became clear that the by-elections were definitely going to be held we participated in discussions with all other left parties in the first instance, to avoid mutual contests, and then, together with these parties (including JVP and LSSP), we had discussions with the SLFP with a view to having a no contest agreement to defeat the UNP in all 18 constituencies. The JVP, LSSP and CP also had bi-party discussions with the SLFP but the LSSP and JVP failed to reach any agreement. As for us there was no question of such discussions, we were going to contest Eheliyagoda whatever the SLFP may have decided to do.

Even if the joint opposition had managed to arrive at a no-contest agreement it would certainly not have constituted any kind of "parliamentarist alliance". Certainly we would have campaigned on our own platform on the basis of our own programme.

In the absence of such an agreement wherever the left is standing we called upon our supporters to vote for the left. Thus for example, in Kalutara and Tangalle we campaigned respectively for the LSSP and the JVP in spite of the fact that the SLFP was standing too. Wherever no left candidate stood we asked our supporters to vote against the UNP. Only a poisonous sectarian utterly divorced from the masses, and an indirect supporter of the UNP, can ask left voters to do otherwise under the circumstances.

As for why the SLFP is not contesting Eheliyagoda, the reason is simple. Through our correct use of united front tactics in the past we have won the respect and admiration of rank and file SLFPers and are seen by them as the vanguard of the anti-UNP forces. The SLFP leaders would

have earned the hostility and opprobrium of their supporters in Eheliyagoda if they had fielded a candidate.

We campaigned in Eheliyagoda on our own programme, including that most sensitive issue of all, our recognition of the Tamil Nation's right of self determination. The UNP, led by the president himself, made this their central campaign issue, accusing us of being Tigers. The NSSP replied. "Yes, we are Tigers, in so far as we advocate the overthrow of this government through the combined mass actions (as opposed to the senseless and stupid terroristic actions of the northern tigers) of the Tamil and Sinhala peoples." Only an idiot or one whose politics is determined purely by hostility towards the NSSP, can claim that such a campaign had the endorsement and support of the SLFP leaders.

It is true that we lost the election, albeit by a small margin. However, the NSSP can be justifiably proud of the fact that it got 23,168 votes, (48.9% of the total polled) with a fall of just 3% from the combined opposition poll of October 1982, in the face of an unprecedented campaign of thuggery, intimidation, and mass impersonation. Furthermore this was a vote for a revolutionary programme which also implied support for the national struggle in the North. By contrast the CP, which did have a "Parliamentarist alliance" with the SLFP, in so far as it did not put forward its own programme and certainly did not take a principled stand on the national question, adapting itself opportunistically to Sinhala Buddhist prejudices, performed abysmally. Even if the JVP vote is taken into account, the combined opposition vote in Kamburupitiya declined by 28% and in Ratgama by 15%, from the poll of October 1982. The NSSP's performance should be a lesson to all those who claim that a Marxist position on the National Question will not be endorsed by the Sinhala Buddhist masses.

**Shanta de Alwis**  
Colombo 2

# CRIPPLED MINDS

by

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# The 'war' moves South

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

**B**ristling with ironies, and not entirely untouched by the surrealistic was the front page picture in the *ISLAND* showing a group of deserters from the RAJA RATA RIFLES walking nonchalantly to the Anuradhapura railway station to take the first train out of town. Posing for the photograph and grinning triumphantly, they looked as if they had just beaten the Yaalpanam gunners at an artillery tournament and brought the trophy home. (See cover)

Like the clever Wijesoma cartoon showing a ferocious tiger twisting a sedate Lion's Tail, this was perhaps the only moment of light relief in the gathering gloom.

The "war" — and these days even our mildest reporters and staid editorialists are quickly acquiring a military idiom — has come south. Not the 'war' of guns and armed confrontation or skirmishes between the security forces and armed rebels or well-organised attacks on pre-selected targets but the uglier, messier, and often unmanageable war of another "underground", the underworld of hoodlums, and goondas resorting to arson, looting, thuggery and even murder under cover of racialism disguised as patriotism. Across the country, from Trinco to Matara, in Ratmalana, Panadura and Kurunegala and so many other towns, the security forces were on full alert to meet unpredictable situations apparently provoked by whipped-up racial passions. It is the sort of situation that no government or army can welcome.

The armed forces are fighting a 'protracted war', still quite low-key and small scale, against a small resolute group of armed youths. **The enemy is Tamil... but not the Tamil people, either of the North or the rest of the country. But the Tamil 'resistance' is trying its utmost to draw that particular dividing line — the State's armed forces versus the Tamil people. This is the major psychological dimension of this unconventional warfare.**

The armed actions of the Tamil rebels (from their point of view, successful 'operations') leads to Sinhala anger and frustration, and in turn inflames Sinhala feelings. Each successful operation also affects the morale of the services. This was in fact the justification for the introduction of an emergency law to dispense with coroner's inquests, as Cabinet spokesman Anandatissa de Alwis told the press.

To crack down hard on Sinhala arsonists and looters has its own political consequences. Not to do so is to risk the breakdown of law and order and invite near-anarchic conditions in which no administration can function. It is a slow goodbye to development. This is the dilemma of the government.

President J. R. showed an acute awareness of this danger when he asked whether some of these Sinhalese miscreants and racist thugs were a bunch of 'modayo'. This campaign of indiscriminate violence directed at Tamil shops, business and professional establishments and factories, only hindered the government's own counter-attack on the terrorists, said the President.

## Sinhala Consensus

He made another point worth noting. He appealed to the leadership of the SLFP, and to its supporters to assist the government in its plans to "wipe out terrorism", a campaign which Lands Minister Gamini Dissanayake says will take two years. **The President's direct appeal to the SLFP is the first serious sign that a UNP administration, embattled economically (SEE TRENDS) and challenged in the Tamil north, may be compelled to move towards 'a Sinhala consensus.'**

J. R.'s reference to Mr. Thondaman who was on the platform pointed to another aspect of the UNP's predicament. The army's sweep in Vavuniya and Trinco has had an immediate impact on the re-settled plantation refugees, both a poli-

tical and moral responsibility of the CWC. It also has an 'Indian connection' and therefore a diplomatic angle.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's instinctive response shows that anti-UNP bitterness (from elections to referendum and by-elections) is too deep and too fresh at this point of time for a closing of ranks between the major (Sinhala) parties. Adapting a wise-crack of Deputy Leader Mr. Llangaratne, the SLFP president said: "We are against both Tiger terrorists as well as Elephant terrorists".

Since she was deprived of her civic rights for abuse of emergency powers, Mrs. Bandaranaike could hardly resist the temptation to enjoy the irony and discomfiture of the UNP which has now armed itself with the PTA and Public Security Act islandwide. The SLFP was **politically** battered and beaten. But in going beyond traditional political warfare to "**unconventional**" warfare against the SLFP, the UNP has opened a front it will now find hard to close. Whatever his own ethnic loyalties and sentiments, the average SLFP'er seems to be deriving some vicarious satisfaction from the way the Tiger is twisting not, as in Wijesome's cartoon, the Sinhala Lion's tail but the Elephant's trunk.

The ramifications of the turmoil in the north are getting wider daily. For all its air of a school boy romp, the desertions from the Raja Rata Rifles was a serious affair. And the Army top brass are right to crack the whip at the sign of indiscipline. About forty men are supposed to have deserted when six of their colleagues, accused of looting etc in Jaffna, were sacked.

The private sector is worried about foreign investment and has plans to launch its own counter-propaganda campaign abroad to polish up Sri Lanka's image... 'stability' and 'democracy' are the areas of concern.

(Continued on page 6)

# Law Minister rejects Bar Assn. charges

JUSTICE minister Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratna last week rejected allegations by the Bar Association of Sri Lanka that the proposed legislation for the removal of judges of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal amounted to a violation of the Sri Lanka Constitution.

The Bar Association protest to Minister Wijeyeratne and President Jayewardene was a sequel to a report appearing in a local newspaper (not the "Island" group) that the government was proposing to pass legislation pertaining to the removal of Judges of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal.

Reacting to the Bar Association protest, Justice Minister Wijeyeratne in a letter to Association President Herman J. C. Perera says :

"In seeking to provide for the implementation of the relevant articles of the Constitution as appears in Article 107 and its sub paragraphs, the government has carried out its bounden duty. To assume that in doing so a violation of the Constitution or its spirit has been contemplated and that too on an

inadequate or erroneous presentation of facts by a newspaper without seeking clarification from the government is, I feel manifestly unfair to both your respected Association as it is to the government both of whom in their mutual respect for an understanding with each other jointly discharge a high responsibility to the people in our contry."

At the outset the minister points out that the provisions of Article 107 (1), 107 (2), 107 (3) are familiar to the government which took special care to draft these provisions in the interest of the same independence of the members of the judiciary in the conduct of their duties.

The government, he said consciously sought in the new Constitution to rectify the weaknesses of what "existed before" and of which the Association's letter indicates their own awareness.

The article quoted by the Association, Dr. Wijeyeratne has told Mr. Herman J. C. Perera, provides not only for the appointment but also for the removal of judges.

"That a judge shall hold office during good behaviour ie., Quam Diu Se Bene Gesserit lies at the root of the guiding principles in upholding the Rule of Law"

"Procedures being integrally ancillary to implementation of principles require to be prescribed clearly. The removal of a judge thus in the unfortunate event of a resolution being followed as specified in the Constitution requires formal steps.

"These have to be laid down either by legislation or by Standing Orders. The mode by which these procedures are achieved do not vitiate the spirit that inheres to the main provisions of the Constitution", says Dr. Wijeyeratne.

The Justice Minister said he was happy that the Bar Association endorsed the fact that "the existing Constitution recognises, more firmly than before that the tenure of office of the judges should be guaranteed in order to ensure their independence."

— ISLAND

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# CSR on Parliament and Judiciary

THE DIRECTOR of the Centre For Society And Religion, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya has submitted this memo to the Prime Minister and the Hon Speaker:—

THE recent appointment of Select Committees of Parliament to deal with allegations of crime, misconduct corrupt electoral practices leads to an important issue of the relationship between Parliament and the Judiciary, and consequently the working of our democracy. Some instances of Parliamentary Select Committees are the ones concerning the allegation that several deaths in Jaffna had been caused by the forces of law and order, the Select Committee of Parliament appointed to inquire into allegations by a former judge concerning two judges of the Supreme Court, and now the Select Committee to be appointed concerning some allegations relating to the recent Mahara by-election campaign.

The Resolution to be moved in Parliament on 7th June alleges that, "Commencing from nomination day the Sri Lanka Freedom Party candidate and his agents made several provocative statements in public which included threats and abuse against the United National Party, its organisers, and supporters in the by-election."

It concludes that "if these tendencies to make provocative and irresponsible public statements, false complaints against opponents and public officers, intimidation and assaults on voters and supporters by outsiders brought into the Electorate, are not stopped completely, the Democratic election process would be rendered valueless and of no meaning.

"This Parliament is of opinion that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report on the above allegations and to make general recommendations with regard to the changes necessary to be made to the law governing elections."

Appointing a Select Committee is a useful way of studying an issue to prepare legislation. The present issue is however concerning several allegations of "provocative statements" "threats" "intimidation" and "assaults of voters". These are serious matters that must be investigated. The question arises whether a Select Committee of Parliament is the proper or best forum to investigate these allegations.

These are allegations which need to be judicially inquired into to find out their veracity and to punish those responsible for crimes or for corrupt electoral practices. They must be inquired into by the proper judicial fora. It is only after such a judicial inquiry that a Parliamentary Select Committee can go into the judgements concerning them and recommend suitable changes in the law governing elections.

## Parliament and the Judiciary

Under the **1978 constitution** the powers of Government are so assigned that "the judicial power of the People shall be exercised by Parliament through Courts, tribunals and institutions created and established, or recognized by the Constitution, or created and established, by law, except in matters relating to the privileges, immunities and powers of Parliament and of its Members, wherein the judicial power of the People may be exercised directly by Parliament according to law: Art 4 (c).

The Parliament and its Select Committees therefore have no judicial power to be exercised directly by members of Parliament except concerning its own privileges, immunities and powers. The judicial power must be exercised through the Courts. This is an essential aspect of the division of Governmental powers in the 1978 Constitution.

Chapters XV and XVI on the Judiciary determines how these

functions are to be exercised by the Judiciary. The Courts are set up for the administration of justice to protect, vindicate and enforce the rights of the people (Art 105).

Art 144 determines that "The Court of Appeal shall have and exercise jurisdiction to try election petitions in respect of the election to the Membership of Parliament in terms of any law for the time being applicable in that behalf."

By Art 130 "The Supreme Court shall have the power to hear and determine and make orders as provided by law on... (b) an appeal from an order or judgement of the Court of Appeal in election in an election petition case..."

Thus the 1978 Constitution enacted by this Parliament clearly indicates the limits of Parliament concerning any exercise of judicial functions. Parliament must exercise such powers through the Courts except concerning its privileges. The Constitution determines the Courts empowered to hear and adjudicate matters concerning elections.

## Corrupt practices

The **Parliamentary Elections Act of 1981** provides more specially concerning elections, election offences and the punishment and incapacities for corrupt practice, by an unsuccessful candidate at an election. Such corrupt practices are to be judged by the High Court. A candidate convicted by a High Court of such corrupt practices is deprived of civic rights for seven years.

(Continued on page 6)

# Civil Rights Movement expresses concern

THE Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka expressed concern over the emergency regulations promulgated by the Government to permit disposal of bodies by armed forces in the north without a post-mortem inquiry.

In a telegram to President J. R. Jayewardene the CRM said:-

"The press reported on June 4 that emergency regulations are being promulgated to permit disposal of bodies by armed forces in the north without post-mortem inquiry. According to one report a government spokesman said the morale of service and police personnel is low because under normal circumstances if they shoot down a terrorist they have to face an inquest, demand and other constraints.

"Another report says that the government wishes to ensure that servicemen and policemen doing their duty under difficult circumstances are 'in no way harassed by the law'.

"The Working Committee of Civil Rights Movement which met on Saturday expressed deep alarm at these reports.

"It recognises that government has serious problems of maintaining law and order in the north and is not unmindful of fact there have been killings of servicemen, policemen, politicians and innocent bystanders with which it is the responsibility of any government to deal.

"It is however precisely at such times that excesses are likely to be committed by security forces who have already demonstrated their propensity to retaliate indiscriminately against civilian population.

"Granting of such powers will create again the excesses of 1971 when similar powers resulted in

deaths under torture indiscriminate killings and executions without trial by the security forces which usurps functions of courts in determining who is a terrorist and who is not and leading to slaughter of many never established to have been involved in insurgent activities. Revocation of this horrifying regulation was one of main demands of CRM at its inception in 1971. As CRM wrote to then Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike at that time 'just as much as a democratic government has certain obligations in exercising its powers in relation to the general body of citizens it also has certain obligations even in dealing with persons who have broken the law or are

alleged to have broken it. It must guarantee that all such persons are dealt with by due process of law and in keeping with fundamental principles of justice..... for otherwise a government would be flouting the principles of justice that are vital to democracy in the very act of claiming to defend democratic institutions'.

"The Working Committee also points out that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Your Excellency's Government has signed specifically provides that the right to life and right to protection from torture cannot be derogated from even at time of emergency threatening the life of the nation". — SUN

## CSR on . . .

(Continued from page 5)

A Parliamentary Select Committee could study the findings of the judges for recommending draft legislation. If an election petition is filed concerning the Mahara by-election there may be an overlapping of inquiries by the Parliamentary Select Committee and the Judiciary.

## Not only Mahara

In this connection we agree that there should be a check on the growing mal-practices at elections. A Select Committee should study not only the Mahara by-elections, but all the judgements so far given concerning election petitions, and await those of pending cases such as the Kalawana case and the Referendum case. The Select Committee should also invite public representation concerning elections since 1977, specially the Jaffna D. D. C. Elections of 1981, the Presidential elections and the Referendum. It is only thus that an overall view of the problems concerning electoral abuses can be

surveyed with view to eradicating them.

Electoral abuses have increased and need to be checked. We are of the opinion that a Select Committee of Parliament being appointed to inquire into allegations concerning one candidate at Mahara elections is not the best way for Parliament to deal with these allegations. It may be a bad precedent which may require Parliament to appoint Select Committees whenever such allegations are made. It is best that Parliament goes into the question of the reform of electoral law after the due processes of law have been allowed to operate concerning particular allegations which require judicial investigation.

## The 'war' . . .

(Continued from page 3)

None of this could have been "planned" by the Tigers or anybody else. It is the sheer logic of events unfolding according to its own laws. But when you take the total picture, it is difficult not to conclude that the initiative is slipping from Colombo's hands.

# Rescuing U.S. policy in troubled S. Africa

FOREIGN  
NEWS

Charles William Maynes

WASHINGTON

**T**he immediate reaction of most observers to the recent tragic events in southern Africa—the car bombing in Pretoria that killed or wounded more than 200 people, and South Africa's retaliatory air strike on Maputo, the capital of Mozambique—is that the racial struggle there has reached a dangerous turning point.

Although there have been 88 known sabotage attacks inside South Africa since 1981, the May 20 car bombing was unprecedented in its scope and target: A single blast killed and wounded more people than all the earlier efforts together, which the resistance in South Africa had designed to minimize casualties.

Statements from exiled leaders of the African National Congress seem to support the conclusion that that organization, which had followed nonviolent tactics for five decades until it was outlawed 22 years ago, was now moving to a less discriminating form of warfare. Oliver Tambo, the ANC president, said in Nairobi the following day: "We have offered the other cheek so many times there is no other cheek left to turn".

Yet a review of the record since the advent of the Reagan administration suggests that the tragedy of May 20 may have been the inevitable ANC response to a South African policy, adopted almost from the moment Ronald Reagan assumed office, to stamp out the ANC as an organization capable of rallying blacks inside of South Africa.

In January 1981, the same month that Alexander M. Haig Jr. announced that the United States would

henceforth place greater priority on the fight against terrorism than on the struggle for human rights, and in the same breath proceeded to denounce African liberation movements, the South African Army launched a cross-border raid into Mozambique to strike at ANC offices there.

The purpose was obvious. The South African government seems to have concluded that it could reach a final solution to its black problem by wiping out the leadership of the ANC.

The following year South African commandos raided the homes of alleged ANC members in residential areas of Maseru, the capital of Lesotho. Forty-two persons died.

South African political figures are using the most extreme rhetoric to describe to their countrymen the security crisis confronting them, talking of the need for "total warfare" in the face of a "total onslaught". South Africa's defense minister has warned that South Africa will employ any methods to defeat its enemies in neighboring countries.

Within South Africa, politics have taken a dramatic turn to the right. Challenged at the polls by right-wing extremists, the South African government attempts to prevent further defections on the right by using the iron fist abroad to strike at perceived enemies.

For the Reagan administration's African policy, the recent developments are a disaster. They force a premature accounting of the results of the administration's policy of "constructive engagement" toward South Africa, and the conclusions of such an accounting can only be extremely negative. The new U. S. permissiveness toward South African transgressions or obstructions has not secured a settlement in Namibia or the departure of Cuban troops

from Angola or a diminution of Soviet influence in the area.

Quite the contrary: the initial South African raid into Mozambique led to a Soviet naval visit shortly thereafter. The Cuban troops seem even more securely ensconced in Angola, and a settlement in Namibia is no closer.

On the horizon loom greater dangers. The Reagan administration is on record as saying that it will never permit another Angola—that is to say, the massive intervention of communist powers through the introduction of troops to shift the balance of power in an African country. If South Africa continues on its current course, however, the administration may face another Angola on the other side of Africa, this time in Mozambique, which is certain to turn to friendly countries for protection from South African attack. How will the United States prevent the introduction of Soviet or Cuban troops to Mozambique? The United States cannot possibly side with South Africa unless it wishes to jeopardize its own interests throughout the continent.

The Reagan administration will have to move quickly to re-establish a credible posture in the area. A first step can be to establish with the South Africans that although the United States understands the right of every government to protect its own security interests, it also insists on the concept of proportionality. It cannot support a South African policy designed to destabilize sovereign governments throughout the region.

The United States will also have to re-energize the negotiations designed to secure the independence of Namibia. A policy of all carrots toward South Africa will have to be modified to include some sticks when necessary. But in the end, the key issue is racial justice.

(Continued on page 8)

*This article, written by the editor of Foreign Policy magazine, was contributed to the Los Angeles Times.*

# Pretoria's "No" to Namibia

Hopes of a diplomatic and 'peaceful' solutions to the question of Namibian independence faded away as the Security Council finished its special debate on this issue. South African arrogance and obstinacy fully supported by the United States, and some other members of the Western 'Contact group' (France is notable exception) guaranteed that no headway would be made. Even nonaligned 'moderates', generally sympathetic to the West, like Zaire denounced the manoeuvres of 5 nation 'contact' group saying that its plans were "designed to lull the vigilance of the Namibians and Africans, if not to hoodwink them".

While the Zairean Foreign Minister, Kamanda Wa Kamanda did not name the U.S. he talked of the group as "the so-called western contact group". The leader of SWAPO, Sam Nujuma was naturally more forthright when he charged the Reagan administration of "publicly embracing the racist state and delaying Namibian independence and prolonging the suffering of our people for the sake of the global ambitions of the U. S. How selfish and hypocritical that is" he said.

Bernard Nossiter, UN correspondent *NYK Times* wrote:

"A LONG LINE of African foreign ministers and diplomats came to the Security Council last week to condemn South Africa and its control over South-West Africa (Namibia).

"Nearly every envoy made the same points on the territory: Five years have passed since the council agreed on a plan to give Namibia its independence, but South Africa is still in charge, and the council must act now to punish Pretoria through an embargo on trade with South Africa.

"But the Africans knew, as several acknowledged, that there was little prospect that the council would impose sanctions. The United States and Britain would veto any move against trade, although both did vote for an embargo on arms in 1977.

"The more outspoken Africans directly accused the United States of blocking independence for Namibia by tying it to a withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola. The more moderate did not single out the Reagan administration, but said they deplored Washington's insistence on linking independence for Namibia to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola".

In Paris last month, the French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson described the "linkage" as a "pre-text."

## Rescuing. . .

(Continued from page 7)

The United States and other Western states that retain credibility with Pretoria are going to have to work harder to persuade the leaders of South Africa that, in dealing with black nationalism, they cannot accomplish with greater force what they might achieve with greater justice. South Africa does face problems few other countries understand. But uniqueness cannot excuse cruel indifference, savage injustice and destabilizing neglect.

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# Sri Lanka : Stark plight, most intractable impasse

R. H. Green

"... WELFARE CUTS are (also) becoming pervasive. In the industrial capitalist economies they take the form of reducing the real value of transfer payments as unemployment rises, and of cutting health and education relative to requirements for maintaining a constant level of availability per capita. In socialist industrial economies, they centre on price 'rationalisations' whose effect is to cut real wages. In the South the process is rather different — welfare, in terms recognisable in the North, and universal access to even basic services have never existed. Higher unemployment, lower real wages, less protection for the poorest as need increases (eg, in **Sri Lanka's** deliberate draconic cutback of basic food entitlement provision, and Tanzania's forced abandonment of attempts to protect real minimum wages and grower prices), and erosion of quality and/or coverage of already far from adequate or universal primary education, pure water supply, and basic health care are the results. Quite apart from their impact on inequality, such cuts have two more effects. They further weaken demand (already a drag on industrial economy recovery), and threaten the employability and productivity of the labour force of the late 1980's and 1990s (especially, but by no means only, in the South).

"The 1982 World Development Report stresses with logic and evidence that basic needs provision and absolute poverty eradication are productive as well as equitable, and that over the 1960s and 1970s not insignificant progress was made in a growing number of countries. Rather ironically, it cites Tanzania, **Sri Lanka** and China as positive

examples, and contrasts them to poorer basic needs absolute poverty eradication results in Mexico, Peru and Brazil. What it has learned by experience here is unclear, as its recent policy advice to **Sri Lanka** (as embodied in 1978-82 strategy), Tanzania and — perhaps a little less clearly and certainly less influentially — China would appear to call for reversing precisely those aspects of political economic strategy leading to the results it commends!

"The World Bank presents the starkness of these countries plight very clearly in its capsule summary of **Sri Lankan** performance and payoff over 1960-80. Constant price GDP per capita rose 67 per cent. Adjusted for terms of trade losses it rose 25 per cent. Constant price investment per capita rose 307 per cent. But domestic savings from 9.6 per cent to 13.8 per cent. Despite and increase in external financing rose from 4.2 per cent to 22 per cent of GDP — fairly obviously an unsustainable

(and globally ungeneralisable) level. As the Report does not add, in the late 1970s and early 1980s security for the very poor was eroded, malnutrition and infant mortality rose (breaking a trend of three to four decades), inflation soared and real wages fell, the external imbalance position became increasingly precarious, and the dash for neo-liberal capitalist, export-led growth looked increasingly unlikely to be maintainable.

"The costs of cuts in such economies is made clear on passants throughout the Bank's two 1982 reports: increased inequality, reduced access to health and education the halting of the development of human capital, the reversing of whatever development dynamic had been achieved with respect either to basic needs or to production growth. But the Bank's structural adjustment programme model seems to be based on prior cuts on the lines of IMF 'stabilisation', and to be so small quantitatively (alone or with the IMF facilities) as to

*Reginald Herbold Green is a Professorial Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. He has acted as a consultant and adviser on several NIEO initiatives such as What Now: Another Development (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation) and Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One World Problem (ILO). Recently he has been engaged in a major study of the World Bank's Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (Berg Report), and has contributed to an Institute of International Economics volume on IMF conditionality. The excerpts published here are from an article entitled 'Things fall apart: The world economy in the 1980's', which appeared in a recent issue of the Third World Quarterly.*

make even medium-term restoration of the cuts impossible.

"For the poor economies — and especially for policy makers in them concerned with the welfare of the poor — the immediate future does indeed seem to be 'Alone in a leaking boat, listening to the undeniable tolling of the bell of the last angelus'. For some of their economies it may mean the same — Ghana, Zaire and Uganda may soon have a new wave of parallels in the 'economics of disintegration' category.

"At first glance, middle-income developing economies with significant manufactured exports seem to have the least dim prospects of any category of country. The World Bank expects them to continue to outperform industrial (let alone low income) economies, and to maintain a growth rate of 4-5 per cent, well above population increase.

"On closer examination, the 'virtuous circle' begins to appear less tightly closed. In 1981, two of the regions dominated by such economies — Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Europe and the Mediterranean — had the lowest growth rates of all. In 1982, Singapore projects a radical fall in growth likely to last at least half a decade, while efforts to restart the Brazilian 'miracle' on the back of manufactured export growth continue to flounder.

"For the established NICs (eg. Republic of Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Brazil, Yugoslavia, and even Portugal and Mexico), the Bank's projections may be broadly correct, if still rather optimistic. They have established firm niches in the international manufactured goods trade pattern and may well be able to hold them. For the would-be serious entrants with a major domestic industrial sector and some export base—e. g. Turkey and (albeit, it is a low income economy) India the outlook is cloudier. For the near (e. g. Philippines) or would be (e. g.

Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Zimbabwe) NICs it is probably as dire as for the primary product exporters. The depths of a global recession, with massive overcapacity at the centre and in intermediate economies, is both logically and historically the hardest time for newcomers to make breakthroughs. Further, UNCTAD's analysis of structural change in manufactured goods demand and trade growth suggests problems, not only for products like textiles and footwear but also for more recent 'success stories' like steel, ships and petrochemicals.

"Given the present and probably future global economic environment and the lack of any realistic prospects of North-led global recovery or South development sustaining support, Southern states must act singly and collectively if they wish to avert a 1980s experience for most of declines in real per capita income. That the problems are largely, or at least substantially, externally caused is not a valid reason for seeking to avoid such action, because no external cure is reasonably foreseeable — quite the contrary.

"The South is evidently neither monolithic nor homogeneous. Countries vary in their economic (and socio-political) strength, in their degree of importance (for whatever reason) to external supporters, in their short-term prospects in the absence of restructuring, in their degrees of freedom to restructure, and — not least — in their domestic political economic, orders (or power — benefit — access — participation structures).

"The last point deserves special mention. It is simply not true that in inegalitarian, authoritarian regimes the present and future crisis will not severely affect the poor. As in the song about the sinking of the Titanic, they put the poor 'down below where they'd be the first to go'. Furthermore,

it appears on balance to be those low income countries which have made substantial gains in basic income and service security for the poor (e. g. Sri Lanka, Tanzania — as cited by the Bank) which face the **most intractable impasses** and the greatest external pressure to abandon basic needs and protection of the poor, and go bald-headed for privatised growth, 'red in tooth and claw, and efficient at increasing inequality and inequity, if not much else.

"Failing to shelter workers and peasants from the worst effects of the crisis is likely to erode social and political cohesion beyond the breaking point in a number of countries. What the form of such ruptures will be, varies. The febrile persistence in indecisiveness of Ghana (1965-81); the bloody settling of accounts of Liberia (1981); the externally-oriented enclave financing an elite and its security forces, with the majority of the people and the territory sinking into oblivion, of Zaire; the deadlock between a strong illegal economic subsystem and a weak state of Uganda (1980-82), are examples of the range of possibilities likely to prove more common than the more spine-chilling variants on the Iranian revolution (which was precipitated by gross inequity even in a context of economic progress), or the Khmer Rouge attempt at coercive, intellectually-modelled restructuring after a bumper populist revolt. Redistribution will be hard to achieve — all sub-classes including elites have had losses in many South economies — not achieving it will often be still more costly.

"The 1969-82 course of the world economy has been one of fluctuating deceleration and recurrent crisis into a generalised stagnation and crisis. The effects on most of the South have been especially severe but the North (including the socialist North-East) is suffering as well. There is no clear understanding of the causes or durability of the present crisis, but early recovery is unlikely and might well prove only a 1976-8 type respite, not a turnaround".

# Current debates on Thai social formation and the peasantry

Victor P. Karunan

Since 1979 an increasing number of top party officials, intellectuals, students and urban and rural activists have defected from the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and surrendered to the government and the military — an event unprecedented in the history of the international communist movement. The CPT which not many years ago was the main opposition to the Bangkok regime, is today severely weakened and ideologically confused. Among the many reasons given by ex-CPT activists in Thailand today, is their 'loss of faith' in the Party's "semi-feudal and semi-colonial" characterisation of the Thai society today seems to be the most prominent.

In this article we shall try to assess the present situation of the CPT and highlight the essentials of the debate on the nature of the Thai social formation.

## Exodus from countryside

The CPT was established on December 1, 1942 although since the 1920's communist activities prevailed in Thailand. Since 1965, the CPT has actively engaged in clandestine armed opposition to the Thai state, and its program of revolution has much in common with the Chinese revolution of 1940's and the Communist Party of China. The CPT's main social base came from the peasant classes in the countryside.

At its Second Congress in 1952 the CPT adopted a strategy of village-based protracted warfare, which was reaffirmed in the Third Congress in 1961 as follows:

"The revolution will triumph only by counting on peasants waging people's war, surrounding cities by rural areas... avoiding any showdown with the enemy when we are weaker, transforming backward rural areas into progressive

and stable bases, into big revolutionary strongholds organised militarily, politically, economically and culturally, in order to fight against the enemy coming from towns, and step by step to win total victory in the long period of struggle... The armed struggle in the rural areas is the main struggle to be coordinated with other forms of struggles in the towns... Without such coordination, the revolutionary bases in the rural areas will be isolated, the revolution will fail, and its final goal — seizing the cities which are the main stronghold of the enemy, — will not be attained." (1)

The CPT has so far been operating most parts of the country from secure rural bases in the North, North-east and the South of Thailand. "Its armed forces (the Peoples' Liberation Army of Thailand-PLAT), cadres, regional forces and local militia, and other immediate supporters probably number several tens of thousands while some estimates speak of 4-5,000 villages in areas under CPT control, or where a system of 'dual power' shared between the CPT and the government administration exists. Such figures indicate that many hundreds of thousands of peasant give some direct support to the CPT." (2)

In the post-1976 period, following the bloody coup of October 1976 in Thailand, the CPT's ranks swelled with the sudden influx of thousands of students, intellectuals, labour and farmers leaders and others who found refuge in the countryside with the CPT. However, by 1976 the CPT was itself confronted with internal conflicts which was a consequence of many factors: ideological right within the Party, internal struggles between the veteran leadership of the Party and the younger intellectuals

and activists who joined after 1976, etc. etc. At the same time, the CPT in 1979 also suffered severe setbacks in its external operations — in 1978 the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Pham Van Dong, announced in Bangkok that Vietnam would terminate all assistance to the CPT. Following the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, the CPT was evicted from its bases in Laos and Kampuchea. On July 11, 1979 the "Voice of the People of Thailand" (VOPT), which had been broadcasting from China, ceased its operations and suddenly went off the air. With these developments, by 1979 the CPT was in a severe crisis.

Since then (1979), the exodus from the jungle began. By June 1981, it is estimated that more than 300 students and other activists had left the jungles and returned to Bangkok. In the past two years (1981-1982) many hundreds more have defected. In December 1982, two large contingents of CPT cadres in North-east Thailand surrendered their sophisticated arms to the military and pledged to 'join the mainstream of the country'. The exodus continues.

## Debate on Thai Social Formation

The definition of Thai social formation as 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-colonial', an idea derived from Mao Zedong's analysis of Prerevolutionary China, has been dominant within the CPT, serving as the basis for the CPT's revolutionary strategy in Thailand, for more than 30 years now. It is this analysis that has become the focus of the ongoing debate among Thai social scientists and activists in the past few years, particularly with the deepening crisis in the ranks of the CPT since 1978-79. Also, a number of intellectuals and former student activists who have now returned to Bangkok after spending 3-4 years

in CPT jungle bases are levelling their own criticisms on the Party's characterisation of the Thai social formation.

There is no doubt that the social formation in Thailand has experienced significant changes since the penetration of the world capitalist system on the traditional economy of Siam. The debate does not question this fact. What has led to controversy is the nature and particularly, the extent of these changes brought about. In other words, how to characterise the present-day Thai — is it 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-colonial' or capitalist' or both and also, which among these would be the dominant mode of production in the Thai countryside today. Further, how to assess the imperialist control of the Thai economy today.

The 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-colonial' analysis was first put forward in 1949 in Thailand by Arun Promchompoo, a key member of the CPT in his work: *Thailand: Semi-Colonial?* In 1979, this thesis was improvised by some young Marxist scholars in Thailand. Although there have been some variations in new interpretations of this thesis, the general agreement among these scholars seem to be the following:

"Imperialism has come to increasingly dominate Thai politics, economy, military and culture through class alliances with the Thai ruling classes. Imperialism has also strong control over Thailand's foreign trade, and has incorporated Thailand into the world capitalist system in a dependent manner. Hence, two modes of production can be identified in Thailand today: (a) a capitalist mode of production in major cities and in those rural areas that have been penetrated by international capitalism, and (b) a 'pre-capitalist' (decadent feudal) mode of production in the countryside. Finally, Thai social formation is semi-feudal in its ideology and semi-colonial capitalists in its mode of production." (3)

Opinions on this thesis have been expressed in Thailand in the past few years. But undoubtedly it has emerged in the forefront of the contemporary political analysis

in Thailand with the massive defections from the CPT in the past few years. Thus, all attention was focused on the outcome of the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) which took place between March–April 1982. In fact, both the progressive forces and the Bangkok regime and military were apprehensive about the outcome of this Congress — the progressive forces eager to see whether there would be any breakthrough in the CPT to overcome its serious crisis and possible emergence of alternative strategies and directions for the Thai revolution in the 1980's; the ruling classes and the military, on the other hand, expecting the CPT to admit its 'mistakes' and 'failures' and return to the 'fold of the law'.

A major document on the proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the CPT was put forward by the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces in Thailand (CCPDF) in its newsletter 1982. The newsletter included comments and opinions from CPT intellectuals, students, cadres and sympathisers on the debates within the Congress, also the communique issued by the CPT and the 20-point programme adopted by the Fourth Congress. It summed up the main debate on the Thai social formation as follows:

"In the Party there exists two estimates of the urgency of the situation which differ from each other . . . . . For the one considered that while the capitalist sector of contemporary Thai society was indeed considerable, there is still no qualitative change. Basically, Thai society had not changed qualitatively, feudal style oppression still predominated over capitalist or other style of oppression. Thai society was probably still semi-colonial and semi-feudal . . . . . But the other group held that the quantitative change of the capitalist sector (of a semi-colonial type) had reached the extent of qualitative change already. Thus Thai society is no longer semi-colonial, semi-feudal. Rather it is semi-colonial capitalist society where feudalism still has a place . . . . . The Fourth Congress was the arena of struggle between the

two systems of thought . . . . . In certain resolutions the new way of thinking won, but in other resolutions the old way of thinking prevailed." (4)

"The analysis of Thai society — the paramount importance of this issue has emerged (at the Fourth Congress) for on it depends how the revolution will be brought about, who will lead it, and how the revolution will be implemented after power passes into the hands of the people." (5)

The Fourth Congress was unable to really resolve this issue. Hence in the final communique of the Fourth Congress, the CPT still adhered to the 'semi-feudal' and 'semi-colonial' characterisation of Thai social formation today. This fact has further polarised the ideological rifts within the CPT, and perhaps is also the fundamental cause for the massive defections from the ranks of the CPT from the completion of the Fourth Congress to the present. The debate continues, and so does the crisis within the CPT and the progressive democratic forces in Thailand today.

## Conclusion

Given the present crisis within the CPT, what would be the possible alternatives for the progressive forces in Thailand to strengthen their protest and resistance against the ruling classes and the powerful imperialist mechanism that is holding the country in a stranglehold today? Will the CPT — which for so long has been the main political opposition to the Bangkok regime — be able to revive from its present crisis, and if so, how and when? Will the lack of a unifying factor and direction together with the confusion in the minds of Thai activists today result in a period of passivity and disillusionment in the Thailand of the 1980's? These are some of the crucial questions confronting Thai intellectuals and activists today. Perhaps appropriate answers will be discovered in the coming years as the current debates on the Thai social formation continues and Thai activists who remain committed to the revolution draw up alternative strategies of action and new ideological directions.

(Continued on page 28)

# On contemporary Indian poetry

# A. K. Ramanujan

## I

**T**he Indian sub-continent is the home of over 1600 mother-tongues from four different language families, 16 official languages including English, with centuries of literary tradition in many more, written in 10 major scripts, and with vigorous oral traditions in all the mother-tongues and their subvarieties. In a single language like Kannada, over 1500 books were published last year.

Furthermore, Indian writing today, no less than any other expression of India's civilizations, is heir to the complex interaction of at least three traditions, (1) the Sanskritic scriptures (the Vedas etc. ca. 1500 B. C.), epics, myths, philosophies, and poems; (2) at least 6-10 centuries of recorded literatures in the many mother-tongues (20 centuries, in the case of Tamil), co-existing with the orally current folk-literatures which are just beginning to be collected and studied; and (3) since the 19th century, the traditions carried by English. One must add the Perso-Arabic traditions if one is speaking of languages like Urdu, Sindhi or Kashmiri.

Add to these, the influence and example of great men of letters like Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), who, in their single lives, wrote in ancient and modern genres, lyric, dramatic, and narrative, in prose and in verse, and produced some of the best examples of each. Tagore was a one-man cultural revolution: he, setting a pattern for poets in other regions, played in one person many parts: pioneering man of letters, orator, nationalist, reformer, journalist, educationist, folklorist, popularizer of science, singer, theatre man and much else.

In the period of Tagore, through the whirl of experiment and struggle with older forms and attitudes, the poetry voiced the nation's great concern, freedom from foreign rule. The old epics, the **Mahabharata** and the **Ramayana**, were retold with modern nationalist meanings.

Professor A. K. Ramanujan, award-winning poet and translator, currently Professor in the Department of Linguistics, Anthropology and South Asian Languages and Civilisations of the University of Chicago, and Fellow the School of Letters at Indiana University, delivered the first Kailasapathy Memorial Lecture on **Translation and cultural understanding** at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Auditorium, on June 2.

The Kailasapathy Memorial Lecture has been instituted by the Centre for Communication and Development in view of the late Professor Kailasapathy's outstanding services to journalism and literature and his strong commitment to the objectives of the Centre.

The Centre for Communication and Development, established on December 31, 1982 has set for itself the following fundamental objectives — to promote, both nationally and internationally, the democratising of communication, and to help guarantee that the communication process, while protecting and preserving fundamental human values will be used as a liberating force.

Among the other objectives of the Centre are:—

To promote the study and research of the structures and process of communication particularly from the point of view of their consequences for democracy and social change; to investigate how local mass media systems are linked to systems of international control and to promote their disengagement from linkages that are clearly injurious to the development of democratic communication;

To promote the democratisation of communication, both nationally and internationally, through the encouragement of the widest possible participation in ownership, management and production:

To counteract the promotion of communal and inter-religious antagonisms through the media and to foster a positive understanding of the culture and ways of life of different ethnic and religious groups through the use of mass media and other forms of communication.

In the poetry of Bharati (1882–1921), a Tamil poet whose birth centenary was celebrated all over the country in 1982, even lullabies to his daughter and folksongs for the drum were defiant nationalist freedom-songs. A symbolist poem carries a warning to the rulers, as one of its meanings:

I found a young spark of fire  
and left it in a bole in the woods.  
The woods burned down till all  
was still.  
Speaking of the valour of fire,  
how can one speak of young or old?  
—Subramania Bharati (Tamil)  
trans. A.K.R.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way  
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening  
thought and action;

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, Let my country awake.

— RABINDRANATH TAGORE (Bengali),  
trans. by the poet.

The Tagore prayer-poem\* (see page 13) extends the meaning of freedom; it is the most famous of such Utopian prayers chanted in many tongues by many poets:

Poets like Tagore in Bengal and Bharati in Madras, — one may add other great names from other regions in this pre-Independence period opened the poetry and prose of their languages to a vast range of forms.

After them, modern biology and and physics, faraway places like Fiji or Argentina, politics, poverty and famine, no less than old myth and village scenes, became part of the Indian poet's regular repertoire. Poetic forms, ranging from the Japanese haiku, the European sonnet, and English nursery rhyme to Whitmanesque free verse, were adapted for Indian use. A medley of isms, like surrealism, Marxism, imagism, has swept through Indian poetry as it has elsewhere in the world's poetry. The influence of the English Romantics in the '20's and earlier, yielded to that of T. S. Eliot (with a time-lag of decades), and later still to that of Pound, of or of Baudelaire, and more recently to the influence of Cummings, Ho Chi Minh, Neruda, Borges, Gunter Grass, or Allen Ginsberg on particular poets in some of the languages — Cummings-and-goings, as one of our crusty teachers would have said.

We have said enough to suggest the vastness and variety of contemporary Indian poetry. No single mind or even a team can even sample, let alone represent this immense complex of literatures. What follows is one man's 'random reader'. One is narrowed further by word-counts, dead-lines, and the paucity of good translations.

The range of subjects, tones, and styles may be suggested by nine, some very short, examples from as many languages. The poems say things otherwise unsayable.

\* The prayer as a poetic form continues to be a favourite, though the new prayers breathe a different air:

Confiscate my passport, Lord,  
I don't want to go abroad.  
Let me find my song  
Where I belong.

— Nissim Ezekiel (English)

Ebbtide and  
a crab inscribe graphics  
on the sand.

— Jinabhai Desai (Gujarati)  
tr. by K. Malik and S. Yasachandra.

Does the day break  
With the sound of guns?  
Not at all.  
It breaks with the cry  
of that bird  
which nibbles through  
the night's darkness  
very slowly.

— N. Bardoloi (Assamese)  
tr. by N. Bezbarua.

### Their Eternal Pity

Their eternal pity — no taller than the pimp on Falkland Road.  
No pavilion put up in the sky for us.  
Lords of wealth, they are locking up light in those vaults of theirs.  
in this life carried by a whore, not even sidewalks are ours,  
Made so beggarly it is nausea to be human.  
Cannot fill our shrivelled gut even with dirt.  
Each new just day supports them as if bribed —  
Not a sigh slips through the fingers of day's plenty  
As we are cut down.

— Namdeo Dhasal (Marathi)  
tr. by E. Zelliott, J. Karve, with AKR.

### The Cat

All through the day I keep meeting the cat;  
In the shade of the tree, out in the sun,  
Amidst the dense shade of the leaves  
After a spot of success with a few bones of fish  
He lies hugging the skeletal-white earth  
Wrapped up in himself like a swarm of bees.  
And yet he scratches at the trunk of the Gulmonar tree.  
Walks behind the sun, stalking it.  
One moment he is there;  
The next, he has vanished.  
I saw him in the autumn evening stroking, with soft white paws,  
The scarlet sun; then he gathered the darkness  
Like little balls, grabbing each with a jab of his paws  
And spread-them all over the earth.

— Jibanananda Das (Bengali)  
tr. Lokenath Bhattacharya.

## Still Life

Flower leaf stem  
lip hand eye  
bloodtide heartsound  
moon light sun  
frozen

in the bow of time  
not a single arrow

— *Shahryar*  
tr. by C. G. Narang and David P. Douglas

## Tamil

Tamil, it's true, is the breath of  
my life.

But I'll not breathe it  
down the neck of my neighbour.

— *Gnanakuttan* (Tamil)  
trans. AKR.

## THE ELECTION

Our jeep crawls to your village  
seeking: strange melodies  
from the roaring sun;  
Le volente generale  
from the criss-cross geometry  
of private agonies.

Our dark longings don't touch you,  
nor our trappings:  
posters, symbols, pep talks, handbills;  
for your grief outlines empires.

The cold grandchildren  
awaken in your heart,  
as you discern  
muted allegories  
on our ashen faces.

Here the great persuaders  
are little things and not so hidden;  
cheap plastic, cheaper nylons,  
dark glasses to blot out sins.

One step in hunger  
one in *atman*\*  
you decide:  
the anguish of choice.

— *Sitakant Mahapatra* (Oriya)  
tr. by the poet.

## II

'Indian literature', 'it has often  
been said, 'is one, though written  
in many languages'. Such statements  
are exaggerations, and do scant  
justice to the uniqueness of the many  
literatures of India, Yet the common

heritage, the shared influences and  
models (mentioned earlier), though  
used in different ways, give the  
literatures a family resemblance,  
not unlike resemblance among the  
literatures of Europe. There are  
other, subtler kinds of unity, wrought  
by certain leitmotifs and themes.  
We shall present one such cluster of  
themes directly through five longer  
poems, from different languages and  
periods, on a subject very relevant  
to us today: food chains, cycles of  
life and death, the relation of man to  
nature, ecology.

## Food Chain, Sanskrit Style

From food, from food  
creatures, all creatures  
come to be.

Gorging, disgorging,  
beings come  
to be.

By food they live,  
on food they move,  
into food they pass.  
food, the chief  
of things, of all things  
that come to be,

elixir,  
herb of herbs  
for mortals.

Food, food, Brahman\* is food:  
only they eat  
who know  
they eat their god.

For food is the chief  
of things, of all things  
that come to be:

elixir,  
herb of herbs  
for mortals.

From food all beings  
come to be,  
by food  
they grow,  
into food  
they pass.

And what eats is eaten;  
and what's eaten, eats  
in turn.

— after the Sanskrit,  
*Taittiriya Upanishad* 2. 2, ca 5th cent B.C.  
trans. AKR.

\* The ground and source of being.

## SUCH LOVE

Knowing one's lowliness  
in every word;  
the spray of insects in the air  
in every gesture of the hand;

things living, things moving  
come sprung from the earth  
under every footfall;

and when holding a plant  
or joining it to another  
or in the letting it go

to be all mercy  
to be light  
as a dusting brush  
of peacock feathers:

such moving, such awareness  
is love that makes us one  
with the Lord

Dasareswara.

— DASARESWARA (Kannada),  
10-11th century. tr. AKR

Kunjan Nambiyar, a versatile poet  
and satirist in Malayalam, wrote  
this prophetic poem in the 18th  
century:

## WHEN DEATH IS ON A HOLIDAY

The son of the Sun God,  
Time King of all things right and true,  
the God of Death,  
is on holiday.

No death in the human world.  
The world is full  
of old people.

They cannot die  
for Death is away  
and cannot be reached.

Grandfather's grandfather  
is still here  
and so his grandfather's  
grandfather.

The five-hundred-year-old  
are mere babies here,  
for they have their grandfathers  
alive with them.

No gruel, not by any chance,  
in any house,  
for eight or ten vats  
are not enough  
for a round.

\* Sanskrit word for soul

Just millions of people  
milling in a house,  
people without teeth,  
moving like painted dolls,

Some cannot see.  
Some cannot hear.  
Some bald heads  
shine as silver plates.  
Starve them for ten days,  
they do not die.

But there is no decrease  
of births. Babies are born,  
here, there, now, then,  
everywhere.

I should stop.  
I cannot describe it.

— Kunjan Nambiyar, 18th century.  
(Malayalam) tr. by K. M. George and  
Ramanujan.

Gopalakrishna Adiga wrote this  
scathing piece in the late '50s, about  
man's restless ravaging of nature,  
the disastrous cult of action and  
progress without thought. (Didn't  
Pascal say, all the troubles of man  
are caused by his inability to sit  
still in a room?)

### DO SOMETHING, BROTHER

Do something, brother:  
something, anything;  
You musn't be idle.  
Pull out this plant, nip this little leaf,  
crunch that flower.  
There's grass, run  
your faggots through.

Butterflies, parrots, sparrows — chase  
them, hold them, cage them pluck  
their wings and pull their fur and  
feather.

There in the garden grow, for the  
wild elephant's feet,  
jasmine and the banana's gold.

All over your walls  
virility's master-switchboard  
itch for your fingers. Close  
your eyes and pull twenty down.  
Earth, water, the skies, they are all  
your geese with golden eggs.  
Gouge them: slash them.

'Do, or die', they say.  
For your genius' galloping dance  
disasters are the test.  
Brother, act, act at once, do  
something.

Thought's weights and measures  
are all for the past,  
for the dead's undying ghostly  
treasures.

There's the forest, cut it  
clean to the stump, slit it for your  
buntings.

You have the axe, the sickle, the saw  
and the knite; go, harvest all the  
world  
with a flourish of your hand —

But  
winter mists:  
light foggy walls that line  
the space between your space and  
mine;

the road sighs and breaks in two  
under the eyes,  
a couple of mountain-peaks rear  
their hoods

and lower upon your head;  
or lightning-winks from sirens  
that sing on every tree:

do they plunge you  
into anxieties and dilemmas of reason?  
No, no, this won't do.

you are a simple man,  
and that's your strength.  
Horse-sense and the blinkers  
are your forte.

Eat what comes to the hand; crush  
what you touch;  
cut the hindering vines.

Mother Earth herself, though tired,  
lies open to the skies; there's still  
flesh

upon her bone, marrow for your  
hunger.

Come, come, brother, never forget  
that you are a man!  
Then there's the Well. Rope  
the wheel and axle, pull all  
the water out. Reach the last dryness  
of the rock; grope, grope with the  
grappling iron.

"V for Victory", brother.  
Gain the God's own arrow,  
and aim it straight to the heart  
of God's own embryo-world.  
Do something, anything,  
anything, brothers.  
Idle men  
are burdens on the land.  
Do brother, do something.  
Keep doing something all the time  
to lighten Mother Earth's loads.  
This is right. This is natural.

This is the onething needful.

— M. Gopalakrishna Adiga (Kannada)  
tr. AKR.

This last poem needs no comment.

### HIROSHIMA

On this day, the sun  
Appeared—no, not slowly over the  
horizon—

But right in the city square.  
A blast of dazzle poured over,  
Not from the middle sky,  
But from the earth torn raggedly  
open.

Human shadows, dazed and lost,  
pitched

In every direction: this blaze,  
Not risen from the east,  
Smashed in the city's heart—  
An immense wheel  
Of Death's swart suncar, spinning  
down and apart

In every direction.  
instant of a sun's rise and set:  
Vision—annihilating flare one  
compressed noon.

And then ?

It was not human shadows that  
lenthened, paled, and died;  
It was men suddenly become as  
mist, then gone

The shadows stay:  
Burned on rock, stones of these  
vacant streets.

A sun conjured by men converted  
men to air, to nothing;  
White shadows signed on the black  
rock give back

Man's witness to himself.

— Ajneya (Hindi)  
tr. by the poet and L. Nathan.

There is much else that is exciting  
in Indian poetry (or drama or fiction)  
today. One could pick another set  
of themes around war, politics,  
poverty or religion, relevant to our  
collective lives today and the many  
Indian literatures would yield similar  
linked anthologies of relevant and  
striking poems. Poetry contains,  
transforms, and returns our reality to  
us, and us to reality, in oblique ways:

— P. S. Rege (Marathi)  
tr. by the poet

### SONG

The song that the bird sings in the tree  
Has another tree again in the song  
That the bird in the tree sings.

In the tree the song that the bird sings  
Has again another bird in the song  
That in the tree the bird sings.

# MARXISM AND THE THIRD WORLD

Dayan Jayatilleka

**M**y starting point will be a comment on Lenin's theorisation of imperialism. Any correct theory arises out of struggle against an incorrect theory or set of ideas. Lenin cleared his theoretical space by negating certain incorrect conceptualizations concerning imperialism. Now Kautsky conceived of imperialism as a mere shift in the policy of world capitalism. Lenin, on the contrary, argued very strongly that it was not a mere policy shift or mere disguise or change of tactics but rather a qualitatively distinct stage in the historical development of world capitalism. On the one hand you have Kautsky's idea of a purely conjunctural phenomenon and on the other, Lenin's idea of a structural, macro level change in world capitalism. I think the dominant sectors of the world marxist movement have failed to understand that a similar change has taken place in world capitalism in the post-war period. Twenty years after the great debate, the open polemic between the Chinese and Soviet Communist Party, we are in a position to understand that the great debate was, in one sense, something of a non-event because neither of the two protagonists came out with a correct conceptualisation of international capitalism, of modern monopoly capitalism, in the post-war period. The debate ranged over the questions of peaceful transformation, peaceful co-existence and a whole range of other issues, but it did **not** succeed in grappling with the qualitative changes that had taken place in world capitalism in the post-war period and thus it

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*This is the text of a Marx Centenary Commemoration Lecture delivered at the Marga Institute. The other speakers in the series were Reggie Siriwardena, Newton Gunasinghe and Sunil Abeyasekera.*

is that incorrect formulations predominate in the Chinese and the Soviet thinking. We have the Soviet Communist Party referring to the 'newly independent countries' and Leonid Brezhnev's report of the Central Committee of CPSU delivered to the 26th Congress of the CPSU last year, contains a whole section, dealing with 'relations with the newly emerged nations'. Not very dissimilar formulations are present in the Chinese writings on this subject. As far as the Trotskyist school of thought is concerned they keep referring to the 'problems of the colonial revolution' even today, in order to reiterate the thesis of 'Permanent Revolution'. So, for the Trotskyists, nothing has changed between the colonial and the contemporary period, and for the Soviets and Chinese something **has** changed but it is a mere change of tactics a new face of the old colonialism. This is precisely the kind of error that Lenin fought so strongly against when he encountered it in Kautsky's ideas of imperialism.

What are the main defining characteristics of this new stage of world capitalism? Without understanding that we cannot hope to grapple with the reality of contemporary 'Third World' society. Without understanding that reality we cannot hope to change it. To understand the post-war international system of relations that characterises the stage of neo-colonialism, we have to go back to the depression of the 1930's. Why? Because a period of depression — often incorrectly understood as a period of collapse — is much more a period of the rationalisation of capitalism. A depression is the time of the rationalisation of a system with the elimination of quite a lot of unproductive aspects and the consequent streamlining of itself as a system. In this way we can see that the main characteristics of **Imperialism** were visible or began

to emerge in the course of the Depression of 1873 to 1896. It is in the aftermath of that depression, the First Depression of what is now called the 'long' 20th century — because the defining characteristics were present in the last portion of the 19th century — that imperialism emerges full blown. In like fashion, the main defining characteristics of neo-colonialism can be traced to the response of the various sectors of the world capitalist system, to the depression of the 1930's. May I correct myself immediately. I used the phrase 'depression of the 1930's' in the popular sense because this depression really lasted from 1914 to 1945.

In the context of depression, capitalism has three options. One is to lower the cost of production, by intensifying to the maximum, the existing field of exploitation. The second of course is war. Capitalism spend its way out of the depression through war. Thirdly, and most importantly the extension of the capitalist market. To extend the market you have to extend the capitalist system. Now the World capitalist system's recovery from the depression of 1940-45 was not due to Keynesianism as some would like to think, but because of the second world war and the subsequent wave of capitalist expansion. It is this wave of expansion that we have to focus on. What happened in the post-war period was the full incorporation of the pre-capitalist areas of the world into the world capitalist system. Thus was the expansion of capitalist market achieved — through the expansion of the capitalist system, i.e. the extension of capitalist relations of production into hitherto pre-capitalist areas of the globe. The post war 'long boom' was based precisely upon this extension of the capitalist system. It is in this extension of the capitalist system that

we find the rise of neo-colonialism **and also** the rise of the so-called Third World. These two things are contemporaneous with each other. It may be running contrary to received wisdom, but the rise of the Third World, the very concept of the 'Third World', is also linked with the rise of the United States' global hegemony. In the post-war period we find the dismantling of various national imperialisms and the consolidation of a single world-wide imperialist system under the hegemony of the United States. We find a shift from the Europe-dominated old colonialism to a United States dominated neo colonialism. This is a shift of paramount importance. It is not a mere tactic. We find this qualitative shift occurring at two levels namely, the political and the economic. At the economic level we find the break up of the old colonial empires. The old colonial empires comprised of restricted blocks of the colonised countries tied to a particular metropolitan colonial power. Empire was the exclusive preserve of this or that colonial power, Britain, France, Holland, Portugal, etc. Decolonisation meant the breaking up of these restricted spheres of colonial interests and their opening up to the 'free', unrestricted penetration of international finance capital. This is analogous to the need of rising capitalism to free the serf from ties to the land. I admit it may be overstating the case, but I do want to drive the point home that it was a process of fundamental importance. Just as the ties that bound the serf to the land were an obstacle to the development of capitalist Europe, similarly the closed, restricted colonial system was an obstacle to the outward expansion of the United States in the post war period. We find a very interesting document unearthed by Prof Chomsky, it is a Council of Foreign Relations document of 1940. This is during World War 2, **before the United States had entered the war** and the Council of Foreign Relations states very clearly that in order to get out of the depression, and in order to prevent a repetition of the depression United States, needs a greater Area which incorporates the old colonial empires. They were very clear about this as way back as 1940! This shows that a certain

faction of the bourgeoisie in the United States, that faction linked to Wall Street and led by the Rockefeller group (and whose interests were expressed at that time by the Council of Foreign Relations and subsequently by the Trilateral Commission) had a very clear project for United States hegemony over the world capitalist system. It was as part and parcel of this project that the United States **supported** formal decolonisation. Let us not forget that there was a contradiction between the old colonial powers and the United States in the post war period concerning the colonial empires, and the United States was a supporter of decolonisation. This is no accident. It went hand in hand with the Marshall Plan and the Cold War. These must be conceived of as a triad and not one in isolation from the other. You cannot have the Marshall Plan without the Cold War and neither of the two can be seen in isolation from the process of decolonisation and the incorporation of the colonial areas into the capitalist world system under the hegemony of the United States of America. The World Communist Movement in the immediate post war period had something of the correct understanding of this process.

Let us go back briefly to Lenin. Lenin in his debate with M. N. Roy at the 2nd Congress of Comintern, concedes that at the time there was present a tendency towards a certain rapprochement between national bourgeoisie and imperialism. For M. N. Roy this was not a tendency, it was a fact and there was a complete identity of interests between imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. That is why M. N. Roy criticised Lenin's original draft theses and argued for a strategy which was very close to proletarian revolution. **M. N. Roy was wrong at that time** but Lenin did concede the existence of this tendency. **What was, in Lenin's time, a tendency, became a generalised phenomenon, a general characteristic of world capitalism, in the post war period.**

In the Comintern formulations of 1927, the Comintern divided the colonial and semi colonial world into three tiers. I believe this tripartite division was first made in 1925 in

two speeches that Stalin gave, a report to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, and one to the 14th Conference of the Russian Communist Party. In these, he divides the colonial and semi colonial world into three categories and he talks of these countries in which the national bourgeoisie is already entering into some kind of pact with imperialism. So while Lenin glimpses this as a tendency, Stalin referred to this in the 1920's as an even more pronounced phenomenon, albeit in **certain parts** of the colonial and semi colonial world. But in the post war period we find Stalin and the Communist Information Bureau (the Cominform) referring to this as a major shift that had taken place. We find the setting up of Cominform in September 1947 as a direct response to the Marshall Plan and the cold war strategy of the United States. The setting up of the Cominform is followed by the Calcutta meeting in 1947 and then we find certain strategic and theoretical formulations in 1947-48. Cominform material is very rare these days out there is a book called 'The Crisis of the Colonial System', (one of the contributors being the Soviet Professor Grigorii Bondarevsky) and in that the authors write very clearly about the linkage between imperialism and national bourgeoisie and the limited (dependent) industrialization that ensues as a result. This point is made concerning colonial and semi colonial areas as a generalised phenomenon. We also find it concerning Latin America.

I recently came upon an article by Professor Jerry Hough in the *Latin American Research Review*, Volume 16, No. 1. He talks of 'The evolving Soviet debate on Latin America today' and he goes back to earlier Soviet formulations on Latin America. This is what he says:

"From 1947 to 1953, Stalin drew a sharp distinction between the bourgeois and proletarian camps throughout the world and one result was the insistence that the bourgeoisie in Latin American countries were allies of the American bourgeoisie in their domination of Latin America. At that time the central focus of Latin America, like that of Asia and Africa, was bourgeoisie in their domination of

capitalist world and the exploitative relationships of the United States”.

We find the post war formulations of Stalin and Cominform rather accurate in perceiving the shift that has taken place in role of the national bourgeoisie and a resultant sharp distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, not only in Latin America but also in Asia and Africa. This is very clearly brought out in the final speech that Stalin ever made which was in 1952 at the 19th Congress of the CPSU a very important occasion. It is a very short speech but in that short speech, of two pages, about a third is devoted to the new situation of the bourgeoisie. He says that there has been a qualitative change in the character of the bourgeoisie and that the national bourgeoisie which once upheld the banner of national independence has sold out national independence for dollars. He also says that the national bourgeoisie which had upheld the ideals of liberty and bourgeois democracy, has thrown these ideals overboard. It is up to the Communists, he says to uphold the twin banners of national independence and democracy. Here we have the idea of a fundamental shift, a qualitative change in the role and character of the national bourgeoisie in the post-war period. This is very interesting because the self same Stalin who has been accused of pushing the idea of tailing behind the national bourgeoisie during the period of the colonial revolution, is subsequently accused of taking a left sectarian attitude towards the national bourgeoisie! I think both these criticisms are wrong and I think that the Comintern and its leadership made basically correct political projections concerning the problems of the colonial revolution in the 1920s and 1930s and I also think that they were evolving a correct position concerning neo-colonialism in the late 1940s and 1950s. It is significant that Stalin says that the banner of national independence had been sold for dollars. Why ‘dollars’? Because it is a very clear expression of the shift in hegemony from Britain to the U. S. In his earlier essay in 1950 on the ‘Economic’ Problems of Socialism in the USSR, he uses

a new term, ‘post war modern monopoly capitalism’ and he says ‘post war modern monopoly capitalism’ is different from imperialism in that imperialism strove for super profits, while post war modern capitalism strives for maximum profits. But these were somewhat nebulous formulations. There wasn’t any rigorous theorisation and I don’t think that there could be because these phenomena were to emerge full blown only in the 1960s. And of course, by then Stalin had died, the 20th Congress had taken place and the Cominform dissolved.

One of the results, at the level of theory, of destalinisation and the 1956 20th Congress of the CPSU was the complete change of tack concerning the peripheral capitalist world. We were presented with the whole project of National Democratic State, national democratic revolution, the idea of a peaceful transition to socialism and the idea of pushing the national bourgeoisie along the non-capitalist path of development towards socialism, and so forth. The phrase “non-capitalist development” has an immaculately Leninist conception, but it is evident that what Lenin meant was completely different. Non-capitalist development, for Lenin, was a process by which the Communist Party, basing itself on the working class, however small numerically, would take peasant societies to socialism by-passing the capitalist path. The pre-requisites for this were the existence of a Communist Party, an armed revolutionary struggle, the setting up of organs of popular power (Soviets) and a close alliance with the victorious Soviet revolution. This Leninist idea of the non-capitalist path was distorted and diluted to mean that this or that national bourgeoisie could be prodded along a certain path — characterised by the expansion of the State Sector, land reforms and massive injection of Soviet aid — towards socialism. This is completely wrong because you cannot speak of non-capitalist development in a social formation which is already dominated by the capitalist mode of production! Non-capitalist development is relevant only in the context of a society like Mongolia or some society

where pre-capitalist relations of production predominate. Once they **are** the dominated relations of production, it is absolute nonsense to speak of the path of non-capitalist development! The question simply does not arise. What really happened in these newly independent countries is the development of State Capitalism. Where the national bourgeoisie does not have the capacity to enter into certain fields the State intervenes and fulfils the function, perhaps with the assistance of Soviet aid. But after a certain point of maturation this class links up with the metropolitan capitalist centres. We find in Algeria this articulation of metropolitan capital and State capitalism. It is very much a capitalist phenomenon, but the point is that in the context of the ‘great debate’ between the Soviet and the Chinese Communist party, the Chinese Communist Party did not explicitly criticise this idea of the CCP did disagree that revolution would take place peacefully through the Parliamentary path. This was the famous question of the armed road versus the peaceful road. But nobody really launched a critique of the projected **character** of the revolution. The character of the revolution in the neocolonies, according to both the Chinese and the Soviet Communist Party, was to be new democratic or ‘national democratic’. So the idea of ‘**what**’ revolution, which were the class forces to be involved in this revolution, was never seriously debated until, of course, the Cuban revolution. The Cuban revolution has a two fold importance. What is important about Latin America is that it is the area of the capitalist world system, which first experienced a primitive form of neo-colonialism. After Spanish colonisation was rolled back, United States filled the breach, but the dominance of the United States proceeded through certain internal social classes. You find neo-colonialism in a primitive form first making its appearance in Latin America and the Cuban revolution takes place in such a dependent but non-colonial context. Unlike the Chinese revolution which takes place in a semi-colonial context, the Cuban revolution takes

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# The role of TV, Communication Satellites and Video Cassettes in the Third World

Neville Jayaweera

It is necessary to set forth first a summary of the positive claims that are made on behalf of these technologies as agents of development in the Third World. These technologies are supposed to bestow the following benefits:—

1. enable the spread of literacy and education to regions and peoples who are either inaccessible because of distance or cannot be provided with school buildings and teachers because of the lack of resources;

2. deliver health care, medical and diagnostic services to people disadvantaged by similar circumstances;

3. provide national integration to countries like India and Indonesia which because of their heterogeneous social composition or because of natural barriers like vast expanses of forests, deserts and mountains, have resisted integration into a single polity;

4. ensure administrative effectiveness in countries which, again because of vastness, have balked at centralisation;

5. diffuse agricultural extension which is invariably hampered in Third World countries by the lack of trained personnel;

6. communicate family planning programmes to societies where annual population growth invariably outstrips economic growth;

7. provide marketing information to Third World economies hampered by the lack of access to data and marketing information;

8. sustain region-specific cultural programmes to minority areas which tend to be neglected by the national networks;

9. guarantee the practice of social cultural and political pluralism by eroding the power and durability of centralised systems;

10. facilitate the practice of participation as a development tool;

11. enhance the capacity of the state to cope with natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes and floods.

The most generalised hypothesis, favourable to the application of these technologies in the Third World, asserts that they will enable these societies to leap-frog into "development", and indeed into the twenty-first century, without having to follow the long and arduous path that was trod by countries which "developed" in the earlier era. It is supposed to be the only option available to Third World countries consistent with their need to cope with rapidly spiralling expectations, growing unemployment and contracting economies.

There is a sense in which many of the claims set out at 1 to 11 above have more than a modicum of truth. However, let us examine them seriously.

1. It is true that the scarcity of sufficiently trained teachers and the lack of capital for investment in schools and laboratories are a major impediment to the spread of literacy and education in most Third World countries. But the suggestion that the solution to these problems lies in developing television networks or in investing in satellites or in distributing video equipment in villages is, firstly, too facile and over-simplistic. Additionally and more importantly, it ignores a vast amount of empirical data gathered in places where television and satellites were harnessed for delivering education, such as in American Samoa, the French Niger, in India and in the Caribbean. The overwhelming evidence gathered through these experiments was that the benefits supposed to flow from these technologies did not occur on anything like a scale that would have justified the investments. Besides, one rarely hears educationists

pleading for the adoption of electronic communication for delivering education. The plea comes mostly from politicians and electronics engineers!

2. The claim that the new technologies may be used to overcome the problems posed by the lack of health care and medical services in Third World countries ignores altogether the nature of the health problems in question. Third World health problems are caused overwhelmingly by the lack of adequate nutrition, the absence of clean drinking water and by inadequate sanitation. These are all problems of under-development and can be remedied only when the economy as a whole moves forward. The suggestion that electronic technologies can provide solutions to Third World health needs also assumes that those needs are primarily diagnostic or clinical. They are not. They are societal and developmental, and call for fundamental structural solutions.

3. It is true that in countries such as India, Indonesia and Nigeria, vast geographical distances pose serious problems for national integration. But to suggest that television and satellites can provide solutions to these problems ignores their complex historical, ethnic, cultural and political origins. In many cases, perhaps such integration may even be morally undesirable and may be attainable only at the cost of severe political and cultural repression.

4. Like most of the other arguments that seek to justify the application of the new technologies in Third World societies, the suggestion that they may promote administrative effectiveness flows out of an appalling naivete in the understanding of the administrative and managerial problems of these societies. These societies require, more and more, to break down the

social and physical distance between the administrative elites and the people. The administrative elites need to interact, face to face, with those they seek to serve. It is not clear how television and satellites will promote these ends. On the contrary, they are more likely to ensure the opposite reaction by enabling administrators to oversee rural development on their tele-screens and from the comfort of their air-conditioned offices in the metropolis.

5 & 6 The claim of the new technologies to be able to deliver agricultural know-how and family planning programmes to the countryside may be treated on the same level as their claim to be able to transmit literacy and education. Their effectiveness is about the same. On the other hand, the problem of agricultural extension in Third World countries is even more complex than the problem of literacy and education. The former has to do with a whole range of complicated questions involving land distribution and the nature of tenure, the size of agricultural holdings and their fragmentation, the availability of credit and the efficiency of credit institutions, the delivery of fertilisers at reasonable prices, and the availability of adequate storage and marketing facilities, and several other issues which are not capable of solution through recourse to satellites or television.

7. In regard to marketing information, reliance on the new technologies will be decidedly more beneficial to the urban and metropolitan interests, both nationally, and internationally, i. e. to the middlemen, than to the small producers or to the rural community. That is not because these technologies are by themselves incapable of delivering information beneficial to the producer. Rather, until fundamental structural changes are effected in the social and economic systems, both nationally and internationally, and until questions concerning the ownership and control of these information delivery systems are resolved in such a way as to obliterate the concentration of power, marketing information will be used by those who own and control the delivery system, primarily for their own benefit.

8. Far from enhancing the quality of minority cultures by providing them with opportunities for self-expression, the new technologies are more likely to further diminish and even obliterate them. Here too, the fault is not in the technologies *per se*, but in the iniquitous structures within which they work. The failure of minority cultures to find expression is primarily a function of dominant-dependent relationships and not merely a question of the inadequacy of communication tools. Until such time as the structures that undergird those relationships are themselves dismantled, cultural material will continue to flow from the dominant to the dependent. The arrival of the new technologies on the scene serve primarily to increase the volume of that flow and thereby to consolidate and deepen the existing power relationships.

9. Cultural social and political pluralism is primarily a question of politics and economics rather than a question of technology. It is not that the new technologies lack the capacity to facilitate pluralism. But in the absence of the more fundamental re-ordering of social and economic structures, the injection of technology into an iniquitous system will only serve to strengthen the concentration and centralisation of power and deepen the underlying inequalities.

10. Participation is primarily a question of political will. Secondly it is a question of structures. It is, only marginally, a question of technology. When there is a widespread general will to practise participation, and where the political and social structures have been rearranged in such a way as to guarantee a minimum evenness of opportunity, and where the technologies in question are distributed evenly, participation can certainly be advanced. Not otherwise. On the contrary, unless those prior conditions are fulfilled, the application of the new technologies is more likely to strengthen domination.

11. The capacity of communication satellites to provide an early warning of the approach of cyclones and similar natural disasters is unmatched. Similarly, their usefulness for transmitting instantaneously and to all corners of the globe,

news concerning such disasters, and their capacity for rapidly mobilising and channelling relief to places where disaster has struck, are also unquestionable. But a pre-occupation with the usefulness of the technologies tends to obscure the more fundamental question concerning the need to ensure that communities exposed to such disasters are provided with housing facilities and health care and ambulance and terrestrial emergency services that will make them less vulnerable when disaster strikes. It is not the presence or absence of modern communication technologies that determine the enormous differences in the scale of the damage wrought by tornados along the coast of Florida when compared to damage wrought by cyclones along the Bay of Bengal. Florida is able to absorb the tornado with consequences that are incomparably less disastrous than the community in Bangladesh is able to absorb the cyclone. The result has little to do with communication satellites. It has everything to do with the underlying question of development and under-development.

The thrust of my argument in respect of all these claims is not that the new technologies are not capable of contributing towards development but that their adoption has to be subordinated to, or be effected along with, comprehensive measures for societal, economic and political restructuring. Unless programmes for effecting such restructuring either precede or accompany the introduction of the new technologies, they are more likely to complicate and further delay the finding of solutions to the problem of under-development. In opposition to this line of argument, it will be suggested that societal, economic and political restructuring is more likely to be effected by first adopting the new technologies rather than by waiting for a set of explicit political decisions, or by waiting for the normal social process to bring them about. There is a great deal of validity in this argument. That is to say, in history, it was the adoption of technologies first, that set in motion societal change, and not vice versa. But it is also true that those who owned those technologies, whether the technology in

question was the wheel, the mariner's compass, gunpowder, the steam engine or nuclear power, first used them to consolidate and extend their own power. The benefits of those technologies came to be distributed more evenly decades and centuries later, and even then, only after the contradictions spawned by the technologies could no longer be contained within the existing system. So, technologies by themselves did not promote democracy. It was the contradictions brought into existence by them, and the increasing polarisation of forces within the system that did so. But that process took centuries to mature. And the social cost was enormous. Now that we have a better understanding of the social process, and have a more adequate grasp of how technology works as an instrument of social change, the question is why we should not short-circuit the historical process and actively engineer social restructuring either before or along with the introduction of the new technologies. That will minimise the social cost and maximise their benefits to the widest possible community in the shortest possible time.

(To be continued)

## France clinches Abu Dhabi Mirage contract

David Marsh

PARIS

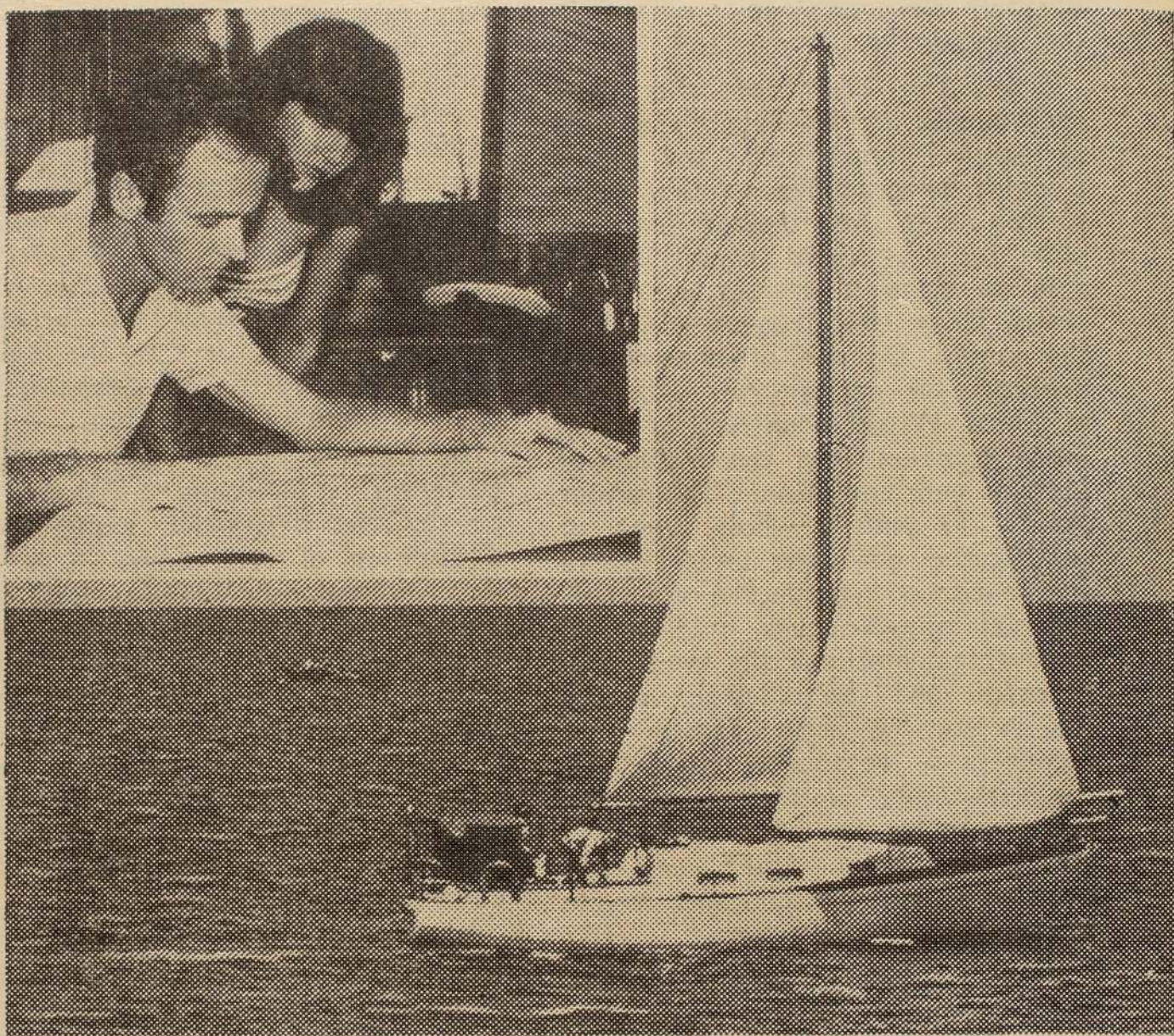
France has clinched an important contract to supply Abu Dhabi with 18 Mirage 2000 jet fighters, making the Emirate the fourth foreign customer to order the technologically advanced combat aircraft.

The deal, agreed after six months of discussions, gives Abu Dhabi an option to purchase a further 18 jets if needed to boost its air force. The aircraft, made by the nationalised Dassault-Breguet company, will be delivered from 1985 onwards.

The Mirage 200 will form the backbone of France's own airborne forces in coming years, with more than 160

(Continued on page 28)

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# THE TAMIL NATIONAL QUESTION

## A Leninist Approach

S. Jeevan

**T**his article, written on the 113th birth centenary of Lenin, is an attempt at highlighting the uncompromising and consistent stand taken by him on the National Question and, in particular, the role of the left. This article will basically centre around the line of inquiry suggested by Lenin in his Thesis on "the Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination". Although Lenin's Thesis was in direct response to the debate within the R.S.D.L.P on the Russian Nationality problem, his analytical framework, firmly rooted as it is in Historical Materialism gives his Thesis a universal validity, **at a given stage of historical development of Capitalism**. Lenin identified the following issues in the debate on the National Question which he emphasised required the urgent attention of the Social-Democrats (in our context, the progressive Left):

(i) The particular urgency of the demand of the right of self-determination of nations under Imperialism;

(ii) Its political and class content;

(iii) The necessity to distinguish the concrete tasks of the Left of the oppressed nations;

(iv) The "purely verbal recognition" of the right of self-determination by the "opportunists" which is, therefore, purely hypocritical in its political significance;

(v) The actual identity of the chauvinists and sections of the Left of the oppressor nations who do not uphold the freedom to secede for colonies and nations oppressed by "their own" nations;

(vi) The necessity to subordinate the struggle for the right of self-determination of nations and for all the basic demands of political democracy directly to the revolutionary mass struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeois governments and for the achievement of socialism.

### 1. The Particular Urgency of the Demand for Right of Self-determination under Imperialism

As pointed out earlier, the universal validity of Lenin's Thesis stems from his methodology based on Historical Materialism and a crystal clear understanding of Marxist Theory. Thus, he realized the need to take into account the specificity of a given social formation in a given historical epoch. In Lenin's own words, "the categorical requirements of Marxist Theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within definite historical limits and, if it refers to a particular country (ie the national programme for a given country) that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch."

Based on the above, Lenin made the crucial distinction between two historical tendencies under developing capitalism, which has a bearing on National Question. "Developing Capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of all national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national

barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science etc."

Proceeding from the abstract to the concrete, while Western Europe with the exception of Ireland emergence of nations and its conversion into independent nation states during the early stages of capitalism and the dissolution of feudalism, later sustained by the industrial revolution and colonialism, the experience of Eastern Europe was just the reverse. The "backwardness" of capitalism in Eastern Europe merely led to the emergence of multi-national nation States-proceeding to the present historical epoch of developing capitalism under conditions of neo-colonialism, what we are witnessing is a case of "deformed capitalist" development which cannot **but** lead to the emergence of national liberation struggles as a response to national oppression.

In this sense, there appears to a historical "parallel" between the experience of Eastern Europe under conditions of "backward" capitalism in the era of colonialism, and the experience of Third World countries under conditions of dependent/deformed capitalism in the era of neo-colonialism. (The process of "deformed capitalist development" in Sri Lanka and the Eelam struggle is a case in point.) Further, the backwardness of the "dependent bourgeoisie" of Sri Lanka and the comprador relationship that the Tamil bourgeoisie enters into with the Sinhala bourgeoisie, acts as a definite impediment against the national economy proceeding to the higher stage of capitalist development. What we witness, instead, is the development

of underdevelopment with the first historical tendency of developing capitalism becoming sharper and concretized and the second historical tendency of developing capitalism under conditions of neo-colonialism becoming stultified.

Suffice it to say, the Eelam struggle is consistent with the scenario depicted by Lenin, in characterizing the emergence of national movements. To quote: "the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and the rights of nation in particular.

### II. The Political and Class Content of the Demand for the Rights of Nations to Self-determination

Lenin's Thesis on The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination is a classic study of the political content of a national liberation struggle against national oppression which clearly and categorically brings out the inseparable link between the right of nations to self-determination and the right to secede. The unwillingness or the inability of the 'traditional left' in Sri Lanka and its appendages in to grasp the nature of relations between the right of nation to self-determination and the right to secede is, symptomatic, of a general case of ideological bankruptcy and a particular case of social chauvinism. It is imperative that Marxist-Leninists remind themselves of Lenin's stand on this issue best highlighted in the following extract from his Thesis. To quote: "The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation.

Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and **for a referendum on secession by the seceding nation.** This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression." Lest there be any

confusion that Lenin meant that he was opposed to separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states (a genuine confusion in certain sections of the progressive Left and a perpetrated confusion by Left opportunists and social chauvinists), it is necessary that one bears in mind the clarification given by Lenin in the concluding sentence of the same paragraph from which the above extract was taken. To quote: "In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nation only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations i. e. their freedom to secede." The political content of the demand for the right of nations to Self-determination is applicable to all costs of national liberation struggles which is a direct response to national oppression at every conceivable level within the economic as well as the political spheres. This then takes us to the class content of the demand for the right of nations to self-determination.

Every national movement has, at its early stages, been led by the bourgeoisie, due to contradictions between the bourgeoisie of the respective nations, at the economic sphere. As Stalin put it very succinctly in his **National Question and Marxism** which, incidentally had the unconditional approval of Lenin, "the market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism." This has, unfortunately very often led to the incorrect characterization of national movements by the ideologically bankrupt Left as being bourgeois in character and, therefore, unpalatable!

What I wish to emphasise is that all national movements in its onward march, if based on material conditions and not on emotionalism, **inevitably** takes on a mass character, since the deformed character of capitalism under conditions of neo-colonialism, throws up a dependent and a backward bourgeoisie which is incapable of resolving its contradictions and performing its historical task. Furthermore, the crisis of deformed/dependent capitalism most explicitly manifest in inflation and pauperization, unemploy-

ment and landlessness, compels the State, which represents the interest of the dominant section of the bourgeoisie (which in a multi-national unitary nation state is the bourgeoisie of the big nation and its agents within the bourgeoisie of the small nation), to use the instrument of national oppression in an all-pervasive manner. Thus, the squeeze is now applied not only in the market, but also in other areas which have a direct bearing on the existence of a nation, such as land, employment or economic existence not directly connected with land, language and a cultural identity.

State terrorism is unleashed in an attempt to crush any signs of rebellion by the oppressed. This signals the shift of national oppression from the economic sphere to the political sphere. At this stage in petty-bourgeoisie, the 'de-class-ed youths', the peasants and the workers get drawn into the struggle against national oppression and the national movement, initiated by the bourgeoisie of the small nation, takes on a truly mass character. And it is also at this stage that the class struggle begins to intensify within the national movement and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie beings to get challenged. As Stalin very correctly put it, "the strength of the national movement is determined by the degree to which the wide strata of the Nation, the proletariat and the peasantry, participate in it.

To conclude it is, therefore, **incorrect to give national liberation struggles a class character as something which is permanent and autonomous. A national liberation struggle, however, becomes an arena where the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie and the vanguard of the workers and peasants strive to further their respective class interests.**

# “The Asiatic mode of production”: A pre-Marxist concept

M. Maha Uthaman

**H**ector Abhayawardhana's comment on Marx's concept of the Asiatic mode of production appeared in two recent issues of Lanka Guardian. The first was a passing remark (Lanka Guardian, Vol 5, No 21, March 1, 1983, P. 17) in which he criticizes Dr. S.B.D. de Silva for failing to take into account the unchanging nature of pre-capitalist Asian Societies. Hector Abhayawardhana quotes Marx to emphasize his point, and most surprisingly concludes that “Marx's generalization about an Asiatic Mode of production supplied a key to Asian history where otherwise a void exists.” In the subsequent issue of Lanka Guardian (Vol 5, No 22, P. 11-12), which was a special issue to mark the centenary of Marx's death, Hector Abhayawardhana ironically chose Marx's writings on Asia to honour him on this occasion. It is ironic because the concept of an Asiatic mode of production lacks theoretical rigorousness and empirical sophistication. It, in fact, represents one of Marxism's greatest voids. It is indeed an awkward appendage to the corpus of Marxism.<sup>1</sup>

As Abhayawardhana rightly points out, Marx attributed certain characteristics to Asian Societies: The absence of landed private property; hydraulic works by the central state and other public authorities; indestructible cohesiveness of the village community; The domestic union of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits; historical immutability; agrarian predominance over industry and limited development

of towns; and concentration of a large part of surplus in the hands of the state. Where Abhayawardhana is wrong is when he implies that the above characteristics were Marx's own original contribution to Social Theory. The truth of the matter is that Marx did not himself uncover any of these characteristics. In fact, he was merely conforming to the intellectual tradition of the west, which, from the time of classical antiquity, attributed certain characteristic to Asia. A comprehensive theoretical categorization of Asiatic societies was provided by the philosophers and economists during and after the Renaissance and Enlightenment. To ignore the existence of this tradition and to speak of the existence of a void of Asia before 1850 is nothing but a parody of parodies!

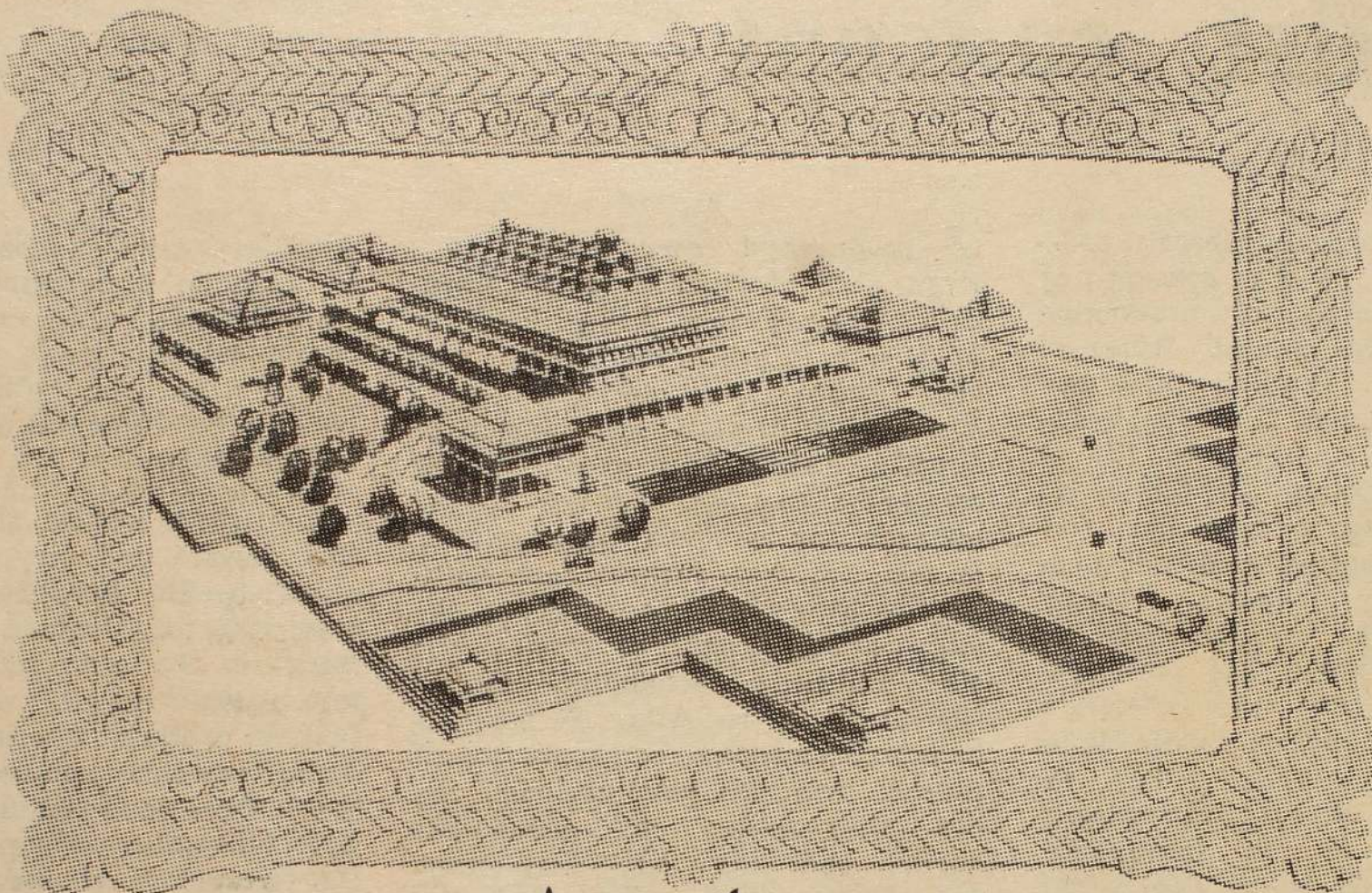
If Marx's categorization of the Orient is examined, one would discover that his notions were a continuation of the earlier European intellectual tradition. The usage of the notion ‘despotism’ could be traced back to early Greek philosophy. Aristotle, in his famous statement on Asia, noted: “Barbarians are more servile by nature than Greeks, and Asians are more servile than Europeans, hence they endure despotic rule without protest”—<sup>2</sup>. The usage of the notion ‘despotism’ continued into the middle ages, but it was banished during the Renaissance for the impurity of its philological pedigree<sup>3</sup>. However, in the 17th century, Hobbes reintroduced the terminology again, and subsequently all political philosophers who ventured into analysing the Asian societies, with the exception of Voltaire and Angutil—DuPerron, attributed despotism to Asia. Among them, it was Montesquieu, alone,

who formulated a coherent theory of oriental despotism; and Jones who extended this notion to include recent history, made some original contribution. The influence of these writers on Marx in this regard is unmistakable.

The characteristic absence of landed private property was ‘recongnized’ by the European intellectual tradition long before the time of Marx. In the post renaissance period it was Bernier who was the first to produce a systematic exposition on this subject. He noted that “these countries, Turkey, Persia and Hindustan, have no idea of the principles of meum and tuum, relatively to land or other real possession...”<sup>4</sup>. Later, Harrington, Montesquieu, Jones and Adam Smith attributed this characteristic to Asia<sup>5</sup>. Here again, Marx inherited from his predecessors a basic axiom, that Asian societies lacked stable private property. In fact, in one of his first writings on Asia, Marx paid tribute to Bernier: “Bernier rightly considered the basis of all phenomena in the East... to be the absence of private property.” — <sup>6</sup>

Marx's description of large-scale public works in Asia was directly derived from the writings of the English classical economists, notably from Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. Adam Smith, in fact, was the first to redefine the difference between Asia and Europe in terms of two types of production: “As the political economy of the Nations of modern Europe has been more favourable to manufacturers and foreign trade, the industry of the towns, than to agriculture, the industry of the country; so that of other nations has followed a different plan, and has been more favourable

The writer is Tutor in Social Theory, The National University of Ireland.



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to agriculture than to manufacturers and foreign trade"<sup>7</sup>. Following this, Smith went on to show the links between the agrarian character of Asian societies and the role of hydraulic works in these societies, i.e. State involvement in the improvement of agriculture. He showed how the sovereigns in Egypt were involved in the distribution of waters and how the same system was followed in India and China. He also showed that "in China and in several other governments of Asia, the executive power charges itself both with the reparation of the high roads, and with the maintenance of the navigable canals....."<sup>8</sup> John Stuart Mill revived Adam Smith's description of public hydraulic works: "The tanks, wells, and canals for irrigation, without which in most tropical climates, cultivation could hardly be carried on"<sup>9</sup>.

Marx's description of the peculiar structure of village communities in Asia is taken from Hegel almost word for word. Hegel characterized the nuclear basis of Indian despotism as a system of inert village communities unaffected by political alterations in the state above them. "The whole income belonging to every village is ... divided into two parts, of which one belongs to the Rajah, the other to the cultivators; but proportionate share also received by the provost of the palace, the judge, the water-surveyors the Brahmin who superintends religious worship, the Astrologer (who is also a Brahmin, and announces the days of good and ill omen), the smith, the carpenter, the potter, the washerman, the barber, the physician, dancing girls, the musician the poet. This arrangement is fixed and immutable, and subject to no one's will"<sup>10</sup>.

Closely linked with the peculiar structure of village communities in Asia is the notion of historical immutability. Here again, the works of Montesquieu, Hegel, Jones and Mill have a notable after-life in Marx's concept of an Asiatic mode of Production! Montesquieu believed that Asiatic societies were essentially unchanging: "The laws, customs and manners of the orient — even the most trivial such as mode of dress — remain the same today as

they were a thousand years ago"<sup>11</sup>. Hegel also repeated the traditional European theme of historical stagnation in Asia. Hegel believed that because of inert village communities which were governed by hereditary custom and distribution of crops after taxation, they are unaffected by political alternations in the state above them; he thus wrote: "China and India remain stationary, and perpetuate a natural vegetative existence even to the present time"<sup>12</sup>. Stuart Mill merely repeated the generic characteristic of "The extensive monarchies which from time beyond historical record have occupied the plains of Asia"<sup>13</sup>. Richard Jones, too, who developed a more original analysis of oriental conditions nevertheless, did not differ from his predecessors on the assumption of the historical immutability of Asian societies<sup>14</sup>, he confirmed what had long become a consensual formula in Europe.

There were other notions about Asia which were discussed by the pre-Marxist philosophers: Bodin, Bernier and Mill described the lack of juridical restraints; Montesquieu showed how religion substituted for law; Machiavelli Bacon and Montesquieu spoke about the absence of hereditary nobility; Montesquieu and Hegel discussed in detail about servile social equality.

I have shown above how erroneous it is to state that there was a void in the study of Asian societies before Marx began his studies on Asia. It is essential to see that two intellectual traditions had already had been firmly established prior to 1850: one originating from Aristotle and later developed by German and French philosophers; and the other deriving from classical English economists. These traditional European conceptions of Asian social and political systems decisively contributed towards the formation of the Marxist conception of the Asiatic Mode production.

In spite of the existence of such an intellectual tradition, Marx never produced a **systematic** exposition on the Asiatic Mode of production. In fact, **only once** did Marx formally mention the term Asiatic Mode of production, and even this

was in a passing reference: "In broad outlines, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois mode of production may be designated as epochs making progress in the economic development of society"<sup>15</sup>. Marx's conception of Asian societies thus, have to be **inferred** from his numerous writing on capitalism, his correspondence with Engels, and his articles that appeared in the New York Daily Tribune.

## NOTES

- (1) For detailed criticism of AMP please refer to: Malcom Caldwell, Introduction to Umberto Melotties **Marx and the Third World**; Perry Anderson **Lineages of the Absolute**; Marian Sawer, **Marxism and the Question of Asiatic Mode of Production**; Lawrence Krader, **The Asiatic Mode of Production; sources, Development and Critique of the writings of Karl Marx**; and Hindess and Hirst, **Pre-capitalist Modes of Production**.
- (2) Aristotle, *Politics*, III. IX p. 3.
- (3) R. Koebner, 'Despotism and Despotism: vicissitudes of a political term', **The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes**, XIV. 1951, P. 300.
- (4) Bernier, **Travels in the Mogul Empire**, p. 232.
- (5) Perry Anderson, **Lineages of the Absolute State**, p. 472.
- (6) Marx — Engels, **Selected Correspondence**. pp 80-81.
- (7) Adam Smith, **An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations**, P. 281.
- (8) *Ibid*, PP 283, 340.
- (9) John Stuart Mill, **Principles of Political Economy**, Vol-I, P. 15.
- (10) Hegel, **The Philosophy of History**, P. 260.
- (11) Montesquieu, **Del Esprit des Lois** Vol. I, P. 244.
- (12) Hegel, *OP.CIT*, P. 180.
- (13) Mill, *OP. CIT*, P. 15.
- (14) Anderson, *OP.CIT*. P. 472.
- (15) Marx, **Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**, P. 21.

## Marxism and . . .

(Continued from page 19)

place in a peripheral, dependent but non-colonial context. And moves rather rapidly and uninter-ruptedly to genuine socialism.

The Cuban revolution gives rise not only to a host of revolution-ary movements but also of theo-risations, which sometimes partially inadequately, attempt to grapple with this new reality. It is with the Cuban revolution that you have the emergence of dependance theory and the contribution of the Monthly Review school. And at the level of political theory we find the ideas of Castro and Guevara. Depen-dency theory lacked two aspects. Firstly, it did not link itself to the earlier tradition of the World Communist Movement i.e. the tradition of Marxism — Leninism. There was a discontinuity between the two. Secondly, dependency theory does not have clearly wor-ked out political theory. It made a critique of developmentalism and also of the Soviet Chinese theori-sation of 'dual economy' but it took place at the level of politi-cal economy and there was no attempt to provide the dependency theory with an over-arching poli-tical theory. These were the two main defects of neo-Marxian depen-dency theory. But I don't think we can overlook or denigrate the contribution made by dependency theory, particularly when viewed against the background of theori-cal vacuity in the World Commu-nist Movement in the 1950s and 1960s particularly during the Khrushchev period.

The fundamental shift in World capitalism, as I said, takes place at the two levels, those of poli-tics and of economics. At the level of economics, we find a dependent capitalist industrialisation at the periphery as a result of the link between metropolitan capital and the national bourgeoisie. We find dependent capitalism becoming the dominant mode of production. Ear-lier we had the tricontinental areas, functioning as a global village and the metropolitan centers as the global towns. The metropolitan centers produced finished industrial

goods while the tricontinental areas were mainly producing raw mate-rial, fuel and so on.

This global division of labour had a certain corollary the corol-lary was that semi-colonial semi-feudal relations were the predom-inant relations of production in the social formations at the peri-phery. This was the situation un-der colonialism. At the level of class relations we had the align-ment between imperialism and the intermediary compradore (trading) bourgeoisie and the feudal land-owners in the periphery. There were the fundamental class polar-isations in the earlier period. But in the new stage we have a change in the international division of labour. This is something that has been improperly grasped by the World Communist Movement and also by the Trotskyite Movement — otherwise they could not have kept on referring to the colonial revolution. So you have a change in the global division of labour where you have a true internatio-nalisation of capital and production. The periphery, which was hitherto **complementary** to the world capi-talist system, became **an integral part of the global capitalist production process itself**. This was achieved by the multinational corporation. We have to under-stand the role of the multinational corporation as a fundamental defi-ning characteristic of capitalism in the post-war period. By multina-tional corporations of course we don't mean some enterprise in which various national capitals col-laborate. What we mean is that is in fact that these corporations have a global division of labour and when they make their produc-tion decisions they have a global point of view. So you may find certain components produced in area A, something else in area B, something else in area C and the overall assembly somewhere else. The rise of the multinational coope-ration is central to the post war picture.

(To be Continued)

## Current debates. . .

(Continued from page 12)

Thailand remains a volatile society. The triangular alliance between the 'Military-Capitalist Classes-Rich pea-sants' when coupled with the san-crosant 'KING-NATION-RELIGION' ideology: can be a very power-ful force indeed. Yet, many would want to believe that the present situation is merely the period of 'calm before the storm'. The pre-sent crisis within the CPT and the general disillusionment among for-mer Thai activists, is perhaps also one that provides an opportunity for self-assessment and ideological debates and necessary re-orientation. Efforts in this direction are under-way in Thailand today, and it is only the coming years that we can assess their viability and effec-tiveness in Thailand.

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- (3) Vaddhanaphuli, Chayan — "Thai So-cial Formation: Current Debates" in SOUTH-EAST ASIAN CHRONI-CLE, Issue No. 80, pp. 22-23.
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- (5) Ibid, p. 29.

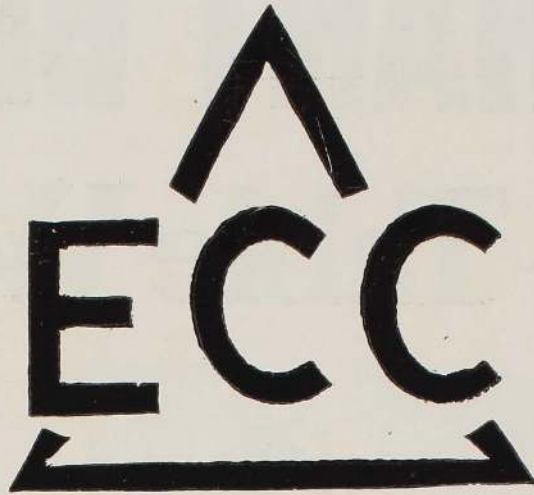
## France clinches . . . .

(Continued from page 22)

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● The Soviet Union has decided to pull out of exhibiting aeroplanes and helicopters at the Paris air show which starts next week, appa-rently because of the cooling of Franco-Russian relations following the expulsion of 47 alleged Soviet spies last month.



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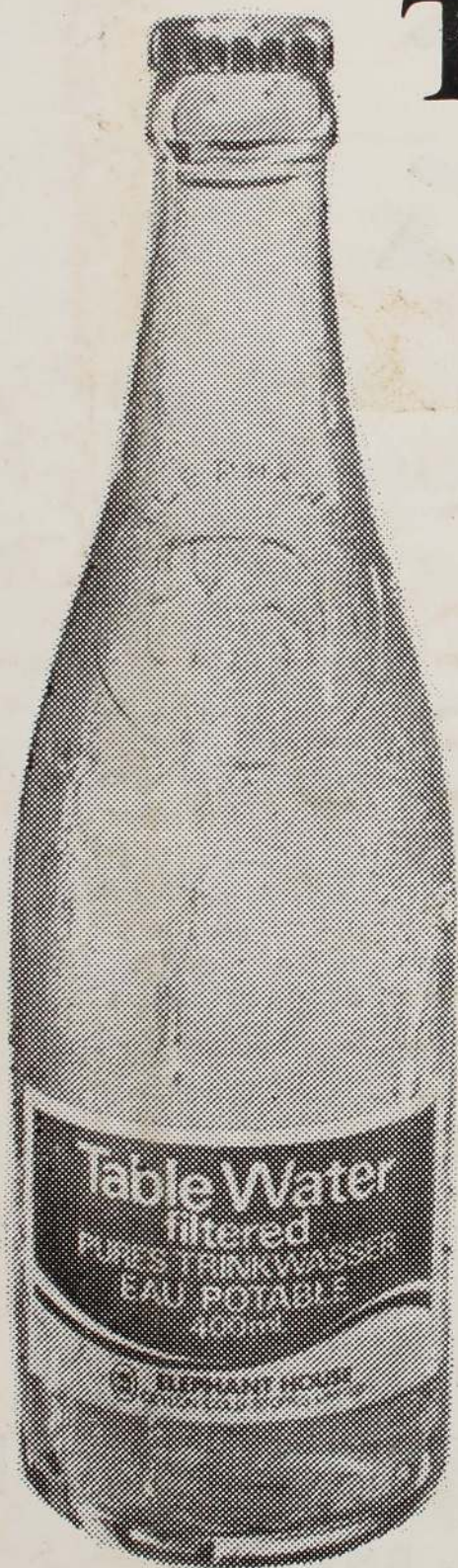
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