

Second ceasefire : monitoring and mechanics

— Mervyn de Silva

LANKA

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UPSURGE OF

PEASANT

PROTEST

— Nihal Perera



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— Mervyn D. de Silva

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IN TIMES OF WAR

"SILENT enim leges inter arma". President JR quoted Cicero recently when he addressed the judges. In the midst of war, the laws are silent.

At another opening ceremony, President JR returned to this theme. He was speaking to the UNP's Executive Committee after he had declared open the party's new headquarters at Sri Jayawardenapura.

"We gave freedom to the press; the freedom to hold meeting, the freedom of opposition. But it should be remembered "he added" that in times of war the opposition will not be allowed to do as it wished. The freedom even of newspapers would have to be curtailed".

Referring to a TIMES (London) report, the President spoke of the new 'War Powers' Act that the Thatcher government was planning to place before the UK Parliament. Next morning, the state-run DAILY NEWS published the article (actually a TIMES report based on a NEW STATESMAN commentary) on its front page.

ECONOMIC PICTURE

NOT tea and sympathy but 'Tea and Tourism' was the tuneful slogan of brighter and bouyant times. But tourism is really in

the slumps as a visitor to Colombo's newest 'star' hotels soon discover. Occupancy of course is the commonest test. Now, the test has become how many guests to how many employees; And the ratio is growing in the wrong direction.

Last week it was low grown tea's turn to do a tumble. A dramatic decline was how one broker described the week's activity at the auctions, according to the SUN, which also stated "Only a few select lines of tea were selling at good prices and even tea from the Uva region sold at lower prices.

Tea down, tourism down, coconuts down..... Only military spending rises.

MILITARISATION

THE Bill to authorise obligatory and volunteer service for youths has yet to be presented to Parliament but the Manpower Unit of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Employment has already selected over 500 recruits for a course of training with the army. 500 young men — 70 of them with degrees and the rest 'A' level qualified — will join the armed services for a period of 5 years. They will then be posted as teachers in State schools throughout the island. The training includes jungle warfare and commando techniques.

TRENDS + LETTERS

North-East linking

WHEN the question of linking the Northern province with the Eastern province arises the question is asked: Will this be the first step to separation? It is a pertinent question, specially after the tragic events of the last few years. When two brothers live in the same strip of land, the big brother in the South and the small brother in the North, how the small brother feels will depend on how the big brother treats him. If he is allowed to manage his own internal affairs, provide his basic needs in the way he wants to — food, educating his children for employment, provide health care for all, clothing and shelter and be allowed to develop his own language, religion and culture he will give his full co-operation to his big brother in all matters of mutual concern.

The question of Separation will not arise.

Dr. R. W. C. Thambiah

Jaffna.

Baffled

DR. CARLO FONSEKA found Qadri Ismail's "irreverence" (contumely, I should have thought was the **mot juste**) concerning Peradeniya's English Department "refreshing". As Mandy Rice-Davies said, when told that Lord Astor had denied her allegations in the Stephen Ward trial: "He would, wouldn't he?" Mr. Patrick Jayasuriya wonders why Mr. Ismail seems baffled that life and literature are not at all cut and dried. Possibly the short answer is that Mr. Ismail is baffled, period.

Ms. D. Perera

Colombo 5.

(More letters on page 24)

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COVER PICTURE

Peasants of Moneragala uprooting the sugar cane nursery of a multinational firm at Kivulyaya.

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The second ceasefire — who will play monitor ?

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

For the first time, the Government appeared to be taking the military initiative. The unilateral extension of the cease-fire announced by the National Security Ministry preceded a hard punch militarily on the highly explosive and strategic Trincomalee front. The situation in the Trinco area was so sensitive that President JR himself described it as a "war".

According to official accounts, corroborated by reporters who visited the area on a special heli-

copter ride, several rebel hideouts in the outskirts of Trinco were taken in a helicopter-supported combined services operation. Evidently, the Nilaweli beach resort area which had effectively come under rebel attack and subsequently their day-to-day control, was cleared of armed separatists who were earlier moving about freely. (The F.T. report by Alain Cass, published in the last issue of the L.G. set the scene vividly).

While there have been other operations which indicate an army much more ready than earlier to take the offensive, it is neither these operations nor any accidental confrontations or skirmishes which are decisive. With both sides publicly pledged to a cease-fire, an all-out battle can be ruled out. The only significance, if at all, is that one side or the other — and in this instance, it is plainly the government — does not want the military balance changed except in its own favour, as the other "battle" enters a new phase.

The parallel battle in this protracted, unconventional war, is of course the political-diplomatic. It is vital because it involves, more and more directly now than indirectly, a third force — not just another South Asian state but the region's paramount power, India.

Having watched an unexpectedly demonstrative Tamilnadu response over the deportation of three Sri Lankan expatriate advisers, and seen the protest mobilise wider and wider support to the point of near-total, across-the-board unity, Delhi has chosen to move with a more studied circumspection. To that extent, the Madras-based rebel groups took a gambler's chance that paid off. Delhi will not be dictated to, not certainly in its dealings with a neighbouring

state. But Delhi **will listen more attentively** to the separatist Sri Lankan groups and try to walk the thin red line more carefully.

Hence the confrontation now over conditions, Sri Lanka's 8-point demand and the ENLF's 4 conditions.

These conditions and any total or limited agreement on them must be seen in the context of the declaration objective of the Indian government at this stage. In High Commissioner Dixit's words to have the ceasefire extended, to see that it is effectively sustained and to create the conditions for resumption of negotiations.

It is the ceasefire violations between June 18 and September 18 of course which have put these 'conditions' from the combatants on the agenda. As I see it, the most delicate of these is the demand that the ceasefire be "monitored" by a 'third party' National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali spotted the move at once and appreciated all its implications. An acceptance of a foreign "monitor", with or without Indian participation, would be to concede a very important point diplomatically. Foreign inspection involves sovereignty. Beyond that any Indian participation in "monitoring" the ceasefire may take the logic to the point where a final accord, if any, has to be underwritten by Delhi.

At this highly sensitive stage, the substantive issues are not the immediately important although discussions on these matters, particularly land and settlements, are proceeding. The mechanics of "monitoring" is what's vital right now. And the government, fully alive to its profound implications is thinking about a body of local supervisors consisting of men of eminence and generally acceptable to both sides.

Mulkirigala Postscript

BROTHERLY BUSINESS

"BROTHER ANURA, how nice to see you after the Mulkirigala by-election...my compliments on a fine performance..."

"And how sportmanlike of you, Brother Gamini,...yes, we did well, didn't we...?"

"Of course, Anura dear brother, you did superbly...considering...well ...but your surprise disappoints me ...after all, should party politics divide us who belong to one big family..."

"Not at all, brother, not at all..."

"If our party fails, we must get together and work for the common good, mustn't we, brother?"

"And why not...? After all your father was a deputy minister in my mother's government...bless his dear soul..."

"And your father was Leader of the House in the first UNP regime, wasn't he now...?"

"Of course, and who knows better about the vicissitudes of politics than we politicians, right?"

"That's a big word, brother Anura, but the gods be with you..."

"And with you, dear brother...by the way, how's Prema and Lalith ...the war's going badly, what?"

Give peace a chance — CRD

When the Thimpu talks began in haste in June 1985, a cautious optimism seemed to prevail throughout the country. There was an increasing realisation that the human cost of this conflict required a speedy and effective political solution. After the dismal failure of Thimpu 2 we remain even more confused and uncertain. The ceasefire violations and the inability to negotiate in good faith may lead to an even greater sense of despair and disillusionment.

It is CRD's contention, that whatever the reasons for the militants presence at Thimpu, they have a good faith obligation to negotiate seriously for a peaceful resolution of the present conflict. They owe this not only to the process itself but also to the people of the North and the East. It is they who will ultimately have to bear the brunt of renewed violence and any guerilla group which truly has the interest of its people at heart must give peace, with justice, a chance. Ceasefire violations by some of the groups, killings of Tamil moderates and increased violence directed at the Sinhalese civilian population has displayed an ugly face of the Tamil nationalist movement. It has also provided the government with a justification for increased militarisation and political inaction.

CRD cannot comprehend why, after all these months of violent conflict the government of Sri Lanka should go to the Thimpu talks with the same set of proposals which were rejected in January 1985. This "dilly-daily" approach makes a mockery of the peace process and casts aspersions at the good faith and willingness of the government to negotiate a settlement. A new set of proposals along the lines of regional councils must be presented at the new round of talks. Only speedy, effective and decisive action can break the present deadlock. Thimpu is not a law court. We

are not in search of technical alterations to the present law. What is needed is far-reaching statesmanship along the lines of the Punjab/Assam accords. CRD however acknowledges that the government of Sri Lanka has come a long way by recognising that the militants are de facto representatives of the aspirations of some sections of the Tamil people. The quantum leap made by both the government of Sri Lanka and the militant groups in facing each other at the negotiating table should be capitalised upon to discuss the substantive issues of the devolution of power, the societal role of the various communities, security and regional development.

Given the importance of these negotiations and the possibilities for a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict, ceasefire violations by both sides are only counter-productive for they will only serve to harden attitudes towards a negotiated settlement. Ceasefire violations by Tamil militant groups taking the form of the murder of Tamil parliamentarians and attacks on the Sinhalese civilian population sending many of them fleeing from their homes into refugee camps is a particularly disturbing phenomenon. These violations are the responsibility of the militant groups as a whole and it is not sufficient for the major groups to claim that they are the result of actions taken by breakaway factions. It is the duty of the larger groups to contain these operations and to ensure that peace is maintained during the times of the negotiations. In addition, attacks on Police Stations and on security services only serves to inflame passions and to fuel the cycle of violence.

As for the state security forces, one cannot forget that the August incidents in Vavuniya in particular were the reasons given for the suspension of Thimpu 2. The killing of innocent civilians includ-

This is the text of an appeal by the Committee for Rational Development.

ing the Vavuniya Sarvodaya workers served only to accentuate the conflict and to provide an easy excuse for those who wished to walk away from the negotiating table. This strategy of retribution on the civilian population engaged in by sections of the security services has been one of the important reasons contributing to the intensification of conflict and the radicalisation of the Tamil civilian population. Given its failure in the past and given the fact that Sri Lanka stands condemned in the eyes of the world for the excesses of its security forces, we can only hope that these incidents will be contained and not be allowed to recur.

The refugee problem in Sri Lanka and the diaspora of Sri Lankans throughout the globe is a sad reflection of our shame and inhumanity. No ethnic community has been spared this human tragedy. The cumulative bitterness of these people will fester like sores for many years to come. The greater societal cost and the psychological damage to individuals cannot be remedied so easily. It will take atleast two generations of peace to erase the scars of this war. In the meantime, special policy measures should be formulated and emergency aid must be requested to meet this growing problem. It must also be understood, however that in the end, only a just peace can truly stem this flow of embittered refugees.

Unless a meaningful settlement is negotiated, Sri Lanka will slide into a war of attrition, at the end of which there may be an imposed peace in which no Sri Lankan — whether Sinhalese or Tamil will have a say. No side

(Continued on page 5)

MUSLIMS — NOBODY'S BUDDY BOY?

The all-pervasive national crisis has been presented often and too mistakenly as a Sinhalese-Tamil racial conflict. The ethnic conflict is no doubt the core issue but the crisis has acquired multiple dimensions which have not necessarily explained in terms of the Tamil question.

As the third and the smallest community, the Muslims have fervently hoped as the flames of the conflict spread that they could remain outsiders or at worst a marginally affected observer. The violence that erupted in the East in April put paid to all such wishful thinking. The Muslims were dragged into the national-communal imbroglio. Not for them the luxury of non-alignment!

If the ordinary Muslim in the E.P. was caught in the conflagration, what of the Muslims in the Western and southern seaboard? And what most of all, of the Moslem leadership?

Probably because it was a small community and perhaps because it was the least advanced educationally, the Muslim electorate was more leader-dominated and Colombo-elite controlled than the Sinhalese or the Tamils.

Give peace . . .

(Continued from page 4)

can win this war. The battle currently waging in Trincomalee is only further evidence that prolonging this war can only lead to national devastation. The urgent need is to extend and observe the cease-fire. In addition, the Government must produce a realistic set of proposals which is acceptable to moderate Tamil opinion. The militants, in return, have an obligation to make a good faith commitment to negotiate for a just and peaceful resolution of the present conflict. ●

A strongly business oriented community with social-personal relations within the 'brotherhood' far more founded on 'big family' patronage than the other communities, Muslim politics was directed by two or three partriarchs (Sir Razik Fareed, Sir Mohammed Macan Markar, Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel etc) supported by a rather thin stratum of professionals, lawyers, educators, accountants, doctors and civil servants.

Until the MEP defeated Sir John's UNP in 1956, the Muslims voted solidly with the pre-independence 'umbrella' party of all communities advisedly designated the **United National** party. But then came Badiuddin Mahmud, the Islamic Socialist Front, Mrs. Bandaranaike's 'opening' to the Arab world. The SLFP had now broken the UNP's near-monopolist control.

But that was not the only conflict of interest which produced fissures in the Muslim community. Besides the UNP-SLFP struggle for power, there were other latent sources of division, and these are now becoming more visible, more sharply fissiparous.

First there was the E.P.-S.P. gap. The Colombo-to-Galle Muslims are a trading community, its interests and political opinion dominating the electoral choices of the poorly educated Muslim voter. The means of livelihood of the large majority of the Eastern province muslims is quite different. What is more the E.P. Muslim is a Tamil speaker, while the Muslim of the western seaboard speaks Sinhala.

The CP journal "**Forward**" may, according to some have been a

little bit too forward in its analysis of a "new development among the Muslims of the Eastern province, especially the younger elements, which has the Colombo-based traditional Muslim leadership worried". But it has been correct to focus attention to the "neglected" third community at a time when the problem monopolises the mainstream media's frontpages and its opinion columns.

The **L.G.** has in the meantime found even more newsworthy two incidents at recent public receptions which seems to illustrate the utter confusion in the Muslim leadership and the embarrassment of UNP-SLFP upper echelons. At a reception in honour of the Sri Lankan Ambassador — designate to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Kaleel, the surviving pro-UNP Muslim "god father" (not in the Mafia sense but as the respected elder) astonished and angered the top UNP'ers present including a minister, by saying that the name "Bandaranaike" was better known than Sri Lanka in the Arab world. It is because Mrs. B. bundled out the Israelis, said the UNP's veteran 'Treasurer'. (A note sent up to him urging the old man to wind up was innocently read out by Dr. Kaleel who proceeded to take his own time in doing so!).

At another 3-star (or 4-star) hotel reception for Mrs. B., Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, the veteran SLFP Muslim, found that he was not only no distinguished invitee but a guest of two SLFP Muslims who was made to feel so uncomfortable that he chose not to be present when Mrs. B. praised the work of her Muslim Education Minister.



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India's role in Lankan crisis

PERHAPS never before a foreign-affairs issue has been so badly mishandled as the sudden deportation of three Lanka Tamil leaders from India by the Rajiv Gandhi Government. It has been an amazing piece of thoughtlessness on the part of the Government to have gone in for such a step without pausing to weigh its consequences, pro and con.

What is further intriguing is that the Foreign Office does not seem to take the responsibility for having initiated it. While it will certainly be a matter worth investigating — at least to get an idea of how the present Establishment operates — the fact of the matter is that no matter whoever has suggested the step or carried it out, it is the Prime Minister and Prime Minister alone who will have to take upon himself the onus of this very unwise step in the eyes of the public both at home and abroad.

At one stage it was thought that the move to expel the three Tamil militant leaders was initiated by the Foreign Secretary since it had come to be known that Romesh Bhandari had a rather heated exchange with some of the members of the Tamil delegation at Thimpu at the moment of the adjournment of the second round of talks there last week between the Sri Lanka Government delegation and the team of leaders representing different sections of Tamil opinion in the island. It was however later on made out that the Foreign Secretary did not advise the deportation. The inevitable conclusion follows that in that event this directive has gone out from the Prime Minister's office, and the Prime Minister's office moves only when the Prime Minister himself directs it to do so. At least, that is what the public thinks how things are run at the Centre.

Foreign affairs by its very nature is a complex subject for any Government to handle. It is not

The following is a signed editorial by Nikil Chakravarti, editor of the prestigious Indian journal 'Mainstream'. The editorial entitled "Casual Amateurishness," appeared in the issue of August 31, 1985.

just a question of meeting heads of Governments, delivering post-prandial speeches, holding press conferences and appending signatures to joint declarations. It needs in-depth knowledge of thorny issues, whose complexities have accumulated over years and decades. The very idea of solving problems by cutting the Gordian Knot is a myth and one suspects if Alexander the Great himself could benefit by cutting it since he could not rule over Asia as the prophecy had promised him.

Rash step

The result of this patently rash step on the part of New Delhi is that the public opinion all over the country has been scandalised by it, and not only in Tamil Nadu as some of the Establishment boys seem to belittle it. The shock came as a violation of human rights, since the granting of political asylum is an accepted norm of Indian democracy. Neither Nehru, nor Lal Bahadur Shastri nor Indira Gandhi ever deviated from it. The only exception was Morarji Desai when he pushed Kader Siddiqi out of his hide-out on the border forcing him to flee into Bangladesh. The actual order for deportation has never been issued against any political refugee in India since Independence.

Tamil sensitivity

As for Tamil Nadu, the expulsion of the three Tamil militant leaders has touched off one of the biggest protest demonstrations since independence and for the first time appeared slogans with the call 'Down with Rajiv Gandhi'. It will be small consolation for the Establishment to dismiss the Tamil Nadu demonstrations as only

the handiwork of DMK leader Karunanidhi. In fact, to credit DMK with all that has happened in Tamil Nadu in the last few days — from stoppage of trains to mass meetings and huge processions — would be making it more popular in the public eye than its strength would warrant. Let it be noted that Karunanidhi since the beginning of the Lanka crisis has been demanding that the persecution of Tamils in the island should be raised in international forums particularly in UN, but Indira Gandhi's Government could ward off, if not scotch, the demonstrating its earnestness to the Tamil sufferings by providing hospitality and shelter to the refugees fleeing from persecution in Sri Lanka, and at the same time patiently trying to persuade Colombo to settle the ethnic problem through political negotiations instead of through repression and Army action.

What is the ground for New Delhi to be extra-careful about Tamil sensitivity? The answer is simple and it should not be difficult for any intelligent observer to understand: the fate of Tamil minority population in Sri Lanka is a matter of constant concern for the people in Tamil Nadu in particular. The organic link manifests itself through emotional attachment. Any government in New Delhi which, in the eyes of the Tamil people, ignores or underplays the problem of Lanka Tamils is bound to lose its credibility in Tamil Nadu itself.

The problem of Tamil minority in Sri Lanka is therefore multi-dimensional for India. Indira Gandhi understood this point as soon as the violent anti-Tamil pogrom broke out in Sri Lanka in July 1983. She not only permitted an estimated one lakh Tamil refugees to come in from Sri Lanka — as any civilised government would have done as a matter of human rights for political fugitives from

ethnic persecution — but took up their case with the Lanka Government itself.

It was mainly through painstaking efforts by the Indira Government offering its good offices — through the Parthasarathi mission — that an All-Party round table could be called in December 1984 at Colombo in which despite provocations the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) seriously engaged itself to hammer out a reasonable settlement. Out of these confabulations emerged what has come to be known as Annexure C (elected regional councils in the Northern and Eastern provinces with substantial powers). But the Jayawardene Government playing Jekyll and Hyde backtracked and the conference approach ended in a bitter deadlock. Followed large-scale anti-Tamil offensive of 1984-85 the target this time being the traditional Tamil homelands in the northern and eastern provinces.

State terror

Meanwhile the Lanka security forces have been revamped with the help of the former British SAS personnel known for their brutal record as also by bringing in Israel's Shin Bet agency. The offensive of the security forces this time has been to strike terror in the Tamil population in which thousands of innocent people were killed or maimed, many more left homeless and persecuted. Today Sri Lanka has become the happy hunting ground of mercenaries from the West while Sinhala terror commandos have been receiving training from various outside agencies, including US and Pakistan.

As the refugee influx posed serious problem for India and tension naturally mounted in Tamil Nadu, Rajiv Gandhi's summit with Sri Lankan President in June held out the prospect of Colombo offering a quantum of autonomy to the Tamil regions which would be in line with what the States in India enjoy in relation to the Centre. It was on the basis of this understanding and also the maintenance of ceasefire that India could persuade the various Tamil militant groups to join along with TULF in peaceful negotiation with

Sri Lanka Government delegation at the Bhutanese capital of Thimpu. But when the conference opened the Lanka official delegation had nothing more to offer than District Councils with some powers — a position which had already been rejected at the All-Party Conference in December 1984. This provoked the Tamil militant groups to reiterate their original demands which included the recognition of Tamils as a distinct nationality with the right of self-determination. At this point the Indian Foreign Secretary's intervention led to the adjournment of the conference thereby preventing its total collapse.

When the second round of Thimpu talks opened this month, the Lanka side had little substantial to offer while the cease fire was violated by the security forces with impunity — which Rajiv Gandhi himself had to publicly criticise. This Sri Lankan provocation would have totally destroyed the prospect of further talks but for another intervention by the Indian Foreign Secretary, which in a very precarious manner has kept up the prospect of further talks. At the moment, the special emissary from Colombo, Hector Jayawardene has been drawn into threadbare discussions in New Delhi to hammer out an official Lankan stand which might help to persuade the Tamil militants to return to the conference table. Hector Jayawardene seems to be engaged in filibustering, as one newspaper not hostile to Colombo, has invested him and his team with the qualification of having made "a fine art of again and again presenting rejected goods in brand new packaging."

It was in this background that the deportation orders were served on three Tamil militant leaders. At a time when India may be called upon to patiently persuade the Tamil side to consider positively whatever could emerge from New Delhi's talks with Hector Jayawardene, it was obviously a tactical blunder on the part of the Government to go in for this precipitate action, since it would hamper its power of persuasion — without the least streak of bullying or hectoring —

to get the Tamil group to return to the conference table provided of course the Hector parleys produce something tangible.

It is argued in some circles in New Delhi that the three deported Tamil leaders are the hardliners in the militant camp and therefore their exclusion would not be undesirable. This is strange logic, for the Government's deportation orders have invested the three with a halo which otherwise they could not possibly have acquired. If they were taking a hardline, it could be combated not by the Government of India but by other Tamil leaders using their influence on the Tamil populace.

JR a prisoner?

The impression has gained ground that the three Tamil leaders were deported with a view to placating the Sri Lanka Government. In fact, the Lanka National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, has almost confirmed this impression by his statement on the episode. No doubt the Jayawardene Government has long been pressing for such a step — and it is not difficult to understand why it has been keen on it. For, it knows that only by such a step it can drive a wedge between New Delhi and the Tamil leaders — an objective which it has long been trying to reach.

In New Delhi, there prevails a theory that among all the Sinhala leaders, President J. R. Jayawardene alone would be amenable to deliver the goods. This myth has been sedulously cultivated by J. R. J. himself from the very first round of the crisis in July 1983. With more than one Indian emissary, he pleaded his helplessness while feigning sympathy for the Tamil minority and its grievances. During Indira Gandhi's time, while such pleas were politely listened to, New Delhi's approach was never based on such an assessment of the Lanka political scene. On this count, there appears to be good ground for believing that a slightly different approach is being followed today, the prevailing impression being that J. R. J. is India's best bet in Sri Lanka. The Lanka side has tried to hoodwink the Indian side by J. R. J.'s constant theme that he is but a prisoner of circumstances, a ready prey for

(Continued on Page 24)

THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

Nihal Perera

The recent picketing at the 'Mahaweli Ministry' in Colombo together with the well-publicised Moneragala campaign and the anti-water-tax agitation have today propelled the peasant movement to the centre-stage of Sri Lanka politics. It is my intention in this note to examine some aspects of this phenomenon.

At the very outset it must be emphasised that it is the continuous lull in the trade-union movement which gives peasant agitational activity added weight. But this is nothing new. Last year it was the University students who had to carry the mantle, which they did in heroic fashion. And while the 'enemy Minister' (who quite literally turned his guns at the students and heralded the International Year of the Youth by launching a vicious attack on their basic rights) spat-out congratulatory messages as a special invitee to the Moscow Youth festival, the baton passed to and was grasped firmly by the peasants.

The slumber of the working-class movement deserves deeper scrutiny than can be afforded here. It can however be said that the urban trade-union movement has yet to recover from the body-blows it received at the ill-planned, ill-timed strike of July '80. Even the closure of the Wellawatte Textile Mill, the nursery of most of the leaders of our old-left, failed to bring the badly disoriented unions together. Presently a number of "trade-union centres" function parallelly, the better-known duo of which are the '**21 Union Committee**' and '**Committee for 11 demands**'. Neither of these poses any real challenge to the government and their furious tug-of-wars sometimes have a tragicomic air about them. In fact

this competition can even be said to have one beneficial result. It has been noted that the relatively more active small-motor (11) often functions as the activator of the spluttering big-motor (21)! This year for example, rival Somapala-Kandasamy commemorative meetings were held by the two on consecutive days in Colombo. The only time the 21 ventured on to the streets was on 16th July (picketing for 80 July strike victims) just the day before the 11 did the same! This however was a relatively tame affair and was ignored by the police. In fact only 4 of the 21 T. U. centres effectively participated in it — those allied to the **CPSL, NSSP, JVP** and the **Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya (DVJP)**. It should also be noted that the trade unions affiliated to the **LSSP** and **SLMP** keep out of both centres.

The upsurge in plantation — union activity which was noticeable after mid-1981 too seems to have also ebbed following the successful '84 April strike. In fact the 14 union **Joint Plantation Trade Union Committee's** ('The Puttu Komitu') slumber at a time the plantation-sector is entering a depressionary period is particularly disconcerting. One seriously wonders whether recent political re-alignments of some of the leading unions have anything to do with this sedation.

True there have been spurts of union activity in the city recently but these have been around sectoral — economic demands (e. g: the nurses and the bankers). As to whether the bulk of the working-class would rally around petty-bourgeois segments again after the '80 debacle is a moot point. Much more promising is the possibility of a joint agitational campaign emerging from the ranks of corporation sector workers who are faced with the closure of factories and privatisation. The '**Rakiya Rakaganime**

Eksath Peramuna' (DVJP) and the '**Vurthiya Eksath Kirime Kamituwa'** (NSSP) have begun grass-root campaigns here but it is too early to predict whether these would flower into effective movements.

Topography of peasant movement

IT IS against this background that the upsurge in peasant agitational activity should be viewed. In order to comprehend fully the activities in this sphere it would be helpful to observe initially the 'organisational-structure' of the movement.

The major peasant organisations have today succeeded in forging a single centre and this is no mean achievement. The short history of the **Joint Committee of Peasant Federations** has indeed been stormy but today it unites the following organisations: Govijana Maha Sabbawa, Sri Lanka Jathika Govi Sammelanaya (allied to the CPSL), Samastha Lanka Govi Sammelanaya, Sri Lanka Krushikarmiyinge Maha Sangamaya (LSSP), Govijana Sammelanaya (NSP), Sri Lanka Mahajana Govi Sammelanaya (SLMP), Sri Lanka Nidahas Govi Sammelanaya (SLFP), Heladiaa Govi Sammelanaya (MEP) and Samajawadi Govijana Sangamaya (JVP). The Govijana Maha Sabhawa which together with the CP's federation functions as the joint convenor of the Committee is linked to the DVJP. It however has a broader mass-base as is evidenced by the fact that its president is A. M. Jinadasa (SLFP) the well-known peasant organiser and former parliamentarian who hails from the Anuradhapura district. The leading activists in the Samastha Lanka Govi Sammelanaya are linked to **Janatha Sangamaya** and the Naya Lanka Communist Party (NLCP) through this Federation too has representatives of a number of other political groupings. It would thus be seen that the JCPF has succeeded in bringing together virtually all the oppositional political streams.

Nihal Perera, Secretary of the Peoples Party of National Liberation (DVJP) is also the chief organiser of Govijana Maha Sabha, and President of the Sri Lanka Mine Workers' Union.

In addition to this 'parent body' there exist two issue-oriented fronts which act in close liason with it. There is firstly the **Jathika Jala-badhu Virodhi Kamituwa** which coordinates the anti water-tax agitation in the villages and cities. The **Monaragala Govijana Sahayogitha Kamituwa**, formed to fight the grant of land to a multi-national company for sugar-cane cultivation, is the other front.

The current phase of our peasant movement goes back to 1976 when a special session of the pioneering Samastha Lanka Govi Sammelanaya was held at Polonnaruwa. At the open seminar held at its conclusion, it was decided to launch a vigorous campaign to revive the peasant movement which lay badly shattered as a result of the repression which followed the 1971 youth uprising. This seminar, which was chaired by the doyen of Lanka's peasant movement, **Ariyawansa Gunasekere**, is indeed of historic significance. The process of revival and reorganisation had features both of positive and negative nature leading to a number of splits and internal clashes. But it can be truthfully said that virtually all our peasant organisers emerged out of the red-cap Ariwansa often wore in the same sense that (as Dostoevsky once said) all Russian writers came out of Gogol's 'overcoat'.

Recent history

The history of the peasant movement since there is best sketched by listing the major agitational campaigns. The march of the Aralaganwila peasants through the streets of Colombo to hand over a petition to the President's office relating to the problems faced by them as a result of the '79 cyclone can best serve as the starting point. This was followed by a public meeting at De Mel Park. The campaign conducted by the **Govijana Maha Sabhawa** against the grant of 24,000 acres of land in the Mahaweli and Maduru Oya region to a multi-national culminated with a picketing campaign opposite the Malaysian High Commission in 1981 which attracted even international attention. This together with the the joint-campaign led by the Govijana Maha Sabhawa against the proposal to hand over

the phosphate deposit at Eppawela to a U.S. multi-national yielded positive results. A few months before the '82 Presidential elections a joint demonstration to hand over a petition to the president a number of peasant grievances was aborted when the police cordoned off the G.C.S.U. from where it was to have commenced. A public rally was however held in the city on this day.

The bill in peasant organisational activity after 1983 was broken by the anti water-tax agitation which commenced at a time when the Left was reeling under the blows inflicted on it by the government after the communal disturbances. This movement has since blossomed into a national campaign linking the cities and the villages. Regional anti-water tax committees function today in Colombo, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kurunegala, Ratnapura, Hambantota and Moneragala. The government and the real authors of this tax, the I.M.F., have openly admitted that its collection has flopped in the first year. The government seem hell-bent on going ahead with the tax and has already begun to disconnect water in Colombo, haul non-paying peasants before Magistrates Courts and even set-up special 'water-tax courts'. The agitational campaign too is getting intensified with protest meetings, demonstrations, satyagraha campaigns etc. being reported from the Mahaweli 'H' area, Maho, Kurunegala, Hambantota etc.

Wellassa

The peasant agitation which has received most publicity recently is the campaign opposing the leasing of over 12,000 acres of land in the Moneragala district to a multi-national for cultivation of sugar-cane. This campaign which began with a joint meeting at Siyambal-anduwa too has now grown into a national movement. The May Day procession, and the satyagraha campaign at the Moneragala Kacheri by Buddhist monks has considerably intensified this struggle. In fact early this month, peasants threatened with dispossession of land marched into the sugar-cane nursery of the foreign company situated at Kiwulyaya and uprooted a part of it. (See cover pic)

Another section of the nursery was reported to have been destroyed by fire later. Things are indeed hotting up in Wellassa.

The demonstration in Colombo on 11th September was organised by the Joint Committee of Peasant Federations primarily to focus attention on the water-tax and Moneragala issues. It was originally planned for 12th August — Hartal day. But when it was postponed for a number of reasons to September, the scope of the demonstration was widened to cover the demands of the nurses, bankmen and State Corporation workers faced with privatisation. This was indeed a significant development which greatly contributed towards its success. The hundreds of peasants, city-workers, plantation workers, Buddhist priests, women and political activists who slipped through the massive riot-police cordon thrown around the city on the 11th shouted a multiplicity of slogans. The placards they held aloft at the Mahaweli Ministry protested at the injustices perpetrated on dry-zone peasants, hill-country plantation workers, B.C.C. workers and the fighting bank clerks.

The left

VIEWED from the perspective of the history of our Left movement the peasant upsurge is significant. It is an admitted fact that the old-left failed to gain a major foot-hold in our villages; except in a handful of pocket-boroughs like Akuressa, Avissawella, Ruwanwella, Kalutara. For a group of parties that was immersed in parliamentary politics this naturally meant political suicide. The UNP right from the beginning — then the SLFP completely out-foxed the old-left in this field. When this left degenerated into coalition — politics in the '60's they had virtually accepted their 'tailist' junior-partner position in relation to the SLFP. One may contrast this with the position of the Indian CP (Marxist) which while dabbling in parliamentary and coalition politics manages to lead electoral alliances in West Bengali Kerala and Tupra thanks largely to its Kisan Sabha movement in these states.

(Continued on Page 11)

Colombo : Drugs and debauchery

A building contractor is working by floodlight in a drive to open Colombo's first strip-tease hotel and bring the city nearer becoming one of Asia's top sex capitals to rival Bangkok. Sri Lanka traditionally has been sold to foreign visitors as a paradise island, with dusky village maidens smiling out of glossy brochures. Today the focus is on boys as well as girls — indeed, Colombo's known male prostitute population far exceeds females.

With cheap drugs and high society gambling too, the city is heavily advertised in European travel magazines offering package sex tours. The preoccupation of the police with Tamil militancy and lax prostitution laws have meant little opposition to the trend, which has boosted the inflow and use of drugs such as LSD, heroin and cocaine. The country is now a key transit point for narcotics flowing from producing countries to European and American consumers. With normal drug trafficking routes disrupted by the war in

Afghanistan, most narcotics from Afghanistan and Pakistan reach the West via Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan drug squad detectives say some 600 kg (1,350 lb) of cannabis alone reach the United States annually from the Indian Ocean island. Large consignment of heroin, cocaine and cannabis have been intercepted in the Port of Colombo over the past few years.

But Colombo's new boom industry is sex. In a tourist resort area about 25 km south of the city, police found that one in every six hotel employees was a male prostitute. Sociologists estimate the island has around 15,000 male prostitutes; police records say there are 1,500 in Colombo alone. Police investigating the murder of an elderly Briton discovered the existence of a homosexual society formed in England for men past retirement age. At least 30 were living in Sri Lanka on permanent residence visas. Complaints about the men's activities are seldom investigated, since the foreigners buy off the police or any complainant.

An international homosexual guidebook, "Spartacus", published in West Germany, described Sri Lanka as a "Gay Paradise" and listed street names, locations and telephone numbers for homosexual contacts.

Health authorities in Colombo, which has a population of 500,000 fear an outbreak of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Some 16,000 people a month currently seek treatment in government and private hospitals for sexually-transmitted diseases, including an advanced strain of genital herpes. An investigation by the weekend "Sun" newspaper revealed that top fashion models, high society married women, schoolboys and rugby players were "on call 24 hours" in many of Colombo's top tourist hotels. Male and female prostitutes were graded to cost from SL RS. 100 to SL RS. 3,000 (\$3.75 to \$110). The newspapers claimed six high class gambling clubs employed waiters and waitresses who became available for paid sex after midnight.

Police deputy inspector-general Heema Weerasinghe said the police department was not to blame for the situation. "We have very limited resources, and most of our men are busy investigating more serious crime," he said. Our inquiries into petty crimes are superficial because only a very limited number of persons are available for routine crime and vice investigation, and they have far too many cases to handle."

Prostitution has traditionally been a minor offence in Sri Lanka — punished with short jail terms, small fines or simply warnings. Police usually charge suspects under the "wrongful gain" section of the Sri Lankan penal code which gives magistrates no choice but to treat defendants leniently.

Last year the authorities authorised the death penalty and life imprisonment for persons convicted of possessing large amounts of narcotics, but neither sentence has yet been imposed.

— Courtesy Compass News Features.

THE PEASANTS'....

(Continued from Page 10)

Various explanations have been given for the parliamentary left's indifference towards the peasantry and these call for deeper study. The immense effort that peasant-organisational work naturally demands in comparison with trade-union work, the early influence of Trotskyism on our left movement and the fact that a good proportion of the leaders were themselves land-owners, are some of the reasons pointed out. Of course, the advent of the welfare-state with its subsidy schemes and the distribution of land through colonisation and village expansion schemes made the objective conditions less favourable for a militant peasant movement. Both the UNP and the SLFP (through land reforms) have consistently worked to create and develop a class of small land-holders who could act as a buffer against

a Naxalite type situation. A study of the UNP's electoral green-belt even today, is classic proof of the success of their parliamentary tactics.

In the context of the rapid disappearance of bourgeois democracy in Sri Lanka all this, of course, is only of historical importance. Parliamentarians whether of the Trotskyist or Stalinist hues, as well as their electoral strategies are no longer of much relevance. The voting-strength of the peasantry is no longer the main factor in our struggle. Similarly, considering the geographical and a number of other factors it is the cities that would undoubtedly grow in importance in the future. This, of course, does not mean that the role of the peasantry is any less important today than it was yesterday. But in mapping out our strategy it should be grasped that while the peasantry is definitely the main force of our revolution, it can never be the leading force.

Will authoritarianism become an economic imperative in Sri Lanka?

Mervyn D. de Silva

*[Dr. de Silva was the Advisor (now retired)
to the Ministry of Plan Implementation]*

Sri Lanka is today in a state of intense crisis faced with a set of serious and complex socio-economic political problems. In this situation no one can be excused from making the most vigorous political, economic, and social analysis of the causes which is an indispensable step towards guiding it on a path that will lead to genuine social stability in the future.

The Silent intelligentsia

Against this backdrop, one of the saddest features of contemporary Sri Lankan life is that bold, rational, logical, and intellectually honest thinking on public issues so closely linked to the very survival of this nation has virtually ceased to exist excepting for a minority of men and women who are prepared to carry the cross, express their views and be damned, branded as enemies of the "Just and Free Society."

Ever since 1977 there have been spasms of violence in this country. Violence to truth, violence to the pen, violence to justice, violence by political design and violence by the gun, the knife and the sword. Yet, all those forms of violence recede in comparative insignificance when viewed against the 'violence' of the silence of the thinking public, a trait that surprisingly seems to be present among a large number of Sri Lankans who are decent, educated, holding high positions in life, gifted with great clarity of thought and sound commonsense, and show great liberalism of outlook.

What has gone wrong with them? How does one explain this phenomenon? How did the mental blocks occur? Why are they so afraid to think straight

and speak out boldly? Why don't they form their opinions and stand firmly with truth even when it is unpleasant to be steadfast in their convictions and be proud of them? After all, they might form a minority but such people are the salt of the earth and in them lies the only hope of preserving democracy in Sri Lanka, the sanity of the Nation and the character of our people. They might reflect on what Coleridge once wrote as far back as 1796 — "in an enslaved state the rulers form and supply the opinions to the people. This is the mark by which despotism is distinguished for it is the power by which despotism is begun and continued."

The Responsibility

It is against this background of a rather depressing national scenario that the decline of democracy in South East Asian countries is looked at to see whether the symptoms of this malady are visible in Sri Lanka today. The time has come when the public, the Heads of the major religions, political and social leaders, and all concerned people should reflect genuinely on what is taking place. They should be courageous enough not to shy away from controversial or provocative positions that are in the best interest of the people of this country.

Experiences of newly independent countries

Sri Lanka was one of the many countries in South, South East, and West Asia that received political independence by the end of World War II. After these countries broke off connections with the colonial rulers, a few of them adopted the socialist model while most of them opted for

the political model of parliamentary democracy. During the past two decades however, with the exception of Japan, India, and Sri Lanka thus far, all political systems based on the Westminster pattern or American style of democracy vanished and was replaced with authoritarianism, dictatorial rule, or one party government.

In terms of economic systems, many of the new nations encouraged by the writings of Karl Marx who blamed their poverty on colonial exploitation, adopted the communist system in the hope of bringing about massive improvements in the living standards of the people. Since the expectations did not materialise many of them abandoned socialism and centrally planned economies and took to capitalism and open economy systems.

Although the shift from democratic political systems to authoritarian rule was accompanied by a shift towards open economies, most governments however did not revert back to the original political system of parliamentary democracy.

The death of democracy

The decline of democracy in these countries cannot be explained as a coincidence because most of them inherited distinctly different social and cultural traditions and patterns of government. Evidence seem to support a view that most of these countries took on Authoritarian forms of government and remain so primarily on economic grounds. The model of Development adopted by Sri Lanka in 1977 and the political, administrative, and constitutional changes that followed give ample room to ask the question — Is authoritarianism becoming an economic imperative?

And what are the noticeable symptoms that have shown up.

Why is authoritarianism an economic imperative?

When the newly emerged nations severed connections with the imperial powers, sooner or later they got entangled in the new alignments and regional groupings that were formed because of the involvement of the two super powers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union in these parts of the world, and the commercial penetration of the region by the Japanese. The new alignments and alliances when examined in depth not only indicate the actual interests of the leaders (usually to remain in power), but also the influence of these political powers. Thus, the new alliances and alignments came to play an important role in the emergence and perpetuation of Authoritarian regimes in the region.

The consequence of authoritarian rule

With the shift in economic policies and the erosion of democracy the authoritarian Asian rulers obtained an unhealthy monopoly of power. The consequences of placing absolute power in the hand of one man or one party with a transnationalised economy has achieved a "development" that is diametrically opposite to the simple aspirations of the vast mass of people. This is well summarised in an article by M Arruda entitled Program of Transnational Corporations under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. "The on-going transnationalisation of the economy which we consider to be responsible for the decline of democracy in Asia, imposes new definitions of the functions of Asian societies in terms of security and stability, and at the same time deprives them of their sovereign political and economic character and democratic nature. It consequently accentuates the banishment of the masses from political power, the destruction of democratic institutions and the violation of human rights, and reduces the politico military apparatus of the state to an instrument of social control and internal repression to guarantee

success of this exclusive economic model."

Stability and investment

Many of the countries that fall into this category followed the economic prescriptions of the World Bank and accepted total dependence. Thus in order to entice foreign investment which is a part of the package of strategies, many changes were brought about in their Constitutions, laws, and policies to ensure a climate of social stability, a prerequisite that aid donors and investors look for. Further, Asian Leaders themselves know that the Western democracies ironically always favour strong Right wing authoritarian regimes in the matter of Aid and Investment.

Cheap Labour

In an interesting study by Cheryl Player of the South Korean export miracle it was shown that the proposed economic model did not require a monopoly of power nor unrestrained investment but it needed a strict control over wages and trade unions and the prohibition of strikes. Cheap labour is the most attractive incentive for foreign investors because "Cheap labour and raw material are the incubators of new wealth for the already wealthy".

Changes in Sri Lanka

In 1977, falling in line with this requirement Sri Lanka apparently began to clear the ground for foreign investors in the form of some guarantees. It dismissed one and a half lakhs of public servants who participated in the general strike, thirty (30) of whom have committed suicide. Their demand was a pay rise of only Rs 300/-, a fraction of the massive salary increases given subsequently to members of the extended parliament of 1983. However the curtailment of trade union activities continued with special treatment shown to those Unions that supported the government. They were able to strike and demand pay rises without being harassed, intimidated, and assaulted. Others, function as paramilitary forces (private armies) to crush the strikes organised by brother trade unions, and/or to clamp down or "erring" intellectuals, Judges of the Supreme

Court, and political opponents. They are given licence to resort to violence, use public equipment even under the very eyes of the guardians of the law who turn a blind eye because they have to guard themselves against reprisals for doing their duty! Can all these adjustments, such unhealthy adjustments benefit Sri Lanka in the long run?

Excuses invoked for Authoritarian rule

Nobody will ever believe that Asian leaders have rejected democratic forms of government only because of alleged external and internal challenges by communists, naxalites, or militant minorities. Yet, this is the most commonly invoked reason by those taking on dictatorial powers. The postponement of the general elections in 1983 because of fictitious naxalites and substituting it with a referendum, the unfairness of which is well documented, falls into this category of excuses.

Modus Operandi

When threats such as these are presented an extra-ordinary dangers which justify extraordinary measures national defence invariably becomes national security. The experiences of some of the authoritarian Asian countries show that this was how they started. Military values infiltrate and permeate the entire civil administration and society with the inevitable outcome of military rule or some form of dictatorship. Many of the countries that adopted the open economy model of development carte blanche were faced with massive popular unrest sooner or later caused by economic unfairness that never understood the links between hunger and poverty, corruption, waste, inefficiency, and unequal distribution of the benefits of so called development etc. and were compelled to resort to repressive means of keeping the people down. No wonder any opposition to corporate or foreign interests become a matter for the police and anyone who questions the development model is automatically treated as a subversive. Thus, popular unrest for whatever reason has to be repressed by whatever means in order to

(Continued on page 24)

Good for capitalists, bad for economy

V. Moonesinghe

So the Government strategy of export-led industrialisation does not appear to have been a success. In fact it might be argued that the Government has not been very good at managing the economy. On the other hand, it might be argued that, from the point of the classes represented by the UNP, the performance of the Government has been quite satisfactory. This point of view merits attention.

Undoubtedly, the capitalist class has benefited from the Open Economy. Between 1973 and 1981/82, the highest quintile income earners increased its share of total income from 46% to 57%, and the real mean income of this section rose by 120%. (17) Although the growth of industry has not been satisfactory, there is evidence that industrialists have been shifting their capital into trade, banking and real estate. The greatest beneficiaries, as indicated by the figures relating to value added, have been those engaged in the import trade and in construction.

The scale of state investment in capital intensive infrastructural projects beyond the capacities of local industry has meant an open market for foreign tenders. Vast fortunes have been built up in tendering for government contracts, especially for the supply of materials. Associated with this has been growing corruption, with an estimated third of the money invested in the Mahaweli Project alone being lost as graft.

Dependent bourgeoisie

It is the small industrialists who require protection for their industries to grow, and this is opposed by the vested interests that have benefited from the Open Economy. For it should not be forgotten that the ruling class of Sri Lanka

is ultimately a dependent bourgeoisie, and in the past few years this dependence has grown. It has, in fact grown so much that the fortunes of the capitalists, indeed the growth of the economy, has come to rest entirely on foreign aid. By 1983, foreign resources accounted for 43% of investment, almost twice the proportion in 1978. (18) Hence, the dictates of foreign capital have to be obeyed, even to the detriment of national development. The policy adopted by the Government, albeit willingly, is that imposed by the World Bank.

In the words of the finance minister, 'protective barriers make inefficient sectors attractive and lead to a misallocation of resources... it is in the country's interest to ensure efficient allocation of resources by developing only those import substitution industries that are competitive'. (19) Experience in other countries has shown that it is virtually impossible to establish import substitution industries without protection. Furthermore, the efficiency of an industry cannot be measured purely in commercial terms, which the Government appears to recognise in its de facto subsidization of exports. However, by making efficiency a criterion for establishing import substitution, the path is left open for industrialisation in areas where the high labour input and distance from the market and from raw materials makes it less feasible for imports to compete, for example in rubber goods and other agro-based industries. The areas which have been singled out for investment are animal husbandry (specifically milk production), agriculture (specifically sugar), fisheries and the processing of traditional export crops. (20) It is significant that three of the projects earmarked in 1985 for aid by the World Bank deal with the Dairy Industry, Agriculture and Rubber growing and processing (21) and that the sugar industry is being handed over to multinationals. Of

especial interest to the World Bank has been the tree crop sector of the national economy. It has initiated no less than five programs for the rehabilitation of this sector, particularly in Tea and Rubber.

The reasoning behind the actions of the World Bank becomes clear once it is set in the context of the world economic situation. One aspect of the 'Third Technological Revolution' since the end of the Second World War has been the concentration of both production and consumption in the rich industrial nations, to the exclusion of the old colonial linkages. The end of this period of expansion saw the relative contraction of the market in these countries, specifically with the recession that started around 1979, and a reversal of the aforementioned trend.

Sharp fall

The average annual growth of private consumption in the industrialised market economies fell from 4.3% in 1960-70 to 2.7% in 1970-82, including a sharp fall in 1978-82. The growth rate of imports, too, fell from 9.5% to 4.3%. The relative contraction of the home markets in the metropolitan countries was compounded by a contraction of the East European non-market economies' imports from the West. The share of the Industrial Market Economies in their own exports remained steady at around 67% between 1960 and 1978, but fell marginally to 66% by 1982. (22) In this situation, the developing nations became an important market. Hence, the World Bank's strategy in relation to Sri Lanka can be seen to be one of developing a market for the exports of the industrialised countries. The development of the primary goods sector of production is clearly a means for financing these imports, as well as providing cheap raw materials for the industrial countries. The concentration on the energy sector shows a dual purpose: while development of power provides a large market for imported electrical goods, the

construction of dams and power stations provides a market for companies specialising in these aspects of production. The latter is particularly so in a situation where energy consumption growth in the industrial countries has fallen from 5.3% in 1970-74 to 1.1% in 1974-81. (23)

It is therefore apparent that the foreign bourgeoisie, whose interests are served by such institutions as the World Bank, have reasons to be well pleased by the Government's handling of the Sri Lankan economy. However, after the initial burst forward, certain effects of Government policy have emerged that might prove to be to the detriment of these interests in the longer term.

Increasing inequality

Firstly, there has been a deterioration in the level of equality that had been achieved by the 1970s. 'Viewing the island as a whole, real mean incomes rose rapidly between 1973 and 1978/79 and more slowly thereafter. Real median incomes rose between 1973 and 1978/79 and fell consequently, largely reflecting the very substantial fall witnessed in the estate sector. The ratio of median to mean income has fallen steadily since 1973, reflecting a worsening of income distribution in the island over the last decade.'

(24) This meant, of course, an increase in the market for imported goods, since the poorer sections cannot afford these goods in any case, so their incomes remaining stable or declining does not affect this market seriously. On the other hand, it causes problems of a political nature, since expectations cannot be fulfilled and frustrations increase. This inhibits the further development of the Open Economy. According to the latest World Bank report, further policy changes are difficult to implement due to the volatile nature of the domestic situation and economic projections are more than normally uncertain because of current social and political tensions in the country. (25)

This increase in inequality has been accompanied by a deterioration of nutritional standards, so that the proportion of households with an inadequate intake of calories had reached 50% in the

urban sector, 43% in the rural sector and 38% in the estate sector by 1980/81. (26) There has been a corresponding decline in welfare services, particularly in health. The outcome of this is a serious deterioration in productivity. Even the expansion of private health services cannot compensate for the income lost. This decline in productivity can cause serious problems in the sectors which the World Bank expects to provide the market for imported goods.

The Government's policy in relation to the infrastructure, too, has created serious imbalance. The state transport services have been allowed to deteriorate, with the result that there has been a proliferation of private vehicles. The road system has neither been expanded to provide for the increase nor been maintained to the level that the extra load necessitates. This leads to a decrease in efficiency both in transport, due to lost time and to damage to equipment, and in the economy as a whole, due to inefficient transport. In the energy sector, most of the investment has gone into the generation of power, while distribution has been neglected, leading to frequent breakdowns.

Destruction?

These factors, while not important individually, can add up in such a way as to impose a severe level of friction on the progress of the economy, and hence on the growth of the import market. This has apparently been recognised. The Government appears to have decided to concentrate public expenditure on developing the infrastructure that has been neglected, specifically 'needs in power, irrigation, transport and communications and urgent needs in health, education, housing and nutritional standards.' (27)

Foreign capital, obviously, considers its investments in terms of return. Official aid climbed to a peak of \$ 800 million in 1981, but declined thereafter to an average of about \$ 450 million per year. This is expected by the World Bank to rise to about \$ 600 million by 1988, but this does not imply any growth in real terms. (28) So it would

appear that foreign capital has assessed the current level of investment as being that which will ensure an optimum return.

The decrease in foreign aid, combined with the lack of private investment, has meant that in order for the economy to grow, public spending has had to be maintained by increased taxation, mainly in the form of indirect taxes. This has led to a decline in the marginal propensity to consume. (29) The need to bring up the basic infrastructure to a standard that prevents excessive friction could lead to a further deterioration. Hence the decision, given the limitation on the growth of foreign aid, to limit the larger scale projects that were hitherto the motor of growth.

It remains to be seen to what extent the Government can operate within the constraints imposed by the above factors in order to prevent a general breakdown. For it appears that the contradictions arising from the Open Economy may ultimately lead to the destruction of the Open Economy itself.

Notes

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FOREIGN
NEWS

The issue of whether to participate in President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, Star Wars, is dividing university scientists in the U.S. and other Western countries, a group of people widely believed to be vital to the project's success, or failure.

Some academic researchers claim that the Pentagon's \$26bn (£18.8bn) programme is technologically and politically unsound and should be shunned, but others are attracted either by the technical challenges of the project or the large sums of cash it will offer.

The arguments particularly concern scientists in computing, which is perhaps the key area in Star Wars research.

An operational system to defend the U. S. from Soviet missiles would require ultra-fast computers that, with reasoning powers approaching those of humans, would control the sensors needed to track the missiles and the weapons such as rockets or laser beams to shoot them down.

The computers, to do their jobs effectively, might have to deal with millions of instructions about, say, 1,000 Soviet missiles within 10 minutes of the projectiles leaving their launch pads.

The task sounds difficult, some say impossible. This is the view of Professor David Parnas, a leading American computer researcher, who recently resigned from a panel advising the Pentagon on Star Wars after claiming that such computers could never be built.

Prof Parnas, who works at the University of Victoria in Canada, says in particular that the complex instructions (software) for a Star Wars computer would be almost certain to contain errors and so make the system unworkable.

The professor, who has done consulting work for the U. S. Defence Department since 1972,

says he resigned from the panel only after several weeks of wrestling with the technical arguments concerning the research. This convinced him that "the programme is full of sloppy reasoning and opportunism."

Others in the computing community agree with his views, says Prof Parnas, but go along with the research because of the grants that are available or because they are tied to defence contracts and are not free to speak out.

"I quit because this seems to me fraudulent," he says.

Prof Parnas's action has endeared him to some sections of the U. S. research community. A petition organised by the highly-respected physics department at the University of Illinois states that the Star Wars programme is "technically dubious and politically unwise" and could make the whole process of arms control more difficult.

Several hundred scientists, from leading institutions such as Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley and Cornell University have signed the petition. They have undertaken not to apply for or accept money from the Star Wars.

Prof Wolfgang Panofsky, the ex-director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center in California (a leading centre for particle physics), is not against research into defensive systems but thinks that the Star Wars programme's "emphasis on demonstrations of technology and early results" is dangerous.

"I am opposed to the false hope that the current balance of terror may be relieved by defence. I don't like to see statements of policy preceding the technical results."

The organisers of an international software conference in London next week, to be attended by 1,000 people from 35 countries, are organising a special debate on the com-

puter aspects of Star Wars.

Prof Parnas will argue at this gathering that the computer problems are intractable, but Prof Fred Brooks of the University of North Carolina, who was formerly a key worker in software developments at IBM, will put the opposite view.

His arguments are supported by other U. S. computer researchers who point out that the technical advances needed for Star Wars may not be so great as people believe. "We are not going to say it's impossible from the start," says Dr Danny Cohen, from the Information Sciences Institute at the University of Southern California.

Dr Cohen, chairman of the Star Wars computing panel from which Prof Parnas resigned, adds: "We are not sure of anything right now but we aim to gain some insights into the problem over the next five years."

Dr James Lonson, director of the innovative science and technology office of the Pentagon's SDI Organisation, the body masterminding the Star Wars programme, says he has been taken aback at interest the programme has generated in the scientific community.

Dr Lonson's office is dealing with 2,700 requests for funds from universities and small businesses for the \$100m that it has available for the year beginning this October.

The cash allotted to Dr Lonson represents only about 4 per cent of the total the SDI Organisation will spend next year. Most of it will go to big aerospace and defence companies working on technologies that are relatively tried-and-tested. But Dr Lonson thinks the work funded by his division is "fundamentally important to the whole programme."

— "Financial Times" August 22 1985

The elements of a more human focussed approach to adjustment

Richard Jolly

A broader approach to "adjustment with a human face" as one might call it, would involve three things:

First, a clear acknowledgement in the goals of adjustment policy, of concern for basic human welfare and a commitment to protect the minimum nutrition levels of children and other specially vulnerable groups of a country's population.

Second, a broader approach to the adjustment process itself comprising three components:

(a) actions to maintain a minimum floor for nutrition and other basic human needs, related to what the country can in the long term sustain;

(b) re-structuring within health education and other social sectors, to restore momentum and ensure maximum benefits from constrained and usually reduced resources. Already, there are important examples of what can be done to reach all of a country's population, but still at relatively low cost; and restructuring within the productive sectors, agriculture, service, industry to rely more upon the small-scale, informal sector production and to ensure greater access to credit, internal markets and other measures to stimulate its growth.

(c) more international support for the economic necessities of adjustment — by the provision of more finance, flexibly provided and with longer term commit-

ments. The extremes of the present situation will often require a ceiling on outflows of interest and debt amortization, if protection of human needs is to be feasible in the short run.

Thirdly, a system is needed for monitoring nutrition levels and the human situation during the process of adjustment. We should be concerned to assess not only inflation, balance of payment and GNP growth — but also nutrition, food balances and human growth. The proportion of a nation's households falling below some basic poverty line should be of continuing concern, to those involved in adjustment policy, not only to those fighting against it.

Let me note in passing that in respect of disasters, a number of countries with the support of international and national agencies, have already made a start with early warning systems for famine, which focus, in part, on household food security and nutritional indicators. We now need to apply the same concern, not merely to natural disasters, but to the man-made consequences of adjustment, and not merely to warn but also to avert the human consequences which often follow.

I have stressed the need for restructuring **within** the social sectors, in addition to the continued concern with restructuring the economic sectors. Here I must make a general point of fundamental importance. Adjustment policy with a human face will remain a sham — "an attempt to paint a smile

on a face with tears" — if it is seen only as a matter of a change in the macro-economic policy of government. Instead it must be people-focussed adjustment, a more fundamental restructuring — a shift to much greater self-reliance decentralization, small scale production and community action, empowerment of people and households. There are the groups and approaches which in fact provide the goods and services and which generate the incomes for low income groups. These also are the sectors which more often than not are squeezed by adjustment approaches, as conventionally implemented. Yet for sheer cost effectiveness as well as protection for the poor, they are the approaches that matter.

Let me give an example of the type of approach required. Over the last year or two numerous examples have demonstrated how infant mortality can be reduced and child health and welfare can be improved, at a fraction of the cost and a multiplier or effectiveness if people's action and social mobilization are used to apply on a national scale, new technologies including use of the media and enlightened government leadership. As many will know — as I hope all will soon know — this is leading to a dramatic increase in immunization coverage and largely home treatment of diarrhoea by ORT. It has already lead in 1984 to an estimated reduction in child deaths by a million a year. This is already moving the 1990 goal of universal immunization to becoming a feasible reality and not only a distant dream.

This example also illustrates some vital points about adjustment with a human face. It must get down to specifics, both to mobilize public interest and awareness and argue the case with Ministers of Finance and visiting missions — and to carry this through to planning and implementation when it is accepted. Macro economies can provide a supporting frame — but only if community leaders, sector specialists and a host of others are involved, will such an approach work. What are the other areas when alternative approaches exist? They are endless — including most of those advocated by community activists, basic needs proponents, appropriate technology enthusiasts etc. In health, housing, small scale agriculture, water, local manufacture of clothing, transport. Across virtually the whole field of basic needs, relevant low cost approaches exist.

In addition, community leaders and sector specialists need to present their case in ways which show its importance for the goals of adjustment. UNICEF has found that the most compelling arguments for ORT, with the doctors who control hospitals, is that ORS costs six cents a time instead of \$50 for intravenous feeding. ORT thus brings a dramatic reduction in hospital expenditure. It is thus possible to combine adjustment to cost and foreign exchange restrictions **and to expand coverage and impact.**

To show the possibility for doing more is the first step to winning political support. At the moment the tough people-oppressing features of many adjustment policies are often supported because the people involved see little alternative. If alternatives are made clear in specific terms, and with cost tags attached, instructions to make them possible may often prove desirable. There is a political pay off from action which visibly benefits the majority — which can be an important force for change.

There is also a critical need to restructure expenditure and reduce the resources flowing to the armaments and the military. Armaments and military expenditures are probably the greatest single area of neglect in both economic develop-

ment analysis and adjustment policy. For all the constraints of foreign exchange and the tough out-backs forced by adjustment in the majority of countries, military expenditure has been rising, at least until 1984. In some cases, the increase in military expenditure is greater than the cut-backs in health, in education resources. Moreover, as Barbra so eloquently and so frequently pointed out, military expenditure is the greatest inflationary factor in the modern world. Military expenditure adds to the difficulties of adjustment and often defeats its purpose. Its enormous use of national resources, especially foreign exchange, for producing a product which cannot be sold and no one buys makes it a prime force for increasing taxation, inflation or debt, and often all of them. And the impact of growing armaments is not only on increasing risk and insecurity but in adding to domestic repression and violence.

There are also more intimate links between adjustment policy and rising military expenditures, most clearly shown in Latin America. Over the last years, most Latin American countries have moved dramatically and mostly democratically to elections and elected governments. These moves still rest on a fragile base, with a new need for those in power to maintain support from the electorate, often with the military still waiting in the wings. The cut-backs and constraints of adjustment on incomes and social expenditures on basic services for the majority hardly makes this an easy task, as a number of recent examples make only too clear. In this world of tight economic constraints, the choice between cutting military expenditure and cutting health education and other basic services becomes an increasingly direct and evident trade-off. Yet with measures of collective action, regional or global towards greater security, these conflicting interests might even be turned to encourage some measure of reductions in military spending.

An example of human focussed adjustment — Britain during World War II:

British experience during World War II provides an example — not

of the specifics of incorporating concerns in an adjustment programme — but of the fact that it can be done even in extreme circumstances and concurrently and successfully with adjustment measures. The adjustment problem, faced by Britain during the war, was to reduce imports very drastically, restructure industry and the economy for the war effort. All had to be done very rapidly, for a war originally thought to last no more than 18 months. Unlike the 1st World War and earlier, protection of the nutritional status of the whole of the British population was made an integral and conscious part of the adjustment process, (as it was also in a number of other countries). Nutritional needs were defined for each group of the population; babies, young children, older children and adults, pregnant and lactating mothers and so forth. At Churchill's direction, no distinctions were made between different groups of the population, except on the basis of physiological needs. Churchill indeed at times explained and defended the programme in Parliament, summing it all up on one occasion with the memorable phrase: "There is no finer investment than putting milk in babies" — an early and eloquent examples of the human capital argument. (If UNICEF had had a hand in the drafting, we would no doubt have pointed out that milk from mothers is always preferable to milk from tin cans).

Before leaving this example, let me make three points about these experiences:

First, it shows there is nothing theoretically or operationally impossible in combining an adjustment programme and the objectives and measures required to protect the nutritional status and basic consumption needs of a country's population.

Secondly, the British experience was remarkably successful. By the end of the 2nd World War, in spite of all the hardships and constraints, the nutritional status of the British population was better than ever before in British history and probably as good as or just possibly even better than today.

Thirdly, and this is a point Barbara herself would surely have stressed, it provides a superb example of what the vision and practical leadership of a few people can achieve.

One key figure in this case was Jack Drummond, a businessman, scientist and expert in nutrition, who was appointed a month or two after the war had begun to be responsible for de-contamination of food from poisonous gas — a hark-back to the gas fears of the 1st World War. Within three months, Drummond had, however, re-defined his job to be concerned with protecting the nutritional status of the whole of the British population — a much bolder and most fundamental task. That, as Barbara might have said, was an example of real vision and scientific initiation.

Another key figure was Lord Woolton, the Minister of Food, who provided the political leadership and advocacy, in parliament and outside. Later to become Chairman of the Conservative Party, his inspiration and human concerns had grown out of earlier experiences working in the Liverpool slums. The professionalism of the whole programme was heavily influenced by Woolton's scientific background and the small circle of top professional scientists he gathered around him.

The whole programme was built on a framework of professionalism and science, turned to the protection of basic needs. Keynes in the background provided the macro-framework for combining a policy for maintaining minimum consumption needs with the pressing claims of resources and government expenditure for the war effort — and setting all within a pragmatic combination of government planning and the use of market forces. Those with an admiration for creative journalism might note that the essential elements of all these were briefly set out in three articles by Keynes in the London Economist, published in the early 1940's, under the title "How to pay for the War".

So it can be done — and professionals, like those of us in SID,

— "the largest non-government professional development organization in the world" — can play a part and perhaps show the vision to take the lead.

Before leaving the historical examples, let me jump 10 years forward to the early 50's and the formative years of the UN. As during the war, and in the early years of the UN, one is struck by the creativity and professionalism of so much of other work. In the UN, it was applied for peace, international economic relations and the early post-war efforts to tackle economic and social development problems. The names of those involved on the economic side conjure up some sense of the

quality of their contributions, though, of course, at the time the reputations of many of these persons had yet to be made.

It is not the names I emphasise but the fact that from this group of people, and others, poured forth a stream of ideas, analyses and proposals which influenced both the international debate and, in time, led in a number of important cases to practical and specific action — the World Bank's IDA and the compensatory export finance facility of the IMF, both proposals made in the UN itself during the 1950's; and, of course, this work led to the creation of UNCTAD.

(To be continued)

"Stop the war, consolidate the peace process" say women

Ten thousand women from all walks of life and from all communities drawn together by deep concern over the worsening communal conflict were moved to sign a joint appeal deploring the loss of life on all sides and calling for peace. They urged a political solution over a military one and called for negotiations involving all parties concerned.

The signature campaign was initiated in December 1984 in the aftermath of the breakdown of the All Party Conference. Beginning with the signature of just eight women, the campaign climaxed on March 8th 1985, International Womens Day, by which date over ten thousand women had signed the appeal. Copies of the signed appeal were sent to the H. E. the President of Sri Lanka, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India.

'Women for Peace' support the recent initiatives towards a negotiated political solution, but are however, deeply distressed that the peace process may be jeopardized by;

1. the recent escalation of violence,
2. a lack of political will and
3. [mischievous propaganda on the part of political formations and groups motivated by opportunism and self interest rather than by genuine concern for the welfare of our country.

Another aspect of the crisis is that an alarming proportion of national income is being wasted on the war effort.

A new dimension has been added to the situation:

The numbers of people of all ethnic groups who have become refugees in their own country are reaching horrific proportions. Whole communities have been uprooted, some of them from homes and livelihoods which have been theirs for generations. This has reached the status of a virtual everyday occurrence. So much so that we have become injured to the fact that there are tens of thousands of Sri Lankans who have been refugees since 1977. They are the forgotten, uncared for unaccounted innocent victims of the accelerated war effort.

Another frightening development has been the increasing number of people, especially youth, detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, some of whom have been detained for 18 months without charge or trial.

We are also gravely disturbed by President Jayewardene's address to the UNP national executive committee on 15 September 1985, stating that "There is a war on in the Trincomalee district." and that "The Government may have to introduce stringent laws which would curb democratic freedom, including the freedom of the press, in the Government's all out war against terrorism."

These developments, in our view will serve not to further but to frustrate the peace process. Instead of war-mongering, all sides should genuinely attempt to observe and extend the ceasefire and create a climate conducive to the negotiation and implementation of a just political solution.

— WOMEN FOR PEACE

17 September 1985

'A REVOLUTIONARY UPHEAVAL IS CALLED FOR'

Tissa Jayatilaka

That Scene II is going to present a vastly changed Clay is noticeable at the very outset. We see him very cozy now in Lula's company. The prim and proper behavior that characterized Clay of Scene I seems a thing of the past. He is no longer on the defensive, no more distant, as he was earlier on, in his present approach to Lula. His tie is open and Lula is hugging his arm. They appear quite relaxed together and seem to be oblivious of those around them. The dramatic atmosphere reminds one of the proverbial calm before a storm, the storm that is to hit us with furious intensity towards the end of the scene when Clay launches into his impassioned denunciation of everything that Lula stands for. Clay begins to notice a newcomer to the subway car and then, almost by chance as it were, discovers that there are quite a number of other people around as well. Clay's not being fully aware of those immediately around him is suggestive of his lack of a proper knowledge of the outside world; of his confusion as regards the real (as distinct from his safe, imaginary) world. The discussion about what they intend to do at the party and after it becomes the topic of conversation. Lula talks of going to her apartment and having sexual intercourse. She gradually turns nastier in both word and deed. Her jibes become pointedly vicious and her behavior hysterical. She calls Clay an "escaped nigger" (p. 29), steps on the other people in her excitement, letting out profanities

as she does so. She asks Clay to dance with her:

Yes, come on, Clay. Let's do the nasty. Rub bellies. Rub bellies (p. 30).

Clay is embarrassed and refuses to dance with her. She then becomes annoyed and this annoyance leads her to make her second⁴ major provocative statement:

Come on, Clay . . . let's do the thing. Uhh! Uhh! Clay! Clay! You middle-class black bastard. Forget your social-working mother for a few seconds and let's knock stomachs. Clay, you liver-lipped white man. You would-be Christian. You ain't no nigger, you're just a dirty white man. Get up, Clay. Dance with me, Clay (p. 31).

Clay's rather dubious status is well and truly exposed here. He is "no nigger" but a "middle-class black bastard." Nor is he a White man; he is only imitation White, "a dirty white man." Lula's coarse outburst upsets Clay's equanimity. In true middle-class fashion the latter is acutely embarrassed. He asks Lula to "sit down, now. Be cool" (p. 31). She does not heed his wishes. Rather, she

continues to scream and mock him while dancing wildly. Referring once more to his middle-class veneer, she insults him again for trying to look "White."

Be cool. Be cool. That's all you know . . . shaking that wild-root cream-oil on your knotty head, jackets buttoning up to your chin, so full of white man's words . . . Don't sit there dying the way they want you to die. Get up (p. 31).

Clay's calm exterior is now irrevocably disturbed. This outburst of Lula's proves the last straw. He now turns aggressive, shedding the placid, polite manner he maintained hitherto even in the face of Lula's manifold indiscretions. He resorts to profanities, inelegant, unfastidious non-middle-class language so uncharacteristic of the Clay we have known so far. Lula continues to hurl insults. She refers to him as "Uncle Tom" (a term, as we know, used to describe servile Blacks who accept without protest anything dished out by Whites and who are willing to play a subordinate role in society). Clay now asserts himself with a vengeance. He stumbles in his efforts as he grabs hold of Lula to drag her to her seat, clubbing, in the process, a drunk who attempts to interfere. He grabs Lula's shoulders, throws her into her seat, and "slaps her hard as he can across the mouth" (p. 33) before he asks her to shut up and let him talk. He then launches

4 The first is in Scene I when Lula taunts Clay for imitating the White middle-class appearance by dressing the way middle-class Whites do.

into the long speech which is the theatrical as well as the thematic climax of the play. He says he could kill Lula and all the other Whites on the train without much effort. He admits to the futility of such an exercise. He asks Lula not to tell him how to live, indeed not to tell him anything but simply to let him be the way he is.

You telling me what I ought to do. Well, don't! Don't you tell me anything! If I'm a middle-class fake white man... (let me be. And let me be in the way I want (p. 34).

Clay exposes Lula. Earlier on we noticed her accuse him of trying to ape the Whites. She sought to advise him against doing so, urging him to remain true to his Black traditions without knowing anything concrete about these traditions or the nature of Clay's real predicament. Through exposing Lula's shallow outlook on racial tensions, Clay exposes the shallowness of White liberal America in general. Those who belong to this section of society, like Lula, presume they know what is best for Blacks without knowing from the inside, in the first instance, what it is to be a Black in this racist society. We are made to see the superficiality of Lula who thinks, as we have noted, that by seducing a Black man or by going to a party with one, she could become an expert on Blacks. Clay similarly denounces those White liberals who claim to understand the music of Bessie Smith and Charlie Parker. According to Clay, they produce art in order to sublimate their anger and frustration provoked by racism. Their music is a substitute for murder. Likewise, Clay, by writing poetry and attempting to join the middle-class is sublimating his murderous instincts. Hence, the significance of his earlier statement "if I'm a middle class fake white man... let me be." This neurosis is forced on the Blacks by the Whites says Clay. If they were to act sanely the only logical thing to do would be to kill the White oppressors:

If Bessie Smith had killed some white people she wouldn't have needed that music. She could have talked very straight and plain about the world. No metaphors. No grunts. No wiggles in the dark of her soul. Just straight two and two are four. Money. Power. Luxury. Like that. All of them. Crazy niggers turning their back on sanity. When all it needs is that simple act. Murder. Just murder! Would make us all sane (p. 35).

We notice the pun on "Just" in "Just Murder!" All one needs is simply to murder the Whites in order to seek justice or a just solution to the racial problem that exists. But Clay rejects this solution.

Ahhh. Shit. But who needs it? (p. 35)

Sensitive, educated Black man that he is, he cannot force himself to be that violent in his deeds. He would rather be like the Bessie Smiths and the Charlie Parkers of this world; he would rather sublimate the hostile feelings. He is happy to find an outlet for these tormented feelings through writing poetry, being the "black Baudelaire."

safe with my words, and no deaths, and clean, hard thoughts, urging me to new conquests (p. 35).

Sanity to the Black person means recognizing the failures of the "advantages of western rationalism, or the great legacy of the white man" (p. 36). It means recognizing the established world order as one which makes the Negro his own worst enemy. It means lashing out to kill the White monster of technology and manipulated civilization. It means having a "very rational explanation" (p. 36) for murdering Lula — though Clay does so only verbally.

Lula then stabs Clay to death. Jones implies the futility of blatant confrontation with White society by allowing Lula to kill Clay. It is no mere coincidence that she does so at the point when Clay is reaching for his books, symbols of Clay's world, his refuge from the ugly reality of racism. It is significant that the other passengers aid and abet Lula in the murder of Clay. None of them protests against or attempts to prevent it and, at Lula's command, they throw Clay's body out and leave the compartment. We could interpret the behavior of the passengers of the subway as being synonymous with that of society in general. Black men like Clay who attempt to defy the norm (in thought if not in deed) are a threat to a society which wishes to maintain the status quo. Hence they must be got rid of. The ending of the play suggests to us that this process will be repeated. Lula straightens her things and gets everything in order. Another twenty-year-old Black youth comes into the coach and the stage is thereby set for more of the same.

Jones's view seems clear. A revolutionary upheaval is called for if there is going to be any meaningful change in the troubled area of Black and White relations in American society. The old stereotypical images have to be cast aside and a new Black nation has to arise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of that past. In **Dutchman**, Jones does not define the nature of this change he envisions for America. Nor does he give us an idea of the process that has to be gone through to usher in that change. We are made aware of these themes by implication. He states them explicitly in his rather episodic play **The Slave**, written nine months later, when he makes Walker Vessels, the Black protagonist, say that it is now the turn of Blacks to take over from Whites through revolutionary means the business of ruling America. As drama, **Dutchman**, unlike **The Slave**, is highly successful. It is well structured, it has thematic coherence, and its texture is richly symbolic.

(To be continued)

SUDDHI — AS I PICTURE HER

Douglas Kulatilleke

ONE FEELS rather reluctant to take up pen, to clash with that lovable and learned Professor Carlo Fonseka, regarding his views on Suddhi, films and film criticism. For what learning and knowledge do we in the "Wild West" like parts of Sri Lanka. (The much talked of, but often forgotten Ruhunurata), possess, to enter a debate with Colombo intellectuals.

I have now lived over thirty years in a remote South Eastern corner of Sri Lanka, very much similar to the North Western dry zone, where our Suddhi, immigrated to, lived (and loved?). This is my experience, and understanding of life here.

Here, too buffaloes (which were only there in the beginning and end, of the film), dominated the scene till very recently. Now the Lunugamveh-era scheme, and earlier the four wheel tractor, have driven these sturdy and very useful animals far away into the scrub jungles close to Uda-Walawe.

Here till as recently as the fifties, buffaloes, man, land and water was what kept us going, and alive; producing our food from the land.

The woman (sometimes may be "indolent", or so often unkindly called "loose character" or "wild") also played an important part in these times.

It was she who looked after and nurtured those sturdy pioneering immigrants from the Southern villages of Kottegoda, Dickwella, Belliatte etc; whose strength of body and spirit always fascinated me. There was no state aided

peasant settlement or colonization here at Magama. In those difficult times it was a case of the 'survival of the fittest!'. The women highly spirited, and may not have been blessed with the milk of human kindness. The elders here still recall how these was then, in the thirties, no mothers milk, even for medicine, for very few infants were born, and survived here due to the Malaria. How could the milk of human kindness exist under such deary conditions?

Jayatissa (now long dead along with his dear wife) was one such outstanding, outspoken, character who survived from those times. I knew him and liked him too.

Hundereds of his cattle roamed grazing in the Lunugamvehera jungle now the tank bed of the emerging Lunugamvehera tank. These animals he protected from the wild ones (animals), brought them to his wadiya at calving time, milked them, and converted this milk to curd, and then money; assisted by his wife and children.

In the bazaar in which he sold his curd, Jayatissa was often in high spirits wasting hard earned money on drink. When I got friendly with him, I warned him that soon he would end up weak and useless due to his drink. His reply is still stongly etched in my mind "Dont worry Sir, my wife wants me strong and healthy, and therefore feeds me well with venison, wild boar etc" and went on to clarify "we have no books, radio, lights etc. Like you the learned and the affluent. She says she needs me strong and virile for the nights so we both keep healthy, strong, and happy!"

So in these wild, jungle, dry zone villages (which are certainly not typical Sri Lanka settled village it is only the most basic needs of man and woman, that had to be fulfilled. The market had not expanded there, than. The temple and its priests were not there to tame the "wild" spirit of man. Or could they?

May be the Sinhala film and novel is now being effectively used by our sensible young, and not so young men, to come to grips with the somewhat false, puritanical victorian, present-day concepts of Theravada Buddhism which most of our urban folks, particularly those urban anglicised Upasaka-ammass foolishly presumed prevailed in the Buddha's time in that wonderful land, where the Kama Sutra was written and respected.

Jayatissa Aiya opened my eyes and even my mind, to a new aspect of life. Though he lived among buffaloes and tended them, he made me realise the problems of emerging village communities in the dry zone.

Now Gunadasa A, Dharmasiri B, Tissa A etc. are in bigger way trying hard to make Sinhala novels and films socially more meaningful and educative, and help us all to understand what has happened to us.

Please dear professor and Dr, please try to understand what they are trying to do and help them along in this so complex, and delicate task.

Would it not be possible for Suddhi to have been a nice, healthy village lass, then plaything and drop out, in a Colombo 7 bungalow and then become the cunning, rootless creature she is in the film?

Letters. . .

The CRM & the Election Law

IN THE opinion of a majority of judges who heard the appeal in the Mahara election petition case, the immunity of the President from legal action in regard to alleged election offences, is not in consonance with the spirit of democracy.

In the interests of representative democracy, the Civil Rights Movement urged the government to amend the Constitution in order to enable courts to hear an election petition even when the executive President, who is very much a political animal, is joined as a party to it.

Professing to view the problem "from an entirely different angle" V. P. Vittachi suggests that during election campaigns the President as well as everybody else should be permitted to freely fling allegations against rival candidates because that "can be good for the health of democracy" (The Island, 2 September 1985 & Lanka Guardian 15 September 1985).

With the air of a very superior person expounding a screamingly self-evident point to a minor jackass, Vittachi says that "the normal law of the land should be sufficient to ensure that allegations are not wild and reckless." But only a major jackass would fail to see that whereas the normal law of the land may restrain the rest of us, it would certainly not inhibit the President from making wild and reckless allegations, so long as he enjoys immunity from all suit under Article 35 (i) of the Constitution. That

surely must be the reason why the CRM urged the government to amend the Constitution to enable the President to be brought to courts in connection with alleged election offences.

Mr Vittachi is too smart a man to fail to grasp the obvious intention of the CRM in urging the relevant amendment to our much-amended Constitution. Perhaps he has chosen to view the matter "from an entirely different angle" because his class has more to gain from the President's immunity from election offences than from truly representative democracy.

Carlo Fonseka.



India's role. . . .

(Continued from Page 8)

hawks and vultures. It is true that Sirimavo Bandaranaike did not seem to agree to take a positive stand on the Tamil crisis, despite her personal regard for Indira Gandhi. This is largely because Sirimavo has been fighting her own battle against the Jayawardene Government and has made support to any settlement proposal conditional upon her civic rights being restored.

It is not difficult for New Delhi to carefully assess the situation prevailing in Sri Lanka. Not only has the Foreign Office at its disposal the useful exercises on this theme carried out in the past, but it has also an alert and competent mission in Colombo whose assessments and reports should have been the main staple for the formulation of policy and tactics at the Centre.

One wonders if adequate attention is paid by the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister on such an approach.

It is important for Rajiv Gandhi to handle the Sri Lanka crisis with care and diligence. This is not a mere question of handling refugees from a neighbouring country. With

it is linked up the question of political stability in a major state in India. If by the mishandling of the Lanka crisis, destabilisation grips Tamilnadu, it will definitely be a severe blow to India's integrity.

Aneurin Bevan had denounced Anthony Eden's mishandling of the Suez crisis branding it as "casual amateurishness". No right-thinking person in India today would like Rajiv Gandhi to land in a Sueztype disaster, but he owes it to the nation to abjure casual amateurishness and go in for serious, careful handling of difficult challenges in foreign affairs — learning from the country's past experience while applying the lessons from it with utmost caution, relying on in-depth assessment rather than on impulsive moves for dramatic effect.

N. C.

August 28

Will authoritarianism . . .

(Continued from page 13)

create and maintain "a stable investment climate for Western interests!

The beneficiaries of Authoritarianism

The close inter-relation between internal political elites and external interests creates and perpetuates social and political structures that to the masses can only mean a worsening of the crises of under-development. In fact, all arguments in favour of the on-going militarisation for instance would seem to appear, as only excuses for a privileged political and economic, if not politico economic minority to justify the use of military force in order to deter or overcome any threats to the prevailing order, to protect their wealth, and discourage and overcome rebellion on the part of the poor and oppressed. Thus, the new ideology of National security is enmeshed with and happily married to political, economic, and social issues. Where does Sri Lanka stand in this picture?

(To be continued)



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