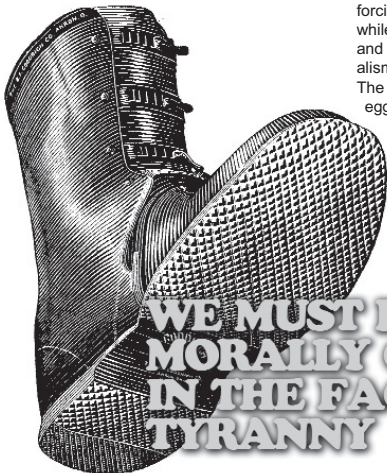


As the gap between the rich and the poor widens further, for the many countries dependant on the IMF / World Bank or US aid / bribery, the price they would have to pay for challenging or rebuking the rich West would be too prohibitive; therefore they have learnt that it is acceptable and politically satisfying to dis-

the truth and maintain the lie. The people's impotence against the dictates of the corporate "homeland" and its threats, both implied and overt, desensitises them into apathy and numb paralysis.

In America, the government is led by a small powerful group having complete power, which forcibly suppresses opposition and criticism while regimenting key elements of commerce and industry and promoting aggressive nationalism and often racism when fighting overseas. The rulers behind the face of Barack Obama egg on the misguided military recruits with propaganda that inverts patriotism in order to sustain itself from invented sins of each kind of "enemy". This further helps to conquer the masses.

One must determine whether it is democ-



WE MUST REMAIN MORALLY COGNIZANT IN THE FACE OF TYRANNY

Lasantha Pethiyagoda

place their frustrations and fears upon small problem areas like local ethnic tensions or industrial action.

There seems to be a gradual polarization of ideologies, one pro-Western, industrialists, Jewish lobbies, puppet governments, multi-nationals and the other, a strange mix of anti-Western elements, ordinary Muslims, peace activists, environmentalists, human rights campaigners, communist regimes, academic personalities and liberation movements. Those on the fence are hedging their bets until the hands dealt, become clearer. Much as our "world leaders" would like to divide these two camps into "Good" and "Evil", the realities remain far more complex and inter-linked. At present, power seems to favour agendas backed by military might. The future might not be that obvious.

New governments in the developing world with scarce resources quickly learn which aspects of their policies are accepted and rewarded and which ones will be met with disdain or scorned. In essence, it is the obedience they are expected to display in return for being tolerated, aided and allowed to remain "peaceful". Remember "Be nice to us, or we will bring "democracy" to your country"

Despite the paranoia and hyperbole, there remain some countries such as Iran and North Korea for example, which are adamantly non-conformist, innovative and self-reliant. They bravely welcome, rather than cringe in front of, the metaphorical wolf-pack. Therefore, instead of being devoured by the wolves, they are lectured to, ridiculed, admonished or made to starve.

Sustained by their pariah status, the survival spirit thrives when freed from the shackles of a mindless and slavish dependence on hand-outs. They choose to reject the "international community's" bland world of consensus and learn to survive in the wilderness of exclusion.

For their leaders and individual citizens, the exclusion provides relative economic independence and territorial integrity with aspirations of continued sovereignty. Because they do not scrub-up nicely for polite company, they do not let themselves be abused and reduced to yapping lap-dogs in exchange for crumbs from the masters' table. Yet they retain the power to bargain with moderate and reasonable governments with power, such as China and India. Sadly for us though, the corporate-controlled press corps, which is the present form of a tribe that once were journalists, mass-feed cattle fodder for news, from which many of us remain misinformed on realities.

Every day, we in the "free" world, see the so-called "world leaders" put on a mask, the contours of which are alternately ridiculous and menacing, in a desperate attempt to subvert

racy or fascism that drives America, when it demands a succession of foreign wars, combined with a stream of threats that keep the public perpetually in fear and anxiety while fuelling a misguided patriotism. Consequently, this fear-driven existence has spawned a grotesque generation of over-eating, indulgent youth who "take out terrorists" for fun in their computer game fantasies.

When a government sets in motion acts to stop people from expressing themselves freely, and monitoring their movements unobserved, while appealing to the conformists that there is nothing to fear if they have not done wrong, it means that you compromise your rights if or when you may even erroneously find yourself in an inconceivable circumstance. The inexorable move towards a totalitarian state is often difficult to detect. If people cannot act upon or behave in accordance with their religious or political convictions, the state is, in fact occupying and controlling "thought", although it had hitherto been an Orwellian figment of imagination.

As a result, people learn to say things which are different to what they think and feel, out of fear. Children learn not to believe in any ideal or value, but learn to conform to expected behaviour. We become progressively more selfish, self-centred, and devoid of true compassion, humility and forgiveness. Love is only reserved for one's family; friendship is measured in how much is given and received. These concepts lose depth and meaning over time.

Today's citizen of the West is therefore primarily an obsequious sycophant playing the role of corporate consumer. Those who seek the truth are required to be agreeable in the face of unyielding authority while those seething with misplaced resentment resort to subversive measures, at risk of persecution.

So, we are forced to choose between two kinds of prison. One is the small self-centred materialistic existence where the mind and spirit become atrophied by being deprived of imagination, empathy or feeling for others. It is also characterized by chronic internalized anger and perhaps clinical depression and paranoia. While the bars of the cage rob us of our humanity, they inculcate a reflexive fear of others. The other kind of prison is for incarceration on suspicion of wrong doing against the state.

We must distinguish between tyranny and a just society. If the state exercises all liberty and flexes individuals towards its own will, we have a tyranny. Even in the absence of overt brutality and violence, depriving a people of its freedom heralds a slide into tyranny. Caught between the two prisons, psychological and physical, paradoxically, there will eventually be no middle ground in such a dysfunctional society.

SRI LANKA GAINS AS CHINA PROSPERS

China, a sleeping giant in the 19th century, became the economic giant in the 20th century and has now surpassed Japan to become the second largest economy behind United States, which is currently experiencing a double-dip recession.

Communist China's economy slipped into an economic quagmire due to Marxist ideologies. It was mainly Deng Xiaoping and his successors who systematically dragged it out by resorting to a market economy and to a dominant place, which China occupies today.

According to financial experts, China is expected to forge ahead in a matter of decades to be the leading economic power in the world. It is the fastest growing major economy with an average growth rate of

Capitalism also became too pronounced when China regained control of the thriving British colony, Hong Kong. China allowed Hong Kong to retain its capitalistic structure of the economy, making one country with two separate economies. The mainland was conscious of the potential gains that would accrue as it too was gradually switching on to a market economy.



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10% over the past 30 years. Its per capita income was at \$6,567 in 2009. It has overtaken US as the world's largest market for passenger vehicles, and Germany to become the world's largest exporter.

The ordinary citizens, realizing the signs of a spurt in the economy, raised their aspirations and hopes for rapid economic progress. They supported their pragmatic, capable and resolute leaders vigorously as they clamoured for a rich, prosperous and strong country in one voice.

China's economy is heavily dependent on exports and investment and, according to analyses; it is essential for China to encour-

Though there were a few changes in the



age greater domestic consumption.

leadership, the leaders chosen from a pack of successors in place as competent, educated and resourceful, always placed economic development of the country at the top of their agenda.

China is the world's largest and populous country with just over 1.3 billion people as of mid-2008 though the population growth has been slowed down by the one child policy.

Population increases have occurred mostly in rural China and it is likely that rural folk would crawl to urban locations for employment though it may pose a few problems for the government. However, the prosperity now attained by China would flow on to the rural areas, strengthening and increasing domestic consumption.

It was in the early 1980s under Deng Xiaoping that the central government founded Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The most successful SEZ, Shenzhen, has miraculously developed from a small village into a city with a population of over 10 million within 20 years.

In so short a period of 30 years, China's GDP has increased from \$147.3 billion in 1978 to about \$5 trillion. This was mainly due to the transformation of the Mao-era planned economy to Deng's market economy in clearly defined three phases.

SEZs are developmental zones established to encourage foreign investment in China, to create much-needed jobs, technical knowledge and tax revenues in return for significant tax concessions at the start of operations and over a number of years.

In the first phase, decollectivisation of agriculture, opening the door for foreign investment and permitting entrepreneurs to set up private business took place. In the second phase, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, liberalization of prices and decentralization of state control occurred while intensification of privatisation, liquidation of banking, oil and telecommunication sectors and selling them to private enterprise happened in the third and the final phase.

Following the tremendous success of Shenzhen, SEZs have been set up in Guangdong, Fujian and Hainan provinces and at Hunchun and at Pudong (Pudong Development Zone) in Shanghai.

A few other countries such as Brazil, India, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Cambodia and North Korea, have established SEZs in their countries, taking the resounding success of Shenzhen SEZ as a

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