

Special 10th Anniversary Number

LANKA GUARDIAN

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***Anniversary Messages from President J.R.,
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COMMENT

"Other news, another view" was the professional task we elected to perform when this little journal was launched ten years ago. Already it was a more than a modest challenge for the small but adventurous band, young and old, professional and amateur, which set itself that task. Mercifully, modesty remained the only charge that was never hurled against this enterprise, even by its most caustic critics.

Recalling those early days, our sole regret is that we needlessly left some of our more earnest readers somewhat mystified, thus unable to make up their minds whether the L.G. was a special unit of the C.I.A. or an ad-hoc contract from the K.G.B. As an obvious example of the extended, but never over-extended, fortify it should have been plain enough that we were in fact hand-in-glove with the Mafia.

Now, reading the extravagant compliments that have been showered upon us by the highest in the land to men of unquestioned eminence in assorted walks of life, a little modesty seems in order. At the risk of confusing our readers by a sudden, inexplicable lapse into intellectual humility, never a L.G. vice, it is necessary to note that historical circumstance rather than individual will or whim made the L.G. what it was to become, and what it is today.

The L.G. is a creature of the times, the most turbulent and decisive decade in Sri Lanka's modern history. It is a mirror, if not a catalyst, by-product of this decade. A mirror and sometimes a diligent monitor of the crisis, the L.G. watched its own personality and function shaped by the tumultuous events which swept Sri Lanka since May Day 1978, from radical constitutional change to Referendum, from race riots to Peace Accord and military intervention.

May Day 1978. A vanguardist Right, a 'new' Right really, basked in the splendid light of Power and Glory. The era of queues and quotas, of rationbook rather than textbook socialism, was over. The 'open economy' opened new vistas. The J.V.P., no longer outlawed, introduced a new exuberance and a new voice, while the Old Left, unable to lift its head, could hardly raise its voice. A demoralised SLFP retired defensively into a long, painful hibernation.

The L.G. remained a watchful sceptic of the 'New Order'. Overly internationalist — some would say incurably and perversely so — the L.G. studied the sweeping changes in a Third Worldist perspective, especially the remorseless authoritarian march of Third World regimes under the banner of "accelerated development".

But the youth unrest and violence in the north was never beyond the L.G.'s sights. The TULF and Opposition Leader Mr. Anura Kumara Dissanayake was to quote the L.G.'s second issue in Parliament. Mr. Rohana Wijeweera was on our cover, much to the disgust and the sneers of the traditional Left. The JVP's 'internal debate' on the National Question was given the greatest prominence, although the general

debate on the ethnic problem may have been too easily diverted into doctrinal erotica.

The self same internationalist bias prompted us to hear in mind not only who we were but where we lived, and what was going on in the Indian Ocean, the neighbourhood, and between the Great Powers. As a result, our preoccupations and anxieties over the external implications of our domestic discontents, led some of our critics to convert the term "geo political realities" into a code word for the L.G. school of thought. We derive no particular pleasure from the present discomfort of our detractors. We are, after all, the "Lanka" Guardian, a casualty like all our countrymen, of our own commonplace 'prophecies' come true.

While History made us, our distinguished well-wishers tell us that we ourselves have made journalistic history. We accept the compliment with gratitude. If they are right, we have kept the faith.

Finally, our sincerest thanks to our small but steadily growing readership, and most of all, to our regular contributors.

Editor

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TRENDS

ISLAMIC STIRRINGS

On Sunday morning a bus hit an LTTE land mine on the Trinco road killing at least 23 passengers and injuring many more. Almost all the victims were Sinhalese villagers on the way probably to the Sunday market. The previous day the 'Tigers' ambushed a bus in Vavuniya and sprayed it with AK-47 gunfire. Six Sinhalese soldiers and five civilians were killed. While the IPKF is responsible for patrolling the North and East, the Sri Lankan forces are now affording protection to Sinhala villages in the Trinco district, and elsewhere in the east. But no civilians of any community Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim — appear to be totally safe from the marauding 'Tigers'. However there is a difference in the collective creations.

No Sinhala buddhists demonstrated anywhere when families of Sinhala peasants were butchered in their homes in the Trincomalee and Vavuniya districts, but Muslims did after Muslim villages were attacked in the Eastern Province.

About three hundred demonstrators, members of the Islamic Students organisation, shouted slogans

outside Arab and other Islamic embassies in Colombo, "to make the Islamic world aware of the fate of Muslims in Sri Lanka" a spokesman said.

"We are fed up with making representations to our Sri Lanka authorities; they are useless," the spokesman added.

Among the slogans: "Will Sri Lanka be another Palestine?"

MAY DAY FOOTBALL

Police approved, the venue, and the route. The permit was in his pocket, said SLFP Trade Union leader Alavi Maulana. It was Campbell Park as before.

But that was not the end of it. After the SLFP announced its May Day program, the CP daily Aththa reported that Campbell Park had been given to the USA (United Socialist Alliance of CP — LSSP — NSSP — SLMP).

But the Police told him that as far as they were concerned there was no change, Mr Moulana said.

The Police were not aware, but a decision had been made at the top to hand over the SLFP's traditional venue to the USA this year.

Then, six other political parties decided to join the SLFP in a joint rally under the leadership of Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The parties were the Eksath Lanka Jatika party (ELJP), Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP), Tamil Congress (TC), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Democratic Workers Congress (DMC) and the Liberal Party. The SLFP finally held its own rally.

FREE EDUCATION

While a group of academics and concerned citizens formed an Organisation for the Protection of Free Education, a Political daily reported that a large number of students eligible for university education had not sought admission to the universities.

Unrest, violence and extended closures of the universities had kept them away, the report said quoting university sources. Many who were already enrolled in the universities were now working in hotels or had found casual employment because no teaching was done on the campuses, the report said.

Most students, and also many teachers, believed that the universities would remain closed as long as the present Government lasted the newspaper said.

The Organisation for the Protection of Free Education told a press conference, meanwhile, that 15 per cent of children of school going age in this country did not go to school now. Of those who did go to school only one per cent finally entered universities.

The policies of this Government had placed free education under threat a spokesman added.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

On this occasion, the Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd. conveys its grateful thanks to our subscribers, advertisers and all those persons and organisations that have continued to extend their moral, professional and material support without which this publication would have folded up many years ago. We owe a very special debt of gratitude to our printers, Ananda Press, which has often borne the burden well beyond the call of duty.

Tactical triumph for J R, poser for SLFP, a boost for the USA

Mervyn de Silva

The 'open door' economy introduced by the UNP in 1977 soon saw the door closed on Sri Lanka's vibrant parliamentary democracy following the Executive Presidency and the 1978 Constitution. The UNP banged the door and kept it shut after the Referendum of December 1982. But it didn't quite throw away the key. In fact President JR put away his bunch of keys for the duration, choosing sometimes to open this or that back or side door. In the meantime, he has been reconstructing, repairing and redecorating the old house. Now it has a new wing, more floor space, and many more doors and windows. Much of this work was made necessary of course by a new plan called 'Devolution' certain structural alterations recommended as a far more desirable alternative to physical division. The work was speeded up by the 'Peace Accord'.

But there was always the basic question of ownership (that is, participatory democracy) and tenancy (that is, regime, permanent, prolonged or open to frequent change).

The significance of the provincial council polls — four out of nine provinces — should be seen and assessed in the light of the fundamental changes and attempted changes in political structure undertaken in the past 11 years. And these, in essence, represented the typical Third World phenomenon of authoritarianism, variously described as 'guided democracy', 'enlightened despotism', 'paternalistic democracy', and in this particular instance, as 'Gaullism in Asia', a generous example of academic licence.

The immediate consequences of the elections, and more so, of the polls result, ought to be examined in our opinion — and official party views are published elsewhere in this issue of the L.G. — in relation to the following questions:

(a) When will the other provinces poll, especially the North-East and the South? Conceding that the North East is to some extent *aut generis*, will the polls be marked by violence (the same level? Higher or lower?) and by the same percentage (60%) participation? In both cases, the South is vital. The answers in the matter of the Southern province will offer clues to the real, so far untested, popular strength of the JVP and its capacity to 'terrorise', and therefore its potential power to convert the situation now prevailing in the South in the first instance, to a widespread low intensity war.

(b) Will the provincial polls lead invariably to power sharing at the Centre? In short, will there be a Presidential and a parliamentary election and if so when? And, in the case of the Presidential, will the electoral mechanism remain the same or will it be changed? If the latter, how? Will the change be so radical and provocative as to be a 'trigger' to mass agitation and violence on the July 1987 pattern? If so, who will launch it? All anti-UNP forces? The JVP? The SLFP led 'front'?

If such an uprising lets off steam and then gradually subsides, well and good. But

if it has sufficient stamina to sustain a prolonged anti-regime or anti-J.R. campaign, how will the armed forces and the UNP leadership behave once the situation becomes uncontrollable? What will be India's reaction to an imminent threat to the J.R. regime and the possibility of an internal anti-India change or the emergence of a new anti-India regime? What will be reaction of the western (donor) states to such a crisis-situation?

(c) While only a scary scenario which may look unreal right now will pose the questions raised in (b), the most important issue arising from the polls and its results focuses on the S.L.F.P.

SLFP's FUTURE

Once the SLFP replaced the Left as the only credible alternative to the UNP the structure of parliamentary politics in Sri Lanka, changed. The historical rule of the SLFP became a marked, stable feature of politics in this country. Not only did the SLFP emerge as an indispensable instrument of the system but a party for which contesting and winning elections was more or less its *raison d'être*. It lived from election to election, the prospect of power and the disbursement of its rewards, keeping its cadres and rank-and-file more or less engaged and active. Without the supportive sustenance of deep-rooted vested interest and clear ideology (the UNP's advantage) the SLFP had to rely on the hopes kept alive by the promise of the next

(Continued on page 52)

Provincial Council Elections

'People for PC elections'

Ranil Wickremasinghe, Education Minister said the electorate has spoken very loudly and clearly in favour of having Provincial Council elections despite intimidatory tactics by the JVP and the SLFP.

He said the voting has been satisfactory. The Badulla District has polled 73%, Ratnapura 65.7%, Anuradhapura 66.4%, Kurunegala 62.8% and Puttalam 60.1%. It was only in one district, namely Polonnaruwa, where intimidation was very bad, voting was down to 31.5%.

"Therefore the outcome is first a victory for the voters of the country who cherish their vote. It is also a victory for the UNP which at this time were able to win all the Provincial Councils. It is also a victory for all the parties which believe in the democratic process and whose decision to contest has been vindicated by the people."

"Mrs. Bandaranaike wanted the voters to stay at home but the voters seem to have told her, she can stay at home permanently. It also shows the majority of people have rejected the bankrupt policies of the SLFP which did not disassociate itself with JVP activities", he added.

"We must also remember at this time all candidates who were killed because they paid the supreme sacrifices of believing in the electoral process. It is a victory for the UNP and all parties and people who believe in the democratic process and peace" he added.

'Voters defy violence'

The leader of the Liberal Party, Dr. Chanaka Amaratunga, said despite the superficial impression of the U.N.P. having won the elections the reality was that it's support had steadily eroded. The

election results was positive despite the low poll in the sense that the violent elements had not been able to disrupt the elections. One reason for the low poll was fear. But this development would give voters more confidence and courage in the next round of Provincial Council elections. There would be more voter participations, he said.

Also the fact that other opposition parties have gained reasonable representation was significant. At least in one tier of government there would be no lopsided representation of opposition as in the case of Parliament. This was a healthy development.

Dr. Amaratunga also said that the process of democracy being restored in the country has been strengthened.

SLMC has done well

Muslim Congress leader, Mr. M. H. M. Ashroff, said Muslim Congress had to commence a polls campaign within a fortnight of being registered as a political party.

He further said "40,000 Muslims have voted for the Congress. These votes show that Muslims are willing to heed the call of the Muslim Congress."

We have shattered the criticism that our party is a regional organisation that functions only within the Eastern Province by winning three seats outside the Eastern Province.

The Eastern Province is the backbone of the Muslim community. When elections occur we will contest there.

'Support declining'

Tamil Congress Leader Kumar Ponnambalam said they showed a frightening decline in the support for or popularity of the government.

What is significant, he said, is that this loss of support is shown with an all-time low poll of between 40 to 50 percent.

"If the usual turn-out of voters between 80 and 90 per cent took place, the results might have been different," he said.

Mr. Ponnambalam was of the opinion that it was interesting that some "... big guns of the government were pitted against new-comers and have been shown to have fared badly."

Kept off on principle

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike said yesterday that the Provincial Council election results were a clear indicator that the majority of people were against the the UNP.

He said the SLFP boycotted the polls on a matter of principle and that the performance of the parties and the voter turn out is a clear indication that the SLFP would have won the election if it had contested.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that while a large percentage of the voters boycotted the polls, a fair number also voted for the USA as a protest vote against the government.

He further said that the critical issue of the Indo-Lanka Accord and the IPKF were not an issue at these elections.

"When the government goes for a general election where these two issues will be of crucial importance, the UNP will be resoundingly defeated" he said.

Mr. Bandaranaike also said that the USA's failure to win a single province despite voters from other anti government parties voting for it as a protest against the government is an indicator that is not an alternative to the UNP.

"The SLFP challenges the government to hold a General election and test its real strength in the country," he said.

Mr. Bandaranaike also cited the examples of Wellawaya, Balangoda, Ruwanwella, Kegalle, Anuradhapura and Minneriya as some examples of Government's poor performance.

— Island

Greetings and Good Wishes on Our 10th Anniversary

President of Sri Lanka

I am glad to send this message to the 'Lanka Guardian' for publication in the special issue being brought out by it to mark its 10th Anniversary.

The 'Lanka Guardian' is one of the few publications in Sri Lanka which comments intelligently on current events. It investigates public issues and ventilates independent points of view on matters of controversy. The Journal has served a most useful publicist purpose and I congratulate it on completion of a successful 10 years. This is no easy task for a periodical of this kind.

I wish the Journal all success in the years before it.

J. R. Jayewardene

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

The Lanka Guardian, within a short span of a decade has made a significant impression in the minds of the reading public of Sri Lanka. Published fortnightly under the able editorial guidance of Mr. Mervyn de Silva, the Lanka Guardian has items of valuable news and articles of educative value both of a national and international flavour.

The press has an important role to play as a medium of development. This becomes specially challenging when the country is a developing one, going through a decolonizing phase. The Lanka Guardian, I believe, has been conscious of this need and has committed itself to this task.

I convey my best wishes to the Lanka Guardian on its 10th Anniversary.

R. Premadasa

Sirima R. D. Bandaranaike

(Former Prime Minister, SLFP President)

Ten years of the Lanka Guardian is a tremendous achievement; because to survive successfully for so long, and to show signs of vibrant vitality for the future, as a Journal published here in English, and reaching in effect an elitist readership which seeks mainly a different focus of light and attention on matters of current interest, is a singularly difficult effort, in both choice of subject-matter and valued presentation.

One would still remember the humble statement of objectives with which the first edition of the Guardian set off on its simple mission to offer a different, yet worthwhile, approach to the facts we see around us; and I think the secret of its success is the very simplicity of this outlook and the wide culture with which large areas of significance were covered in a balanced journalistic appraisal of both local and foreign material. Perhaps there was an added flavour that arose from all the circumstances of conflict and change in a world getting more integrated each day in transport and communications. Flavour, however, is not the mere facts; but also art, the judgement that is exercised in the acceptance of facts and their evaluation. All credit to the Guardian, therefore, for the manner, in which, it has tried to face up to the world as it unfolds before us every day.

So, well done, Guardian, over the first ten years; and may you thrive and prosper through all the travails of Journalism of the present era, into the broad sunlit spaces of a new age of Justice and Order, where "the immutable principles of representative democracy" that are mentioned in our Constitution will never be maimed or mangled by executive siege or violence in interpretation. You will then be ever more a norm of competence and a shining light.

Gamini Dissanayake

(Minister of Lands, Lands Development and Mahaweli Development)

The Lanka Guardian was launched around the same time as the inception of the Jayewardene era, in 1977. The major development policies of the United National Party government, and the liberalisation of the economy, have had the critical acclaim of the Guardian, which has met the need for a serious English journal in Sri Lanka.

I have pleasure in sending my best wishes to the Guardian on its 10th anniversary.

Lalith Athulathmudali

(Minister of National Security and Deputy Minister of Defence)

The completion of ten years of publication by The Lanka Guardian is, indeed, a significant occasion. The decade that has passed has seen a great deal of progress and change in Sri Lanka. An unprecedented rise in the growth rate took place during the first half of this decade as a result of new economic policies adopted in 1977.

The inculcation and dissemination of intelligent and objective points of view on matters of public interest are of special value during a period of crisis such as the present in Sri Lanka. The Lanka Guardian has contributed much within this context and I take this opportunity to congratulate them. I have no doubt that their contribution will continue to be invaluable in the years to come.

S. Thondaman

(Minister of Rural Industrial Development)

In this country very few periodicals like the Lanka Guardian have been able to celebrate a 10th anniversary.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Mervyn de Silva, Editor of Lanka Guardian, for successfully completing ten years of publication.

Lanka Guardian has played a very important role in the political life of this country and I wish the journal all success in the coming years.

Anura Bandaranaike

(Leader of the Opposition)

It is not necessary for one to agree with everything written in a journal to respect opinions which are intelligently and seriously presented. The Lanka Guardian has done so for 10 years, without the resources of a big commercial enterprise or the support of the Government. Its Editor, Mr. Mervyn De Silva, a respected and skillful journalist, has shaped the Lanka Guardian into a unique magazine. He has been ably assisted by a fine editorial staff and other intellectuals who write regularly to Lanka Guardian. As a Sri Lankan I am happy to say that the magazine is widely known in academic and political circles in those countries that take a keen interest in following developments in Sri Lanka. I wish Mr. De Silva and his staff all success.

Pieter Kauneman

(President, Sri Lanka Communist Party)

I am happy to send the "Lanka Guardian" my greetings and good wishes on its 10th anniversary.

The "Lanka Guardian" is prescribed reading for all who want to keep in touch

with developments in Sri Lanka in the political, cultural and other fields. It provides a forum for many points of view that would otherwise not easily find expression. Its readers include many who occupy important positions in the decision-making processes in many fields.

Its editor, Mervyn de Silva, is a pre-eminent figure of Sri Lankan journalism. The fact that the "Lanka Guardian" has been able to weather many storms and keep going despite many difficulties is due in great measure to his dedication and guidance. His own contributions are always a delight to read — irrespective of whether one agrees or not with what he says.

I wish him and the "Lanka Guardian" fresh successes in the years to come.

A. Aziz

(President, Democratic Workers' Congress)

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Lanka Guardian, I, on behalf of the Democratic Workers Congress convey our greetings and good wishes for completion of a very meaningful period of 10 years in the cause of our Nation. During these 10 years, our country has gone through an epoch making period. There have been positive and negative changes and we have undergone a virtual civil war in which thousands of innocent lives have been sacrificed. The entire economic structure has been changed. From a regulated economy 10 years ago, the present Government launched what is termed as "Open Economy". The rupee was devalued drastically causing problems of cost of living, high prices and everything that is related to it. Above all, from a Parliamentary Form of Government, the country has gone into a Presidential system. The ethnic problem which had already existed has become more acute and does not appear nearer a solution. Side by side there have been development projects, like the Mahaweli and other irrigation

Schemes. There have also been vast strides in the matter of housing and construction. All these have had their impact on the political, social, cultural and educational life of the country. The birth of Lanka Guardian was almost simultaneously with the beginning of this new era. The Lanka Guardian during this period has put before the Nation an objective analysis of all these problems. It has given the country the view points of all different forces and personalities with complete journalistic impartiality. At the same time the Lanka Guardian has adopted a progressive attitude for the betterment of the country and in the cause of the people. In its pursuit for analytical criticism, it has rightly styled itself. "For Other News and Another View".

Mr. Mervyn de Silva the Founder Editor of the Lanka Guardian has behind him a brilliant career and is one of our foremost Journalists. The long and fruitful experience that he has gathered as a journalist of national and international repute has gone into the running of the Lanka Guardian. He has used his experience in a great effort to keep the country on the path of democracy. He will always be held in high esteem by all those who love and support democracy in Sri Lanka.

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary, we wish Lanka Guardian and its Editor Mr. Mervyn de Silva long life and still greater achievement for serving the cause of impartial journalism in the interest of fair play, progress, justice and democracy.

Vasudeva Nanayakkara

(Leader of the N.L.S.S.P.)

I am glad to contribute a message on the 10th anniversary of Lanka Guardian's noteworthy existence. It is probably not a coincidence that, Lanka Guardian's 10 years has also been the most decisive years of our recent history. The particular analytical angle of L. G. had been a fresh

breeze in local journalism, even though our disagreements remain. It provided a much needed forum for the many controversies that surfaced during recent times. The information and view points published in the L. G. finding its way into Sinhala and Tamil media demonstrated its authority, and its usefulness as a source.

The accommodation given for the numerous and conflicting shades of opinion not only enhanced the prestige of the journal, it set a pace in our journalism.

I congratulate all those who have carried the burden of L. G. and wish them happier days in the future.

Chandrika. B. Kumaranatunga

(Leader of the S.L.M.P.)

It is with great pleasure that I send you my greetings and good wishes, on the occasion of your tenth anniversary.

The Lanka Guardian made its appearance at a time when the dignity of the great art of journalism was being seriously eroded in our country.

You gave wide coverage to local as well as international events. We enjoyed the analytical debates and those thought provoking articles you published regularly.

Honest journalism has a great role to play in building public consciousness, especially in the developing countries. It can serve as a powerful vehicle in the liberation of our peoples from the various fetters which impede their march towards freedom and development.

Your journal can boast of the singular distinction of striving to move in that direction. To have tried and survived, as well as you have done, is in itself an achievement in the present context of suppression of free debate and human rights and the erosion of democracy.

I wish the L. G. all success in continuing its valuable role in the years ahead.

N. Sunmugathasan

(Leader of the Ceylon Communist Party)

Please accept my congratulations on the tenth anniversary of the publication of your journal.

In a country where press freedom is a mockery and where the monopoly press; whether owned by the State or by the private sector, religiously refuses to publish opinions that are contrary to their right-wing thinkings; and consciously blots out all left oriented news and views—in these circumstances, it is a measure of relief that there exists a journal, like yours, which, at least up to a point, accommodates views that cannot find expression in the pro-establishment press.

I hope you will continue to play your part in ridding Sri Lanka of its three main evils: Indian expansionism, Sinhala big-nation chauvinism and Tamil narrow nationalism.

I wish you all success.

G. G. Ponnambalam

(General Secretary, All Ceylon Tamil Congress)

I am honoured and privileged to have been invited to give a message to the "Bumper Edition" of the "Lanka Guardian," which is celebrating its 10th Anniversary on the 1st of May 1988.

As an avid reader of the "Lanka Guardian" from its very inception, I have seen it grow from humble beginnings to what it is today and the position it occupies amongst the politically conscious individuals of our society.

"The Lanka Guardian" has filled a void in our society of the need for an English periodical which was independent and not the voice of any particular political party. To the best of my knowledge, there was no English periodical, before the birth of the "Lanka Guardian", which performed this function, and indeed there has been none since. The absence of any "competitor" is clear proof of the fact that the "Lanka Guardian" is performing its function satisfactorily.

It speaks volumes for "Lanka Guardian", to have come out at a time of spiralling cost of printing and to have valiantly stuck it out all these years against various odds and for not letting down its readers.

One has also to congratulate "Lanka Guardian" for steering an even keel in a political atmosphere which is overbearing and dangerous.

By way of constructive suggestion, if it is not out of order in a "Message" of this sort, I thought it might be a welcome feature to have really in-depth articles on matters of topical or immediate interest which, in turn, might give an opportunity to new faces to grace the pages of the "Lanka Guardian". "Lanka Guardian" would do well to help guard the rights of various interest groups in this Island, be they political, social, or cultural, and to high light the issues involved at a time of crisis. It would also not be a bad idea to have more material on the engine room happenings and the political intrigues and manouvers that go on in this country in order to understand more intelligibly what ultimately surfaces. In this way the secret machinations of the king makers will also be under the spotlights. The "Lanka Guardian" is eminently equipped for these.

Ad multos annos, "Lanka Guardian!"

M. H. M. Ashraff

(Leader, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress)

On behalf of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and myself I wish you my very hearty congratulations and good wishes to the Lanka Guardian on its celebrations of its 10th Anniversary on May 1, 1988.

The Lanka Guardian has won the praise and confidence of both ourselves and the public at large as a media source expressing its views with frankness, candour and impartiality. We are confident that in the future years and also in the tumultuous times that the country is experiencing today, the Lanka Guardian will continue to win the confidence of its readers.

We wish you all success for the future.

Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam

(T.U.L.F.)

Lanka Guardian has secured a niche for itself in the intellectual and political history of Sri Lanka. The Guardian has provided space for the expression of such a diverse range of political and critical information about developmental trends in Sri Lanka. It is the only journal which is frequently read from cover to cover in some of the major intellectual centres throughout the world, by scholars who have a continuing and abiding interest in Sri Lanka issues. It has thereby opened a window onto Sri Lankan political and social thought and cultural and literary developments. It is remarkable that it has been able to sustain the quality and diversity of serious and informed opinion on every facet of the developmental process and on regional developments.

The Guardian is also an important journal of record to which one can frequently turn for important political statements and reports. There are, a few counterparts to the Guardian in any other Third-World country with a developed intellectual and political tradition. It has not been afraid to confront the most

controversial and disturbing moral and political issues of our times, and recognise that an independent journal has a responsibility not only to inform, but also mould the values of a society which is bitterly divided and exposed to incalculable cruelty and human suffering. The Guardian thus serves as a mirror which reflects the passions, the dreams and ideals which have wrestled with one another to shape Sri Lanka's polity and the consciousness of its intelligentsia. It enables us to examine the flaws in our society and yet hold out the promise of a better future towards which all the elements of the polity could strive.

The Lanka Guardian is not a journal or a news magazine. It is an institution.

Dr. Gamini C. Wijesekera

(General Secretary, Eksath Lanka Janatha Pakshaya)

It is with a sense of deep satisfaction that I send this message of congratulations and good wishes to the Lanka Guardian on its 10th anniversary.

The mere fact that the Lanka Guardian has been able to survive for ten long years in these times of turmoil and economic hardships, is an achievement in itself. It has also been able to establish itself as one of the most popular and widely accepted English periodicals in Sri Lanka. As a Journal of critical political analysis and truthful overviews the Lanka Guardian has maintained a high sense of journalistic integrity. The Lanka Guardian has also not failed in its duty by our country.

Mr. Mervyn de Silva the Editor of the Lanka Guardian needs to be specially congratulated on successfully and competently editing this journal throughout.

I wish Mervyn and the Lanka Guardian many more years of successful existence in the name of honest journalism and democracy.

Lakshman Jayakody, M. P.

I am indeed very happy to be able to congratulate the Lanka Guardian on its tenth anniversary, and to wish it continued success. In these oppressive times it is a relief, in some measure, to be able to read an un-intimidated publication like the Guardian.

These are times when the so called national press is hesitant and reluctant to print even what is said in Parliament, if it is not in favour of the ruling regime; that is the freedom of the press, even in non-government controlled newspapers, in Sri Lanka today.

The Guardian is one of the very few unbiased and intelligent publications available to the reading public. Let us hope that it will be able to continue so for a long time more.

D. E. W. Gunasekera, M. P.

I am glad to greet The Lanka Guardian on the occasion of the successful completion of 10 years.

I think it has within the resources available successfully accomplished the task of making a dent — however small — into the monopoly the capitalist media's hold in the shaping of public opinion in our country.

In the first issue The Guardian placed before itself the task of presenting the "other news" and "another opinion". It is my wish that the journal continues to perform this task, because inter-action, of diverse points of view concerning public affairs is so vital for the working of the democratic process in a plural society like ours.

It has been rightly said that public opinion is a parliament in perpetual sessions. The Guardian is a member of this parliament. We expect it to uphold the rights of the public—the people.

M. Haleem Ishak, M. P.

I am happy to be able to send a message on the occasion of the completion of 10 years of Publication by the Lanka Guardian. It is a well known fact that the Lanka Guardian ranks as one of the most prestigious and independent publications of its kind in the country, which serves a fair cross section of Sri Lankan and foreign readership.

It publishes sociological studies of an analytical nature while also accommodating political views of all hues. This independent journal has been a trail blazer in the realm of presenting articles of realism of a political, sociological and intellectual nature. It is a journal with a forthright and courageous approach. Its objectivity has been the hallmark of its very existence. Now, the Muslim community is very much in the news. Our press has always paid poota to some Muslim politicians and so-called leaders but never shown any genuine interest in the community. As a Muslim MP, I feel it is my duty to record that Mr. Mervyn de Silva, is an exception. Although he is a Sinhalese buddhist, he has always written about developments in the Islamic world with knowledge and sympathy, particularly the cause of the oppressed and persecuted Palestinian people.

Dinesh Gunawardene, M. P.

(Leader, Mahajana Eksath Peramuna)

"Lanka Guardian" has served a very useful purpose in the past ten years in bringing views on current affairs and on special topics into focus. Although I have not agreed on some of the views expressed at times, I do appreciate the Lanka Guardian style of its own in presentation of such views, and their analysis. Presentation analysis and the use of the language has established journalistic style of its own. This valuable feature is commendable.

In a country starved of independent news and views, your journal has played a role in presenting views from all quarters. This I think by itself is a great service to the public here and abroad.

I wish your journal every success in the years to come.

Gamani Jayasuriya

(Former Minister of Agriculture)

A Free Press is an integral part of a free society. It is a corner-stone of democracy on which rests a vast responsibility of giving the people news, views and comments, without fear, favour or prejudice.

The Lanka Guardian, founded ten years ago, with such tradition in mind, has continued publication despite heavy odds, to be accepted as a vigorous voice, beneficial to the people.

Although the Press had its beginning in Colonial Sri Lanka in 1834, it had continued to be published until the middle of the 19th century in the English language, by Englishmen and mainly for the Englishmen. It naturally lacked nationalist aspirations, independent objectives or majority viewpoint. Fortunately with more and more Sri Lankans venturing into newspaper publishing it came to be fashioned by talented and devoted Sri Lankan journalists of high Professional standards, into an effective weapon for national upliftment, cultural renaissance and the freedom struggle.

In turbulent times such as ours, the need for an independent and perceptive Press is all the more appreciated.

I have great pleasure in felicitating the Lanka Guardian on the occasion of its 10th anniversary and I sincerely wish it continued success.

Rex de Silva

(Editor, Sun)

My congratulations to the Lanka Guardian on the tenth anniversary of its birth.

What a fortuitous name for a concerned Journal. It conjures up a mental picture of

a Guardian Angel with a Flaming Sword, ever-alert to the security and defence of Mother Lanka. A St. Michael come down to watch over our beloved isle; to guard and guide us in our difficult ascent from the limbo towards the light.

Ten years is a long period in the life of any Journal — especially so in the case of an English language journal where the readership is small and daily diminishing thanks to our fumbling through what we euphemistically refer to as Educational Reforms; which infact have proved to be a retardation to our national growth vis-a-vis life and learning.

The Lanka Guardian is aimed at the thinkers amongst the country's English-speaking elite who yet have a say in Lanka's destiny.

I am sure that the Lanka Guardian would have the influence to generate a 'double think' and revamp the policies for the greater good of the masses.

I wish the Lanka Guardian more strength to its columns.

One cannot stop by merely congratulating the Lanka Guardian without congratulating the 'Guardian' of our country's Guardian — St. Mervyn, the erstwhile patron of many newspapermen of Lanka. May he like the Printer's Devils, be with us always.

Vijitha Yapa

(Editor, Sunday Times)

When the publication of the Lanka Guardian was announced, Cynics wondered whether there is room for a fortnightly publication in English. This tenth anniversary provides adequate testimony, that it has proved to be a useful forum for divergent views.

'The Island'

(Editor, and Staff)

'The Island' and everybody associated with it wish to extend their warmest congratulations to the Editor and staff of the 'Lanka Guardian' on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. It is not an easy task to maintain a periodical of quality in the context of the problems besetting the publishing industry in Sri Lanka today and the 'Guardian' deserves our congratulations and well wishes for its determination, tenacity and the high standards of journalism it has upheld.

A. Sivanesanthalvan

(Editor-in-Chief, Express Newspapers (Ceylon) Ltd.)

It gives immense pleasure to send this message of felicitation on this decade-long endeavour's successful anniversary.

Lanka Guardian, a long-standing need of this country, was installed in the period when there was a need for an objective political assessment on regional and international affairs. With the able guidance of the well known and veteran journalist Mervyn de Silva it has been offering well balanced and thought provoking articles to the readers.

Its objective contribution with a very strong social conscience has been a force in maintaining journalistic ethics and professional standards.

I should like to take this opportunity to wish Lanka Guardian a bright future and success in the years to come.

Reggie Siriwardena

(Editor, ICES Journal)

As a frequent contributor to the Lanka Guardian throughout the last ten years, I am happy to greet the journal on its birthday.

The first decade of the LG has been a period when media in general in Sri Lanka have been in decline. Not only has State domination of the media seriously restricted the freedoms of information and expression, but many privately owned publications have themselves violated these principles, either by timidity and servility in some respects and at some times by gross partisanship and irresponsibility in others.

In this situation the LG has been the principal standard bearer of independent and objective journalism as far as publications in the English language are concerned. It played a particularly honourable role during the escalation of ethnic conflict from 1983 to 1987, in its stand against racism and war hysteria. It was one of the few voices speaking up consistently for sanity and for peaceful solutions at a time when politicians were beating the wardrums and the mainstream press assisted them by cocealing from the people the magnitude of the national tragedy and the extent of the international isolation which had overtaken Sri Lanka.

The successful completion of ten years of existence is a major achievement for a periodical unsupported by big capital in our part of the world. I hope the LG will continue to flourish in its second decade so as to serve as a critical and rational force in the persisting crisis of our society.

Prof. A. J. Gunawardana

Half a century ago, Bertolt Brecht wrote:

"When they start marching
Many do not know
That their enemy marches at the head.
The voice that commands them
Is the voice of their enemy.
He who talks about the enemy
Is the enemy himself."

During its first decade, the Lanka Guardian has endeavoured, in its own way, to bring us a clearer awareness of the nature of dominance and manipulation — the working out of the Brechtian theorem in culture, ideology, politics and government. In the process, the journal has needled us, annoyed us, teased us, delighted us, and made itself indispensable. We shall have even greater need of the Lanka Guardian's clinical ministrations in the years to come, years of non-manifest destiny for our land.

Prof. Ediriwira Sarachchandra

I was delighted to hear that you will soon be celebrating the tenth anniversary of the publication of your journal, and I must congratulate you on this occasion. Through your journal it has been possible to carry on a constant dialogue on matters that concern all of us. I wish your journal all success in the years to come and hope you will be able to provide a forum for discussion at this time of crisis.

Ajith Samaranayake

(Deputy Editor, Island)

I remember the exhilaration with which as a young journalist just three years at Lake House I greeted the advent of the 'Lanka Guardian' on May Day 1978. That coming out had a symbolic quality because the 'Lanka Guardian' stood for the 'other' point of view at a time when a comfortable orthodoxy was settling on the media as well as wide sections of intellectual opinion — a process whose logical culmination we see today in the present climate of opinion where any dissidence is treated as being tantamount to subversion.

The 'Lanka Guardian' has maintained that tradition and those standards amidst multiple odds throughout a period of polarised ethnic loyalties and rising national hysteria generated by the most profound

crisis of contemporary memory. Its tenth anniversary is therefore a testimony to the tenacity of purpose of its editor Mervyn de Silva and a beacon which holds out hope for independent journalism in the country.

H. A. I. Goonetilleke

(Former Chief University Librarian)

"Conformity means death, only protest gives a hope of life." That was Bertrand Russell long ago and never has it been of truer application in Sri Lanka than today. Time was when protest came naturally to those who preferred to be protagonists rather than members of a compromising chorus. But Russell's durable dictum has been stood upon its head — the dissenter is hustled into limbo, while the conformist lives in splendid and secure isolation. Lanka Guardian began on the swelling tide of a supposedly brave new world. In its first ten years it has seen the collapse of old ideals, the disintegration of erstwhile norms of public morals and personal integrity, and the emergence of a social polity dedicated to the preservation of those in power at any cost, it would seem. Your review has stood steadfast in this swirling welter of change and decay, striving to bear aloft the torch of journalistic resilience, and to deliver, through its pages, a discerning commentary on our collective fate. Lanka Guardian may not provide an arena for seditious thought or subversive notions, but its virtuoso insights and sometimes irreverent analyses revive the palsied spirit and lubricate the inarticulate tongue. Long may you survive to offer a restorative tonic in the abiding interests of truth over repose and hope over despair!

Desmond Fernando

(Secretary, Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka)

For those of us who value freedom the tenth anniversary of the Lanka Guardian is an occasion for celebration.

The picture of our media is not a pretty one. Television and Broadcasting are government monopolies which are run as propaganda machines for the party in power. Facts are selective; comment is one-sided; dissent is not tolerated. The same goes for the Lake House group of newspapers which is controlled by the government. As for the two privately owned groups, one cannot expect much from one group which exists head bowed, cap in hand, for government loans. The head of the other group was sharply rapped over his knuckles in the most recent budget speech because he had dared not to be servile.

For ten years there has been one English journal, the Lanka Guardian which has had the courage to voice dissenting views and consider important public issues from many aspects. It has been edited with style, élan, and wit for its editor Mervyn de Silva is our foremost journalist.

I wish the Lanka Guardian which has served our country so bravely for ten years every success.

Hector Abhayavardhana

(Pallathura Member LSSP)

The "Lanka Guardian" is to be congratulated on its completion of ten years of uninterrupted publication on the first of May, this year.

The ranks of those accustomed to reading and writing in English were never very large in Sri Lanka and the successive waves of Sinhala chauvinism that inundated good sense and breadth of vision for more than thirty years have had a disastrous impact on whole generations of our youth. This had to find reflection in the quality and extent

of English writing in the country. English periodicals, as a consequence, had a high mortality and tended to be aligned with political parties and groups.

The need for an English journal in which the bulk of the modernised intelligentsia could articulate its thoughts, feelings and reflections always existed. The difficulty was that of finding a suitable editor and sustaining the journal in the face of indifference in commercial circles. "Lanka Guardian" was able to overcome both difficulties. In Mervyn de Silva it found both a journalist of the highest calibre and an organiser of considerable influence.

During the ten years that have passed, a society that had been ruthlessly straitjacketed was fortunate that the "Lanka Guardian" had enough agility to avert its own fate. The Sri Lankan intelligentsia has never impressed the world with its capacity for self-expression. But within its limitations it has found in the fortnightly of Mr. Mervyn de Silva perhaps the only medium in which it could attempt to ponder on its future in one of the most critical phases of its existence.

Gamini Corea

(Former UNCTAD Secretary-General)

I am pleased to send this message of congratulations to the Lanka Guardian on the celebration of its 10th Anniversary. I have found it a highly relevant and readable journal. I have valued the deep insights it has provided on so many important and sensitive issues and have greatly admired the quality of its presentations, its fearlessness, and its commitment to values and principles. The Lanka Guardian fills a need in these troubled times and I hope its strength and influence will continue to grow in the years to come.

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When Coffeehouse Activism is Not Enough: It's Time to Take a Stand

FOREIGN
NEWS

Woody Allen

NEW YORK

I'm not a political activist. If anything, I'm an uninformed coward, totally convinced that a stand on any issue from subway fares to the length of women's skirts will ultimately lead me before a firing squad.

I prefer instead to sit around in coffeehouses and grouse to loved ones privately about social conditions, invariably muttering imprecations on the heads of politicians, most of whom I put in a class with blackjack dealers.

Take a look, for instance, at the Reagan administration. Or just at the president himself. Or at the men who are hoping to become president. Or at the last cluster of presidents. These characters would hardly inspire confidence in the average bail bondsman.

Another reason I am apathetic to political crosscurrents is that I have never felt that man's problems could be solved through political solutions. The sporadic reshuffling of pompous sounding world leaders, with their flbs and nostrums, has proved meaningless. Not that one is always just as bad as the next — but almost.

The truth is that, whenever the subject turns to ameliorating mankind's condition, my mind turns to more profound matters: man's lack of a spiritual center, for example, or his existential terror. The empty universe is another item that scares me, along with eternal annihilation, aging, terminal illness and the absence of God in a hostile, raging void. I always feel that as long as man is finite he will never be truly relaxed.

Mr. Allen's most recent film is "September." He contributed this comment to The New York Times.

Having said all of the above, I should also point out that there have been a few times that I have taken a public stance. Some people may remember that recently I came out vehemently against the colorization of movies without the consent of the director. This is hardly a life-and-death political issue, but it is an ethical one, and I was quite amazed at the lack of support that my position received.

Not that everyone was unsympathetic, but the moral indignation and protective legislation that I thought would follow was not quite equal to the ire aroused when a person gets in front of you in the line at the bakery. In the end, it was not the artist's rights that prevailed but rather the "realities of the marketplace."

Another example was my anti-apartheid stance. So infuriated was I with the treatment of blacks in South Africa that I proclaimed that I would not allow my films to play there until a total policy change was agreed to. This unfortunately failed to topple the existing regime, and apartheid continues, though I have received a number of grateful letters from Afrikaners who say that while they had avoided my films before, now they are prevented from even wandering into one of them accidentally, and for this they thanked me with all their hearts.

Still, there was the gesture and the hope that it would stir others. And to a small degree, it has. And now, after months of quiet in my own life, another situation has arisen, a situation that is quite painful and confusing and a stand must be taken.

As a supporter of Israel, and as one who has always been outraged at the horrors inflicted on this little nation by hostile neighbors, vile terrorists and much of the world at large, I am appalled beyond measure by the treatment of the rioting Palestinians by the Jews.

I mean, fellas, are you kidding? Beatings of people by soldiers to make examples of them? Breaking the hands of men and women so they can't throw stones? Dragging civilians out of their houses at random to smash them with sticks in an effort to terrorize a population into quiet?

Please understand that I have no sympathy for the way the Arabs have treated the Israelis. Indeed, sometimes you get the feeling you want to belt them, but only certain ones and only for very specific acts.

But am I reading the newspapers correctly? Were food and medical supplies withheld to make a rebellious community "uncomfortable"? Were real bullets fired at first to control crowds, and rubber ones only when the United States objected? Are we talking about state sanctioned brutality and even torture?

My goodness! Are these the people whose money I used to steal from those little blue-and-white cans after collecting funds for a Jewish homeland? I can't believe it, and I don't know exactly what is to be done, but I'm sure pulling out my movies again not the answer.

Perhaps for all of us who are rooting for Israel to continue to exist and prosper, the obligation is to speak out and use every method of pressure — moral, financial and political — to bring this wrongheaded approach to a halt.

The left parties in India

Marxist Political Forces — Perceptions and Practices

Sumanta Banerjee

(Special to the Lanka Guardian 10th anniversary number)

Let me begin in a lighter vein. There is this joke about a drunk, on his knees, searching for something under a lamp post. He tells a passer-by that he is looking for his keys, which he says, he lost "over there," pointing out into the darkness. The passer-by asks him: "Why, if you lost the keys over there, are you looking for them under the lamp post?" The drunk answers: Because the light is so much better here.

Sometimes I wonder whether we in India are not behaving like the drunk. We seem to believe that what is sought can be found only where the Marxist classics have shed light, leaving out of account all those empirical data which do not fit the particular conceptual framework within which we at the moment happen to work. The key may be somewhere else — outside the sacred circle of light, in the outer darkness. We should remember two things — first, the size of the circle of light from the Marxist lamp post needs to be enlarged to cover other parts of the vast space of outer darkness of the Indian reality where new developments are taking place, and secondly, there is need to explore other possible sources of illumina-

tion to light up the outer darkness.

It is about time we courageously addressed ourselves to the basic questions: Is the traditional Marxist approach acting as blinkers preventing Marxist political forces from having a full view of the many-sided, multi-dimensional reality of India? Is the orthodox leninist concept of party organisation hampering the growth of imaginative and innovative practices and discouraging the development of the individual party functionary?

Although more than half a century old, the Marxist political forces in India are yet to evolve a comprehensive strategy of dismantling the present socio-economic order and bringing about a society — a strategy that would at the same time anticipate and avoid the pitfalls suffered by post-revolutionary regimes in the past.

It is no doubt a tall order! But the pathetic experience of setbacks and failures in the international Communist movement in general, and in working class struggles in India in particular, demands an honest reappraisal of past perceptions and practice, and a bold reconstruction of the strategy for a change by Marxist political forces in India.

Concept of the Indian Nation:

In their perception of the Indian reality, Marxists of all varieties ranging from the major parliamentary parties like the CPI and CPI (M) to the various groups of Marxist-Leninist armed revolutionaries, continue to be influenced by some traditional Marxist notions. One of these is the belief that India is a

single nation which is suitable for a uniform strategy for change. A centralised economic and administrative system run from New Delhi is believed to have produced a uniform national psyche, ready to respond in one voice to a call for change. Such a belief underestimates the tenacity of caste, religious, linguistic, ethnic and other differences that have overtaken the Marxist dream of a unified Indian proletariat leading the masses for a revolutionary transformation of society. The present Indian society is a patchwork quilt, made of uneven layers and strips reflecting the different stages of historical development that co-exist in our country — traces of primitive communist relations in tribal societies which are desperately trying to resist the inroads being made by mercantile capitalism; extremely backward feudal relations in the rural society of central and northern India; the emergence of a highly conscious organised working class (although a fraction of the total labour force) in the most modern industries concentrated in a few areas which peep out like insulated islands from the vast variegated ocean of the Indian economic scene; the role of the educated urban middle class which dominates the tertiary sector and also consists of the most explosive section of the masses of unemployed. Such a situation does not lend itself to a single strategy of change — be it through parliamentary elections, or a revolution.

In one part of our sub-continent — the then East Pakistan — we saw how Marxists were left behind by the onrush of linguistic nationalism which prevailed over class conflicts during 1960-70, the party of the petty bourgeoisie taking over the leadership of the nationalist movement. In today's fragile unity of what has been propounded as the Indian nation is lessening with every passing day — with events developing in Assam and the north-east, in Punjab, the rise of regional parties in the south, and tribal movements in the centre. The

Sumanta Banerjee was educated in Calcutta and worked for ten years as staff correspondent for *The Statesman*. Contact with leaders of CPI (M-L) permitted him access to Party documents and information in preparing his book *'India's Simmering Revolution: The Naxalite Uprising'* published by Zed Press, London. He was underground and then arrested in 1975 during the Emergency. He was released in 1977. He is also the author of *India's monopoly Press: A Mirror of Distortion* (1973) and *Child Labour in India* (1979). He has edited the *'Thema Book of Naxalite Poetry'*.

character of these various movements and the composition of the participants differ from area to area. How do the Marxist parties perceive them? The CPI and the CPI (M) tend to paint them black with a single stroke, dismissing them as 'divisive' forces funded by CIA, Christian missionaries, Pakistanis and other readily available scapegoats. It is significant that neither the CPI nor the CPI (M) mentions any longer the right of nationalities to 'self-determination.' Taking for granted that India is an integrated nation, they oppose any such move.

As for the various CPI (ML) groups, they do not seem to have chalked out any independent programme of their own to lead the various ethnic and linguistic groups which are increasingly becoming conscious of their separate cultural and historical identity. Some among them tend to lend support indiscriminately to every regional struggle, failing to distinguish between latent communal and chauvinistic forces on the one hand, and potential allies on the other. Their refusal to give lead to the struggles of ethnic minorities or linguistic groups against oppressive social and economic forces stems from the policy laid down by Charu Mazumdar: "Communists need not lead national struggles. They should make unity with these struggles. The duty of the Communists is to develop class struggle, not national struggle." (The United Front and the Revolutionary Party, July 1968). As a result, the leadership of the various regional struggles is left in the hands of different interest-groups, who often instead of directing them against the Centre, or the actual exploiters, manipulate them in communal and chauvinistic directions—against other linguistic groups (like Bengalis in Assam), or religious community (like Hindus in Punjab), the more palpable targets of attack before a disgruntled and frustrated indigenous population.

Marxist political forces of all the varieties are yet to resolve

several questions: should they rely on the appeal of social equality through class struggle, or on the appeal of protecting cultural identity and socio-economic interests of exploited communities through the struggle of self-determination of the various Indian nationalities? How do they identify 'nationalities'? By religious, linguistic, cultural, or ethnic homogeneity? Should emancipation of nationalities precede class struggle?

Since almost all the Marxist parties and groups believe in a uniform strategy for the entire country, their perception of the primary contradiction in Indian society tends to be influenced by a desire to simplify the reality, and generalise it in terms of class relations. The CPI discovers the contradiction between the monopoly bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the rest of the people including the national bourgeoisie on the other. The CPI (M) finds it in the relations between the big bourgeoisie-led bourgeoisie-landlord combine on the one hand and the rest of the people on the other. The CPI (ML) groups pinpoint the primary contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses. What is lost sight of in this sort of generalisation is that because of the uneven nature of development, class polarisation leading to sharpening of class conflicts may not have reached the same stage everywhere. Contradictions of other types may prevail over, or blur class conflicts—contradictions (within one exploited class) between one ethnic group and another; or between one linguistic group and the Centre policy; or between the lower castes and the upper caste, for instance. How should the Marxists intervene in such situations? Should they lead the victims, giving voice to their primary aspirations or support from outside their spontaneous protest demonstrations?

Notion of the Proletariat

This brings us to the other traditional Marxist notion that is subscribed to by the Marxist

political forces in India—the myth about the omnipotent role of the proletariat as the leader of revolutionary change in the direction of socialism. The CPI calls upon the working class to "take the initiative in launching this national movement." The CPI (M) strives for the establishing of "people's democracy based on the coalition of all genuine anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces headed by the working class." Even the CPI (ML) while recognizing that the main force of the democratic revolution in India will be the peasantry, hopes that it will be led by the working class.

The perception of the role of the Indian working class among the Marxist political forces in India is again influenced by the orthodox Marxist precepts. The industrial proletariat which has emerged in India hardly fits in to the role of the vanguard and tool of revolutionary change as envisaged by Marx in the context of his contemporary Western European situation. In main industries in India, the proletariat is often half worker, half farmer. In his factory, he can be a militant trade unionist fighting for better wages, while back in his village he can be a mini-exploiter, hiring agricultural labourers and treating them as serfs. In the organised sector, the unionised strength of the workers is used for purely protective purposes—job security, better wages, promotion, etc.—instead of for political objectives (e.g. control over means of production). Yet, if it is these organized sections of the industrial proletariat, gathered around the various trade union bodies of the Leftist parties, who are supposed to lead the revolution?

The faith in the industrial proletariat among the parliamentary Left is sanctioned by the latter's belief in the concept of modernisation through expansion of developmental and industrial projects and India's integration into world economy. While both the CPI and the CPI (M) are committed to nationalisation of foreign-controlled industries; ex-

pansion of the state sector; an increased pace in industrialisation, etc., neither questions the quality of industrialisation. Questions like the relevance of certain types of industries to our people's needs; the consequences of a rapid and indiscriminate expansion of industries on the socio-economic life of the local people, particularly in tribal areas; the future implications from the environmental point of view, are never posed. It is amazing how the established Marxist parties can remain indifferent to the nature of industrial expansion that is being carried out in India. In the name of developing industries in the backward regions, industrialisation is being carried out through ruthless forms of feudal exploitation of, and repression of the tribal poor. The setting up of a steel plant, or a heavy engineering factory in tribal areas of Bihar or Orissa, has meant the displacement of the indigenous population from their lands. While initially during the formative stages of these industrial projects they are employed as casual unskilled labourers (without any of the benefits guaranteed to industrial workers under the law), once the construction of the projects is over they are disposed of and reduced to the position of permanent migrants.

The New Self-Asserting Forces:

The established Marxist parties which seldom take up the cause of the dispossessed tribal population, seem to take it for granted that those engaged in pre-capitalist mode of production — the agricultural labourers, the unskilled workers in mines, the tribal population depending on forest produce, the vast segments of the Indian poor which still remain outside the organisation framework of the Marxist trade unions — will be gradually marginalised and ultimately disappear. But what was possible in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the course of capitalist development in certain parts of the world, cannot be repeated in the latter quarter of the 20th century. Today, even the most backward communities have started articula-

ting their problems and asserting their rights. They simply cannot be wisked away as undesirable obstacles in the way of a modernization that threatens their cultural identity and economic livelihood. In the absence of alternative means that would both protect their identity and assure their economic well-being (absent in the programme of ruthless industrialisation and modernisation adhered to by both the present ruling party and the Marxist political forces in India), they are bound to explode into protest movements. The outbreak of certain types of agitations (e.g. Jharkhand in Bihar-Orissa, Chhatisgarhis in Madhya Pradesh) should be viewed in this context.

It is significant that some of the movements of the exploited poor in recent years have been continuing outside the framework of the established Marxist organizations. The Chipko movement in the Western Himalayas to save forests, and directed against predatory commercial interests, has both economic and environmental implications. The risks of indiscriminate industrialisation at the expense of forests and leading to ecological imbalance with grave implications for the country's economic resources, have never engaged the attention of Marxist practitioners. Similarly, while the CPI and the CPI(M) are vociferous against the hazards of nuclear explosions by the USA, curiously enough they remain silent about the environmental pollution posed in India by the nuclear power plants established by our government — a problem brought to the fore by reports of accidents in some of these power plants and the threat of radio-activity faced by the workers there.

In the field of social relations again, the fledgeling feminist movement in India has developed recently completely outside the framework of the Marxist political parties. The conventional Marxist approach to the problem of women in our society is that the system of discrimination can only end in a future socialist society, and hence tackling of the problem can be shelved till the *victory of the revolution!* Such an approach perpetuates feudal

attitudes towards women even among Communist party ranks, — also in the behaviour of top ranking Communist party leaders towards their own daughters or wives.

The point is that Marxist political forces in India have failed to grasp the emerging trends and contradictions in the variegated Indian political and social scenes, which lie outside the Marxist 'circle of light' — a circle revolving round the concept of a single, coherent Indian nation, and the nation of the industrial proletariat as the leader of the future revolution! The ethnic and linguistic forces, the environmental groups, the feminists who lie on the outer margins of the circle of light, are dismissed as temporary aberrations, and are expected either to disappear or be incorporated within the holy circle. But as past and recent experiences indicate (e.g. the failure of the Marxists during the secessionist movement in the then East Pakistan, and the isolation of the Indian Marxists today from the various forms of regional and linguistic aspirations), Marxist practitioners will find themselves left behind by the march of spontaneous forces (often manipulated by communal and religious fundamentalist groups) if they continue to refuse to come to grips with these problems. Already they look like ageing adolescents, like characters sitting in an old act, not told by the prompters that the scene has changed, that at the back a new set is being knocked together.

Among the Marxist parties, the CPI and the CPI(M) are trying to come to terms with the increasing signs of disintegration of the concept of the Indian nation by seeking an understanding with the regional parties (e.g. Telegu Desam or the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir), demanding more autonomy in financial matters for the states, and moving towards a federal structure. But both the parties nurse the nostalgic feeling that the Indian Union is an indissoluble entity which holds the states together to form the Indian nation, and that these states are all bound to each other by a sense

of national identity. This explains their panicky reaction to aggressive manifestations of separatist tendencies and their hurried retreat to the shelter of Indira Gandhi, pledging her total support to maintain the 'unity' of India.

As for the CPI (ML) groups, there is hardly any central and national authority laying down guidelines. The groups operate in different parts of the country, and are evolving their respective tactics to suit the particular situation prevailing in their areas of operation. This appears to be a healthy sign since such practices are in keeping with the local demands and are likely to be rooted to the grass. But there are two dangers. First, the risk of isolation. Even if they manage to establish 'liberated zones', they can never survive for long unless such rural-based guerrilla warfare is coordinated with simultaneous strikes in industries and upsurges in cities to cripple the economy and transport of troops to the villages, and attempts to neutralise or win over at least a section of the state's armed apparatus — factors which still seem to be outside the ken of the strategy and tactics of the underground CPI (ML) groups. Secondly, the absence till now of any attempt to establish ideological hegemony. Persistence of caste prejudices, religious superstitions, obscurantist practices will continue to distort whatever achievements the CPI (ML) activists might have made in their respective areas of operation, unless along with the struggle for economic emancipation they strive for social and cultural transformation of a tradition-bound people.

Ideological Hegemony

Indian Marxist political forces until now have concentrated on the question of influencing, dominating, or capturing the political state (which embodies relations of coercion), and have neglected the task of establishing ideological hegemony in civil society (in which relations of consensus predominate). The power of the present Indian ruling classes, though finally guaranteed by control of the state, also rests on predominance

within certain institutions and practices of civil society, including the ideological domain. There is for instance, the morality of authoritarianism and paternalism (one of the few sentiments — and self-defeating at that — that still helps to bind our people into a 'nation') imposed from above on an admittedly willing people, who have not developed by long practice the institutions and customs which make it easier for individuals and groups to act with independence, initiative and civil courage. Through a complex network of processes, consent to authority — whether political or civil — has become normal. This reflects the hegemony of the ruling class in society.

To confront this, the Marxist political forces must mount a hegemonic challenge within civil society. This means the intervention of the Marxists in all areas of social life, including the hitherto neglected marginal sectors (e.g. environmental issues, women's problems, ethnic minorities, consumerist movement). It implies an alternative plan to develop counter-vailing institutions of power — manned by workers (in factories and their work situations), peasants (in villages), ordinary citizens (in urban social life) — that would influence decision making in civil society.

The failure of the parliamentary Marxists to develop such alternative power structures at the grass roots level in the Left movement reduced them to pawns in the hands of the bureaucracy after they came to form governments in states. Most of the measures of reforms — moderate by the traditional Marxist standards — had to depend on enforcement by the power of the state. One did not expect any revolutionary change in Left Front regimes, particularly when they were being required to operate within the straitjacket of a highly restrictive constitution and a highly skewed legal system. But one hoped for a breath of fresh air — a few changes like control of corruption and crime, end to police high-handed-

ness, a sympathetic and efficient administration, improvement in civic amenities — areas where the common people suffer the most and where change could have been brought about even within the present constitutional framework. But failure of the Marxists in power in West Bengal in these spheres again indicates their gradual dissociation from the concerns of the common people at the grassroots level, their indifference to the needs of the civil society.

Need for building up parallel institutions of power in civil society assumes importance in the context of the growing erosion of credibility of the old institutions like parliament, judiciary and established political parties.

Attempts to experiment with such innovations and reach out to other areas outside the fixed 'circle of light', not only demand a thorough revision of the traditional Marxist approach to the Indian reality, but also a change in the Leninist concept of a party organisation. Inner party democracy allowing individual questionings and initiatives can open up new avenues where the Marxist practitioners can seek understanding from all possible perspectives.

The stress in Marxism on the monistic view of development has often led Indian Marxist political forces to assume a uniform and unilinear historical progress for our country, and to insist upon the universal validity of the Leninist party and the proletariat as the only leaders of any revolution. Academic formulations have taken the place of the horse-sense that comes from a knowledge of men.

It is about time therefore that India's Marxist political forces become modest enough to acknowledge that the future shape of India is not a roseate replica of the Soviet Union or China (or Albania for that matter!) but a huge jigsaw puzzle, each

(Continued on page 52)

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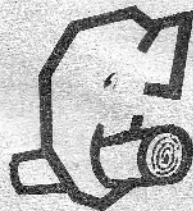
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MINISTRY OF LANDS & LAND DEVELOPMENT

The Peace Accord — a view from Tamil Left

L. Ketheswaran (Official spokesman of EPRLF)

A great deal of speculations and interpretations as regards the genesis and the motives behind the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord have only served to mystify rather than clarify some of the crucial issues. The de-mystification of the above can be effected only by taking note of the fact that the various forces (or "actors") which support the accord are not monolithic and homogenous; on the contrary, the various reasons and motives behind expressions of support for the Accord were, more often than not, mutually exclusive and diametrically opposed to each other.

In view of the above, it is imperative that any analysis of the Accord should begin by differentiating the various "actors" without whose support the Accord would not have been impossible, and the reasons for their initiating/supporting the Accord.

Forces Supporting the Accord and Reasons:

1. Within the Tamil Politico-Military Organisations: The Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) arrived at its own independent stand that given the following politico-military situation, the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord had to be defended;

(i) Given the intensification of a "genocidal war" unleashed against the Eelam People (is the Tamil-speaking People of Sri Lanka) by the dependent bourgeois and authoritarian Sri Lankan State, starting with the unilateral abrogation of the December 19 Proposals and culminating in the May 1987 Offensive, the Government of India had to be directly involved in guaranteeing safety and security of the Tamil People. In this regard, the air-dropping of food supplies (an overt case of infringement of the sovereignty of Sri Lanka under

international norms) followed by the deployment of the Indian Peace-Keeping Forces (IPKF) soon after the signing of the Accord (legitimate since this was done with the concurrence of the Sri Lankan Government) were, both, necessary and unavoidable.

Although the EPRLF had no illusions that the Accord constituted a permanent solution to the National Question in Sri Lanka, it was clear that our People (is broad Tamil as well as the Sinhala masses) wanted an immediate respite from a protracted genocidal situation and incineration warfare.

(ii) Since the "residual matters" pertaining to the devolution of power to the Provincial Councils, envisaged in the Accord were to be tackled in the post-Accord period, and given the fact that the credibility-gap which existed between the Eelam people and successive Sri Lankan governments had, in fact, widened, it was imperative that the Government of India should be brought in as guarantor of the Accord.

(iii) It was also becoming increasingly and painfully evident that the progressive, democratic and left forces working in the midst of, both, the Tamil and Sinhala social formations had become marginalized in the face of right-reaction terrorist-adventurism and chauvinism by the LTTE in the Tamil homeland and the S.L.F.P.-JVP emerging "coalition" in the South. The above twin tendencies, although mutually antagonistic, fed on each other and reinforced themselves, much to the satisfaction of the Tamil and Sinhala reactionary bourgeoisies. The Sri Lankan State also found it convenient since the above developments served to distract the broad Sinhala masses from agitating against the rapidly deteriorating

standard of living, compounded by increasing inflation and unemployment. The EPRLF, therefore, also considered the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord as an instrument which could pave the way for an "Interim" period of some stability and restoration of the democratic process. This "Interim" period (ie valuable time and space) was to be utilized to forgo and further strengthen links between the progressive, democratic forces within the Tamil and Sinhala social formations. The fusion of the broad, democratic Sinhala and Tamil consensus was seen as a primary task, if the dangerous trend towards communal holocaust was to be thwarted.

(iv) The geo-political situation also warranted stabilization, particularly in the face of a concerted programme of destabilization of the anti-imperialist forces in the region. In this context, the annexure to the Accord which sought to act as a deterrent to the presence of the military/intelligence agencies of U. S. Imperialism and its client-states (or what could be broadly termed the Washington-London-Tel Aviv-Islamabad axis) was seen to be progressive.

(v) In addition to what was perceived as the positive aspects of the Accord, the EPRLF was also cognizant of the dangers of rejecting the Accord. It was clear that while the Imperialist bloc gave the signal to the J.R. Jayewardena regime to proceed with the Accord, the non-aligned and socialist bloc countries similarly, extended their support to the positive response by the Government of India. Under these conditions, an outright rejection of the Accord would not only have taken the Eelam Resistance on a collision course with India, but it also would have stood completely isolated and condemned, in the eyes of world opinion. Such an eventuality, would have been disastrous.

The EPRLF thus took the decision to support the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. So did the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF). While extending their collective support for the Accord manifest in a joint-statement of 27th July signed by leaders/representatives of EPRLF, TELO, PLOT, and ENDLF the above organizations presented a joint-memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, highlighting their apprehensions as regards certain deficiencies in the Accord.

They were:

(a) The problem of statelessness of the plantation Tamils which remain unresolved;

The composition of the proposed interim administration which had not been incorporated in the Accord and remained ambiguous;

(c) The question of General Amnesty and the ambiguity as regards the plight and status of Sinhala political prisoners;

(d) The question of Referendum and the ambiguity as regards the provision pertaining to the merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces.

In conclusion, it could be said that while EPRLF and PLOT viewed the Accord, both, in the context of the National Question in Sri Lanka as well as in the wider context of the geo-political and international situation, TELO and ENDLF were concerned mainly with issues that had a direct bearing on the nationality problem.

LTTE's Position

The position taken by the LTTE since the Bangalore parleys in November 1986 remains ambivalent and confused. However, one could discern three tendencies within the LTTE. Firstly, the tendency to accept anything as long as it was

offered the dubious status as the sole, legitimate representatives of the Eelam and the denial of any legitimacy to the other politico-military organizations. Secondly, the tendency to reject anything that impedes the secessionist goals of the creation of an independent sovereign state of Tamil Eelam. Thirdly, rabid anti-Indian tendency which appears to have been consciously nurtured by external forces using various intermediaries amongst sections of the Tamil expatriates as well as direct infiltration into the decision making process.

2. THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT

As for as the J. R. Jayawardene Government was concerned, the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord, which it initiated, was meant to satisfy the following conditions:

(i) The disarming of the Tamil militant groups;

(ii) The removal of India (in particular, Tamil Nadu), as an "external sanctuary" to the Eelam Resistance;

(iii) The stabilization of the J. R. Regime and its outward self-projection as a government that stands for peace and political stability — a necessary pre-condition for the implementation of the IMF/World Bank Package that is heavily dependent on foreign investments.

It could be argued that the commitment made by the J. R. Regime to implement "residual matters" pertaining to devolution of power to the proposed provincial councils, in consultation with the Government of India and the annexure to the Accord, pertaining to the delinking of foreign military/Intelligence agencies inimical to India's security and interests, could have been a tactical ploy or a "bait" to co-opt India in ensuring that conditions (1), (2) and (3) are satisfied. That the Sri Lanka

government acted in "bad faith" is now evidently clear given the manner in which the 13th Amendment to the Constitution and the Provincial Councils Bill was enacted without taking into consideration the various elements that were discussed between Colombo and New Delhi in three rounds of talks which included "proximity talks" with the TULF. Further, recent policy statements and interviews given by prominent Sri Lankan spokesmen are in direct conflict with the terms of the annexure to the Accord that deals with the geo-political situation which concerns India as well as the anti-Imperialist forces in the region.

3. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The reasons for the Government of India responding to the signals sent by Colombo, through various intermediaries, in putting together the accord, could be as follows:

(i) Genuine concern over the role played by the Sri Lankan government as a "bridgehead" for the forces of destabilization in the region. The Government of India was, in particular, sensitive to the fact that the J. R. Government was using the Eelam Resistance as a pretext to seek military assistance and training facilities from forces which were seen as threat to India's own interests and security.

(ii) The Tamil Nadu Factor — Although the emotive identity between the people of Tamil Nadu and the Eelam People (i.e. the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka) was not seen as a problem by the Centre, yet, it would not be incorrect to state that the Centre was particularly sensitive to the possibility of any spill-over of separatist tendencies. Further, the refugee problem which, although manageable and nowhere close to the magnitude reached during the civil-war in Pakistan (just before the birth of Bangladesh) was beginning to reveal some pulls and strains. The spate of robberies by dissidents of Tamil militant groups, further aggravated the problem.

(iii) The increasing frustration on the part of the government of India in its repeated failure to "mediate" a negotiated settlement and the attraction of a direct "interventionist" role, primarily in its own interest, but also residually in the interest of the Eelam people.

(iv) The preference to deal with a known devil (ie. J.R.) and the hope that sufficient pressure would bring him around to recognizing India's strategic importance in the region, as well as the futility of seeking a military solution to the Nationality problem in Sri Lanka.

U. S. IMPERIALISM AND THE WASHINGTON-LONDON-TEL AVIV-ISLAMABAD AXIS

The strategy adopted by the above was basically to bring about a negotiated settlement between the J. R. Jayawardena government (ie its client-state) and the LTTE which had, over a period of time and through intermediaries, been propped-up militarily as well as financially. The strengthening of the LTTE was done with the dual purpose of neutralizing the increasing radicalization and the anti-imperialist content of the Eelam Resistance and weaning the Eelam Resistance from India's sphere of influence. The fratricidal attacks by the LTTE against the EPRLF and PLOT should be seen in the above-stated context as well as the declaration of TELO by the LTTE. It must be noted that while the ideological orientation of PLOT and EPRLF was anti-imperialist and socialist-oriented, the TELO was openly criticized by the LTTE as "puppets" of India. The reactionary sections of the Tamil expatriate bourgeoisie maintained direct contacts with the U. S. State Department and western intelligence agencies, whilst the Jaffna and Colombo based Tamil Bourgeois elements acted as intermediaries between the J. R. Regime and the LTTE.

It was when these plans were running into snags that U. S. imperialism and its agencies

settled for the second-best of co-opting India, rather than confronting it. However these agencies continue to maintain contacts and encourage (covertly) those forces opposing the accord, so as to keep its options open, particularly that of undermining India's strategic importance in the region, if its foreign policy continues to maintain an anti-imperialist orientation.

THE SINHALA PROGRESSIVE, DEMOCRATIC AND LEFT FORCES:

The progressive, democratic and left forces working amongst the Sinhala people which supported the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord could be broadly categorized as follows:

1. The "legal" Left and Social Democratic Parties — ie the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL), the Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshya (SLMP), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP). Here it must be noted that the Trotskyite NSSP has taken an ambivalent and an ambiguous stand that endorses regional autonomy but opposes the presence of the IPKF and the Accord.

2. Human Rights and Civil Rights Movements — ie the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE), the Campaign for the Release of Political Prisoners (CROPP), Centre for Religion and Society, Satyodaya etc.

3. Proscribed and underground left organizations — ie Vikalapa Kandayama and other splinter groups of the JVP and legal left parties, NJVP and Samajwadi Janatha Viyaparaya.

The reasons for these forces supporting the accord are a close approximation of the rationale behind EPRLF's decision to support the accord.

DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THE AIMS OF THE PROGRESSIVE, DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN SRI LANKA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND TENDENCIES

Given the concrete situation that exists today (15 4 months

after the signing of the Accord), it would not be an exaggeration to state that neither the expectations of the democratic, progressive forces in the Tamil and Sinhala social formations in Sri Lanka, nor that of the Government of India have materialised. It would also not be an exaggeration to state that the Socialist bloc countries and the non-aligned nations which supported the accord have become increasingly concerned about the quagmire that India has got itself into.

The reasons are as follows:

(1) The LTTE continues to be the main obstacle to the restoration of some semblance of peace and the democratic process in the Tamil areas. In the post-Accord period, the arms wielded by the LTTE (ie arms not surrendered plus arms acquired after the accord) were used to stifle the democratic alternative to the LTTE led by the EPRLF and including PLOT, TELO and other groups engaged in mass work. In addition, the LTTE incited Tamil Muslim riots in the Eastern province and murderous assaults against innocent non-armed and uninvolved Sinhala civilians were a clear indication of LTTE's diabolic designs of subverting the peace process. Ultimately, the LTTE took to armed actions against the IPKF, which was seen as a direct threat to its hegemonistic designs. The civilian casualties and deprivations have destabilized the situation in the Tamil areas.

(2) The J.R. Regime has abrogated on its commitments under the Accord particularly to "residual matters" pertaining to the devolution of power to the proposed provincial councils. The J.R. Regime has also failed to terminate the presence of the various military/intelligence agencies affiliated to Washington-London-Tel Aviv-Islamabad axis.

(3) The campaign and acts of individual terrorism by the Sinhala chauvinist coalition led by the JVP has reached a crescendo and has destabilized the situation in the South.

(Continued on page 50)

Indo-Lanka relations

Professor Shelton Kodikara

Sri Lanka's continual pre-occupation with a regional approach to International Relations was in part a product of its historical commitment to political and economic de-colonisation, disarmament, anti-imperialism and preservation of peace and territorial integrity in the post-colonial territories. But it was also in part contingent on stark geographical realities. Stalin is reported to have told Paasikivi of Finland: "There is nothing I can do about geography" No Indian Prime Minister has said anything like this to a Sri Lankan counterpart,¹ and certainly the locational determinism implied in Finland's relation to the Soviet Union by the above statement bears no comparison with the posture of Indo-Lanka relations. For one thing the centrality and the "oceanic and aerial modality"² of Sri Lanka in the Indian ocean area, has given it a greater flexibility in her foreign relations than would otherwise appertain to a small power juxtaposed in close proximity to a big power. For another, the strategic importance of Trincomalee, one of the finest natural harbours in the world, and formerly in British times considered an indispensable bastion of Indian defence, may still attract the attention of major Powers and even of India in certain contingencies, but this in itself may constitute a guarantee of non-interference. Nehru often commented on what he considered to be the quite unreasonable fears of India entertained by certain sections of opinion in Sri Lanka.³ Speaking at a mass reception during his 1950 visit to Sri Lanka, Nehru declared:

Some people fear that the great country India might want to develop or sort of absorb Ceylon. I assure you that if any people have any such idea it is completely wrong.⁴

Despite these assurances, a certain reserve and aloofness persisted in Indo-Lanka relations, especially in the early independence years: Sir Ivor Jennings, a keen observer of Sri Lanka politics in these years, analysed the situation as follows:

India (thus) appears as a friendly but potentially dangerous neighbour to whom one must be polite but a little distant It is not that India and Indians are unpopular, but that the Ceylonese, while admiring much that is Indian, and feeling themselves racially akin to Indians, have a sensation of living under a mountain which might send down destructive avalanches.⁵

These susceptibilities were in large part due to the mere fact of Sri Lanka's juxtaposition in close proximity to India, and to the sheer disparity in their size and populations. But official Indian policy after independence also came to assert India's interest in the integrity and territorial inviolability of her smaller neighbours, Sri Lanka included. The assumption of an identity of security interests between India and Sri Lanka is implicit in Indian thinking, as revealed by the following statement made by a retired Indian naval commander.

Sri Lanka is as important strategically to India as Eire is to the United Kingdom or Taiwan to China. . . . As long as Sri Lanka is friendly or neutral, India has nothing to worry about but if there be danger of the island falling under the domination of a power hostile to India, India cannot tolerate such a situation endangering her territorial integrity.⁶

Written in 1974, this was a clear enough prognosis of India's

conception of the identity of national security interest between the two countries. India, having inherited a body of British strategic theory in other respects, also regarded Sri Lanka as lying within its defence perimeter. The status and future of Trincomalee is an object of continuing Indian concern. Trincomalee was a naval base under the British even after independence, until 1956, but since S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's time Sri Lanka has scrupulously refrained from permitting it to be controlled by other major Powers in order not to offend Indian susceptibilities, and in pursuance of non-aligned policy.

The locational factor and Sri Lanka's strategic situation in relation to India is, then, the independent variable in Indo-Lanka relations and to this is related the vast asymmetry in the size, population and power of the two countries, making the dyadic relationship essentially that between a Big Power and a Small Power.

Among the dependent variables in these relations the regional strategic importance of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean area and the global strategic implications of Trincomalee's present or future status may, as suggested above, in themselves constitute an area where Sri Lanka's decision-makers may attempt to balance India's regional power and influence against the interests of other major powers in the region, notable those of the United States and China, and even against the interests of lesser regional powers such as Pakistan's. In this sense, the ebb and flow of Indo-Lanka relations might be seen as stemming from the wider foreign policy orientations of Sri Lanka's decision-makers.

Personal identities therefore become in themselves an important variable in Indo-Lanka relations. Changes at the top leadership level have been more frequent in Sri Lanka than in India. Since independence there have been eight different persons who have held the office of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (one of these being the incumbent President) and each Sri Lankan Prime Minister has had a welenschoon different in greater or lesser degree than that of the others. Not surprisingly, therefore, the 'view' of India from Colombo has tended to change — sometimes in fundamental respects — due to the personal predilections of and the succession from D. S. Senanayake to Dudley Senanayake and Sir John Kotelawala and from S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike to Sirimavo Bandaranaike and then from the latter to J. R. Jayewardene and R. Premadasa. In India changes at the top have been fewer. Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the destinies of India and its international postures for seventeen years and among his four successors, two were family members, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, and a third, Lal Bahadur Shastri, was an ardent disciple.

For his own part Pandit Nehru reciprocated the esteem and affection with which he was held in Sri Lanka. He was greatly attracted by Sri Lanka as a repository of Buddhist culture and, apart from persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, for whose welfare he felt a special responsibility, while building up a tradition of close cooperation with Sri Lanka's political leaders. Apart from his personal visits before independence, Nehru visited Sri Lanka four times since 1950; first in connection with the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Conference held in Colombo that year, second, to attend the Southeast Asian Prime Minister's Conference held in Colombo in 1954, third in connection with the Buddha Jayanti celebrations in Sri Lanka in 1957, and finally, in October 1962, to declare open the Ayurvedic Research Institute in Nawinna, these

visits spanning the tenure of office of four different Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka, namely D. S. Senanayake, Sir John Kotelawala, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Bandaranaike. His last visit was in fact made at a time of crisis in India-China relations, and just one week before the Indo-China war began on 20th October 1962.

Nehru's relations with S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike were especially close: both men were brought up in the same tradition of liberalism and moderate socialism, and both shared remarkably similar views on Third World issues, non-alignment and international affairs generally. On the eve of his taking office as Prime Minister in April 1956, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike said:

I visualise much more friendly relations and closer cooperation between myself as prime Minister of this country and Pandit Nehru as Prime Minister of India in dealing with not only problems affecting our two countries and Asia but general world problems.¹

And some months later, in a public farewell dinner to B. N. Chakravarty, Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Bandaranaike stated that "In many matters concerning international affairs, I happen to hold views not dissimilar to those held by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru".² The tradition of goodwill and cooperation initiated by Nehru and Bandaranaike was carried on by his successors, and the close friendship and rapport between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became later a factor of considerable importance in the Indo-Lanka personal equation.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike was Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for 12 years (1960-65 and 1970-77), a longer period than any previous Prime Minister in office and during this period her counterparts in New Delhi were Jawaharlal Nehru himself, succeeded in 1964 by Lal Bahadur Shastri and in 1966 by Indira Gandhi. The abiding achievements of Indo-Ceylon relations during the 12-year span of her

stewardship was in part a testimony to the family bond and rapport which subsisted between the Nehrus and the Bandaranaises, but in part it was also the product of Mrs. Bandaranaike's own diplomatic skill and her steadfast adherence to the principles of non-alignment.

It is significant that soon after becoming Prime Minister for the first time in 1960, Mrs. Bandaranaike undertook a Buddhist pilgrimage of India, accompanied by members of her bereaved family. Pandit Nehru had demonstrated his great esteem for S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike by declaring the day of his funeral, 26 September 1959, a public holiday in India.

In July 1960, he welcomed Mrs. Bandaranaike as a state guest and accorded her the friendship and cooperation which was due to her in her own right as Prime Minister of a friendly neighbouring country. The fact that Nehru's advice and assistance were sought and readily given to Mrs. Bandaranaike is proven in the crisis which ensued in Sri Lanka following upon the Bandaranaike's government's take-over of assisted denominational schools in 1961. Certain classes of assisted denominational schools were permitted to continue as private fee-levying schools, and the rationale of the take over was that since colonial times, denominational schools had been set up and maintained at state expense, and that this had favoured certain denominations, particularly the Catholic Church, at the expense of others. When the Catholic Church hierarchy, Catholic parents and even school children mounted a campaign to resist the take over, and when sit ins and demonstrations by the Catholic lay community seemed to foreshadow a situation where the loyalty of Sri Lanka's predominantly Christian officered armed forces were also in doubt, the appeal to Nehru resulted in the intervention of the head of the Catholic Church in India, Cardinal Gracias, who personally undertook a visit to the island to resolve the crisis.

In 1971, it was Mrs Indira Gandhi's turn to assist, with men and materials, the imperilled government of Mrs Bandaranaike when it was threatened by the April Insurrection in that year. Indian assistance on this occasion, too, was crucial, for not only did a detachment of Gurkhas from the Indian army guard Colombo's International Airport, but Indian naval craft also patrolled the waters off Sri Lanka during the pendency of the crisis.

Apart from these marks of affinity in Indo-Lanka relations, however, Mrs. Bandaranaike's contribution to the strengthening of these relations related to three substantive issues: first, the negotiation of the Indo-Ceylon citizenship agreements, of 1964 and 1974, second, her advocacy of the proposal to make the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace, and third, the agreements on the demarcation the maritime boundary between the two countries.

Perhaps the most notable area of cooperation between Sri Lanka and India in recent times relates to the signing and implementation of the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of October 1964, which dealt with the citizenship status of persons of recent Indian origin in Sri Lanka. This question, a carry-over from the colonial period, had become a controversial issue in Sri Lanka politics as early as the 1930s, and had become the subject of Indo-Lanka negotiations from this time onwards. With the approach of Independence in Sri Lanka, and particularly after the 1931 Donoughmore constitution had conferred on Sri Lanka a semi-responsible government, a conflict of economic and political interest between persons of Indian origin and indigenous elements of the population became the subject of protracted debate between the governments of the two countries, and figured in the Bajpai-Senanayake talks of 1940/41 and the extended correspondence between D. S. Senanayake and Jawaharlal Nehru in 1947/48.

In the post-Independence period, Dudley Senanayake's talks with Jawaharlal Nehru in 1953, and the agreements entered into

between Sir John Kotelawala and Jawaharlal Nehru in 1954 proved inconclusive and abortive. The Indo-Ceylon agreement of October 1964 was, therefore, preceded by a long history of negotiations between the two countries, and its immediate background' on the Sri Lanka side, was a determined effort on the part of the Sirimavo Bandaranaike government in the early sixties to find solutions to the problem of the citizenship status of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, and on the Indian side an earnest desire, on the part of the Lal Bahadur Shastri government, to improve India's relations with neighbouring countries and foster a spirit of mutual trust and friendship among them in the wake of troubles after the Sino-Indian war.

Under the 1964 agreement, Sri Lanka agreed to grant citizenship to 300,000 of an estimated 975,000 persons of Indian origin in the island, and India agreed to grant Indian citizenship and repatriate to India 525,000 such persons, the period of validity of the agreement being 15 years. Natural increases in the stipulated numbers for repatriation to India and grant of Sri Lanka citizenship, respectively, were also covered by the agreement which provided for the transfer of assets of repatriates up to a specified limit. The 150,000 persons not covered by this agreement were to be the subject of further negotiations. In January 1974, Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Indira Gandhi agreed to take equal responsibility for them, i.e. 75,000 persons of this number were to be given Sri Lanka citizenship and 75,000 were to be repatriated to India. By a further agreement, the period of validity of the agreements was extended to 1981.

The Indo-Ceylon agreements of 1964 and 1974 stand out as a unique example of the manner in which two neighbouring countries have succeeded, over the years, in resolving disputes and problems, some of which appeared at times to be intractable, by recourse to discussion, negotiated statement, and diplomacy. In a mutually operative spirit of give

-and-take. The implementation of the agreements has been beset by numerous political and administrative difficulties, which it is not intended to adumbrate here at length.

The political difficulties stemmed largely from the fact that Mrs Bandaranaike herself was not responsible for the implementation of the agreement except during the period of her second administration between 1970 and 1977. The governments which succeeded her after her electoral defeats in 1965 and 1970 were both beholden to the Indian Tamil political leadership for its Part in their electoral victories and lacked the political will to implement the agreements resolutely in the spirit in which they were made. Indeed, the enabling legislation to put the 1964 agreement into effect, the Indo-Ceylon Agreement Implementation Act, was not enacted till 1967 and it could not become operative, because of the requirement to give a two-year period for filing applications, until the tail-end of Dudley Senanayake's government in 1970. More significantly, this Act changed the terms of the 1964 agreement by tying the grant of Sri Lanka citizenship not to actual repatriation to India under the reciprocally phased program mentioned in the agreement, but to the grant of Indian citizenship with of course, the liability of repatriation, if so desired, at a later date.

Mrs Bandaranaike amended the Implementation Act after her return to power in 1970 providing that the number of Indian origin persons admitted to Sri Lanka citizenship should be in proportion to the number of such persons repatriated to India but once again after the change of government in 1977 grant of Sri Lanka citizenship is tied to grant of Indian citizenship in the specified ratio to 4:7, and to repatriation itself.

Administrative difficulties of implementation of the agreements have related, among other things, to delay, on the Sri Lanka side, of payment of gratuities and release of exchange control permits to would-be repatriates and to the Indian High Commission's

own cardiness in the disposal of applications. These have undoubtedly compounded the difficulties stemming from political causes. But it is reasonable to infer that implementation of the citizenship agreements and disposal of the problem of statelessness would have been much speedier had they remained under Mrs Bandaranaike's direction.

Indian Ocean as Peace Zone

National identities concerning world politics are also germane to the stability and well-being of Indo-Lanka relations at all times. Attitudes to international issues in the two countries have not, over the years, been marked by diametrical divergences, and India and Sri Lanka have remained the two most important members of the Non-Aligned Movement in South Asia since its inception in 1961. From the late sixties, onwards, the two countries have also been much concerned to preserve the Indian Ocean as an area of Peace in the context of the escalation of Big Power rivalry in this area. Both countries had an important status as littoral states in the Indian Ocean area, and have seen the increasing naval activity of outside powers as a threat to the peace and integrity of littoral and hinterland states in the region. The proposal to make the Indian Ocean a Peace Zone stemmed from the initiative of Mrs Bandaranaike who, following up on an earlier proposal made by her at the Calvo Non-aligned Summit in 1964 calling all non-aligned states to take steps to close their ports and airfields to ships and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and liquidate bases existing in their territories, presented a resolution, which was carried at the Lusaka Non-aligned Summit in 1970, calling for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. This resolution called upon the UN General Assembly to adopt a declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace from which Great Power rivalries and competition should be eliminated. Mrs Bandaranaike also personally presented the IOZP proposal before the 26th Session of the UN

General Assembly, where the Declaration of IOZP was adopted. Interestingly enough, Mrs Bandaranaike conceived of IOZP not only from the point of view of its military implications, but also as a means of bringing about regional solidarity in the Indian Ocean area. Explaining IOZP at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference held in Singapore in January 1971, she declared:

The Indian Ocean is a region of low solidarities or community of interests. Although it forms a geographical and historical entity, there are few cooperative links between the countries of the region, and these are either bilateral or subregional. A Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean will provide countries of this region with time to develop trends towards integration and cooperation so that in course of time the Indian Ocean region could move from an area of low solidarity to an area of high solidarity.⁹

India's complete consonance of view on the IOZP proposal is not surprising, for it was Nehru himself who had, in the fifties, first urged the necessity of preserving the Asian region as an area of peace at a time when it appeared that the pressures of the Cold War would engulf the newly independent states of the region in military blocs and power rivalries East and West. Mrs Indira Gandhi herself expressed, on innumerable occasions, her complete identity of view on the IOZP proposal. In September 1980, she declared:

The Ocean has brought conquerors to India in the past. Today we find it churning with danger. Even the Pacific hardly lives up to its name. The frantically increasing pace of militarisation in the Indian Ocean makes the 3,500 miles of our coast more vulnerable. How can we acquiesce in any theory which tries to justify the threat to our security environment or condone the existence of foreign bases and cruising fleets? Independence implies the responsibility of deciding what is good and

safe for ourselves and of charting our own course.¹⁰

And in December the same year, in a statement to Parliament on the forthcoming visit of Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to India, Mrs Gandhi made explicit her concerns on this subject.

Continuing tensions and growing conflicts in our region have given outside forces an opportunity to exploit these tensions to their advantage. Recent years have seen a revival of efforts by certain non-littoral great powers to increase or consolidate their military presence in the Indian Ocean. There is much activity in building existing bases and in acquiring new bases and facilities. We have ourselves been demanding that the entire Indian Ocean should be freed of great power presences so that it becomes a zone of peace. The people of Asia and Africa can ill afford embroilment in this international power game which seems to be the beginning of a new cold war. We have shared our concern frankly with our Soviet friends.¹¹

Preservation of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has become a recurrent theme in pronouncements on Indian foreign policy in the recent past. India is a member of the Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the UN under Sri Lanka's Chairmanship to devise means of implementing the Peace Zone proposal. Developments in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf region, however, have led to its periodic deferment. Yet, the IOZP issue remained a common band between the two countries and illustrated their commonality in foreign affairs, especially during the Sirimavo Bandaranaike-Indira Gandhi period.

Martime boundary agreements: India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Projection of similar interests by India and Sri Lanka as regards the Indian Ocean and the personal rapport between Mrs Bandaranaike and Mrs Indira Gandhi was further reflected by the definitive agreements reached between the two

countries on the question of demarcation of their maritime boundaries. Sri Lanka is separated from India by a narrow stretch of water, the Palk Strait, which is barely 20 miles wide at its narrowest point, and the definition of territorial waters, contiguous zones, and exclusive economic zones acquired considerable importance in the relations between the countries against the background of recent discussions and decisions of the International Law of the Sea conferences. A notable area of cooperation between the two countries was the signing of an agreement demarcating their international boundary in the Palk Strait in June 1974, which came into operation on 8 July 1974. The agreement demarcated a boundary in the sea from a point about 18 nautical miles northwest of Point Pedro in the Palk Strait to Adam's Bridge, a distance of approximately 86 nautical miles.

The agreement gave each country sovereignty and exclusive jurisdiction over the land and waters on its side of the boundary line. The vessels of each country were to enjoy in each other's waters the rights of navigation as they had traditionally enjoyed while each country was to be free to explore and exploit all petroleum and mineral resources falling on its side of the boundary. Provision was made for the two countries to agree on the method of most effective exploration, where petroleum or mineral deposits were found to extend from one side of the boundary to the other. The significant aspect of the agreement, from Sri Lanka's point of view was that it resolved, once and for all, the vexed question of sovereignty over the island of Kachcha Thivu, which had been a matter of dispute between the two countries for over two decades. The agreement did not refer specifically to Kachcha Thivu, but under it this island fell on the Sri Lanka side of the boundary. The agreement related to the international boundary between the two countries in their historic waters in the Palk Strait and the Palk Bay, and resolved the question of overlap created when India and Sri Lanka extended the limits of their ter-

ritorial waters from six to twelve nautical miles in 1967.

A further Maritime Boundary Agreement of 1976 extended this boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal, and gave each party sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction over the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zones, as well as over their resources, whether living or non-living, falling on its side of the boundary. Under this agreement, each party was also required to respect the rights of navigation through its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone in accordance with its laws and regulations and the rules of international law. In respect of the marine area between India and Sri Lanka in the Gulf of Mannar, the agreement defined, by latitudes and longitudes, 13 points which were equidistant from the coasts of the two countries. Under the agreement, the lines connecting these points constituted the maritime boundary in the area. It was further provided that the extension of this boundary beyond Point 13M would be considered.

The agreement further stipulated that if any single geological, petroleum, or natural gas structure or field existing on one side of the boundary was exploited on the other side, the two countries should reach an agreement on the manner in which the structure or the field shall be most effectively exploited, and the manner in which the proceeds deriving therefrom shall be apportioned. The agreement was dated 23 March 1976, and ratified on 6 July 1976.

Practical effect to this agreement on the Sri Lanka side has been given by the Maritime Zones Law of 1976 and the Presidential proclamation gazetted on 15 June 1977, which provide as follows:

1. The territorial sea of Sri Lanka shall extend to a distance of 12 nautical miles from baselines measured from the low watermark of ordinary spring tides along the coast of the mainland and along the seaward side of islands.

2. The contiguous zone of Sri Lanka shall extend 24 nautical miles seaward from the baselines from which the territorial sea is measured.
3. The exclusive economic zone of Sri Lanka shall extend to the sea to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the territorial sea is measured.
4. The pollution zone shall extend to the sea to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the territorial sea is measured.

The proclamation also defined the historic waters of Sri Lanka in the Palk Strait, the Palk Bay, and the Gulf of Mannar, and declared that (a) the historic waters in the Palk Strait and the Palk Bay shall form part of the internal waters of Sri Lanka; and (b) the historic waters in the Gulf of Mannar shall form part of the territorial sea of Sri Lanka.

The continental shelf of Sri Lanka had also been defined in the Maritime Zones Law of 1976 as the natural prolongation of the land boundary of Sri Lanka into the sea up to the outer edge of the continental margin or up to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the coast, whichever was more. The delimitation of the international boundary described above must be regarded as a historic landmark in Indo-Lanka relations, and the culmination of many years of hard negotiations between the two countries. India herself made a simultaneous proclamation defining the extent and legal status of the historic waters between the two countries in the Palk Strait, the Palk Bay, and the Gulf of Mannar. A Supplemental Agreement dated 22 November 1976 between India and Sri Lanka determines the extension of their maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar from position 13M to the Trijunction point between Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives, while these three countries entered into a further agreement determining the Trijunction point itself in July 1976.

Non-Alignment

Personal identities and the role of the individual, however important they might be as catalysts in given political and historical situations, do not supersede long-term historical tendencies. Nor can they obviate the basic geopolitical interests might essentially be quite unrelated to personal identities in the neighbouring countries. But also perception of a state's security interests can change, as can perception of the community of interests between states.

Mrs Bandaranaike's great diplomatic achievement was that she made Sri Lanka count for more than the small power it was in the dyadic relationship with India. And this achievement was obtained not with external, extra-regional, sources of power or bases of support. It stemmed largely from the projection of her own image in the arena of international diplomacy. The fact that she was the world's prototype woman Prime Minister was very relevant to her image in the world at large. The fact that Mrs Indira Gandhi was her successor in this respect was very relevant to the whole course of Indo-Lanka relations when these two personalities were at the helm of affairs in their respective countries. Also relevant to these relations was the fact that their contention of non-alignment remained the same during their tenure of power. There was a remarkable consistency of their views on the Indian Ocean, as seen above. Moreover, the fact that the Fifth Non-Aligned Summit Conference was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1976, and that Mrs Bandaranaike became the first Asian Chairperson of Non aligned Movement gave her an added importance in international affairs, which superseded the conventional indicators of Sri Lanka's power and influence.

Even during the Nehru era, Mrs Bandaranaike felt independent enough to play a mediatory role after the outbreak of the India-China war of October 1962. On this occasion, resisted pressure from elements within her own party as well as from the Opposition to brand China the aggressor

in the war, and took the initiative in summoning the Colombo conference of six non-aligned nations, with a view to exploring ways and means of bringing India and China to the conference table and settling the boundary dispute. The proposals which emanated from this conference, together with their clarifications, were personally explained by Mrs Bandaranaike and other representatives of the non-aligned conference in Beijing and Delhi in January 1963. Srimavo Bandaranaike's mediatory efforts did not resolve the Sino-Indian boundary dispute indeed, it still remains unsolved twenty five years later. But her diplomatic initiative did pay at least limited dividends. Its main achievement was that it gave the combatants a 'breaching-space' to consider their respective positions. Moreover, India accepted the conference proposals 'in toto', China accepted them, too, with reservations. And Mrs Bandaranaike had made herself the medium by which the non aligned countries gave expression to their concern over the conflict between the two Asian giants.

In the same way during Indira Gandhi's time, Mrs Bandaranaike did not rush to take sides with India during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971. Pakistan, too, was one of Sri Lanka's friendly neighbours. Though always sympathetic to national liberation movements, Srimavo Bandaranaike was also alive to the implications of secession and separatism for polyethnic countries such as Sri Lanka. She laid herself open to charges later made in certain quarters in India and Sri Lanka that she permitted the routing of Pakistan International Airways (PIA) aircraft carrying Pakistani troops and materials via Colombo to theatres of operations in East Pakistan during the war. Though this might in fact have been the case, it is clear that Mrs Bandaranaike did not knowingly permit such overflights through Colombo. PIA was a civilian airline, it had rights of overflight through Colombo. And it would appear that if Pakistani troops did transic through Colombo to Dhaka, they did so in civilian attire, not in

uniform. However they may be, this act of commission by Mrs Bandaranaike's government did not tarnish Sri Lanka's image as a power friendly to India. Nor did it affect personal good relation between Indira Gandhi and Mrs Bandaranaike.

The issue of Tamil militancy and separatism, now be deviling Indo-Lanka relations, had roared its head during the latter part of Mrs Bandaranaike's second administration, but it had not assumed the serious proportions of the present time nor had it become so portentous an issue in Indo-Lanka relations as it has now become. The denial of civic rights to Mrs Bandaranaike precluded her from participating in the negotiations between the concerned parties in the prevailing ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. But it did not prevent her from becoming a part of the political process relating to this crisis. Quite apart from her own domestic political role, Mrs Bandaranaike became involved in the bilateral negotiations between India and Sri Lanka relating to the crisis inasmuch as India's accredited representatives as well as special envoys and high officials from the Foreign Ministry customarily kept her informed and consulted her about the Indian approach to it.

NOTES

1. Apropos of Nepal, however, a former Indian Foreign Minister, A. B. Vajpayee, announced a variant of this dictum when he declared: "God and geography have linked our two nations and decreed that we live in friendship." *Times of India*, 16 July 1977.
2. Cf. P. R. Ramachandra Rao, *India and Ceylon, A Study*, (Bombay, 1954), p. 8.
3. See e. g. *Ceylon Daily News*, 16 January 1950; *The Hindu* 20 May 1957; *Ceylon Daily News*, 30 May 1956.
4. *Ibid.*, 16 January 1959.
5. Sri Ivar Jennings, *Commonwealth in Asia* (London, 1951), p. 113.
6. See Ravi kaul, 'The Indian Ocean: A Strategic Posture for India' in T. T. Poulouse, *Indian Ocean Power Rivalry* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 66.
7. *The Hindu*, 8 April 1956.
8. *The Hindu*, 7 October 1956.
9. *Ceylon Daily News*, 14 January 1971.
10. See India's Visit on the Indian Ocean (New Delhi, n. d.), pp. 1-8.
11. *Ibid.* p. 8.

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Class, Caste and the Political Process

Newton Gunasinghe

Although South Asian social formations have historically been differentiated into various socio-economic strata, other forms of social segmentation were also present in these social structures. These segmentations were sometimes hierarchical and sometimes non-hierarchical, i.e. horizontal divisions. If one attempts to conceptualise the social formations in South Asia, it is imperative that one ought to take into account that these social structures are segmented by class, caste, ethnic, religious, sectarian and parochial differences. A social theorist attempting to grapple with these complex problems, has to comprehend within the context of South Asian social formations, not only class differentiation which actually exists, but also other social segmentations mentioned earlier. It is not theoretically significant to say that these are general social characteristics of peasant societies if one were to compare the South Asian subcontinental civilisation, with the other major civilisation in Asia, that of China, one is confronted with the social structural fact that caste is absent in China. Hence a different theoretical discourse is necessary to comprehend the profound crisis in South Asian social formations.

It is from this perspective that I shall attempt to do a preliminary analysis of the complex problems relating to class and caste differentiations in Sri Lankan society and the impact these exerted on the political process. Although a number of serious studies have dealt with the caste systems of Sri Lanka, (i.e. Pieris, Ryan, Banks, Roberts and Yalman), the impact of caste and caste consciousness on the political process has yet to be investigated in depth.

In my view, Sri Lanka does not possess a single caste system; to go one step further, even Sinhala society does not possess a single caste system. The following differ-

ent systems could be identified with ease in relation to the traditional social structure: (i) the Kandyan caste system and (ii) the northern Tamil caste system. As sub-systems one may identify the systems in the eastern province and the Nuwara-Kalaviya. The structures stream of anthropological thought in France (i.e. Dumont) has defined that a caste system ought to revolve around three basic principles: (a) hierarchy (b) division of labour and (c) endogamy, while laying emphasis on the religious aspects of hierarchy. Nevertheless, these three structural elements must necessarily function within a single social system, which give them meaning and order.

In a multi-ethnic and a segmented social formation, this is not possible, although the systems are interacting and overlapping, still a degree of segmental mutual exclusivity is maintained. With the penetration of capital, under imperial rule, modern class divisions also emerged in this segmented social formation. From the mid-nineteenth century, the traditional social order was transformed, however with certain archaic relations of production being reactivated under the dominance of capital. This reactivation of archaic relations of production, especially in the post 1848 revolt period influenced the caste system and the restructuring of the system.

The period of British rule developed a land-holding **Mudaliyar** stratum, which controlled subordinate bureaucratic positions, while allowing the emergence of a stratum of mercantile plantation owning capitalists. But it must be emphasised that except at the level of the **Maha Mudaliyar**, which during the entire British imperial rule was controlled by a single extended family, other **Mudaliyarships** were somewhat representative of the different castes at least in the Sinhala coastal areas.

On the aftermath of the revolt of 1848, a phase of social order ensued, with an agrarian bloc combining the landlords and peasantry in the Kandyan areas and a degree of capitalist growth in the coastal regions. The process of capitalist growth brought about the formation of modern classes: i.e. a bourgeoisie, a petty bourgeoisie and a working class, once again segmented on ethnic and caste lines. For instance, the urban working class concentrated basically in Colombo was mainly Sinhala by ethnicity, whereas the large mass of the plantation workers concentrated in the up-country plantations were of South Indian origin: coming from the underprivileged castes of that region. The bourgeoisie too were caste differentiated, basically adhering to the rule of endogamy, while uniting for political and economic purposes.

The earlier orientation of elitist politics had to be abandoned by the upper stratum of Sri Lankan society with the arrival of universal suffrage, granted to Sri Lanka by the British imperialists with no mass struggle for this objective and against the heavy opposition of all the so-called "National Leaders". Hence forth the elements of the upper stratum inclined to capture political power were obliged to cultivate the "masses" on whose votes they had to depend. Within this context patron-client relationships were established, which in a segmented social formation has a tendency to run through parochial groupings, such as ethnicity, caste and village community. As the ethnic factor has already gained dominance by the mid-forties, no Tamil candidate could win a majority Sinhala electorate and no Sinhala candidate could win a majority Tamil electorate, whatever his political leanings or popularity may be. Hence the divisive lines of demarcation had to organise around other segmentations, and it is precisely here that caste assumes modern significance as a political mobilizing factor through the patron-client linkages.

What is sociologically interesting however, is that this was not what one may assume to be the "crad-

(Continued on page 37)

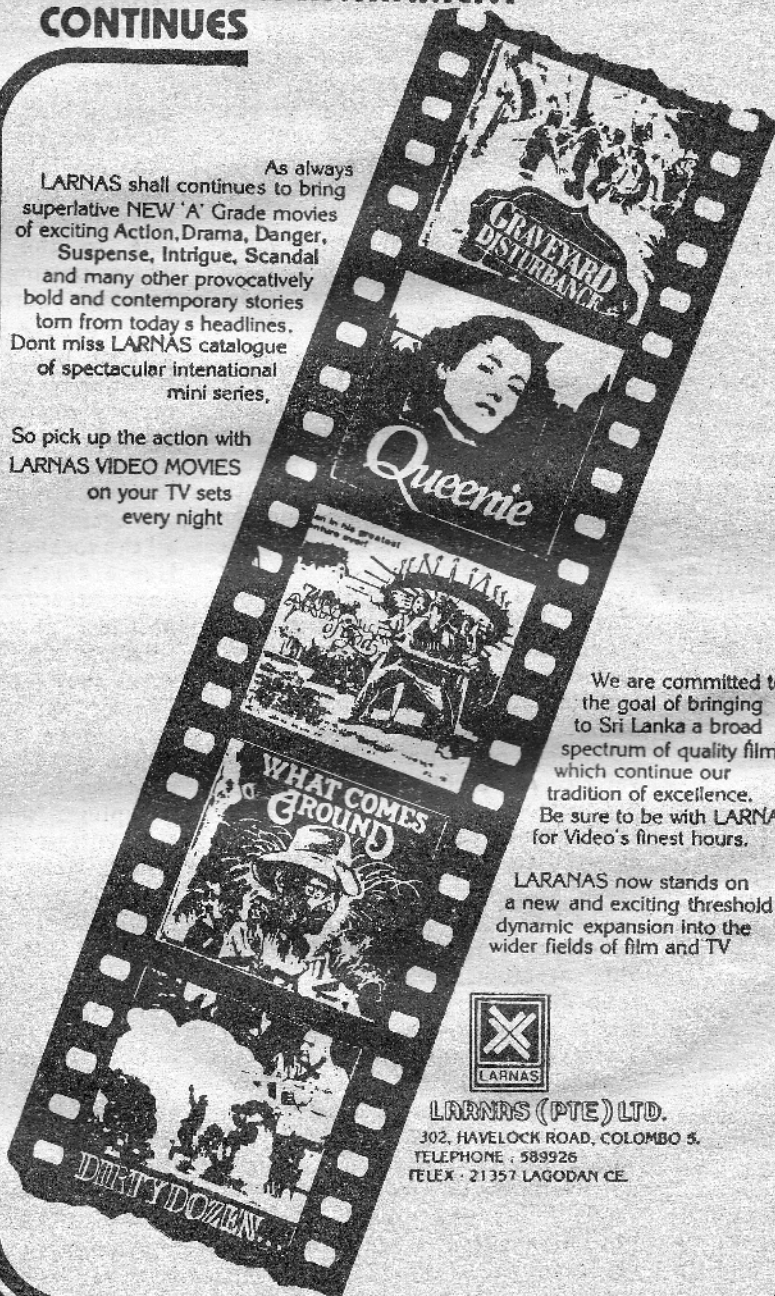
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SRI LANKA'S FIRST NAME IN VIDEO HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Wariyapola Sumangala

Prof. W. A. Wiswa Warnapala

In the great pantheon of Sri Lankan heroes who have contributed in various ways to achieve liberty and national independence, Wariyapola Sumangala was considered the most powerful bhikkhu who, displaying tremendous courage and patriotism, pulled down the British flag when it was hoisted in Kandy on the occasion of the signing of the Kandyan Convention which converted the Independent Kingdom of Kandy into a vassal state of the British colonial empire. This incident, which occurred at the time of the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815, is now celebrated by the nationalist-minded people primarily because of the fact that the courageous and patriotic act of Wariyapola Sumangala generated a force of nationalism that eventually culminated in the achievement of political independence. In Sri Lanka, there is a great dearth of autobiographies that record events of the past. In addition, there are no comprehensive works on national heroes and the few publications available focus their attention on those anglicised upper middle class politicians who fought for constitutional reforms. The leaders of the constitutional reform struggle were treated as great heroes because they represented the ideology of the proagandists of this idea. In my view the pantheon of national heroes of Sri Lanka could be broadly categorised into three special segments, and this has to be done on the basis of their contribution to the national awakening and liberty and independence of the country. This, again, could not be restricted to the constitutional reform struggle dominated by the anglicised English educated upper crust of the Colombo elite whose political and cultural ethos and aspirations were not different from the colonial bureaucracy that played a role in the early constitutional reform movement. Before the advent of political independence, our heroes were British Governors in whose memory statues were erected in Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya

and this kind of servility to the representatives of the colonial master was followed by the erection of memorials to commemorate the leaders of the constitutional reform movement. They made a contribution to the constitutional and political modernisation of the country and this was done within the framework of the constitutional arrangements constructed and guided by the colonial authority. In my view, the national heroes belonged to the great tradition of the Keppitipola, Gongalegoda Banda, Puran Appu, Ven. Wariyapola Sumangala and Ven. Kudapala and other martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of political liberty and independence. They were the most important heroes who sacrificed their lives in their struggle against imperialism and thereby laid the foundation for national awakening in the future. The next category of heroes in my assessment based on national ideology and their contribution to the kindling of nationalist feelings of the masses of the oppressed people of Sri Lanka, are the segment of the educated bhikkus of the period, who, through their numerous efforts to rejuvenate culture, religion and language, injected a feeling of nationalism, and they included in this galaxy may be Welivita Saranankara, Hikkaduwa Sumangala, Walane Siddartha, Waskaduwa Subhuti and Ratmalane Dhammarama.

People who opposed imperialism and chose leaders who adopted violent methods to defeat imperialist domination in the island were traitors and their admirers were not allowed to resurrect their images to derive nationalist inspiration to generate popular feelings against colonial rule. In such a context, the oppressed peoples — natives in the language of the imperialists — were prevented from identifying their true national heroes. This was not properly accomplished even after independence in 1948, it was only in 1956 that a process of reha-

ilitation began and people, guided and motivated by a new sense of emancipation, began to recognise national heroes, making a distinction between the patriots who wanted to overthrow imperialism and those of pro-imperialist constitutional reformers. It is in this changing historical context that we have to examine the impact made by Wariyapola Sumangala on the post-1815 developments in the arena of Sinhala nationalism. A patriot is one who makes an outstandingly remarkable contribution to the development of a nation and the motive should not be self-interest. In the great pantheon of patriots, there were a large number of leading bhikkus, who displayed religio-nationalism derived from the island's national ideology; they also excelled in art and literature. Welivita Saranankara, Walane Siddartha, Hikkaduwa Sumangala, Waskaduwa Subhuti, Ratmalane Dhammarama, Pelane Valiragha, Karatota dhammarama, Moratota Dhammakandhi, Kirama Dhammananda, Saliele Maniracana, Mohottiwatte Gunananda, Ambalangoda Dhananda, Battaramulle Subhuti, Udakendawala Siri Saranankara stand prominent in this illustrious line of patriotic bhikkhus and they, in addition to the permanent contribution made to language and literature, played a leading role in awakening the people. Udakendawala Siri Saranankara became a fire brand nationalist playing a pioneering role in the island's left wing politics. In my view, the beginning of their anti-imperialism and the imbibing of patriotism could be traced to the patriotic episode with which Wariyapola Sumangala was associated.

Welivita Saranankara and Wariyapola Sumangala represented the twin forces that helped to rehabilitate the buddha Sasana in a time of turbulence. The advent of the Portuguese brought about a decline in the Sangha, whose dedicated fraternity, in their efforts to preserve the Sasana

and the historic influence on the Sinhalese nation, migrated to the Kandyan State. In the time of Rajasingha of Sitavaka, the Sasana faced the challenge of destruction; Buddhist texts were destroyed and bhikkus faced numerous difficulties, including death at the hands of the king. This period in our history witnessed a marked decline in the organisation of the Sangha; it had a menacing effect on the Sangha that a lot of them disrobed themselves. The Kandyan State, with a view to arresting this process of decline took several measures to resuscitate the Sangha in the time of Vimaladharmasuriya who re-established the Upasampada. In this great task, he was supported and assisted by the good advice of Devanagala Ratnalankara Thero. Yet another feature contributed to the decline of the Sangha was its close association with lay affairs, and this led to the disappearance of the religious content from the dispensation. The absence of 'Silvat bhikkus' led to further deterioration, and it was in this background that Robert Knox recognised kinds of bhikkus during his time of captivity in the Kandyan hills. In the period of Vimaladharmasuriya's reign, measures were adopted to restore the Buddhist Sasana and despite efforts at restoration certain bhikkus continued to disrobe themselves. In fact, some of them retained the Samanera status without taking to Upasampada because of their attachment to interests in property. The arrival of the illustrious bhikku Welivita Siri Saranankara on the scene characterised by the decline of the religious institutions, changed the religious environment of the Kandyan State which now became the sole repository of Buddhist traditions and knowledge. Saranankara Thero, entering the Buddhist Order in 1712, travelled the length and breadth of the country searching for fountains of Buddhist knowledge, and with the sole purpose of purifying the organisation of the Sangha, he wanted to re-establish the Upasampada in the country. It was with this aim in view that he organised the 'Silvat

Samagama' a reformist movement developed within the order. Under the guidance of this movement, efforts were made to break away from the irregular practices, and to stick to the rules and regulations prescribed in the Vinaya texts. Again emphasis was laid on the learning of the texts and the strict observance of the rules laid down in the ancient texts. The practice of mendicancy was again restored, and all these changes in both the organisation and behaviour of the bhikkus impressed the king who now decided to extend his patronage. The ancient role of the Sangha, and its place to the affairs of the Sinhalese State, came to be restored, and the tradition association of the Sangha with the secular power structure in the Kandyan State received prominence. Malwatta and Asgiriya received recognition and prominence as the two leading monasteries, which derived legitimacy from the patronage extended by the State. In this period, the Kandyan people showed intense loyalty to the Buddhist institutions, and this was an integral aspect of the Kandyan social organisation. The bhikku in the Kandyan State, apart from the spiritual influence they wielded, exercised considerable political power in the land, and this was primarily due to two important social factors. They were the traditional repositories of learning and knowledge and owned vast acres of land—which was a source of power and influence. In addition the bhikkus, especially the Mahanayakas and the officials of the Buddhist hierarchy were the members of the aristocracy. The Kandyan aristocracy, which was primarily a land-owning oligarchy, maintained its inter-locked relationship through bloc ties and marriages. Their possession of national economy. Inter-twined to this social system was the presence of the bhikku as yet another central force in the Sinhalese State structure that exercised considerable political influence over the Sinhalese populace. In other words, the close association between the Sangha and the secular political authority

came to be established after the purification of the Sasana under the pioneering leadership of Welivita Saranankara Thero, and it was this combination of the two social forces that impelled Governor Maitland to describe the bhikkus as 'a political engine which the King of Kandi is continually endeavouring to keep in his favour'. This was the traditional position of the Sangha, and it in fact, was the central feature of the Sinhalese political culture. The recognition of this central fact—place of Buddhism and the role of the Sangha in the affairs of the State—from which derives the basis of the national ideology of the island—led to the adoption of the Article 5 of the Kandyan Convention of 1815, according to which it declared Buddhism inviolable and pledged to protect its rites, priests and temples. This, in political terms, meant that the Kandyan Convention guaranteed the preservation of indigenous institutions, both political and religious, and it included the legitimate role of the bhikkus in the affairs of State.

The Vidyalkara Declaration of 1946, which justified the involvement of bhikkus in politics, was a part of this heritage. Governor Brownrigg admitted that without the adoption of Articles 4 and 5 of the Kandyan Convention consolidation of their hold on the country was impossible. In fact, he wrote that 'or secure possession of the country hinged upon this point'. All these amply demonstrate the power and influence of the Buddhist Sangha in the political affairs of the country: the subsequent appointments of Kobbekaduwa Nayaka Thero and Mawathagama Nayaka Thero as Mahanayakas of Malwatta and Asgiriya respectively further illustrates this vital point. This historically the influential role of the Sangha reached this stage due to the untiring efforts of Welivita Saranankara, and Wariyapola Sumanagala, giving symbolic expression to Sinhalese pride and nationalism, pulled down the English flag when a British soldier wanted it hoisted before signing the Convention in 1815. He refused to become a subject of the British Empire

before the subjugation of the island was complete. A wide variety of interpretations and opinions have been expressed in respect of this patriotic event associated with Wariyapola Sumangala. It however needs to be emphasised that Wariyapola Sumangala, by defying the British at the very hour of their imperialistic glory, laid the foundation for the struggle against imperialism and the Sangha, in varied ways, came to be involved in the struggles of 1818, 1834, 1846 and 1848. The Sangha entered the anti-imperialist struggle and it manifested in various spheres of activity, one significant milestone of which was the Vidyavankara Declaration of 1946 which recognised the political role of the Bhikkus as legitimate one that derived inspiration from this heritage of the bhikkus. Bhikkus in the 19th century, through literary activity, didactic poetry and debates on religious issues, got themselves actively socialised into the arena of nationalist politics. Migettawatte Gunananda, mobilising Sinhalese resistance to the missionaries, played a kind of anti-colonial role. Waskaduwa Subhuti, through his literary activity, played a similar role while Welligama

Sumangala made use of the Buddhist renaissance movement for the awakening of Sinhala nationalism.

Historians, especially those writers who narrated the story from the point of view of the imperialists, paid very scant attention to the Wariyapola Sumangala episode and this perhaps was motivated by the need to obliterate its relationship to the national consciousness of the Sinhalese people. The Sumangala episode received prominence in the hands of such writers as Tennakoon Vimalananda, Dolapilla, Walpola Rahula who, in particular, treated this patriotic event as a significant element moulding the heritage of the bhikkus in the country. According to this historical view, the bhikkus are an integral factor in the social and political heritage of the country, and it is this heritage that makes the Sangha the most powerful pressure group in the politics of the country. The Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters traditionally accept and assume the role of the two leading pressure groups and the continued generation of pressure on national issues—political, social, economic and cultural is legitimate in the context of the national heritage from which

they derive constant inspiration. The Sri Lankan State through this form of legitimisation, assumes the character of a semi-Buddhist State and this, though not expressly stated in constitutional terms, is informally represented in the State structure. As a permanent element in the Sri Lankan political culture, the Sangha will continue to play a leading role in determining and shaping national policies and issues; they, more than any other social group, can get themselves identified easily with national issues, and it is this national acceptance that binds them permanently with our political culture. No political movement in Sri Lanka and no person wielding political authority can succeed without the blessings or the adherence of the Sangha because it is the major force in our national culture and it is also the central element in our political culture. Wariyapola Sumangala, therefore, traditionally symbolised this central force and proved to the world that their prime duty was to protect and safeguard the Sinhalese nation.

(The full text of a commemorative lecture delivered in Kandy by Prof. Waswa Warnapala, Head of the Dept. of Political Science, University of Peradeniya).

Class, "Caste" . .

(Continued from page 12)

tional" situations. Even in the early fifties, caste does not seem to have played the same political mobilizing role as it does today. For instance, in the elections of 1952, Nawalapitiya electorate a **Bathigama** majority area was contested by two principal contenders, Mr. R. E. Jayatilaka and Mr. D. P. Serunga. Although belonging to the majority community Mr. Serunga was soundly defeated by Mr. Jayatilaka. In the same election, Gampola electorate which is a Govilgama majority area was contested by Mr. M. W. R. de Silva and Mr. P. M. Jayasena and Mr. de Silva won the election with a significant margin. Mr. Jayatilaka was a Labour Party candidate while Mr. de Silva was a U.N.P. candidate. I have cited the elections of 1952 rather than the elections of 1947, as the latter was overdetermined by the presence of the plantation workers, who

lost their voting rights after independence. But from the mid-sixties onwards, it is a problem whether these two seats could be electorally won by a person coming from the non-majority caste, whatever his political orientations or personal popularity may be. However, it has not been tested. Both principal political parties, the U.N.P. as the S.L.F.P. have taken care to put forward candidates belonging to the majority caste in almost all the electorates that they have contested after the mid-sixties.

This raises an important question relating to social theory not only pertaining to Sri Lanka, but to the sub-continent as a whole. What is the degree to which one could promote class consciousness in a segmentary social formation overcoming the boundaries of ethnic, religious and caste divisions? Is it possible that an ideology close to class consciousness prevailed among different social strata, including

the bourgeoisie, the working class and the peasantry, three or four decades back than it does now.

I think one is obliged to conclude by cautioning against screams of unilinear and unidirectional thought. To a person caught up in mechanistic thinking, capitalist growth should necessarily bring about the differentiation of classes and along with it class consciousness, over-riding other segmentary differences. But the very uneven nature of capitalist growth in the South Asian region, while intensifying class conflict has also led to these actual social conflicts to express themselves through "traditional" segmentary divisions, inherited partially from traditional society, but sometimes reinforced by colonial rule and the post-colonial states.

Based on a presentation delivered at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, March 1988.



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TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL RODRIGO

Buddhism and Christianity: Toward the human future

**Rev. Michael Rodrigo —
'he had a dream...'**

Michael Paul Rodrigo, Oblate of Mary, was born on 30th June, 1927 at Dehiwela. He had his secondary education at St. Peter's College, Colombo.

After a short spell as teacher at St. Peter's, he joined the Oblate novitiate, Bambalapitiya in September 1947. He was sent to the International Scholasticate Rome for his ecclesiastical studies and passed seven years there at the Gregorian University. He was ordained priest on 7th July 1954.

He was one of the first members of the staff of the newly constituted National Seminary Ampitiya in 1959. He taught Psychology and Logic there till 1970.

Fr. Michael obtained his Ph.D in Philosophy of Buddhism in 1959 at the same Gregorian University, "summa cum laude". In 1971-1973 he obtained the Doctorate in Theology at the Institute Catholique, Paris while on sabbatical leave.

Fr. Mike was deeply involved in the liturgical apostolate as a young priest. He carried out a veritable campaign for the meaningful participation of the people in the liturgy. The reforms of Vatican II spurred him on to even further effort. But as time went on he matured as an Oblate priest and realised the importance of the social apostolate.

That is why in 1973 after his Parisian studies, he opted to work in the Centre for Society and Religion, Colombo. From here he joined the new diocese of Badulla under Bishop Leo Nanayakkara. He was appointed Director of the experimental Seminary, Sewaka Sevana, at Bandarawela and trained the first group of priests there. The Seminary was heavily oriented towards situational formation.

In 1980 he took another decisive step and established a small house in Lower Uva at Buttala. This became the Buddhist-Christian Dialogue home.

— Fr. Dalton Forbes, O.M.I.

(Text of one of Fr. Michael Rodrigo's last sermons)

In the upsurge of interest in Buddhism, following Vatican II, and in the search of the Church's concern for an open, pluralist society, a group of Christians (a priest two women religious and a Buddhist young man named Somadasa) came to a rural area nearly 150 miles east of Colombo, capital city of that island and cradle of the Buddhist scriptures. It was practically in Uva Wellasa, the same area wantonly destroyed by the colonial power in the last century that we began our abode and fellowship named "Suba Seth Gedara" (Good wishes house) and Buddhist-Christian Dialogue and Conscientization: Village Effort, respectively, on July 11th 1980.

Within a fortnight of our arrival in July 1980, the Poya malu vihara monk asked: "when would you be leaving this place, for we are sure you would soon pour water and baptize." To which a small-time trader, a follower added: "Why don't you see to your own religion and we will see to ours?". But after persistent visits, interchanges, planning together and persevering collaboration on issues, the tide turned by Vesak 1982. When we had re-written with a lyricist farmer's help, Buddhist devotional songs based on the *saradharmā* and the *dasaparamitas* (ten perfections), and seven hundred devotees had listened to them with awe and respect, the monk, Venerable Alutwela Sumanasiri announced over the address system: "The group of 10 Buddhist singers and one catholic priest and two sisters are Buddhist Christians, Buddhists by their culture and the other Group is Christian by belief and conduct. They have a large heart to honour the Buddha as a great Asian teacher. I regret having harassed him at the start saying he had come to baptize. Now, I know that was not his idea. So, now I tell you, be free to come here to go there to learn the dhamma. It is the same. He too can guide you".

In a rice-bowl country of South Asia where yet some Buddhist monks take the *patra* (bowl) around for begging food/rice from the people, there took place in the year 1818 unwanted reprisals against the peasantry, their tanks or reservoirs, their homes and all their possessions were destroyed.

An imperialist power governing that island through a Christian governor thus brought to nought the work of generations of Buddhist peasants in one fell stroke. This

event, seared into their memory and wilfully upheld in mind and imagination even a hundred and sixty-five years later produces in them a traumatic shock. The Buddhist monks, custodians of the doctrine and keepers of the Buddhist way of life are also holders of the bowl — barometric sign of a people's prosperity or poverty, for if they receive rice above the 'equator' of the bowl, the people are prosperous, and if below, the people are poor.

On May 21st 1987, he officially affirmed his collaboration in the Village Effort of Buddhist — Christian Dialogue by giving his signature to the Constitution and agreement. We had come a long way to work for a fuller humanity.

Again, when 89 farmers had lost their harvest due to a heavy drought we prepared a 34-page report and went for redress and relief: the Christian group and the Buddhist monks and farmers, eight in all to the local state secretarial (the kachcheri). A puny official accosted us: "One religion is frightening enough. I get more frightened when two religions come together". To which the Venerable Alutwela Piyananda retorted: "Surely you are not against the **dhamma samajaya** (the righteous society) set up by the leader of the country?" By evening, the local MP had asked him not to join the Christians for such work in future. The monk came to us and said: "For whom did Jesus live and die? for man. For whom did the Buddha work? for man, for

men and women. Now let us get together and work for human rights". We felt we were together in our distress.

Such events, after our initial survey to assess needs, organization of a Health community; of recycling drop-outs back to school; visit to the Buddhist shrines and holy places for four days their request; training of 14 barefoot or rural nurses for 14 villages for over a year; collaboration on culture of the Buddhists through monthly slide programmes; organization of Kantha Samiti (women's group) and Mothers (Union) Group, with consensus; presentation of the **Uluka Jataka** on consensus; being better than majority decision (drama held at the temple), preparing 30,000 kg of certified local fertilizer with twelve farmers; Vesak day exhibitions to show the great wise healer (Mahasudha pandita, the Buddha) and the divine physician (Jesus) as both interested in the People's health and the 600-volume library of Buddhist, literature, history,

drama etc., books — all this endeared us to them and them to us.

"Whom do humans say that I am?"

Jesus after a presence of many months with his disciples asked them what they and the people thought of him. At the request of the Christian Conference of Asia Christology Conference of November 1984, we presented the answers about our Jesus Community, given us by our peasants.

Madduma Banda (40) now paralyzed after some village incident, once said in 1983: "I heard you wish to leave our village to try out dialogue elsewhere, but please stay. You will never realise how much the people feel uplifted that you like us and our faith. The morals of our people have been deepened by your presence as a group. People are the better for it and I must tell you that". **Piyatilleke**, a young lad said in August 1985: "By religious rule: it seems, Muslims help Muslims, but here I see that your rules allow help to be given to Buddhists. As Christians you do not pretend riches but live poorly and united with us. You educate our children and drop-outs without asking any return. That is **loku pinak** (a great act of merit). **Ratnayake** said: "You live like us, close to us with-out exploiting us (*sura kema thorva*). You are friendly and want our true good (*sebe yahapatha*). You are religious (*pevidi*) and observe it with kindness, prayer and ritual. Then you also honour the Buddha whom we venerate as our teacher and master". **D. M. Gunasekera** wound up: "Whatever you do, you do well and fully. You do good. Thus you help our country. Some are good to their own people. You are good to all. I like that, and that is why I come here" (12)

A thirty-year old one-time leftist youth leader wrote in when we gave the same question. Below is a summary of what he said in **extenso** :—

"I accept Jesus as founder of a noble religion, one who showed sincere affection for people. He loved all as equals and showed it by his life.

"The Church lays claim to much wealth and property, and so she cannot change the existing system. Difficult to think she will. Some or many do something, but because of the decision of many more is victorious, so truth is sent underground. "Suba Seth Gedara" group is in tireless effort to see that truth will win and people better themselves.

"For five years now, in an area of more than 99% Buddhists, this little church-group has honoured our traditional, time-honoured customs and culture. Many have accepted the quiet effective good work. We like the friendly openness with which you work with our people.

"At the start, some young people watched you carefully: 'how will you act towards us? Did you come to turn us to your ways somehow? were you an international spy-group or spy-ring to eventually sell out our village? — were questions harassing us youth. But we went beyond observation, worked with you as you worked with people. There we discovered the true face of what you call 'sabhava' the church.

"You understood our sorrow, our plight (*dukvedana*) and are really very loving and compassionate towards our people, the poor (he then lists what we have done or tried to do). It is for the poor. It all proves the true meaning of your house as Good wishes house, 'Suba Seth Gedara' and 'Susith bavana' convent (house of good thought). There is a new awakening among us, a renewal.

This juxtaposition of Asian poor and Asian religions linked with the prophetic mission leads right into the heart of politics. Aloy Pleris, SJ goes so far as to say that "the local church

In Asian, whether prophetic or not, rich or poor, is a political church; a neutral church is a contradiction in terms.

Jesus said: "You will do greater things", and so the Jesus community must not fritter away but consolidate the gains of dialogue outlined above, and see to it that dialogue does not degenerate into an elitist exercise, one so roundly rejected by Harvey Cox in his *"Religion in the Secular City"*. He proposes to Christians to "meet fellow humans not detachedly or aggressively; not in some demarcated sphere of religion but in the day-to-day combat of real life". Likewise he decries the elitist form of dialogue where only religious representatives meet. He opts for Christians who with Hindus and humanists and so on, do theology in a different way: they do it as part of the emerging world-wide community made up of the despised and rejected of the modern world and their allies... in this new community the most intransigent of religious, cultural barriers no longer have the power to divide".

Our Village dialogue effort is but promising preamble to solidarity in this emerging world-wide community: the Poor coming into their own as masters and subjects of their destiny. Such a dialogue will keep Buddhism and Christianity ever vigilant. Village or world social relationships are wrecked when gathered around counter-values of wealth, money, worldliness, sin. They are fostered and deepened when gathered round the pole of values like poverty, detachment, no-avarice, authority as service, fellowship and brotherhood/sisterhood of humans.

Buddhism and Christianity Through the Political

"Everything is political but politics isn't everything" is a saying attributed to a lecturer in political science in Paris. The face-to-face of dialogue deepens only in the side-by-side of collaboration on the true future of the

Human. If the Christian opened the Gospel injunction to give a cup of cold water then, now he or she will have to agitate to see up a water-works to give drink to the thirsty, and this is political-social action. Religion has an immanent corrective within, to better itself by its prophetic spirit. The area of the political will keep religion true to its faith, inner dynamism, its self-sacrificial spirit, its spirituality. Touching the liberative spirit, it will lessen man's inhumanity to man.

Sound Christian theology must animate Christian faith and praxis, especially the doing of theology, and this includes the realm of the political.

It is in Basic Christian communities or Basic Human/people's communities or something open and similar that the Church can shed its frequent apolitical stance. Then will we see the Jesus community at work in the world. When the church is handmaid of the world, then Jesus is seen as the Suffering Servant of Yahweh at the humble service of the world. As happened in most of Latin America, so also in Asia we hope Dialogue of Life and Development with Justice will make the BCC to passover to BHC wherever needed.

Getting Back on Course to a More Human Future

Buddhism began out of the compassion of the Enlightened One and began as a career of universal liberation. The movement included monks and nuns and also lay-women, lay-men. The *Anguttara Nikaya* gives names of twenty-one lay Buddhists who became arhats, who reached "perfection by unwavering faith in the Buddha, in the Dhamma, in the Sangha, noble virtue, noble knowledge and noble liberation". Hence, Mahasangha in the entire community of those who take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha, in the Enlightened One, in the firm stability of doctrine, in the Community formed by the word of truth.

The order of monks was not to remain indifferent to the suffering of humanity. Born as the Torchbearer of mankind (*sakkadharo manussanam*), the Buddha is said to have been born for the happiness of humanity (*manussaloke hitsukhaya jato*). Buddhism may have begun as an ascetical movement but it grew into a social movement.

With us, without us, the masses will arise. Sovereign power is vested in them. After two millennia of Buddhism, and several centuries of Christianity, Asia is still a continent of contrast: enormous wealth and luxury stare unashamedly at rows of poverty, deprivation, wretchedness. Costly medical care of the few side by side with the many ill, weak, physical break-downs from generations of hard work and low wages, exhaustion and malnutrition. Forty and more years of analysis in Asia has led scholars to believe in a "rural crisis" in Asia, with its poverty, poor nutrition, low income levels, widespread unemployment. Its source is the tension by continuously growing demands on agricultural production wealth must largely be met from limited land and water resources. Those raking in the surplus and the unseemly profits live in palaces, large dwellings vaunting vulgar affluence, drive in limousines while the vast masses have just stepped out from a stalled bus — unroad-worthy bus on unbusworthy roads — in rural areas of Asia. While the few enjoy higher education and read the high literacy-rate charts in the capital city, literally millions drop out from school at an early age. The few dominate, dictate, control, cajole, the others are suppressed, cowed into submission, victims of threats, thugs, force, despair.

Through our Village Effort at Dialogue, multiplied manifold, reflected and acted upon, may there be a saner approach to Dialogue, to the Poor, to the Liberation thrust so that we may move slowly but surely to the future of removing as best as we can the milestones to Armageddon.

Cinema, Politics and Stereotypes

Ajith Samaranayake

The term 'ethnic conflict' itself is of recent origin and came to be bandied about only after the traumatic and shameful events of July 1983 when the confrontation between the Sinhala and Tamil communities was aggravated. Before that people knew vaguely that there was some such problem, variously called 'communal problem', 'Tamil problem' etc.: but it would be largely true to say that it had not impinged on the collective consciousness of the people as it did after 1983. Therefore somebody can well ask what relationship the ethnic conflict bears to the national cinema and why indeed such a theme as the present one should be raised in the first place. But since the cinema and now television have become powerful and influential means of communication in Sri Lanka today the attitudes they uphold towards the communities and how they reflect the relationship between the communities in their collective mirror will be of vital importance to social health in the country.

Looked at in that sense and confining oneself primarily to the cinema — both Sinhala and Tamil works produced in Sri Lanka — one is made to discover almost with a sense of shock that very little of the relationships between the communities is reflected in the indigenous cinema. Sri Lanka since independence has been a multi-communal multi-religious polity and there has been an intermingling for decades of the Sinhala, Tamil Muslim and Burgher communities. But very little of this intermingling can we see in the cinematic mirror. While the few Sri Lankan Tamil works have predictably dealt with a few limited themes centring on that community most Sinhala films with a few notable exceptions have dealt almost exclusively with themes which have been of concern to the Sinhala people. While this can not be faulted since they are after all Sinhala films one is amazed at the absence of a multi-communal dimension in a country

This is the text of the keynote address delivered at the 15th OCIC film awards ceremony held at the Tower Hall on March 20. The theme was "The role of the mass media in fostering ethnic harmony."

where the communities have historically co-existed. The spate of self-conscious tele-dramas which followed after the events of July 1983 can be seen as an attempt to expiate this sin.

But for this trait I would not blame the cinema entirely. It is part of a larger failure, a failure to evolve a common tradition where the separate identities of of the several communities would be preserved while being subsumed in a larger ethos. This failure can be best illustrated by looking at Sinhala literature.

Except for a few works which were themselves peripheral to the central stream of Sinhala writing there have been no works of fiction imaginatively dealing with the relationships of the communities and projecting a wholesome image of communal relationships. None of our major writers perhaps with the exception of Gunadasa Amarasekera in the latter half of 'Gandabha Apadanya' have dealt with the relationship between the Sinhalese and the Tamils — relationships whose progressive deterioration have now exploded with cataclysmic fury all around us. This insularity of our literary intelligentsia points to a larger failure of vision on the part of the entire intellectual elite in the country.

This is why I have already said that I would not blame the cinema entirely for this situation. If we look at the Sri Lanka cinema we see that by and large the cinema has upheld attitudes which have been favoured by the society at large. The cinema has not been

used in the main for challenging the existing orthodoxies and propagating any radical ideas. In such a situation it has not been surprising that the Sinhala cinema has been largely satisfied with perpetuating this blind spot in our society and behaving as if there was no problem between the communities in Sri Lanka. After all most of our politicians and intellectuals too were quite satisfied to do the same until disaster almost overtook us.

However the cinema was placed in a better position vis-a-vis the other media to project a plurality of outlook because of its very nature. Cinema being a communal art most of the technical and other backroom personnel at least during the infancy of Sinhala cinema were Tamils. So were most of the leading film producers. Thus in the cinema we had a climate where people from various communities worked side by side in a spirit of camaraderie. The first Sinhala films were produced in Madras while the story line, characters and music were bodily lifted from the then popular Tamil films. But as I have already said the cinema largely upholds established standards and values. The theme of these early films was dichotomy of the poor boy wooing a rich girl. But there was no feeling of class consciousness in these films. The poor boy was not oppressed by any sense of his own poverty or inadequacy. On the other hand by the last reel he would be himself incorporated into the magic circle and win the hand of the rich girl by vanquishing the upper class villain.

No sense of realism penetrated this opaque facade erected by our early film-makers. In fact very soon these fantasies propagated by film-makers heavily in debt to the dream factories of Madras and Bombay were generating a reaction. Their dependence on the Indian cinema, the total garishness which characterised the end products and their complete alienation from the prevailing reality of a newly

resurgent country provoked strong criticism on the part of the critics in the Sinhala language newspapers. This attitude was epitomised most powerfully by Jayaratne Wilegodu who wrote a regular film review to the 'Dinamina' under the pseudonym of 'Jayavilal'. However as recent researchers such as Gunasiri Silva have pointed out Jayavilal's trenchant film reviews exposing the Sinhala cinema's dependence on the Indian cinema were also impelled by a strong patriotic impulse bordering on the chauvinistic.

In reaction the film-makers began turning increasingly to the pastoral simplicities of the Sinhala village as celebrated by the Colombo Poets of the time. The films of Sirisena Wimalaweera merged into such films of the 1960's as 'Kurulu Bedda' and 'Sikuru Tharuwa' which offer us a picture of an idealised village life. Between the alien monstrosities of the South Indian-inspired film industry and the some what callow romanticism of the new Sinhala film there was very little room for any sense of realism in the Sinhala cinema. But even when such a realism came in the films beginning with those of Lester James Peries what we see is that the film-maker operates in a milieu and with a cast of characters which precludes the other communities in the country. This we can see even extending to the case of religion. It has become mandatory for the average tele-drama to pay pious homage to the village priest but there is very little in either cinema or television which portrays the way of life of any other religion. It is only now that researchers like Sunil Ariyaratne have begun paying attention to the rich body of Catholic religious music. In the cinema perhaps 'Devayani Oba Kohida' can be singled out as a popular treatment of a Christian theme while in his 'Thuneveni Yamaya' Dharmasiri Bandaranayake makes use of catholic symbolism in exploring the troubled psycho of his guilt-ridden protagonist.

Admittedly it is not an easy task to deal sensitively and realistically with communal relations in a multi-communal country. In Sri

Lanka this is made doubly difficult by the fact that the communal problem has been treated as the 'dirty little secret' of politics. We have on the whole tended to ignore it thinking that it would go away.

The lack of such openness has ensured that the question should become a mine field which few creative artists, let alone film-makers, have ventured into.

The historian of culture and ideas in Sri Lanka will note the period when a Sinhala Department functioned at the Jaffna University at a time when attempts were made to change this situation some what. During this time young Sinhala intellectuals and creative artists came into contact with their Tamil counterparts and each group was exposed to the culture and thinking of the other. Two significant cinematic creations flowed from this experience — Dharmasena Pathiraja's 'Ponmani' and Sunil Ariyaratne's 'Sarungale', 'this latter film based on an idea of Gamini Fonseka's. The first film dealt with the role of caste in Jaffna society and how it pulls asunder two star-crossed lovers. The other dealt with the whole question of Sinhala Tamil relations during a time of communal disturbance (in this case the 1958 communal riots) with the emphasis on how communal differences disrupt one particular life, that of the protagonist Nadaraja. Both films drew heavily on the sights and sounds of Jaffna and if for no other reason have to be noted for introducing the northern Tamil milieu into the consciousness of the Sinhala film goer.

'Ponmani' is one of the more notable Sri Lankan Tamil films in conception and execution but was perhaps too much in advance of the Tamil consciousness of the time in its discussion of caste. In 'Sarungale' we see Tamil public servant coping with the fact of his Tamilness in a predominantly Sinhala office milieu and a somewhat sleazy lurper proletarian background. He had been in

love with a Sinhala woman just as his own sister had been in with a young man of a lowly caste. At a time of heightened communal feelings the film-maker contrasts the moral cowardice of the middle-class Sinhalese with the much more healthy and robust reaction of the urban thug although in a moment of intoxication he is capable of communalism. While men are either good or bad the whole communal problem is attributed to 'third class' or 'dirty' politics. But it is precisely this dirty or third class politics which consumes. Nadaraja and it is not merely enough to blame the dirty little politicians. There are social forces which have created the contemporary communal cleavage and these have to be identified. Again in Gamini Fonseka's own 'Kotivalige' the victim of a communal attack joins a terrorist group. But who or what forces were behind this communal attack? Isn't it the same forces which had made it impossible for the honest police officer who is the film's protagonist to do his duty? Without a deep-going discussion of the political origins of communalism in our time no clear picture of the problem is possible. Unfortunately in Sri Lanka we do not seem to have matured still for such a discussion to be conducted dispassionately to not mention the taboos imposed by politically-motivated censorship on the film maker.

All this does not mean that I underestimate by any means the difficulties facing the film maker venturing into the political mine field of communal relations. In fact tribute has to be paid to the above film-makers for daring to tackle however partially the problem when most politicians and intellectuals until recently were opting to bury their heads in the sand. Given the sense of guilt suffered by most sensitive and progressive artists towards the Tamil people any attempt to treat this theme can well produce exercises in masochism or self-laceration. They

can well end up by upholding a kind of exalted humanism represented for example by the profusion of children singing Sinhala-Tamil songs in tele dramas which we see these days. In a sense we are still too close to the crisis of our times to see it dispassionately let alone discuss it critically. For this reason I can not foresee any attempts in the near future to treat the theme of inter-communal relations in any meaningful way in a creative work.

In fact much has happened since the late 1970's when films like 'Ponmani' and 'Sarungale' were made to radically transform our consciousness of the ethnic problem. The rising Tamil militancy which assumed anarchic and nihilistic forms, the anti-Tamil violence of July 1983, the escalation of the civil war in the north and the east and now the advent of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord and the Indian Peace Keeping Force have altered everybody's perception of the problem. The rising violence on both sides of the communal barricades have

hardened views on both sides while the minority of moderates and enlightened observers of the problem are being increasingly driven to the wall. This is another reason why a dispassionate scrutiny will not be possible in the near future.

However the film-maker and the television artiste can do something to negate some of the communal stereotypes which are common in popular culture.

As far as the cinema and television are concerned I must say that this is far less common than in the Sinhala theatre which recently was plagued by 'Nejnage Suduwa' 'Sergeant Nallathamibi' 'Sathasivam' and the like almost as if Tamil or Muslim stereotypes were necessary to enrich the Sinhala theatre. Such stereotypes are mercifully very much less in the cinema and television. In fact one of the major challenges in these areas will be how to project Tamil and Muslim characters through the film and television without caricaturing their accents and mannerisms.

Therefore to summarise, before any discussion of communal relations is possible on screen and over the box a major political dialogue is called for on the nature of the communal crisis of our times. At the moment we are only still going through that process and only the vaguest outlines and contours of such a dialogue is discernible at the moment. Moreover the polarised attitudes of the two main communities has pushed back considerably any possibility of a consensus or a common identity of interests. What the artiste can do in this context is limited.

At best he can only uphold the values of a broad humanism and appeal to the soul of the people above the din of the political market place. At worst he will himself succumb to that din and add his voice to the hub-bub of the contemporary communal jungle. For anything more tangible we will have to look to the future and not the very near future either.

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Nikolai Bukharin : A Centenary Reassessment

Reggie Siriwardena

Nikolai Bukharin was one of the great figures of Russian Marxism in its heroic period. Like several others in that brilliant constellation — the men of 1917 — he was a many-sided personality — a political activist, an intellectual and writer whose interests ranged over philosophy, the sciences and literature. During the post-revolutionary years, he was at one and the same time a member of the party Politbureau and of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He was one of the least mechanistic of Marxist theorists of that period on the social dimensions of literature. Tragically (though not surprisingly) he became also one of the major victims of the Stalin dictatorship. In 1938 he was the principal accused in the Moscow Trial of that year, where he and twenty others were charged with espionage in the service of foreign intelligence agencies, treason, sabotage, political assassination and conspiracy to overthrow the state. Together with most of the other accused, he was sentenced to death and executed.

Last month — fifty years after his death — Bukharin and co-accused were fully exonerated of these charges by a decree of the Supreme Court of the USSR and rehabilitated. The official communiqué announcing this decision said:

As has been established, the pre-trial investigation of the case was conducted with gross violation of socialist legality, with facts being falsified and admissions of guilt wrung from accused through unlawful means.

Thus Bukharin's own prophecy was fulfilled. In a letter 'to the future generation of party leaders' composed on the eve of his arrest and made public in Moscow only in November 1987, he had said, 'I am sure that sooner or later the filter of history will wash the dirt from my head.'

While in Stalinist literature Bukharin was for a long time represented as the wrecker and traitor, the image of him in Trotskyist discourse was that of the 'friend of the kulak' whose political victory in the 'twenties would have led to the restoration of capitalism. There is a fixed and recurrent role in which Bukharin figures in Trotskyist writing: he was the man who said to the peasants, 'Enrich yourselves!' Bukharin did say that at one point of time, in 1924-25, but to make out that was all he stood for is as distorting as it would be to reduce Trotskyism to the fact that in 1921 Trotsky wanted the trade unions assimilated into the state apparatus.

In my own rethinking about Soviet history it took me a long time to overcome the prejudices against Bukharin acquired from the Trotskyist tradition in which I was at one time educated. The initial breakthrough for me came from the American scholar Stephen Cohen's study *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (1974). Cohen argued that the diffusion of economic power that Bukharin strove for in the 'twenties' could have been a counter to the growth of the monolithic and dictatorial state, and that Bukharinism was therefore a real and viable alternative to Stalinism, as Trotskyism was not.

A decade and a half after the publication of Cohen's book, a similar view is being expressed by an emergent school of thought in the Soviet Union. I shall come back to this question at the end of this paper. Meanwhile I wish to refer to the unusual interest in Bukharin that has been reflected in the Soviet press during the last few months, both before and after his rehabilitation. In my own reading of the Soviet press (which is certainly not exhaustive) I have come across

a profile of him in *Moscow News* (No. 49, 1987), which incorporates the text of his letter to posterity; a long feature in *Ogonyok* (November 28—December 5, 1987), presenting the reminiscences of his widow, who is still living in Moscow at the age of 76; a devastating portrait of Vyshinsky, Stalin's public prosecutor, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (27 January 1988), with pertinent comments on the Bukharin trial; an article in *Moscow News* (No. 7, 1988) on the trial, raising the question of what made possible this perversion of justice; and again in *Moscow News* (No. 8, 1988), an interview with Stephen Cohen on 'The return of Nikolai Bukharin'. This last item represents a dialogue which one would have thought impossible not so long ago.

It has seemed to me worthwhile in this centenary year (the birth anniversary is in September) to focus attention on Bukharin for the benefit of those interested in Soviet history or concerned with contemporary Soviet affairs. The subject of Bukharin as tragic hero is stimulating to the literary imagination. I have recently written a play on this theme, entitled *The Long Day's Task*, and I hope it will be possible to present it on stage during the next few months. What I have sought to foreground in the play is the interrelation between the political drama and the deeply moving personal story of Bukharin and his wife. The present paper is meant to be complementary to the play: it is an attempt to explore Bukharin's political role more fully than was possible within the limits of a dramatic form. However it is not my intention to foster a personality cult of Bukharin of the kind that was promoted for Stalin during his lifetime or that which has been built round Trotsky by the more uncritical of his adherents. Bukharin was an imperfect, often erring, figure, all too

vulnerable in the relation between his strength and his weaknesses. He was a humane and deeply sensitive individual, and he could break down emotionally in political crises. We are told that at the Politbureau meeting in 1929 at which Stalin secured the deportation of Trotsky from the Soviet Union, Bukharin, opposing it, 'screamed, wept and sobbed'. On the other hand, a more positive light is cast on this aspect of his personality in an episode recalled by his widow. During Stalin's forced collectivisation, with its attendant famines, Bukharin saw at a small railway station in the Ukraine a group of children with their bellies swollen with hunger. He was so overwhelming that he gave them all he had; and on returning to Moscow, he broke down in relating this experience and sobbed hysterically. No, Bukharin was not of the stuff of which strong-willed political leaders are made. But it is a matter of personal moral choices whom one prefers: a wayward Bukharin an iron Stalin or an intellectually imperious Trotsky.

In the early post-revolutionary years Bukharin stood on the extreme left of the Bolshevik Party. He was the leader of the faction in 1918 advocated revolutionary war with Germany instead of what he considered a capitulatory peace. In the next period — that of the Civil War — he shared with Trotsky the illusion that the military regimentation of the economy represented an advance towards socialism. There is little I want to say about this period except that both on revolutionary war and on war communism Bukharin was entirely wrong.

The fact that between 1918 and 1920 Bukharin was on the extreme left and that between 1921 and 1929 he moved to the right has been interpreted as a sign of the emotional instability of this personality, carried over into politics. I would suggest instead that he was politically and intellectually immature in the early post-revolutionary years, and that the later period represents his

growing out of the exuberant illusions of his youth. In any case, what has come to be known as 'Bukharinism' is identified by his position in the inner party struggles of the second half of the 'twenties, and it is on this period that I want to concentrate here. Before I go into this, however, I must first make two preliminary points.

The first is that when I use the terms 'left' and 'right', I am adopting them in this context merely as descriptive labels. There is no implication that what is referred to as 'left' is inherently correct and what is called 'right' is inherently wrong, or vice versa.

The second point concerns the object of this review of past history. For a long time a re-examination of these crucial years in which the destinies of the Soviet Union were decided was barred by two orthodoxies. One was the Soviet orthodoxy which prevailed until recently, and which presented the history of the Soviet Union as a continuous path of progress opened up by infallible decisions of the party leadership. The other was the Western orthodoxy of the cold war, for which dictatorship was the necessary and ineluctable outcome of a regime based on Marxism. For both orthodoxies, therefore, the question whether there could have been in the mid-twenties and after an alternative to Stalinism did not arise. If one rejects both these orthodoxies, as I do, the question becomes a real one, even though it is open to the imponderability and speculativeness inherent in any exploration of the ifs of history. However, to ask whether Bukharinism represented a practicable alternative to Stalinism is not to indulge in a merely fanciful exercise of the historical imagination. The lessons of history can be derived not only from the victors but also from the vanquished. If the object of historical study is to understand the past so as to enable us to cope better with the present and the future, the opportunities

missed, the paths not taken, are as relevant as the courses actually followed by those who were in command of the chariot of history. It is for that reason that there is going on in the Soviet Union today an earnest, and sometimes even anguished, interrogation of the past by journalists, historians, political scientists and creative writers. But it is not only for the Soviet people that this process of inquiry is relevant. An assimilation of the lessons of the Soviet experience of the 'twenties and after is valuable to any contemporary society seeking to take the road of radical social transformation.

In the period I am concerned with, Bukharinism was associated above all with a certain orientation towards the peasantry. In 1921 Lenin had called off the rigours of war communism, and begun the New Economic Policy, which abolished requisitioning of grain from the peasants, re-established a certain freedom of exchange for the peasantry, as well as making concessions to retail trade and small-scale industry. Bukharin soon became an enthusiastic supporter of NEP, and it can be said that right down to 1929 his position was that of striving to preserve and consolidate NEP.

In his initial euphoria for NEP, Bukharin thought that the best way to help the rural economy to grow was to help the upper peasantry to develop, so that they could provide employment and other forms of economic assistance to the rest of the peasants. He also envisaged a long and gradual process of development of the socialist economy: in 1925 he said, 'We shall move ahead by tiny, tiny steps pulling behind us our large peasant cart.' These positions ignored both the class contradictions in the countryside and the compulsions of survival for the Soviet Union in a hostile international environment.

However, Bukharin subsequently corrected these errors, and between 1926 and 1928 there were

no significant differences between him and the Stalin wing of the party on policy towards the peasantry. Both were agreed that efforts should be made towards maintaining non-antagonistic relations between the State and the peasantry—particularly the middle peasantry who constituted the large majority (67% in 1926-27). The supply of grain was vital in order that the cities should be fed, but it was recognised that this should be secured by non-coercive methods. Collectivisation of the land was accepted as the ultimate objective, but this was to be promoted with caution.

The opposition to these policies at the time came from the left Opposition, led by Trotsky, and joined later by Zinoviev and Kamenev. The position of the Left Opposition on the peasantry was put in its sharpest form by Preobrazhensky, one of Trotsky's followers. Preobrazhensky maintained that the most urgent task of the Soviet state was that of primitive accumulation—in other words, to find the resources for investment so that a socialist industrial revolution could take off with the greatest possible speed. This could only be done, he argued, by exploiting the peasantry, just as capitalism had done in earlier epochs in the West.

Trotsky didn't go quite so far, because he maintained that the contradiction between the workers state and the peasantry in the Soviet Union could only be solved on the international plane: in other words, the European revolution would come to the aid of the Soviet working class and release them from isolation and economic backwardness. But what if the European revolution didn't come? For Trotsky this was a non-question because of his absolute faith in the revolutionary potentialities of the European proletariat.

The left Opposition wanted both rapid industrialisation and

collectivisation, but without coercion. In fact, Trotsky was at the same time asking for a return to full inner-party democracy. It is difficult to understand how the left Opposition could have reconciled these two aims if they had come to power and there was no European revolution (as there wasn't). In this situation Trotsky and his followers would have been engaged in trying to square the circle. It is arguable in fact that when Stalin made his left turn in 1928-29 and launched collectivisation, he was implementing that part of the left Opposition's programme in the only way in which it could have been carried out at that time—that is, through force.

Between 1926 and 1927 Bukharin assisted Stalin in defeating the left Opposition and acquiesced in Stalin's measures to silence them and expel from the party all those who resisted. His self-justification would have been that he and Stalin saw eye to eye on the economic questions, and that the political victory of the left would have provoked a disastrous showdown with the peasantry. However, by this course he unwittingly furthered the concentration of power in Stalin's hands and, ultimately, his own destruction.

For what happened in 1928-29 was that Stalin made a decisive shift towards centralised control of the economy, large-scale industrialisation and collectivisation of the land. The immediate provocation for the overturn in policy towards the peasantry was a series which threatened the food supply of the towns. However, this change must be seen as part of a larger shift in direction, which represented the victory within the party of those groups who stood for the total statification of the economy, a 'revolution from above' carried through regardless of the human cost. What Stalin did in effect was to take over the earlier programme of the left Opposition and to carry it through with brutal ruthlessness.

At the first signs of the impending change, Bukharin panicked. He was still in the formal sense a member of the ruling group, with a seat on the Politbureau. But in the summer of 1928, he took the unprecedented left Opposition, and had a secret meeting with Kamenev. The latter's record of this conversation shows that Bukharin was in a state of terror: he wouldn't even mention Stalin by name, but kept repeating, 'He will stop at nothing... He will destroy us... He is the new Genghis Khan.' He told Kamenev that their disagreements were of far less significance than their common differences with Stalin. What was at stake was the preservation of party and state and even the survival of all Stalin's opponents. 'He is an unprincipled intriguer,' said Bukharin, 'who knows only vengeance and the stab in the back.'

Nothing, however, came of Bukharin's approach to the left because both factions were too deeply conscious of the ideological differences between themselves to be able to make common cause. Bukharin made his last stand in an article in *Pravda* in September 1928 and in documents presented to the Politbureau early in 1929. In these writings he vigorously opposed a programme of industrialisation achieved at the expense of the living standards of the masses or based on a 'tribute' to be levied from the peasantry. This he said, would lead to the reversion to the military feudal exploitation of the peasantry. He urged that it was necessary to maintain a balanced development between agriculture and industry as well as between heavy and light industry themselves. He linked these economic issues with the democratisation of the party regime. He called on party members 'to take not a single word on trust... to utter not a single word against their conscience.'

These were Bukharin's last independent political pronouncements. Before the end of 1929 he was out of the Politbureau.

He spent the next few years in positions where he carried out the policies of the ruling group with no capacity to influence them — as editor of *Izvestiya* or chief drafter of Stalin's new constitution. However, by 1934 the space even for such forms of survival was contracting for Stalin's defeated opponents. The era of their physical elimination through the purges and treason trials had begun. Bukharin was arrested in February 1937, and became the main figure in the show trial of the following year.

Before I come to the last part of my paper — an attempt at a general assessment of Bukharin — I must refer to the question of the confession that, like all the other accused in the Moscow Trials, he made in open court.

In 1940 the novelist Arthur Koestler, himself an ex-Communist, wrote a novel, *Darkness at Noon*, around the Moscow Trials. His central character, Rubashov, was a composite figure but bore in some respects a similarity to Bukharin. This was enhanced by the fact that Koestler seems to have taken the idea for his title from a sentence in Bukharin's final address to the court. In the novel Rubashov confessed because he was convinced by the interrogator that this was the last service he could do to the party. Owing to the great influence that the novel had, particularly in the 'forties and 'fifties, the theory gained ground in the West that Bukharin had in fact confessed as a matter of loyalty to the party.

This view, which never had any factual evidence in its favour, must now be decisively rejected. From what is known now, it is clear that Bukharin's main motive for making his false confession was to save his young wife. He had known her since she was a child, he loved her deeply, and he undoubtedly wanted to protect her from the reprisals that Stalin visited on the families of those accused who refused to co-operate.

However, Bukharin also wanted to make sure that she would survive in order to fight for his vindication. He composed a letter 'to the future generation of leaders of the party' defending himself, and made her learn it by heart (in 1937 it would have been too dangerous for her to possess the written text of such a document). It was this letter, preserved in memory through fifty years, that Bukharin's widow, Anna Mikhaylovna Larina, transmitted to Gorbachev in November 1987. At Bukharin's final parting from her, in 1937, before he left for the meeting of the Central Committee from which he was never to return, he fell on his knees before her and made her promise not to forget a single word of his letter. From her reminiscences it is clear that he had faith and confidence in the future. 'The situation will change,' he told her, 'it will have to change. You are young. You will survive.' He also asked her to bring up their son as a Bolshevik.

Bukharin's conduct at the trial is also against the theory of a willing submission to the prosecutors. Though he confessed as much as was necessary to keep his bargain with them he denied the most shameful of the charges — that of espionage and assassination plots — and argued with Vyshinsky about them in the courtroom. He even said, 'The confession of the accused is a medieval principle of jurisprudence. He must have hoped by these means to convey, indirectly and subtly, to the outer world that the trial was stage-managed.'

How do we place Bukharin fifty years after his death? I have already indicated some of the occasions when I think he was wrong, sometimes grievously wrong, in the positions he took. What is necessary however, is to ask whether there is any part of his thought and action that remains significant, that can fertilise socialist thinking in the present. The answer to this question depends, in the first place, on how we evaluate his stand against Stalin's forced collectivisation of the land.

We know what Stalin himself thought of this measure when he looked back on it in later years. During the Second world war he told Churchill that even the ordeal of the Nazi invasion was not as bad as what he called the terrible struggle for collectivisation. Ten millions of peasants, he said, holding up his hands. It was fearful. Four years it lasted. But he went on to add, 'It was absolutely necessary for Russia.'

There will be many people who, even while they admit the immense human cost of Stalin's collectivisation, will agree with his last judgment. It was necessary, they will say, it was part of the price the Soviet Union had to pay for modernisation, and ultimately, it made possible progress.

I think, however, that it is possible to attempt a different judgment. Even if we disregard the cost in human lives that collectivisation involved — those who died in the ensuing famines and in deportation to penal camps in the North — there is no doubt that the imposition of the measure from above on an unwilling peasantry provoked a resistance which resulted in an immense setback to Soviet agriculture. The peasantry in their bitterness and despair burnt their grain and destroyed their livestock. It has been estimated that half the cattle in the Soviet Union died in this orgy of destruction. And even when that resistance had been crushed, the sullen opposition of the peasantry to the new collective forms meant that Soviet agriculture remained inefficient for a long time — in fact, the Achilles' heel of the economy. Moreover, the social tensions created by the violent destruction of private farming accentuated the trend towards dictatorship. Before collectivisation, the rule of one faction had already been established in the Bolshevik Party; what was consolidated now was the rule of one man.

(To be continued)

Harry Pieris — a life in art

H. A. I. Goonetilleke

As I stood listening to the simple and moving Christian ceremony at Kanatte in the early morning sunshine on March 16th as Harry Pieris was cremated, the film of memory rolled back forty five years to the time I came of age in 1943 — a heady configuration in many personal respects. It was a climactic year in the somnolent local world of art when a small band of twelve painters, comprising the '43 Group, launched itself on an unsuspecting public accustomed to the simpering sentimentalities and stale repetitions of a rose-coloured vision of reality. Inadequately tutored to perceive the living shapes and vibrant colours surrounding them, and not quite able to discern the significant forms of life in their midst, the make-believe artists of the time went through the bland motions of depicting nature in a rather insipid precision in conformity with prevalent and congealed reflections of boudoir Edwardian taste overlaid by a prim Victorian academicism.

This complacent environment was soon to be laid low by the primary and inspirational exertions of the two Ws — C. F. Winzer, the English painter and Chief Inspector of Art, and Lionel Wendt, musician, critic, photographer, collector, patron and aesthetic extraordinary. The Ceylon Art Club, founded by Winzer in the late twenties, was in a sense the progenitor of the 43 Group. It provided a platform for informed discussion and ushered in a new vehicle of aesthetic life based on a significant and intelligent response to a fresh understanding of what painting was all about. It was, in brief, the manifesto of the new movement. Wendt provided the fertilising impetus and ideological space for its leading lights — George Keyt (his special protégé), Justin Pieris Deraniyagala, Geoffrey Beling, and Harry

Pieris — to realise their true potential. The thirties became a fruitifying phase in the modern development of art in Sri Lanka, and, when the time was ripe, these artists, all born along with Wendt in the first seven years of this century, came together with eight others and exhibited at the drab, but commodious, showrooms of the Photographic Society in Colombo in November 1943.

Harry Pieris, born on August 10th, 1904, was the first and last Secretary of the 43 Group up to its final 16th exhibition in 1967. With his death on 14th March this year only George Keyt, soon to be 87 on April 17th, and Beling now 81, remain of the Big Four. The latter unfortunately abandoned his brush after 1945. Lionel Wendt (born in 1900) died six days before Christmas 1944, worn out by his unflagging dedication to increasingly exacting goals of photographic perfection. Justin Deraniyagala died in 1967, and L. T. P. Manjuri, Ralph Claessen, and Ivan Perles died more recently. Only George Claessen (born in 1903), Aubrey Collette in 1920, and Richard Gabriel in 1924, of the younger artists in the famous dozen, remain active as ever. Of Walter Witharna (who had 16 pictures in that inaugural show, the most number in fact) and Y. J. Thuring (who had only two) I do not know.

On Harry's shoulders fell the main burden of keeping the Group together, becoming its guiding force and leading organiser for nearly a quarter of a century, while recognising new talent and unearthing young artists all the time with his discriminating eye and unerring gift for separating true from false and the genuine from the spurious. Almost two generations of artists in this country are beholden to his consistent support and his sagacious

counsel, given with a characteristic and generous spontaneity in word and deed. He was their unfailing friend and mentor to the last. A mere roll-call of some of them is a tribute to his influence — Reggie Candappa, Ivan, M. Fernando, Terry Jonkass, Shelton Thabrew, Gamini Warnasuriya, Sita Kulasekera, Neville Weeraratne, Susila Fernando, Stanley Kirinde, Ranjith Fernando, Swanee Jayawardena and Noel Abeysinghe. Not content from the beginning with assisting and consorting with his active confreres of the brush, he brought into the 43 Group a few purely passive and life-long students of art who benefited by discussion and were spurred into personal voyages of artistic discovery through his stimulating guidance. The price of annual membership of this circle remained five rupees, and to this small company of questing spirits I belonged from the inception almost. I can recall with an abiding nostalgia long memorable Sundays in the forties spent in the spacious ease of the original Barnes Place residence, along with George Claessen, Ivan Perles, and Richard Gabriel, who first introduced me to the discipline, logic, and nuances of artistic theory and practice. Harry was the presiding genius of all those who wished to see with a new insight into the nature of all things as revealed in art, and the books he often lent, and advised one to read and digest, became the tools of his tutelary trade and our informed taste. He remained the magister magistrorum.

Harry Pieris lived, studied, and worked in Europe for almost a decade in his formative years, and his insatiation owes a great deal to this influence. But his later stay in India, and his long familiarity and studious knowledge of the best elements and styles in the Indian and Sri Lankan traditions of painting and

sculpture, both classical and folk made their congenial impress on his aesthetic sensibilities. He was an early admirer and publicist of the better forms of religious art, and would speak with undiluted enthusiasm of certain little-known Buddhist fresco paintings in Southern temples. But it is time to look a little more closely at his progress at the easel before concluding this brief evaluation of his art and times. As with nearly all Ceylonese painters, of that time and later, he first studied at the Atelier School of Art conducted by the formidable A. C. G. S. Amarasekera, but the true and enduring foundations of his art were laid at the Royal College of Art, London, where he won his spurs and a diploma under William Rothenstein in 1927. It was Amerasekera, in fact, who persuaded Harry's mother to send him to London, where he proceeded to forget most of what he had learned in Colombo. After a year back home, he moved to Paris where his English training was subjected to severe strain under the radically different approaches in style and technique. His teacher was Robert Falk under whom he worked for six invigorating years. But it was Rothenstein again who influenced his decision to go to India and Santiniketan where Rabindranath Tagore and his ideas became a powerful intellectual influence. He returned finally to his home in Colombo in 1938, where his family wealth and social power (though always lightly worn) enabled him to devote his time to his consuming passions in arts. After almost twelve years abroad three of them in India, the joint impact of Europe and India was to influence his palette, mood, and the impeccable quality of his technique. His business concerns, and his congenial leaning towards teaching inhibited the full manifestations of his painterly skills — but on the occasions he was able to use his brush, without hindrance and to good purpose, his work took on a magisterial and unrivalled effect, especially in portraits of an acutely observed dignity and meticulous design. His use of soft and glowing

colour was remarkable, shot through when necessary by darkish hues of an ineffable richness. Preeminently a portrait painter, he will be remembered too for his many landscapes of a brooding and evocative charm. Whether done in France, India, or Sri Lanka they display the strength of a restraint inspired by Europe and a pleasant radiance derived from the East. All the work of his mature years is also distinguished for superb draughtsmanship. He did not leave behind a substantial body of work, but some of his portraits and a few landscapes bear the distinctive impress of a true master of his craft working at the top of his bent, and are likely never to be excelled. Harry showed with the Ceylon Society of Arts before 1943, but thereafter exclusively with the Group he shepherded in Colombo, and also with his fellow-artists in London and Paris. Too busy advancing the causes of his brother-artists, it is no surprise to learn that his first and only one-man exhibition was held to celebrate his 80th birthday, an occasion on which his outstanding talent and immense gifts were all too clearly on view. The attractively illustrated brochure published to mark the event contained some affectionate tributes by friends and colleagues. The private collection of art he assembled at 32/1, Barnes Place is the cultivated key to his eclectic personal taste, and almost an anthology of contemporary painting in Sri Lanka.

The painters of the '43 Group were subjected to a great deal of public ridicule and opposition, but Wendt was there to disarm the pseudo-critics with his devastating pen at the beginning. Throughout the twenty-five years in which it functioned as a kind of 'new wave' however, official apathy was conspicuous, a philistine elite turned up its pretty — pretty nose, and a largely pretentious and ill-informed press ignored its importance. That it survived so long was, in great measure, due to Harry's tenacity and his unsparing belief in the significance of what it had to offer to the national inheritance. In an in-

humane political climate, where intellectual sophistry flourishes and cultural artifice abounds, from where will the fresh air and creative artistic impulse come as it did in 1943?

When all is said and done, Harry Pieris will best be remembered for his dedication to the contemporary renaissance of art forms in Sri Lanka, and his commitment to the task of keeping alive the energising vitality and an essentially vivacious synthesis between East and West, which the '43 Group represented at its quintessential best. One hopes the Sapumal Foundation he authored in 1974 for so worthy a cause will help to keep his memory green, and the spirit of his work alive in the ways he would have wished it to move.

The Peace...

(Continued from page 25)

In short, the progressive, democratic forces in Sri Lanka which extended their wholehearted support for the accord, are now finding it increasingly difficult to defend the "peace process" where there is neither peace nor any rationality in the process. In particular, the inability of the democratic alternative to the LTTE (is the TULF, EPRLF, PLOT, TELO etc) to demonstrate, in concrete and tangible terms the gains of the accord, will only serve the diabolic designs of the LTTE and right-reactionary tendencies in the Tamil areas. Similarly, the forces of Sinhala chauvinism also find the unstable conditions conducive to thwarting the process of democratization and the granting of regional autonomy to the Tamil People. In particular, the non-release of Sinhala political prisoners who are incarcerated in prison for supporting the democratic demands of the Tamil People has further compounded the problem of fusing a Tamil and Sinhala consensus which, in the final analysis, is the **only** guarantee for the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. In the meantime the IPKF has no option, but to continue to play the role mandated to it under the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord.

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BOOK REVIEW

AFGHANISTAN: AGONY OF A NATION, by Sandy Gall (Bodley Head,)

No-one could impugn Sandy Gall's pluck and determination in setting out, just short of his 59th birthday, on his third trek into Afghanistan. It was the longest of the three, and, as he says, the most arduous, involving more than five 15,000 foot passes from Pakistan to the Panjsher Valley and then some more. On foot and horseback he was determined to reach the latest headquarters of Ahmed Shah Masud, the Tajik commander who has been made a legend by all the Western reporters who have made the journey to see him.

Mr Gall's interest, beyond his obvious delight in the lonely mountain scenery which fills much of his book, is in bringing to his readers what he considers to be a shamefully under-reported war. Yet at the end of his enthusiastic account two conclusions gripped me; First, that more can probably be learnt about the war by spending two months interviewing in Peshawar. Mr. Gall ends his book with some horrifying stories of atrocities recounted by survivors, whom he talks to in the refugee camps there. They reveal more than the long travelogue of the preceding pages.

At no point, either, does the author explain anything of the socio-economic realities of Afghanistan, the land tenure system, the position of women, or any of the other issues which provoked the political crisis of the decade leading up to the Soviet invasion.

To say that "Communism has no appeal to the vast majority of Afghans" is undou-

tedly true, but the country's recent upheavals are more complicated than that.

My second conclusion is that, if, as Mr. Gall wishes, the Western world was told more about the Afghan war, the result might not be quite what he hopes.

The world would learn more about the struggles among the various mujaheddin groups, the faction-fighting, the narrow provincialism, and the disputes between modernisers and fundamentalists, which tarnish the comfortable image of a nationwide jihad against the infidel invader.

Sandy Gall knows that this reality exists, since he refers to it in a paragraph in one of his early chapters. But it interests him less than saddling his horse, strapping his bully-beef and cameras alongside, and riding up into the hills.

— Jonathan Steele

Marxist. . . .

(Continued from page 21)

patch awaiting to be put in its proper place. In this complicated adventure, collaboration of various exploited groups is more effective than the endeavours of a single party. Each group according to its own tendencies, in order to bring about a society based on the end of exploitation, and on social justice and equality, will always discover a new opportunity arising along a particular section of the puzzle for adding a piece more quickly than any one isolated party could have done by itself.

Tactical triumph

(Continued from page 3)

elections, which it was bound to win in the now fairly well-established UNP-SLFP *thattu-maru* system.

Eleven years may not be a long time in politics. It is an oppressive ordeal to the SLFP.

Thus, the provincial councils bill and the prospect of P.C. polls proved a painfully exacting challenge to the S.L.F.P. The internal debate to contest or not was intense, acrimonious and protracted.

It is just possible that the average Sinhala voter is more intelligent than what his self-elected chauvinist champion is prepared to grant!

The irony which embarrasses the SLFP is multiple. The anti-regime feeling (not on the Accord but for other important, perhaps more important reasons) is so profound and pervasive that thousands who would have voted for the SLFP, voted for the U.S.A. to leave observers (and SLFP supporters) wondering whether the U.S.A. may be a possible challenger (not rightaway) to the SLFP's traditional role as the anti UNP alternative.

If this reading of the polls result is correct, the SLFP may have captured two or three provinces! From these provinces it could have then started attacking the Centre (JR) to force him to hold the presidential or parliamentary elections.

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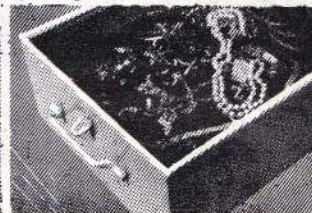
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