

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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— *making waves over the Palk Strait* —

WOT NO TREATY ?

COMING SHORTLY —

Delhi's Sri Lanka syndrome

— *Mervyn de Silva*

TURMOIL IN TAMILNADU

— *Salamat Ali*

A second look at "VIRAGAYA"

— *Kamalika Pieris*

The Pathogenesis of Ball-and-Bat

U.S. Nuclearising a tiny island

— *Kalinga Seneviratne*

Washington's lock-jaw on Israeli atrocities

— *Mary McGrory*

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RETURN OF RONNIE ?

Former Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel's name may have dropped out of the headlines and even the frontpage but in U.N.P. circles there's still talk of getting him back. The U.N.P.'s appreciation of the need to close ranks is all too evident. The two M.P.'s who were expelled from the party for their failure to vote for the crucial Constitutional Amendment Bill — the first step in the implementation of the July 29 Peace Accord — have now returned to the fold. They have withdrawn the case they filed in the courts and the U.N.P. has restored their full rights as Members and M.P.'s retrospectively. Of course, it followed a formal expression of regret for defying the party Whip.

With the chapter closed political observers drew two conclusions — President J.R. is a stern disciplinarian and does not tolerate deviationism, even with stalwarts like key front-benchers, and secondly that the party cannot afford to lose M.P.'s just when provincial polls are in the offing. The fact that the two deviationists represented electorates in the South — Hakmana and Kamburupitiya — the JVP bastion now under siege by the security forces, was not lost.

Mr. de Mel's main offence was that he violated basic principles of Cabinet government: collective responsibility and secrecy.

While Mr. de Mel is expected back next month, there is a counter-current of speculative discussion in Opposition circles. Ronnie de Mel, it is claimed, will get back to his former party, the SLFP. That would be true to form. He left the SLFP at the tail end of the SLFP's 1970 — 77 administration.

DISAPPEARANCE

The Akmeemana M.P., Mr. Amarasingi Dadangoda raised the matter in parliament on Dec. 16. According to him, Mr. Sathyanpala Manigama, a assistant lecturer of the Ruhuna Univ. was arrested by the police on Nov. 13, and taken to a local police station. He was later moved, says the MP, to another police station. Since then he has "disappeared". Representations have been made by the Univ. Teachers Association to the District Minister, the National Security Minister, the UGC, the President etc. So far the "mystery has not been solved."

The Ruhuna Univ. Teachers Association has now appointed a four member committee, which includes the UTA Secretary, Mr. Kamal Karunadasa, to investigate the "disappearance".

A question was also asked by the Opposition in Parliament about 10 'missing persons'. The MP, Mr. Richard Pathirana, told the House that he knew the numbers of the vehicles used by the uniformed personnel who had made the "arrests". The SLFP MP was told that no such arrests had been made.

EXILES RETURN

Six Tamils who had appealed against a deportation order of the British authorities have had their application rejected. This is the end of the road, legally speaking in U.K., said a spokesman for Tamil expatriates in Europe. Mr. Douglas Hurd who gave the order after rejecting a final appeal by a Lawyers group in Britain, argued that the Tamil refugees had failed to satisfy that they had a reasonable fear of persecution, the basic stipulation of U.N. Convention. The question is will the EEC follow the U.K. line. Already, the UNCHR is far from pleased by Mr. Hurd's ruling. The UK argument is that it is 'safe for the refugees' to return home. The number of Tamil refugees in western Europe is anybody's guess. While figure usually given is 30,000 — 40,000, some H. R. associations say it can be as high as 100,000.

TRENDS + LETTERS

Bank of Ceylon

I suggest that the Philatelic Bureau of the ministry of Posts and Telecommunication issue a new stamp to mark the golden jubilee celebrations of the First State Owned Bank, which was established on 1st December 1938.

After all when the Colombo Y.M.C.A. celebrated its century, a new stamp was issued.

R. A. S. PAUL

Rajagiriya

LINKS

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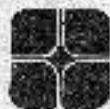
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FROM REVIEW TO RE-NEGOTIATION

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

July 29 — January 29. Exactly 6 months. Time to review the Gandhi Jayawardene Peace Accord. How has it worked? How is it working or not working? What are the snags? Who or what is responsible? How best can these impediments be removed to mutual advantage and to improve and speed up implementation, with the pact running far behind the scheduled December 31 provincial polls date.

Such questions and the ceremony of review and re-appraisal are a natural part of a bilateral inter-state exercise. Mr. Gandhi took the Indian Republic Day as the most obvious occasion on which to conduct that operation, with January 26 offering the additional advantage of honouring his co-signatory, (and fellow Nobel Prize nominee) by making him Chief Guest at the lavish spectacular ceremonies. President JR's hurried 2 day stay in Delhi on the way back from the SAARC summit allowed the two leaders time only to raise questions, not to examine them carefully or find answers. So formal occasion, ceremonial honours and mutual political-diplomatic need meshed perfectly.

Transcending all these natural interests and consideration was each leader's need to consolidate whatever he had gained from the Accord, and if possible, recover whatever he had lost, or as much of it as possible. In the gain-loss equation, the 'loss factor' was plainly the bigger component in the Sri Lankan part of the July 29 transaction. Not only because Sri Lanka is fundamentally the weaker, contracting party but the actual circumstances — the post-Vadamarachi-Air-drop situation — increased this weakness. Thus, the actual terms of the transaction

reflected this gross disparity in bargaining power. Indeed if the essentially domestic part of the deal (the devolution deal or the 'settlement' of the ethnic issue) deserves that delightful American expression, a 'shot gun' wedding, the state-to-state (or foreign policy) part of the transaction was, in Colombo's eyes, pure gun-at-your-head highwayman stuff. So from the Sri Lankan viewpoint, the Delhi talks were more than a review and critical re-assessment of what had happened since July 1987. There was an attempt at re-negotiation.

Logically the approach by both sides was based on what had already happened. For both, the situation on the ground was the starting point. However, there was a changed or changing perception of the entire situation, not just the situation in the north-and-east, the IPKF's area of operation and its exclusive responsibility, but of the South, the JVP challenge, the significance of Ronnie de Mel's resignation and growing divisions in the UNP (See "Three Frontrunners" from a report in the F. E. E. R. by its Colombo correspondent Manik de Silva, who is editor of Sri Lanka's leading daily, the state-owned 'Daily News'). But more important than these developments is the general demand for Presidential and parliamentary polls, the rising anti-UNP opinion, and the re-appearance of Mrs. Bandaranaike as a key player in the unfolding Sri Lankan drama.

Symptomatic of this major change in Delhi opinion is chorus of increasingly critical voices in the influential Indian press, many of them authoritative editorial voices, and some generally pro-government. This would

certainly be true of the *TIMES OF INDIA*. Secondly, these voices sound like alarm bells. And ideologically, they range from the conservative *STATESMEN* to the leftwing *MAINSTREAM*, edited by the most highly regarded editor in the country, Nikhil Chakravarty.

Noting the "fragility of the Government in Colombo" as the most disturbing aspect "of the Batticola jail break, the *TIMES OF INDIA* wondered whether "coherent government" is "on the verge of breaking down".

"The Sri Lanka government is already under attack from within, the internal divisions are widening, and the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party is calling for the absorption of members of the outlawed Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) in the political mainstream, in contrast to President Jayawardene who wants to crush that organisation out of existence. Is there a government then, on the verge of breaking down in Sri Lanka? It may seem alarmist even to ask the question, but the way things are going on the island gives cause for the utmost concern in India. In particular, what is the IPKF's role to be? Will it end up propping up a shaky government under siege from its domestic critics, including many within its own ranks? It is vital that New Delhi reassesses its political strategy in view of the troubles assailing the Jayawardene government."

In other words, the Indian press has awakened not merely to the vital political significance of the 'Southern dimension' but to the central issue of democracy, and the integral connection between conflicts in Sri Lanka and its post 1982 'closed system'. In that sense, it has become suddenly

aware of a major flaw in its analysis and understanding of the Sri Lankan conflict. Though the awakening is belated, it is more than pardonable. Our own analysts, preoccupied with the strictly ethnic issue and devolution as the answer to the problem — a preoccupation that may have been a mere byproduct of intellectual conditioning rather than the self-serving imposition which critics of the 'ethnic studies' approach allege — have been guilty of the same error.

Thus, the importance the Indian press attached to Mr. Ronnie de Mel. An editorial in the *Statesman* notes:

"Even a cursory glance at Mr. de Mel's record as Finance Minister that far from being a hardliner who believes in a scorched earth military offensive against the recalcitrant Tamil militants, he was in the front line arguing for a negotiated settlement on the grounds that Sri Lanka could not afford a civil war. In fact, when the Indo-Sri Lankan accord was signed on July 29, Mr. de Mel and Mr. Gamini Dissanayake

were the only Ministers whom President Jayewardene took into his confidence. That even someone who risked the wrath of the Sinhalese hardliners by urging moderation when Colombo clearly thought it unfashionable to do so has now said farewell to the Government is a pointer to the growing perceptions of disaster and to President Jayewardene's complete isolation".

It is not as the region's paramount power but as the world's largest democracy that India faces a painful predicament. It is a peculiarly American one. Does one dump a trusted partner if, by losing his legitimacy, he can become a liability? Or does one tighten the protective embrace, running the attendant risk of mutual damage. Is discreet distancing the shrewder option? If so, when and how? The questions can be troublesome when the major partner's professed ideal, democracy, and his perceived self interest coincide to recommend a course hostile to the dependent ally.

The *STATESMAN*, founded in 1818, is an old-fashioned

and somewhat staid defender of democratic institutions. It is this perspective it brings to bear on the totality of the Sri Lankan situation, a totality which had eluded the Indian, and more conspicuously, the Tamilnadu press, — the *Hindu*, being the most glaring example. While such partial viewpoints and analytical approaches were quite natural and understandable in the case of the *Hindu*, required reading for the English-educated Sri Lankan, this could hardly be said for the Sri Lankan specialist observers of Indian politics and India's Sri Lanka policy.

Both persist in another error — identifying the 'Southern dimension' wholly with the J. V. P. In equating the two, ideological prejudice, sometimes pathological tends once more to distort judgments. The *Statesman*, reading the de Mel resignation in objective terms, locates and corrects that basic error:

"It does not really need the outlawed JVP to remind the Sinhalese people that the Parliament which is legislating to esta-

THREE FRONTRUNNERS

Jayewardene whose tenure as president ends early next year, took along to New Delhi two key ministers. Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali who with Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa, are the front runners for the UNP ticket at next year's presidential election. Dissanayake who played a key role in negotiating the July Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord is a particular favourite of the Indian Government.

Athulathmudali on the other hand, has been lukewarm about the accord, cautiously treading a tightrope in seeking to retain his popularity among the Sri Lankan armed

forces and majority Sinhalese while at the same time not appearing to rebel against government policy. As deputy defence minister, he as well as Gen. Cyril Ranatunga — the joint operations commander who was also on the delegation — had an important role to play in discussions with the Indian defence establishment.

At home the president has rapped Premadasa — whose recent public speeches have not been entirely to Jayewardene's liking — by dropping two strong Premadasa supporters from the UNP working committee. He also obtained finance minister Ronnie de Mel's resignation for what he

regarded as a lack of "loyalty" to a five-year-old cabinet decision to hold a referendum in December 1982 to extend the term of the incumbent parliament. De Mel said in parliament in December that he had been opposed to the referendum to which he attributed many of the country's present problems. Despite the fact that replacing de Mel, a gifted technocrat, was a major problem, Jayewardene clearly felt that cabinet and party discipline was more important.

Obviously, the president intends to show the country that he will be calling the shots in the remaining months of his term of office.

(F.E.E.R)

blish the provincial councils and the enforced merger of the two "Tamil" provinces received its mandate as long ago as in 1977. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike is repeatedly telling them so, and she is hardly to be dismissed as "anti-Indian".

It is against this background that India's readiness to sign the draft Defence Treaty — and marked lack of enthusiasm to do so — should be seen. It does not want a 'Treaty' to supersede the Accord. Sri Lankan politicians and pundits say that the 'annexure' has no standing under international law. A scrap of paper, said one. Indian legal experts disagree. However Mr. Gandhi was not prepared to relent an inch on the substance of the annexure.

Sri Lanka, having signed it, while Colombo was a besieged city ringed by marching mobs and by fires, with Indian Commandos in frigates alongside Galle Face green, wants to introduce reciprocity or 'mutuality'. In doing so, it can dilute its negative impact on Sinhalese opinion. The F. R. E. R. Colombo correspondent writes:

"Colombo was anxious to sign with New Delhi a treaty of friendship and cooperation modelled on the Indo-Soviet treaty which would include reciprocal obligations. The intention, from Jayewardene's point of view was to get rid of what many Sri Lankans perceive to be inequities in the July accord. Although the Indian External Affairs Ministry has been cool on the idea of a treaty, Gandhi himself has said that he had no reservations about signing such an agreement with Sri Lanka.

At the conclusion of the visit Jayewardene told reporters that the draft submitted by Colombo will be discussed at length during the coming months and the next round of treaty talks would be held before the elections for the Sri Lankan provincial

councils. Having the treaty signed before parliamentary elections, which most observers believe would precede the presidential election, would be a useful campaign plank for Jayewardene."

What the correspondent calls "inequities" was more accurately described by highly placed and knowledgeable Sri Lankans as "structural flaws" or "imbalances" in the annexure. It was its one-sidedness that made the "annexure" appear such an obvious imposition, and an abridgement if not surrender of sovereignty — that anyway was the Opposition line, and the SLFP, with foreign policy as its propagandist ace at the next polls would have played that card to a maximum effect. President JR's move was intended to pre-empt SLFP attack on that front, and gain positive advantage by telling the Sinhala electorate that India has signed a treaty which closes the door finally to Tamilnadu military support for Sri Lankan Tamil rebels.

Again on the purely domestic issue — the situation on the ground — he has pushed India this time more effectively, to pledge peaceful conditions in north-and-east and a meaningful provincial polls. Such a situation would leave President JR with the following advantages vis-a-vis his own national constituency which he must sooner or later face. (a) the "Tigers" have been tamed, with manageable "residual terrorism" as the only problem left (b) the IPKF can leave or at least follow the polls with a thinning out of forces. A reduction in force-levels, a less "high profile" Indian military presence, now a major irritant will certainly allow him to tell the Sinhalese electorate — I have got the Indians to tame or pull out the LTTE's claws, and restored a semblance of democracy in the north-and-east. When the referendum is held let the East decide.

By getting the IPKF to re-locate its camps in Ampara and the

Sri Lankan forces to take tactical control of "designated areas" in Trincom district — while the IPKF retains strategic control — he can ease Sinhala-cum-Muslim passions, give the S.L. army a marginal role with a promise of a greater role later, and allow the return of Sinhala and Muslim refugees in a climate of "security".

While President JR is concentrating on winning back lost ground externally (the "annexure", the foreign policy concessions) and the ground that he has lost to the SLFP-led anti-government forces. Mr. Gandhi is suddenly confronted with uncertainty in the key area of his national constituency, (Tamilnadu) and criticism in another less clearly demarcated area of the same constituency — the Indian press, crucial element in the broad consensual support he had initially received for his Accord and his military involvement.

Nikhil Chakravarty observed:

"The move to have a treaty with President Jayewardene should await such a review of the entire policy towards Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister would be wise to take the nation into confidence instead of putting his trust in President Jayewardene... Is the Rajiv Gandhi government prepared to go in for such commitment since this is also possible under the July 29 accord? Have we worked out the implications of such a situation in which India might annoy other political forces in Sri Lanka, while trying to pull President J.R.'s chestnuts out of the fire?"

The *Statesman* editorial concluded: "Unless of course, the Prime Minister is deluded enough to believe that the IPKF should again bail out the beleaguered Sri Lanka President, this time by going to the assistance of his troops fighting the JVP."

Extremely interesting in this connection is remark of an Indian official quoted by Anita Pratap in *India Today*. The

correspondent writes "The key question, however, is what happens to the accord in the context of a change of guard, particularly in view of the anti-accord stand of the SLFP and Jayewardene's own possible successors? As an Indian official put it: "If the SLFP comes to power, we'll do business with them. Jayewardene is a natural ally because he is the signatory, but the events of the last four years cannot cloud the fact that India has traditionally had close ties with the SLFP." In characteristic opposition bravura, Anura Bandaranaike declared publicly: "If we come to power, we will send the IPKF packing in 24 hours." He later admitted that total withdrawal of the IPKF may not be possible but that the SLFP would definitely strive to reduce its number."

The assumption that "Accord", hailed by Washington and Moscow, conferred India a "regional superpower" status has tempted Indian analysts into tenuous Vietnam and Afghanistan parallels. To the extent that Delhi misread the nature and complexity of the challenge and overestimated military power, the analogy holds. "Quagmire" and "Imbroglia" too can pass. But no further.

The "Tigers" (LTTE) are neither the Vietcong nor the Mujahdeen. Once military links with Tamil Nadu, the southern Indian state, were cut, the LTTE has no steady supply source or rear-base.

What are India's choices? An Aquino option is out, on the face of it. The Opposition leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike's son threatens to order Indian troops out in "24 hours" if his party

assumes office. It is as if Mrs. Aquino had threatened to do the same with the U.S. bases. A more realistic Mrs. Bandaranaike now spoke of "re-negotiating" the Accord. A dutiful son has amended "withdraw" to "phased withdrawal".

The region's superpower and the world's biggest democracy is learning its first chastening lesson on the limits of power. It may not have its Vietnam. Perhaps a Sri Lanka syndrome.

This peculiarly American dilemma is sure to have been of absorbing interest to the many distinguished American visitors to Colombo recently, including former Ambassadors, well known scholar Howard Wiggins and Mr. Robert Peck, of the state department and Mr. Peter Galbraith, senior adviser to the all important Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

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Rajiv's risky game: Polls in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka

Is Mr. Rajiv Gandhi playing a high-risk game in Tamilnadu, having won a similar game in Jammu Kashmir, ignoring the failure of his mother in the Punjab. It is a parliamentary numbers game they have both played to achieve the same end the Congress (I) holding the parliamentary balance and/or making the ruling party almost totally dependent on Congress votes?

In Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Gandhi held polls only after he had weakened the position of Dr. Faruk Abdullah, in the valley by building up the Moslem fundamentalists who were against the Chief Minister. In Punjab, says Ajit Battacharjya, former Indian Express, senior staffer, Mr. Gandhi "deployed Hindrawale against the Akali Dal." Now, in Tamilnadu, the Congress has suddenly switched support from Mrs. M.G.R. (Janaki) to the Jayalalitha faction or appears to be doing so under Presidential rule. Once the manoeuvre of de-stabilising and splitting the AIADMK is complete, he can order polls, confident that the Congress I will control the "balance of power" in the Assembly.

Such a game however may tempt Janaki defectors to join the ultra-nationalist Karunanidhi's DMK. And that could make the whole strategy counter-productive, seriously affecting Tamilnadu support for his 'Peace Accord', and his time table for polls in both North and East Sri Lanka and in Tamilnadu. Battacharjya comments:

The Congress (I) is taking similar risks in Tamil Nadu. For it is on the cards that the influential politicians in the Janaki faction, who feel betrayed by the Congress (I), will join forces with the DMK in a replay of the pro-Dravidian anti-North campaign that Tamil Nadu has

experienced before. This is particularly hazardous now since they can mobilise Tamil sentiment against the IPKF campaign in Sri Lanka to bring the LTTE to heel, with unpredictable domestic and international repercussions. Tamil Nadu probably has as many sophisticated arms and trained young guerrillas available as Punjab.

The initial plan, therefore, was to allow Mrs. Janaki to remain Chief Minister, thus avoiding an early constitutional crisis. Second thoughts appear to have changed with indications that an arrangement with the Jayalalitha faction could prove more rewarding since it would be dependent on Congress (I) support and the Congress (I) could dictate terms. If the Janaki faction responded with rowdiness — as was predictable with Mr. Pandian in the chair — President's rule and elections when convenient would be equally advantageous.

Although Congress (I) spokesmen are talking about early elections, much will depend on developments in Sri Lanka. If the IPKF is able to subdue the LTTE and normalise returns to Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, they could be held within the six months provided in the Constitution. Other wise President's rule may have to be extended by another six months. The risks involved in further antagonising sentiment in the State by a continued campaign against an influential Tamil faction in Sri Lanka which has close contacts in Tamil Nadu are obvious.

The defection of Sivaji Ganesan, another celluloid hero, from the Congress (I) is also a major reverse unless he is persuaded to return to the fold in which case he will lose some of his popularity in Tamil Nadu. Altogether the Congress (I) strategy involves high risks not only to the party but also the nation.

Financial crisis if IMF reneges on Rs. 5 billion pledge

J. T. de Silva

Economists have warned the government of a huge financial crisis in the next six months if the IMF does not grant a massive loan to ease the country's balance of payments situation.

This situation has arisen due to the lack of confirmation from the IMF whether it would honour an earlier pledge to extend Rs. 4000 million at special concessionary rates.

If the IMF loan falls through even World Bank loans for the rehabilitation of Lankan industries would be lost, financial circles pointed out.

Some economists said that foreign reserves were sufficient only for five weeks' consumption and that the government will be compelled to ration foodstuffs if the IMF loan does not materialise early.

Meanwhile the government has requested a further Rs. 4000 millions at concessionary rates to cover up the losses from a depressed market the economists added that a World Bank representative presently in Sri Lanka had failed to give categorical assurance on the availability of Rs. 4000 million loan earlier promised.

— Sun

Lalith explains cut-off points

Minister of National Security — Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali: There seems to be a misunderstanding about the natural cut off point of 2.5 per cent. It is not a fixed cut-off point. It varies according to seats.

I worked out the number of members who will be returned. In the western province there will be 120 members. In the central province 56, and in the South 53 members. In the North there will be 36 members, in the East 34, in the north-west 50, in Uva 32, North Central 32 and in Sabaragamuwa 42. The total number of members will be 438.

There will be plenty of room in the assembly. In Colombo there are 1 million voters. If only 80% of them vote there will a voting

population of over 800,000. Any party getting 19,736 votes will get one seat. In voting terms this is the natural cut-off point. If 4 or 5 villages get together surely they can get this number of votes, and they can get one seat. It will be like the Israeli parliament.

Mr. Athulathmudali next gave the number of votes necessary to elect one member to a council on the basis of 80 percent poll.

Western Province:— Colombo — 19,736; Gampaha — 20,963; Kalutara — 19,299.

Central Province:— Kandy — 17,470, Matale — 15,370 and Nuwara Eliya — 10,384.

South:— Galle — 20,389, Matara — 20,885 and Hambantota — 16,282.

North:— Jaffna — 22,209, Mannar — 7,335, Vavuniya 9871, Mullaitivu — 6377, Kilinochchi 10,666.

East:— Batticaloa — 15,267, Ampara — 14,616 and Trincomalee — 13,325.

North Western Province:— Kurunegala — 17,427 and Puttalam — 16,438.

North Central:— Anuradhapura 11,702 and Polonnaruwa 12,741.

Uva:— Badulla 13,436 and Monaragala — 9,444 and Sabaragamuwa: Ratnapura 15,562 and Kegalle 17,820.

Mr. Athulathmudali then read out the natural cut-off point in each district.

In Colombo 43 members are to be elected. If you divide 100 by 43 you get 2.3 per cent which is

the cut-off point. In Gampaha 63 members and the cut off point will be 2.7. Similarly Kalutara 4.3, Kandy 3.5, Matale 9.1, N'Eliya 5.8 Galle 4.5, Matara 5.8, Hambantota 7.1, Jaffna 5.2, Mannar 20, Vavuniya 25, Mullaitivu 20, Kilinochchi 25, Batticaloa 9, Ampara 7.1, Trincomalee 11.1, Kurunagala 2.8, Puttalam 6.6, Anuradhapura 4.5, polonnaruwa 10, Badulla 5.2, Monaragala 7.6, Ratnapura 4.3 and Kegalle 5.2. The natural cut off point is a variable point. The percentage figures I gave is assuming the district will poll 80 percent. There is a total of 9,122,267 registered votes in the country.

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Once more, Tank Farm?

A joint Sri Lanka — India restoration and maintenance plan for the abandoned oil tank complex in Trincomalee has been initiated, the Tamil Nadu State Radio announced last night.

The proposed scheme of work would come into action by the united efforts of the Sri Lanka Petroleum Corporation and the Indian Oil and Gas Commission, the radio broadcaster further stated.

The Trincomalee oil tank, largest in the Indian Ocean, was installed by Great Britain during time of the Second World war.

A group of Indian officials is expected to visit Sri Lanka to look into the matter, the radio announcement further, disclosed.

— Sun

The Dravidian factor

MGR's death throws southern politics in a flux

Salamat Ali

MADRAS

The death of M G. Ramachandran, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, has unsettled the politics of this south Indian state. The film-star-turned-politician who was popularly known as MGR rode to power on the back of the ethnic Dravidian movement, but became an ally of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and supported New Delhi's policy on Sri Lanka. Thus the repercussions of his death will also be felt in India's national and foreign policies.

Waiting in the wings to recapture power in the state is the opposition party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led by M. Karunanidhi. MGR split with the DMK to form his All India Anna DMK or AIADMK in 1972 and became chief minister five years later. If the factional squabbling in the ruling party precipitates a snap election, the opposition, DMK could well come back to power in the state. In that event, given the DMK's deep antagonism towards New Delhi and the Congress party, the latter's political hopes in southern India could well be frustrated.



Janaki

DMK is a cadre-based party and its tight-knit organisation is considered as good as that of

the communists and the rightwing Hindu fundamentalist groups. Although it lost the last state election in December 1984, its margin of defeat in almost all seats was less than 3% of the votes polled. This performance was all the more remarkable because it was scored against a wave of "double sympathy" — MGR had been paralysed by a stroke and prime minister Indira Gandhi had been assassinated a couple of months earlier.

In a state where the electorate has traditionally responded more to charismatic personalities than to party platforms, Karunanidhi is now the only political leader of any stature. Also, he is the foremost opponent of India's policy on the ethnic Tamil crisis in Sri Lanka, as well as the strongest exponent of the Dravidian political philosophy which has strong overtones of linguistic and racial chauvinism.

In practice, the DMK's politics hinges on opposing the national language of Hindi and the dominance of upper castes among Hindus, especially in northern India. The anti-north sentiments are usually expressed as the domineering Aryan north's insensitivity towards the Dravidian south.

However, most of the Congress leaders and some political analysts in the state maintain that the Dravidian movement is dead. The movement was born as a reaction against the supremacy of the Tamil Brahmin caste. The prolonged agitation against the upper castes and two decades of DMK and AIADMK rule have reduced the Brahmins to underdogs who no longer pose any social or political threat.

To Ramaswamy Naicker, the spiritual mentor of the Dravidian movement, the corollary to opposing the priestly Brahmin caste

was archetism. But the hold of religion is such that today most of the movement's leaders routinely go to temples. Moreover, they have come to terms with the importance of Hindi in national life and are sending their children to elite private schools which teach Hindi, while the state-run schools Tamil Nadu continue to ban Hindi. Analysts, including Congress leaders, also maintain that the decade of MGR's rule has brought the Tamil masses into the national mainstream and the anti-north sentiments have lost their sting.

Such an appreciation of the political situation should propel the Congress to try to wrest control in Tamil Nadu. But the Congress has chosen to wait on the sidelines for the time being. For the past decade it relied on MGR to make electoral gains in the state, primarily by bargaining for a share of the state's seats in parliament. MGR's critics charge that initially he needed the Congress to defeat the DMK, and later became vulnerable enough to concede to most of the Congress' demands.



Jayalathika

MGR hated Karunanidhi with an intensity that would have forced him to align with anyone who was against his arch foe. The antipathy was as much per-

sonal as political, and dates back to the 1960s when the late C. N. Annadurai was the party leader. MGR was already a popular film star before joining the party and Annadurai, himself a popular writer and orator, carefully built up MGR's movie image into a political asset.

Ironically, rural electrification, which got a boost in the late 1950s and early 1960s when Congress leader K. Kamraj was the state's chief minister, led to more movie houses in the rural areas and MGR's films that brought DMK propaganda to the state's countryside.

Annadurai built MGR into the mould of a Lone Ranger ready to rescue every underdog, showering bounties on the needy and putting down all tyrants and villains. His popularity on the screen became a political crowd-puller on the streets, and all over Tamil Nadu MGR fan clubs proliferated. After Annadurai's death in 1969, Karunanidhi succeeded him as chief minister and correctly sensed the threat to his power from the MGR fan clubs and ordered the actor to wind them up. Seeing it as an attempt to clip his wings, MGR revolted and formed his own party.

After his success in the 1977 state election, MGR emerged as a political leader in his own right and showed an uncanny

appreciation of policies which could bring him maximum popular support. The AIADMK's ideology was called "Annalism", after Annadurai, and described as a combination of capitalism, socialism and communism—a sort of populism also dubbed "the dole raj." He built public lavatories; distributed clothes to widows and found jobs for them. He provided free meals to poor schoolchildren who otherwise would have gone hungry and provided raincoats to all pedicab drivers in Madras and elsewhere.

Basically, his style was to give the needy more than they expected—he often dug into his own pockets but always made sure that his philanthropy became widely known. Therefore, no charge of corruption against himself or his regime could ever stick. His fans argued that he was taking from the rich to be given to the poor—an action in line with the heroes he played in the films.

His political inheritance is contested between two factions both headed by women. One faction is led by 38-year-old Jayalalitha Jayaram, a movie heroine who became the party propaganda chief and was close to MGR both on screen and off. A second faction is headed by MGR's widow, Janaki. Soon after MGR's death, the senior most cabinet minister, V. R. Nedunchezhiyan, was sworn in as acting chief minister.

When Janaki's followers paraded 97 of 131 AIADMK legislators before the state's governor, she was allowed to form the government and prove her majority in the legislature when it is convened. While the show of strength between the two rivals was looming, the Jayalalitha group herded its 47 legislators together and took them out of the state to prevent any defections to the opposite camp. On its part, the Janaki group, in order to encourage such defections, threatened the seven ministers in the rival camp with expulsion from the party and the legislature.

Janaki needs the support of 112 of the 223 state legislators to prove her majority. She needs the backing of defectors from the Jayalalitha faction or from the 64 members the Congress party commands. More worrisome for both Congress and the AIADMK, however, is the strategy of the DMK which has been patiently watching the political wrangle in the expectation that the two factions would destroy one another.

On 19 January, DMK chief Karunanidhi predicted that the Janaki government would collapse, leading to direct central rule over the state and followed by fresh elections by the end of the year.

The new regime in Madras could affect policy on Sri Lanka

For the first time since India's independence, the internal policies of one of its states—Tamil Nadu—has become inextricably entangled with the country's foreign relations. One of the major concerns facing New Delhi is whether the tacit acceptance in Tamil Nadu of Indian military operations in Sri Lanka will continue amid the war of succession raging in the state after the death of chief minister M. G. Ramachandran.

The ethnic Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka has been a matter of

abiding concern in Tamil Nadu where the people share linguistic and religious ties with their brethren on the island nation. In recent years as the conflict escalated, a large number of refugees fled to Tamil Nadu, which had also given sanctuary to militant Sri Lanka groups. Under the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord, Indian troops were sent to Sri Lanka to enforce peace in the Tamil regions there and became involved in clashes with armed militants.

The charismatic Ramachandran, popularly known as MGR, had managed to contain the disaffec-

tion in his state, in the wake of allegations of the army's excesses against Sri Lankan Tamils. It is widely accepted that but for MGR's efforts New Delhi would have found it extremely difficult to sell its Sri Lanka policy to Tamil Nadu. However, while supporting New Delhi's policies, MGR continued to back the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the largest Sri Lankan militant group, much to the dismay of the Indian Government. Understandably New Delhi wants the next administration in Tamil Nadu to support its policy on Sri Lanka.

A significant section of opinion among intellectuals and Congress leaders in Tamil Nadu favours a more aggressive espousal of the Sri Lanka policy. Cho Ramaswamy, editor of the *Tughlak* weekly and a widely read commentator on the state's politics, argues that opposition to the Sri Lanka policy is "a played-out card" in the state's electoral politics. K. Ramamurthy, a Congress MP from the state, also expressed similar views to the REVIEW.

However, there is continuing concern in India over Tamil Nadu's feelings about Sri Lanka. In a message on the eve of Army Day in mid-January, Gen. K. Sundarji, India's chief of the army staff, called for a national consensus on the Indian army's operation in Sri Lanka. Regretting doubts and reservations in quarters he did not identify, the general pointed out that these could affect the morale of his men.

C. Aranganayagam, a leader of the Jayalalitha faction of the ruling AIADMK — MGR's party — and Tamil Nadu's education minister until MGR's death concedes that feelings ran high in the state over the reports of the Indian army's killings in Jaffna, but he adds that this was primarily because the army was assigned a law-and-order role which should have been played by the police. According to him public opinion in Tamil Nadu strongly favours a fair deal for fellow Tamils in Sri Lanka but does not like a division of that country. He does not believe that the Tamils in India could be alienated from the national mainstream over this issue.

But the rival faction controlled by MGR's Janaki, and the opposition DMK dismiss the Jayalalitha group as a "pet poodle" of New Delhi. Valampuri John, an MP from Tamil Nadu and an influential leader of the Janaki faction told the REVIEW that the Indo-Sri Lanka accord was an ineffectual agreement for it lacked the participation of the two key elements to the ethnic conflict: the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils or their representatives. On the feelings in Tamil Nadu, John said that the psyche of the Dravidians — the people who ethnically

dominate in the south — was deeply wounded by the Indian army's actions, and the seeds of resentment could sprout at the next opportunity.

There was an upsurge of sympathy for the plights of Sri Lanka Tamils after the ethnic riots in Colombo in 1983, following which large numbers of refugees moved across the Palk Strait into Tamil Nadu, as did all the armed separatist groups of Sri Lanka Tamils. Among the several militant groups, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) headed by Sri Sabharatnam was the principal beneficiary of New Delhi's patronage, including military training, and supplies. However, the largest and the best organised of the groups was the LTTE, which was not actively backed by the Indian Government. In early 1986, the LTTE killed Sabharatnam and nearly decimated the TELO leadership. After that New Delhi began supporting other smaller guerrilla groups also.

Because the TELO was supported by Karunanidhi and was hostile to the LTTE, the latter was chosen by MGR for his patronage. As a result the LTTE acquired special status in Tamil Nadu, freely importing arms and building up weapons stockpiles. The LTTE also threw in its lot fully with MGR and his party. When the DMK workers collected some money on Karunanidhi's birthday for distribution among the militant groups, LTTE refused to receive its share and instead bagged a gift from MGR which was five times as big. This was taken as an affront to Karunanidhi and more so to the entire DMK organisation.

MGR also persuaded New Delhi that because of its size the LTTE should not be totally ignored. In carrying out New Delhi's instructions on the militant groups MGR went far beyond his brief in the local handling of the LTTE. However, the central government did not consider it prudent to antagonise MGR over the issue of his special favours to the LTTE.

When Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene made Colombo's participation in the 1986 Bangalore summit of the South

Asian Association for Regional Cooperation conditional upon the disarming of Tamil militants sheltering in India, MGR helped New Delhi in seizing all the weapons. But what has remained unpublished is that he later returned all the seized arms, including those belonging to other groups, to the LTTE.

When MGR learned that the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord was nearing completion, he tipped off the LTTE which moved most of its arsenal to secret hideouts in northern Sri Lanka. MGR also told the LTTE that all militant groups would be disarmed by the Indian Peace-Keeping Force so they too hid their arms which later had to be searched out by the Indian troops after a prolonged campaign.

Although the LTTE has been engaged in combat with Indian troops since October MGR kept his close links with it. His statements on India's Sri Lanka policy were deliberately vague enough to yield differing interpretations by the LTTE and New Delhi. Until MGR's death, the LTTE's speedboats used to shuttle between Tamil Nadu and Jaffna's northern coast with impunity almost every night.

New Delhi might now try to break the LTTE's special links with Tamil Nadu regime. But the LTTE has learned to play politics with the major parties in the state and is striving to retain the close ties with MGR's successor and widow Janaki, while opening up their channels with the opposition DMK as well.

Six months after Indian troops landed in Sri Lanka, the conflict has continued to fester with no sign of an early end to the military campaign. In addition, the insurgency in southern Sri Lanka by Sinhalese extremists has frustrated Colombo's plan to restore normalcy to the country. If the LTTE and the southern subversives combine their efforts, Colombo would be under greater pressure and this would make a political solution almost impossible. The impact of these events will further unsettle Tamil Nadu's politics. — **Salamat Ali**

— *Far Eastern Economic Review*

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MINISTRY OF LANDS & LAND DEVELOPMENT

Reticence in Face of the Jewish Lobby

Mary McGrory

FOREIGN
NEWS

You could comb the pages of the Congressional Record for the last 10 days of the session and not find a single reference to the shameful events unfolding in Israel and the occupied territories.

On the West Bank, Israeli soldiers have been clubbing unarmed teenage Arab demonstrators into the ground. The week before Christmas, having terrorized relatives of patients who were waiting in the courtyard, Israeli troops stormed into an Arab hospital in Gaza and beat up doctors and nurses.

If those killed and wounded had been Israelis, you can imagine the outcry. But the casualties were Palestinians, who are voiceless here, and the silence on Capitol Hill was awful. "We were awfully busy getting out of there," said one member of Congress at a holiday party. "You know, we had Contra aid and fairness and all that."

But another said more forthrightly, "Of course, nobody spoke out. We are too intimidated. We are afraid of the Israeli lobby. We are afraid of our Jewish constituency. Some of my Jewish

Reaganism In Retreat

The glamour of the Reagan Administration's "summit triumph" is quickly fading. The U.S. found itself totally isolated on two major international issues, while suffering a humiliating reversal on one of its crucial foreign policy adventures. Reaganites swore angrily because the rest of the international community refused to follow the President's lead on an arms embargo against Iran, while the U.N. rapped the U.S. for vetoing for a second time a Security Council resolution asking Israel to honour Geneva conventions on treatment of civilians in war conditions. The U.S. attitude to Israel was condemned by its staunch Arab friend, King Hussein of Jordan. Washington was losing credibility in the region said the Jordanian monarch. "We consider the US position encourages inhuman behaviour towards our brothers in the occupied lands and reflects directly on US credibility".

Meanwhile the Egyptian President, a recent guest of Mr. Reagan, decided to press ahead with his own peace plan, which has been supported by the Pope on whom President Mubarak called on his European tour. The Soviet Union has proposed that all members of the Security Council should meet at Foreign Minister level to prepare for an international conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But the biggest blow came from his own Congress. The U.S. House voted 219-211 to cut Reagan's aid program to the Contras who are fighting his "proxy war" against the government of Nicaragua, which rejecting Reagan's plans for peace in the region, has expressed solidarity with other Central American countries in their effort to ensure peace and stability in the area.



voters are as appalled as I am at what's going on, but they don't dare speak out for fear of the others."

Of the presidential candidates, only Jesse Jackson has spoken out, citing a "betrayal of silence". He spent much of his 1984 campaign fighting charges of anti-semitism, and is not heeded. Senator Paul Simon said he would not hesitate to speak out on policy differences with Israel — but forebore to do so in the present instance. Michael Dukakis, who is often more sensible, said, "I think the Israelis can deal with these problems themselves."

That is manifestly not true. Israel badly needs help from her friends, friends who care enough

to tell her she is doing everything wrong with the Palestinians, beginning with a refusal to acknowledge that there will never be peace until she deals with the problem of people who were there when the Israelis claimed their own homeland.

The Reagan administration, which is as permissive with Israel as its predecessors, felt obliged to condemn Israeli tactics, calling them "unacceptably harsh". But there was no threat to do anything about it. The president was even-handed in condemning both sides and said nothing about withholding any of the U.S. weapons and funds on which Israel depends for her survival. Israelis made it official policy during their brutal 1982 invasion of Lebanon that words will never hurt them.

Inside Israel, there is silence. Those Israelis who protested the Lebanon adventure and its attendant barbarities have rallied round their weak leaders. Abba Eban long ago warned his countrymen that annexation of the occupied territories would give Israel the choice of either ceasing to be Jewish (because the Arabs would soon outnumber the Jews) or of ceasing to be democratic (because it dares not confer citizenship on an Arab majority).

In the U.S. Jewish community, which was torn apart over Lebanon, the hardshell loyalists are saying that the demonstrations are the work of "outside agitators" and that the unmasked agitators are "terrorists". The more moderate urge Israelis to admit that they have a fundamental problem of justice and decency.

The one thing that has caught the attention of the Israelis was a massive strike by Arabs living in Israel. It was, a resident Arab

Glenn Frankel of *The Washington Post* adds: Medical sources say that 56 residents have been treated for broken bones — mostly arms and hands — and deep bruises and cuts at Ramallah Hospital in the past week. The *Los Angeles Times* said 30 more were treated for similar injuries at Rafidiya Hospital in Nablus.

Mr. Abba Eban, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and a member of Rabin's Labour Party, told reporters: "If there are Cabinet ministers or Knesset members who are enthusiastic about the idea of taking Palestinians to a certain place, ordering them to put out an arm, taking a baton and breaking the extended limb with precision, why do they not volunteer themselves instead of ordering soldiers to do it?" Yossi Sarid, one of the legislators who compiled the Gaza statistics, said, "When you see a man 75 years and he is very, very severely beaten, you necessarily come to the conclusion that we are not talking about self-defense."

expert told *The New York Times*, "probably a shock". Israelis, who do not talk to Arabs much found it hard to believe that Arabs

who had been living quietly among them care more about their brother Arabs than their paychecks and their security.

The condescension is inescapable. It is part of the trouble. The Jews have never accepted the Arabs as human beings any more than the Arabs have accepted the existence of a Jewish state.

The Israelis occupied the conquered territories to secure their borders after their great victory in the 1967 war. The territories have been under military rule ever since. The Arabs, some of them living on family land owned for generations, can vote only in municipal elections. They have no self-government. Palestinian youths didn't need the PLO to point out that they were living under apartheid.

A bad situation was made worse by Menachem Begin, who harangued Jews about their God given rights to the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria and accelerated the pace of Israeli settlement. The prospect of peace with a ratio, in Gaza, of 560,000 Arabs to 2,500 Jews is not powerful. Expulsion of the Palestinians, which is favoured by the hard right, would not be tolerated; annexation is, for Abba Eban's reasons, unworkable. Negotiation is clearly the answer.

But as long as they can depend on U.S. aid and the silence of timid politicians, Israel is likely to pretend that no accommodation is necessary and, when human evidence to the contrary rises up, to go on clubbing it.

— *The Washington Post*.

Afghan accord prospects worry Pakistan

LONDON

There is growing conviction among diplomatic observers in major West European capitals that U.S. and the Soviet Union may have reached an informal understanding over the future of Afghanistan, at the December superpower summit between the U.S. President, Mr. Reagan, and the Soviet leader, Mr. Gorbachev. The West

Europeans are closely following the progress of the talks. Soviet and American officials are holding in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is felt that the diplomatic battle for Afghanistan's future has commenced in earnest.

In Islamabad, the U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Michael Armacost, has had a round of meetings with

Pakistani officials and leaders of various factions of Afghan guerrillas. He is accompanied on this delicate mission by several senior American officials and policy-makers who include Mr. Robert Oakley of the National Security Council. Ostensibly the Americans are busy trying to convince the various Afghan guerrilla factions that there is no question of "sell-out" to the Soviets. But, according to informed

observers, the American officials are having a 'hard time' convincing the military establishment in Pakistan that the time has come to abandon a military confrontation in Afghanistan.

There are three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and during the eighties Islamabad has been the major beneficiary of the refugee aid from the West. It is also an open secret that many senior Pakistani military officials have made minor fortunes out of the refugee aid programme. It is in this background that the American officials are encountering resistance to the idea of any change in the Afghanistan policy.

In Kabul, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, had talks with senior Afghan officials, including the Afghan leader Dr. Najibullah. The Soviet Foreign Minister's unscheduled visit to Kabul has raised diplomatic eyebrows in

Kabul and major western capitals. It is also an open secret that there are differences between Moscow and Kabul over the perspectives and logistics of a settlement which includes withdrawal of Soviet troops and talks with Pakistan. Whilst Kabul may not disagree with the fundamental objectives there are serious differences over the timing of the Soviet withdrawal. Western analysts widely differ about the reasons for Kabul's apprehensions.

Western observers feel that Pakistan's own foreign policy is in some confusion. The Foreign Minister recently resigned and his deputy has been dispatched to Morocco. Mr. Armacost and his colleagues are busy trying to assess the Pakistani view-point about the issue which concerns the timing of the proposed withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Pakistanis are confused because

Moscow has stated that it is prepared to pull its troops out of Afghanistan within 12 months and will not insist on a pro-Soviet Government in Kabul.

The Pakistanis are in a quandary because this is exactly what they have been asking for. Now that the reality of the Soviet military withdrawal coupled with overt Western withdrawal of monetary and military aid for the Afghan guerrillas, dawns on Islamabad, there is confusion. Mr. Armacost and his colleagues find that they not only have to convince the various guerrilla leaders that there is no question of a "sell out" but they also have to reassure the Pakistani military establishment that the basic Western perspectives of policies in South Asia have not altered.

— Hindu

Zia's stance will block Afghan solution: Tass

MOSCOW

The Soviet Union has said that the door to a negotiated settlement on Afghanistan "will be shut tight again" if President Zia-ul-Haq's Government in Pakistan refuses to sign an agreement with the Afghan Government headed by Najibullah.

The sharp reaction came last night in an official Soviet news agency commentary on the interview given by Gen. Zia to the *Washington Post* on Sunday.

Tass said he would not sign an accord with Afghan President Najibullah whom he called "pro-Soviet," but made insulting attacks on the Afghan leadership and the Soviet Union.

Tass said Afghanistan now had objective conditions for a real coalition of all democratic and

patriotic forces capable of stopping the war and settling all pressing national problems.

The "temporary presence" of Soviet troops was no hindrance to a settlement as a decision had already been taken for their withdrawal, it said.

"But the door to a settlement would be shut if Mr. Zia repeats what he said to the *Washington Post* when the U.N. Secretary-General's envoy, Diego Cordovez, returns to Islamabad after the current consultations in Kabul," the news agency added.

The Tass commentary referred to Gen. Zia's "shrill, vociferous and unbalanced tone" in the interview and to his "distortion of historical facts" and slapping of "false labels."

On a sarcastic note, it asked if the legitimate Afghan representatives would, at the Geneva round call the Pakistan negotiators the "delegates of putschists" although it was an open secret how the present leaders came to power in Pakistan in 1977.

The commentary termed as the "monologue of a deaf person," President Zia's call for a free independent and neutral Afghanistan.

It said the Afghan leadership had repeatedly proposed the same on condition that Washington and its allies would not interfere in Afghanistan's affairs.

— (PTI)

US to develop Pacific Island Nation into nuclear base?

Kalinga Senoviratne

An interesting legal and political battle is taking shape at the UN over a tiny island in the Pacific.

On 21 August 1987 voters in Belau voted by more than two to one in favour of accepting 'self government' for their island group, thus ending its status as the last United Nations Trust Territory.

The vote by 5,961 to 2,200 approved a special Compact of Self-Government in free association with the United States. But like most other former Trust Territory islands in the Pacific, Belau will not be truly decolonised by the Compact. All indications are that it is being bribed by the United States to create another 'unsinkable aircraft carrier' in the Pacific for the US Navy.

The August 1987 referendum was immediately challenged in courts by Belauan opposition groups. However, before the legal battle could begin, in September, the father of a lawyer who was challenging the referendum was shot dead at his home.

Bullets were also fired into the home of the Speaker of the House, Santos Oikong, who has opposed the compact, and Belau's chief justice stopped hearing the case, after he received death threats.

Another judge, Robert A Hefner, issued a memorandum on 9 September 1987 which said there were indications that the withdrawal of the case 'was brought about by intimidation through the use of violence'.

Situated about 800 km east of the Philippines, Belau is a collection of about 200 small islands

Belau, a tiny new nation of only 15,000 people, has been pressured into a form of independence which will allow the US to develop it into a military and nuclear base — in spite of a constitution which originally made the island nuclear-free.

with a combined population of 15,000. During the second world war, Japanese used Palau (as it was then known) as a base to attack Philippines and Indonesia.

In 1947 Palau, as part of Micronesia, became a Trust Territory of the United Nations under US administration. The Republic of Belau was established in 1979 under a constitution which made Belau the first country in the world to adopt a nuclear-free status. The 'nuclear-free' clause could be overturned only by a 75% majority vote in a referendum. The constitution was ratified in a referendum by 92% of the voters.

Ever since, the United States has applied extraordinary economic and political pressure to get this nuclear free constitution overturned. In 1987, after no less than eight plebiscites, Belauans at last got the first step 'right' — and voted for a 'compact of free Association' through which the United States retains responsibility for defence.

Although the US has promised not to use, test or store nuclear weapons in Belau Washington has, under the compact, contingency rights to operate nuclear warships and aircraft from Belau, and to acquire land and port facilities there.

The past seven years have been stormy. In 1981, a national strike left one dead and president Haruo

Remeljik's office fire-bombed. At that time, Remeljik refused a US offer to send in the marines from Guam to help restore order.

In March 1986, president Remeljik who was a staunch supporter of the nuclear-free constitution, was murdered.

With deepening political crisis, the island has also been plunged into serious economic crisis by the IPSECO power plant project scandal. This 16-Megawatt power plant and 6-million-ton fuel farm project was originally sold to Belau on the basis that it would pay for itself. Instead it has plummeted the tiny nation into debt.

Belau defaulted on the payment of the loan in April 1985. A US\$35 million law suit against the republic by a multinational banking consortium was filed in December 1985 and IPSECO declared itself bankrupt in London in March 1986.

After the failure of the seventh plebiscite on 30 June 1987 to overturn the nuclear-free constitution, president Lazarus Salii (who succeeded Remeljik) announced a financial crisis. Three days later, he laid off 900 of the island's 1,200 government workers (40% of all workers in Belau are government servants), bringing an already devastated economy to a standstill.

President Salii was the architect of the 'compact of free Association' which he negotiated with the

(Continued on page 18)

Kalinga Senoviratne is a Sri Lanka-born journalist who now resides in Australia, where he produces a public radio programme on development education.

The crisis of the Sri Lankan intelligentsia

Ajith Samaranayake

The International Centre for Ethnic Studies appears to feel that I am possessed of either enough presumption or foolhardiness to comment on the crisis of the intelligentsia. To anyone who knows Sri Lanka's intelligentsia and the curious posturings and tribal warfare it is capable of this will look almost like an act of self-immolation or a voluntary delivering of oneself to the wolves. But on the other hand I can not conceal the fact that I am keenly interested even though in an amateurish and impressionistic way in the subject which has been assigned to me. So having accepted the invitation I can not but carry on doggedly in the hope that I will be spared the wrath of our leaders of intellectual fashion.

I do not propose to define the term "intellectual" in any elaborate sense. I am sure that as far as "crisis" is concerned you will agree that the country is presently subjected to the most profound moral and intellectual crisis in her contemporary experience. The intelligentsia is both partly victim as well as partly agent of this crisis. The failure of vision of the country's post-independence intelligentsia is largely responsible for this state of crisis.

If we take an "Intellectual" to mean a cerebral worker as against a manual worker for the purpose of this presentation we can define an intellectual as somebody who works in the realm of ideas. From that I propose to examine what ideas have influenced political and social developments in the country in contemporary times and to what extent the intelligentsia has been able to generate ideas which have been humane and possessed of a vision capable of promoting the social good.

If we begin with the granting of independence (as well we might in the light of the 40th anniversary of that event which will fall

Text of a talk delivered at the
International Centre for Ethnic
Studies on January 28 1998.

In a few days) we can say broadly that the idea which inspired the movement towards independence was liberal democratic in essence. But an almost immediate qualification seems to be called for. This idea derived from the British liberal democratic tradition was mixed up with and almost overlaid by patriarchal and backward-looking elements derived from the country's feudal past. The leadership which inherited independence was patriarchal and easy-going in its attitude towards people at large. They were intellectually flaccid and had no vision of how the new Ceylon should be built. They were imitative in their ways and had imbibed little of the genuine liberal intellectual tradition of the west or its critical and rationalist culture although this was concealed by the veneer of sophistication most of them assumed. In his short novel "Miringuwa" Martin Wickramasinghe, who was a trenchant critic of this class which he called a brahmin caste offers us a telling portrait of this shallow and imitative upper bourgeoisie in the character of Westie Dhanapooriya (note the name) an upper-class gentleman much given to entertaining Englishmen. His knowledge of English is confined to the English newspapers. He thinks that "Pickwick Papers" is the name of an English in Britain. To him Bernard Shaw is a book-seller and G. K. Chesterton a tavern keeper.

This shallowness and taste for trivia of the anglicized ruling class which inherited independence was largely responsible for the stagnation which the country was subjected to in the immediate post-independence years. This class had no historic sense and therefore did not grasp the immense possibilities which independence

offered for a resurgence of the nation. This is why I am rather sceptical of the hopes and objectives of the newly risen Liberal Party when it seeks to revive some imaginary tradition of liberalism which it identifies with a now defunct branch of the United National Party. The liberal bourgeoisie which moulded itself on the Englishman in the aftermath of independence has much to answer for today's tragic national condition.

The reaction to this, of course came in 1956. The idea which inspired the overturn of 1956 was nationalism in its Sinhala Buddhist manifestation. It was a reaction to the darsinated cosmopolitanism of the then ruling classes and summoned up considerable populist resources which urged that the hitherto suppressed social layers and their language, religion and way of life should be given its proper place. While the upheaval of 1956 broke the monopoly of the English-educated classes over society (for example those who did not know English could not personally transact any business in a Government department before 1956) it also placed itself in opposition to the idea of a Ceylonese nation by emphasising the dominance of the Sinhala-Buddhist ethos. Things were not helped at all by the fact that the Tamil political leadership which in essential ways was as its Sinhala counterparts had chosen the same path of militant nationalism.

It is axiomatic to say that the Sinhala intelligentsia composed of that magical trinity of Singha, Veda Guru gave leadership to the 1959 victory but it is worth asking whether they in fact gave leadership or were swept with the tide. If their target was to shatter the leadership of the western-educated elite over society they certainly did not wholly succeed. The western-educated elite remained very much a presen-

ce and even adjusted themselves to the changes by becoming bilingual. In fact three decades after 1956 it is worth asking whether the cultural forces unleashed by the 1959 victory are even represented at the highest levels of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party today. Certainly the Sinhala-educated rural elite was able to displace their urban counterparts in the power structure for some time and restore certain aspects of the native ethos such as the Sinhala language, Buddhism traditional cultural forms, ayurveda etc; which had been neglected but now with the benefit of hindsight we can see that what has been achieved is really a duplication of the ruling elite. The resurgence in the fortunes of the UNP which took place in 1977 and the far-reaching changes which its Government then imposed on the country show that the old elite has by no means been dislodged. On the other hand the Sinhala-educated class which came to the fore in 1956 has itself undergone a kind of cultural mongrelism which combines curious features of traditional culture with equally strange features of the new popular culture of the west which some of them at least seem to see as the great white hope of the future.

(To be continued)

US to develop...

(Continued from page 16)

United States in 1984, as an Ambassador. Many believe that the economic crisis was part-engineered by Salil, to ensure a majority vote for the compact.

For several months, Belauans have been subjected to increasing economic pressures, with government workers on a four-day week and cuts in electric, water and hospital services. Islanders have been assured, by their president, that immediately after the compact is passed all three shortcomings will be rectified and back pay given to the workers within 30 days.

The compact also promises US\$1 billion in aid over 50 years. In spite of the economic crisis, according to Greenpeace, police funding has been increased and guns have been distributed to many of those government officials still employed. Also, an assortment of people connected with John Singlaub's World Anti-Communist League (of US), Unification Church (Moonies) and similar groups active in the Philippines, have passed through Belau during the crisis period. High Chief

Iddul Gibbons described the situation just before the eighth plebiscite on 4 August 1987 as 'like matches and gasoline'.

This latest plebiscite saw 71% of Belauans vote for a constitutional amendment to eliminate the requirement of a 75% 'yes vote' to pass the proposed 'compact of free Association' with the US. Thus it paved the way for the referendum on 21 August 1987 to pass the compact with a simple majority.

With the compact the US will be taking over the job of defending Belau, but it would be naive to believe that the US motive for wanting military access to Belau is to protect the islanders.

If the Aquino government in the Philippines falls in the near future, the Pentagon will have a 16-Megawatt power plant and a 6-million ton fuel farm to fall back on — just 800 km away in Belau.

Meanwhile, Belau has become a rallying point for anti-nuclear, environmental, human rights and peace groups from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and North America. They have petitioned committees of the United Nations and the US congress to investigate the situation.

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Harnessing the sun to generate electricity

Camillus Liyanage

Among solar energies, solar PV has many advantageous features such as:

1. The solar PV system can be installed for generating electricity in any place where the sun is shining and construction of power transmission lines is not necessary.
2. Fuel is not required and solar energy is limitless.
3. Operation and maintenance are easier and safer than in other power generation systems because there are no moving parts.
4. A special infrastructure is not necessary and therefore installation is very simple. It can be easily installed in remote areas. Almost all villages in Sri Lanka are located within two miles of a traversable road and therefore there is unlikely to be problems with installation work.
5. It is more reliable than other renewable energies such as wind, biomass and mini hydro energies.
6. It can be designed in any capacity suitable for any size of load no matter how large or small, and future intermediate expansion is easy.
7. It produces no pollution, and therefore has no undesirable side-effects for humans or livestock.
8. In the future, further considerable decreases in cost are expected through mass production, efficiency improvements in the system and longer lasting systems.

Since the solar PV system has such advantageous features as mentioned above, it should not be compared with other energy systems only on the basis of cost.

One of the most important advantages of the solar PV system is its lack of necessity of a special infrastructure. In Sri Lanka 80% of rural villages are located within 2 miles of a traversable

road and therefore there is unlikely to be problems for installation work.

Regarding the scale of the PV system, a large scale is to be considered when costs decrease in the future. At the beginning, a medium scale system around a few score KW will be adopted as a trial for data collection and experience.

Photovoltaic Applications.

(1) Solar Pump System for Civil Water and Irrigation.

Photovoltaic powered water pumps are suitable for almost all ground water applications, including stock watering, flood irrigation, drip-irrigation and community use. There are 2000 to 5000 PV powered water pumps that are reliably producing water today.

Social Benefits.

- I. Increased availability of drinking water contributes to improvements in maintenance of a source of clear drinking water in rural areas is a fundamental prerequisite for productive activities.
- II. Waste land can be converted to farm-land and single cropping farms can be converted to double cropping farms. Hence the income of the farming population can be increased.
- III. Harvests are increased and the standard of living goes up. Employment in rural areas increases and public peace is maintained.
- IV. Will stimulate the economic independence of rural agricultural areas as well as rural cities and consequently contribute to social stability.

(2) Cathodic Protection.

Cathodic protection is an electrical method to prevent corrosion. Photovoltaics provide a very competitive power supply for the cathodic protection of pipelines, gas wells, bridges, navigational aids pumps, and water wells.

Social Benefits.

The solar PV system makes for a longer life of pipe lines, marine

structures, etc. and raises their economic efficiency. In addition, there are other applications of the solar PV system much as telecommunications and navigational uses (buoys, light houses etc.)

(3) Communications.

Photovoltaic modules are supplying reliable, cost-effective electricity for communication systems at remote sites all over the world. Examples of such systems include mobile radio systems, UHF and VHF Radio Repeaters and highway call boxes, storm warning signs and fire alarm systems.

(4) Rural Electrification — Photovoltaic Solution.

One of the most drainable PV applications occurs in rural villages where electricity is used to power community health clinics, school facilities, and economic activities.

In remote areas not covered by power transmission and distribution lines, kerosene and diesel oil are used for lighting and as a motive energy source.

This energy comes from imported crude oil, and therefore any future possible rise in oil prices will adversely affect the national economy.

The solar PV system has almost no requirements for construction of electric power transmission and distribution cables, and does not utilize petroleum products such as kerosene at all. Therefore it is the best system to hasten electrification in rural areas which are left unelectrified because of the delay in construction of transmission lines due to a shortage of materials such as electrical cables, and because of shortages of kerosene through lack of foreign currency.

Solar PV electrification and conventional electrification are not competitive. The solar PV system is supplemental system with conventional rural electrification. Namely they can proceed in a parallel fashion, thus a unified electrification programme is possible to create uniform national development, thus the power of the rural people is increased.

When conventional electrification progresses in the future, the solar PV system can be used either as a stand-alone system or connected with the national grid.

The solar PV system can be installed for generating electricity in any place where the sun is shining. This is the most suitable system as a stand-alone type of power generation for the fastest electrification of remote rural areas where transmission lines of a centralized type of power generation system such as a hydro-electric one do not reach, where construction has been delayed.

Even when the transmission lines are extended in the future, the solar PV system can be used in parallel with conventional energy distribution method.

The Social Benefits.

- a) The level and quality of literacy in Sri Lanka is already high, but it can be raised even higher by this system.
- b) Night courses at schools and vocational training centres help to raise the level of education and technology.
- c) It enables amusement facilities such as radio, TV and VTR to be made available at community centres in remote rural areas, and the educational and cultural activities of the Sri Lankan government can be expanded.
- d) Lighting by solar PV creates longer working hours in rural homes and factories at night and incomes are expected to show a resultant increase.
- e) Street lights electrified by solar PV enhance the security of rural areas and lead to increased community activities.
- f) The quality of medical facilities at hospitals or dispensaries in remote rural areas can be raised and refrigerated stock of necessary vaccines and serums becomes possible.
- g) Efficiency of agricultural work rises by means of electrified agricultural machinery and farmer's incomes will increase.
- h) The maintenance of a source of clear drinking water by the solar PV pumping or desalination

systems becomes very effective for sanitation and health control of the rural population.

- i) Harvests are increased with double cropping due to micro irrigation by solar PV.
- j) Solar PV contributes to the economic development of farms and a rise in cultural standards, an increase in employment opportunities and a consequent expansion of public peace.

To make electricity available to rural populations who cannot enjoy its benefits in remote areas, to increase the income of the population and to raise the level of education and culture, the PV village power system is considered to be the best. In terms of raising the rate of electrification in the shortest time.

(5) Desalination.

Solar-powered desalination plants are very attractive to many water-poor regions. PV powered desalination plants are cost effective modular, and can be run on AC or DC current.

(6) Navigation Aids.

Navigational aids were one of the earliest uses of photovoltaics (PV) with more than 13,000 operating systems in the world. As an application where reliability is more of a concern than cost, photovoltaics promise reliable power with minimal maintenance.

Whenever the sun shines, photovoltaics can work to improve the quality of life cheaply, efficiently without endangering the environment. Used around the world PV's are replacing traditional sources of energy, bringing electricity to remote places on the earth.

(7) Rural Clinic System

Social Benefits.

Serums and vaccines can be safely maintained in refrigerators electrified by solar PV, and the rural death rate can be reduced because of the increased availability of medical facilities.

(8) Systems for Street Lights, Signal Lights and Crossing Areas of Railways, Streets, Highways and Public Yards,

Social Benefits.

- i. Solar street lights contribute to Public security.
 - ii. Solar street lights enhance the availability of late-night activities such as those at libraries and institutes of learning and thus can contribute to a rise in the standard of education.
 - iii. Signals electrified steadily by solar PV contribute to a decrease in electric power failures and resultant traffic accidents.
- (9) System for Household and Village use.**
- Social Benefits.**
- i. Lighting by solar PV creates longer working hours and a resultant increase in incomes.
 - ii. Lighting at community centers enables people to congregate together during the night hours. Communication between families, mutual entertainment and consequently a rise in the level of culture and living standards are actuated. Through the increased gathering of people at temples, libraries and cultural centres, cultivation of religious activities and a rise in the level of literacy can be expected.
 - iii. Additional lighting at night time and an increase in the availability of amusements such as TV, can aid in controlling the birth rate.
 - iv. Lighting contributes to the pleasures of home life and can assist in reducing the gap between the old and young generations.
 - v. Night courses at school and vocational training centres held to raise the level of education and technology.
 - vi. Fire accidents caused by kerosene lamps will be reduced.
 - vii. Solar PV contributes to a raise in the living standards and cultural activities of rural areas, the control of migration from villages, the greater satisfaction of young people's rural life, and a resultant reduction of anxiety in the lives of rural people with a consequent expansion of public peace.

'Viragaya' — a significant event

Kamalika Pieris

Tissa Abeysekere's film "Viragaya" deserves more attention in the English press than it has received so far. Apart from two sympathetic and broad ranging reviews, in each of the two major English dailies, there has been little discussion of the film. I have not, in recent times, seen any film other than Viragaya to which I would readily award maximum marks. It is cinema at its best.

What I liked about this film is the great deal of care and thought which had gone into its creation and the many unobtrusive features which made it a technically accomplished film. In this respect, it is a lesson to filmmakers and a significant event in the development of the Sinhala cinema.

The first feature to which I would like to call attention is the finish this film acquires through its fine attention to detail and through its neat, symmetrical structure. These qualities are visible at all levels and in all aspects of the film, continuously, which makes it difficult to select illustrations.

For the study of detail, let us take one aspect of the film — the appearance of children — and look at some of the examples which come to mind. Differences are clearly and immediately established between children of different classes, as in the case of Sirmal, Bathi and Vajira. Particularly in the case of Bathi, there are sharp differences in terms of dress, appearance and rough speech. When looking at detail in the dialogue we recall Dharmadasa breaking off his comments on Sarojini's letter to order his son to leave the group instead of listening to the talk of elders. Lastly, when considering detail in action and setting, Aravinda's rapport with

his nephew is naturally and indirectly established in the short paper boat scene, which actually begins in the earlier frame which shows him greeting his nephew.

This film is rich in gesture, movement, action and manners in situations which a lesser director may have considered unimportant. We note the concentration of action and conversation around the back verandah, near the kitchen where the women constantly work... the cups of tea which prelude serious discussion... the light conversation among the women during the wesak celebrations... the camera moving casually over Dharmadasa and Aravinda in discussion at the Veda Mahachmaya's funeral.

I found the symmetrical structure of this film very pleasing. The story is set in three time frames (encompassing four phases in the lives of the characters) and the film moves systematically through the two later time frames into the main story and then back again, in a measured manner. Returning to the funeral pyre to end the film reminded the reader that the focus of the film was the story of the novel and not the later events. The two additional time frames, which are the director's invention are well used. They act not only as a convincing introduction to a rather slight story, but are also used to flavour the story and give it some depth through the comments of Sammy and Vajira. The later time frames were quietly and unobtrusively linked to the main story by appearance of the child Vajira at one point. On the other hand, by quickly describing Sarojini's subsequent history and by establishing the deaths of Sarojini and Siridasa, the director has effectively separated the characters he has created from those

of the novel. Thus we are invited to consider the newly added sections simply as a frame for the story — as for a painting or a photograph.

The second feature which I think should be recognised in this film is its empathic quality. This is a rare experience for the sophisticated viewer of Sinhala films. Most Sinhala films do not cry to reach the audience at this level. Success is usually defined in terms of blatant camera work and the expert display of emotions while the audience sits back and watches with detachment.

It is difficult to pinpoint any one aspect of the film which particularly relates to audience rapport. It is usually a combination of factors, dialogue, acting and over all direction which leads to a sensitive response from the viewers. In this case the dialogue is sparing and economical. Particular mention should be made of the opening conversation — Vajira's telephone call to Sammy — where a very naturally delivered one sided conversation told the viewer what he needed to know. Some comment should also be made to the place given to gentle humour in what is usually seen as a serious and complex story. It is greatly to the merit of this film, that even in the midst of its serious action, it is able to evoke mild laughter, as in the scene where Aravinda tells Sarojini that while Siridasa earns about five hundred rupees, he earns only eighty five.

It is rarely that one sees a Sinhala film in which there is sustained and balanced handling of all the characters who appear in the film. Often many of the characters are not developed at all or blown up when needed and forgotten thereafter. In 'Viragaya', on the other hand, I

could find virtually no character in the film who had not been thought out with care. The best example of this is the director's handling of the minor part of the Chief Clerk, in the scene where Aravinda arrives for his first posting as a clerk and receives his first lesson in loyalty to the Crown. Given this example, it is surely unnecessary to state that the major characters are equally well thought out. If we were to select one example out of them, then surely it should be the characterisation of Aravinda himself. Abeysekere has steered clear of the myriad interpretations of Aravinda's character, the tone of the novel and the novelist's intention. As I understood it, this film was about the life of a good man, unworldly, no more negative than many a person around us, but one who is able to retain the love and concern of those nearest to him. He is not without affection for his sister and nephew. And he is not without passion — note the slap he gives Bathi and the expression on his face thereafter. The film depicts his reluctance to agree to Sarojini's premature (and preposterous) suggestion of running away as little more than natural uncertainty and diffidence. This is well illustrated in his query whether, instead of running away as Sara suggested, he could bring her to his sister instead! The film shows the transition of this youth to maturity. There are corresponding changes in facial appearance (the mouth becomes more resolute) and in speech (which becomes more authoritative as when he speaks to Gunawathie and Jinadasa). At the level of make up, there is a visible systematic aging of Aravinda and deterioration during his final illness. (However, the make up man has left Aravinda's hands and the rest of the cast out of the aging process.)

There is a careful build up of character and interaction between characters throughout the film. It is this factor, coupled with the director's ability to gather around him a group of accomplished actors, nicely orchestrated in excellent performances, which probably leads to the empathic

qualities of the film. In this respect 'Viragaya' comes close to good foreign films made with better resources where we often see a bringing together of brilliant actors each in a well thought-out role and with excellent performances all round.

A brief word at this point about the casting, would be appropriate. Again I prefer to focus on the minor characters of the film, to indicate the great care taken by this director. Abeysekere has used to advantage the availability of a mother and daughter duo in Sriyani and Inoka Amarasekera, but he has gone further and managed to portray some similarity between the young and mature Vajira. We know that they are played by different actresses, but there is no jarring transition from one to the other. However, one weakness here was the absence of Gunawathi in most of the scenes in Aravinda's house. Her presence in the background would have added to the naturalness of the film.

The camera is very unobtrusive in this film, and the whole directorial effort leans towards smoothness and gentleness in unfolding the story. One particular feature in the editing are the lightening quick, brilliantly timed transitions from one scene to another. Abeysekere's ability to evoke atmosphere, nuance, and set a scene without his characters speaking one word was well illustrated in the opening scenes in 'Mahagedera'. In 'Viragaya' the camera makes a similar comment as it lingers on the arrangement of groups at Aravinda's funeral — relatives and friends prominently in front, with Bathi and her group well to a side together with the rest of the public. The most brilliant shot of all however, is the single shot of Aravinda at the 'Home Coming' moving abruptly out of the camera's range as the bride and groom recognise him.

To describe a very pleasing and technically well made, well acted film as a landmark in Sinhala cinema calls for more explanation than I have so far provided. After all, are not such films common in a vigorous

cinema tradition and are we not zigzagging our way towards such a goal? I am not satisfied that we are. On the one hand we have a prize awarding tradition which confuses our aesthetic judgment by regularly giving prizes to mediocre efforts, supported by much vacuous publicity. 'Maldaniye Simoon' was one such example. On the other hand, where there is a genuine effort to create a critical response to cinema, it is wholly dominated by a single school of critical thought, which maintains, equivocally, that the only way that the Sinhala cinema could acquire a distinct national identity is by facing the challenge ('abhiyogaya') of depicting a certain type of social reality ('yatharthaya'). Dished out on a platter of sensitive and perceptive assessments of Sinhala cinema, and couched in fine prose, this approach is repeatedly offered in *Sinesith* and *Mawatha*. This approach is certainly valid as one way of looking at the role and function of cinema, but in the process, it artificially narrows the full range of cinematic expression to a single genre, which in turn would be better realised by brilliant documentaries, probably, than by feature films. More importantly, this approach fails both the director and the audience. Since it views a whole range of objectives in terms of just one objective, it neither provides constructive criticism for the director nor does it serve to deepen the understanding of the audience. In its chase after theme, intention, the director's social conscience etc, this school of thought does not demand from the film director any kind of technical finesse, any analysis of story, any use of logic or common sense, any concern for the audience (whether bewilderment, boredom or irritation). In short any commitment to the provision of technically and aesthetically finished products. I see 'Viragaya' as a useful corrective to this. The approach and techniques used are applicable to all film genres, including those of social realism.

CORRESPONDENCE

'Cover Point' in L.O. of 15th January informs us that Aahis Nandy, the reputed Indian scholar, has speculated that cricket was an Indian game, 'accidentally discovered by the English'. He may well have a considerable point there, but we would appear to have missed Arisen Abuhadu, the well known Sinhala poet and writer, who observed in the Island of 18th April, 1987, p. 2, that the English national game originated in Sri Lanka, and was called 'buhu'. The following piece of ribaldry may amuse 'Cover Point', you, your readers, and all lovers of the game of 'organised losing'.

The Pathogenesis of English Cricket

In the two hundredth year of our Lord's MCC
It's the green that Britannia rules, not the sea,
An event historic to be toasted by all
Familiar with the arts of the bat and the ball.
But hark! From a fledgling Test-craved land
Comes news hardly cricket, as you'll soon understand
Arisen Abuhadu of Sri Lankan fame
Has robbed the English of their national game;
The greyboards at Lords were a bunch of low cads!
Ere they thought up bat, ball, stumps, bails and the pads
The Sinhala heroes had watered their pitch
And given their brief sarongs the hint of a hitch!
As prelude to firing their bolts at the bat
And yelling "Howzat!" at the drop of a hat.
So MCC members should now cry "Boo Hoo"
Since Sri Lanka was first in the field with "Buhu"
The precursor of cricket in this sportive land
Played with oriental guile, if not thought of hand,
In the dim distant past in the year of our Lord
Buddha or Christ, at your wisest accord
The sons of the Lion were beating them down
While the yokels in span cloth were going to town,
To watch the trim locals gelding at slip
And Sir the Slinger with the ball in his grip
Or Babun's brute blade beheading runs with a will
When his stars smashed windows, then he'd foot the bill!
The turf has been drilled full of holes near the wicket
Who said we weren't first with such rhyging at cricket?

So ye Marylebone's Gentlemen and players to boot
Arisen and cronies would joyously hoot
If a Sinhala eleven were invited to play
A Test Match at Lords a warm summer day.
Let Gutting and Co. go down on their haunches
As Juggernaut Dave begins on his launches
Over the ropes and right into the terraces
("These Sinhala blighters are absolute menaces!")
When he's caught off a skier he stays firmly put,
And surveying the scene sez "Brother, just shoot!"
The TV replay shows he's really quite out—
A catch without question, not a shadow of doubt;
But in stentorian tones a la W. G. Grace,
"They've come to see me and my Sinhala mace
Clobber your fellows all over the place,
So get down to business, I'm ready to face!
I'm the crack king of Buhu in all but name
My right Royal plays narched in our End of Fame,
No self-righteous rulings can put me to shame:
So off with the trophies and on with the game!"

Now Bionic Bothern takes guard at the crease,
As Arisen gets ready to bowl with the breeze,
The ball is a beauty, it curves in the air
And flies through the parting in Botham's thick hair.
Ian Jones his cool, but grips his bat tighter
It's just not for nothing he's known as a fighter;
But Arisen A. has more tricks up his sleeve
Poor Botham continues to lounge and to heave
Kinless and widish he smiles a wan smile
But his troubles aren't over for quite a long while
Arisen A. hits him all over his body
His bat is no shield, his defence surely shoddy;
He soon retires hurt with a blob to his name
'No picnic, this buhu, it's one hell of a game,
With hat and wick ball they'll smite Allon hollow
Too bitter a pill for all England to swallow!"

But much worse, of course, would undoubtedly follow
If Mike and his Merrie Men were invited to wallow
In a Sri Lankan giddy field under the sun
Bogged down with helmets, and unable to run;
While Arisen's huge boys, wicked as sin,
Have the Englishmen groping in a welter of din
From a partisan crowd, all agog from the start
For the rituals of cricket not caring a fart,
Compared to our buhu, a fine, ancient art
Of throwing the ball—with bent arm like a dart!
My Muse gives up here, I'm unable to cope,
But in Arisen Abuhadu I place all my hope
Were birds of a feather, come high wind, foul weather...
Now this saronged fiend's coached the end of his tether.

Silly Point
(Maharagama)

New Businessman

Did he escape?
Yes, as others do
What about his contract
That he completed?
Or so they say
Did he make much money?
Of course, that is the point
About a million or so
Only the Swiss Bank will know
How did he do it?
I could not tell
Why should one bother
So few who know
You go about and act
As if nothing happened.
Precisely, it will be difficult
If one remembers too much
Or talk out of turn
There are others involved
And it is sub judice
With the gunman behind you.

— Tilak A. Gunawardhana.

CRICKET

Hadlee — the Greatest bowler in the world

Peter Roebuck

It's hard to say whether a batsman about to face Richard Hadlee feels more like a patient in a dentist's chair who is beginning to regret his penchant for chocolate, or a pupil in a headmaster's study who's ruing his fondness for cigarettes.

Hadlee makes batsmen aware of their faults by constantly probing them. Not too good against outswingers, eh? Well, here is one. And here's another. The batsman hangs in there, dreading every delivery, watching for the sneaky one that breaks back into him.

To take guard with Hadlee at the top of his mark, you must have a stout heart and a secure technique. It isn't that Hadlee is fast — only occasional deliveries are quick enough to brush your moustache — simply that he is so good.

He intimidates with movement, to counter which batsmen pessimistically reduce their backlifts. Anyhow, he bowls so few bad balls, and there's no point in dreaming. Not one of his 458 deliveries for New Zealand in third Test against Australia at the MCG recently was hooked, and barely one hit to leg.

And his run up is so innocuous! If he's going to be dentonic, he might at least charge in from somewhere over the rainbow. From a dozen measured paces he can move the ball either way, and vary his pace wickedly. Really, it isn't fair.

His repertoire includes a fierce bumper that rears past your chin — Allan Border was nearly decapitated by one in Melbourne. He has, too, a slower ball which he holds back in his wrist at delivery. This is the masterpiece in his collection. Dean Jones fell for it after he'd been

softened up with a couple of leg cutters, and even Border had a swish at one. It's as elusive as Qadir's googly.

Facing Hadlee, a batsman has all these things on his mind. Still, there may be good times just around the corner. He might be taken off. It's not as if the blessed bloke ever says anything. Hadlee can be pictured, silent and brooding, emerging from the mist in one of those Boris Karloff movies. It's all part of the effect. Hadlee isn't snooty really, but he understands his own game and realises that it pays him to bowl with a cold heart. Ian Botham may turn games into jousts, may buy wickets when he's stuck. Hadlee disdains such loose living, and is quietly menacing as he goes about his work.

He lost his temper with Botham 10 years ago, rising to a bait and bowling a bombardment of bouncers which cost his team dearly. He doesn't go in for that sort thing these days, doesn't need to. Why would he when he has so many different types of delivery at his command, and 373 Test wickets — level with Botham's record — in the bag to prove it?

Hadlee is the best bowler in the world, and has been for five years. He knows it, and so do the batsmen. As he stands ready to bowl, you wonder which of those deliveries he's selected for you.

Hadlee is formidable because he's disciplined. His run-up and action are as groomed as a clock, so that he gives nothing away, pinning the batsman down as he works him over. He tries one ball. If you survive it he flicks his eyebrows, hitches his trousers and strides back to his mark to continue to ask a hundred questions.

He is already superbly skilled, and despite his 36 years and spindly body he appears to be getting better. His greatness stems from a decision he made a few years ago to change from a tear-away into an economical howler dependent on movement and variety. He'd never been as good a fast bowler as Dennis Lillee, and now he was too old for all that charging about. So he cut down his run. Stubbornly ignoring critics, he concentrated on bowling wicket to wicket, running in so close to the stumps that people were amazed he didn't clatter into them, and with his arm rigidly at 12 o'clock, Hadlee metamorphosed into a bowler with a wide range of deliveries who was quick enough to push batsmen back. Wickets began to tumble. By accident, almost, he'd hit on his route to greatness.

At the MCG recently he took 10 wickets in a Test for the eighth time, moving past Barnes, Grinnell and Lillee. Of his victims, six were leg-before and four caught in the slip region. All were batsmen, every one of whom protected his wicket with spirit. Hadlee doesn't take fortuitous wickets. He planned the downfall of those eight batsmen, and executed those plans. On a fair pitch he took 10 for 176 in 75 overs of majestic bowling. He is the master of a genre that requires concentration and analysis, a writer of detective fiction, not Victorian romps.

In Brisbane two years ago he gave the performance of a lifetime, or so it appeared. It wasn't. He's always good, but last week he was remarkable. He even chuckled occasionally, if somewhat chillingly. He'll be missed in England next season. We need someone to expose our bad habits. Chocolate and cigarettes aren't good for you, are they?

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