

• *Amnesty Report on North-South violence* •

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

Vol. 11 No. 5 July 1, 1988 Price Rs. 5.00 Registered at the GPO, Sri Lanka QJ/84/NEWS/88

**IZETH HUSSAIN**

**“COSMIC MAN”: Ethnicity vs. Universalism**

**NEWTON GUNASINGHE**

**Obeysekera's “DUTUGEMUNU”**

**MIRKO FRYBA**

**Modernism and madness in Sri Lanka**

**MERVYN DE SILVA**

**The emerging military formation**

**VELUPILLAI PRABAHARAN**

**Why we wage a war we despise**

**A. AMIRTHALINGAM**

**The path to peaceful settlement**

**AZIZ HANIFFA**

**India's “hidden agenda” and U.S. perceptions**

**Also: Zamyatin's “WE”,  
Harry Pieris, Thondaman *and*  
The meaning of Allahabad**

# THE PREMIER PORT IN SOUTH ASIA

A massive Port Expansion Project has transformed Colombo into a modern Container Handling Port and Transshipment Centre qualifying for "Base Port" status with the following additional facilities to the Industrial and Commercial Port Users:

- Bulk-Handling facilities for Grain, Fertilizer and Cement.
- Rebagging and Reprocessing facilities.
- A Streamlined Bonding Service.

*Any special requirements could be arranged for on request.*

**Enquiries:**



## SRI LANKA PORTS AUTHORITY

19, Church Street, P. O. Box 595,  
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Telephone: 2 5 5 5 9

Telex: 21805 PORTS CE



**FOREIGN MONITORS**

"Free and fair elections" is the common slogan of Opposition parties in those South Asian countries where at least a semblance of democracy can still be found. An equally common factor incidentally is Opposition disunity. The demand for 'free and fair' poll was never raised here.

If Sri Lanka up to now has looked a striking exception, two facts have made it so. Since the introduction of universal franchise over half a century ago, there have been frequent allegations of bribery, impersonation and intimidation but never an Opposition charge that the entire exercise was a fraud. There have been elections and MP's have been unseated. Yet, the number was few. When the LSSP, supported by some other Left parties, screamed "fraud", having discovered ballot papers in a city swamp, it soon became a three-day item of gossip and then a non-event, in the 50's.

By the second decade after independence, two achievements were notable — ever-rising voter participation and the voter's growing conviction that governments can be defeated, although accusations were often made about a particular by-election e. g. UNP charges about Dedigama against the 1970-77 United Front and it's use of emergency regulations, and thuggery.

The first occasion for Opposition accusations against a national poll was the Referendum of 1982. For one thing, it was held under emergency, with some political parties proscribed and key opposition campaigners held in jail under emergency laws. The Election Commissioner's report four years later justified Opposition fears but there was no incontrovertible evidence that could prove the result did not reflect electoral opinion.

The trend however is clear — gradual erosion of voter confidence, and rising Opposition distrust of the manner in which polls were held, and the result.

The seven-party, SLFP-led Alliance's demand for "international monitors", so soon after the recent provincial polls, is therefore a radical break with the past. Sri Lanka, the conspicuous exception, is becoming more of the regional — Third World rule.

**DRINK MORE AND  
LIGHT UP**

The Government hopes to collect Rs 350 million from the latest increase in the prices of cigarettes (15 cents) and liquor (Rs 5 on a bottle of arrack). The choice, said Finance Minister Nandu Marikkar, was between cutting down on Government spending or raising additional revenue. Government spending has won.

**Well deserved**

Just returned after a spell abroad and leafing through recent copies of my favourite local journal I am pleased to hear of your coming of age. The felicitations are very impressive and well deserved. As a keen and interested reader, I must congratulate you. May you grow from strength to strength and keep your Readers informed of events as they happen, without prejudice, without fear or favour.

A. Kandappah

Colombo 3.

**No share in rewards**

I have just received your issue of 1.6.88 and was quietly disturbed.

1. THE ROOTS OF SOUTHERN REVOLT — So many young people bent on destruction because they are denied the opportunity of a meaningful and productive contribution to the development of their country and a share in the rewards.

2. CAMPUS UNREST — REVELATIONS — Universities closed for nearly a year and one third of the already inadequate numbers of doctors kept away from work. What prospects are there for a country whose main resource is its human resource — an intelligent and politically mature people?

3. The solution? J. R. Dutt at Galle Face!

J. W. B. Perera

Giriochuan  
West Australia

**Low poll**

What was most news-worthy but was not told in the screaming headlines of a section of the national press of this country, on the June 9th Provincial Election was the record low poll recorded in a country that had enjoyed universal franchise for over fifty years!

V. K. W. Ierathna  
Panadura

LAHSA

**GUARDIAN**

Vol. 17 No. 5 July 1, 1988

Price Rs. 5.00

Published fortnightly by  
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd.

No. 246, Union Place,  
COLOMBO — 2

Editor: Mervyn de Silva  
Telephone: 547584

**CONTENTS**

News Background	3
The Educational Impasse — II	13
Dutugemunu, State Power and Morality	16
'Madness' In Sri Lanka — Issues of Mental Health	18
Cosmic Man at the Golden Gate	21
Yevgeny Zamyatin's Anti-Utopia	25
Correspondence	28

Printed by Ananda Press  
92/5, Walfordiel Street, Colombo 13,  
Telephone: 35975



# Journal of Eelam Studies

No 1

Spring 1988

£ 4.00

**S. Nagarajan**

**Territorial Identity of Eelam**

**R. Chelliah**

**Marxism and Law**

**CARE**

**Tamil National Question**

*Notes and Commentary:*

**M. Maha Uthaman**

**International War Crimes Tribunal**

**Editor:**

**M. Maha Uthaman**

(Former Tutor, Dept. of Social Theory, National University of Ireland, Ireland)

**Editorial Committee:**

**Ramani Chelliah**

(Former Research Fellow, University of London, UK)

**S. Nagarajan**

(Professor and Head, Dept. of Tamil Studies, Tamil University, India)

**G. Palanithurai**

(Lecturer, Dept. of Political Science Annamalai University India)

**B. Pfaffenberger**

(Lecturer, Division of Humanities, University of Virginia, USA)

**Correspondence:**

Journal of Eelam Studies  
140, Links Road  
London SW17 9ES  
UK

**Tamil Edition:**

All issues of the Journal of Eelam Studies are also available in Tamil

**Subscription Rates:**

Countries	Individuals	Institutions
UK and Eire	£15.00	£25.00
Rest of Europe	£20.00	£30.00
Rest of the World	£25.00	£30.00

(Rates quoted for annual subscription include postage).

Cheques or Postal Orders payable to:

Journal of Eelam Studies



# INDEMNITY LAW — 'militarisation' advances

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

It was a coincidence of course but too striking not to mark well. Just two days after the Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali scoffed at the latest Amnesty report on Sri Lanka (See Amnesty on IPKF, LANKA TROOPS) the government gazetted a Bill to indemnify all PTA enforcers for 8½ years — from the introduction of the PTA in July 1979 to Dec. 1987! The Bill covers all persons who acted "lawfully or unlawfully"! And the ambit of the proposed law which is certain to be passed in a Parliament where the governing party enjoys a five-sixths majority is so wide that it covers almost every action taken by an "offender".

The indemnity embraces the lawful or unlawful act of any individual who was "involved in the detection, prevention or prosecution of any person indulging in unlawful activities specified in the Prevention of Terrorism Act".

In short, they are protected from being charged for human rights violations. Or, from the citizen's point of view, his Fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution mean little if the transgression can be covered by the proposed Bill. Police and Security personnel will no longer bother to act under 'emergency regulations' tough as they are. Once their 'lawful or unlawful' actions are covered by the PTA, and were committed before Dec. 31 1987, they are totally immune. And since by 1989, the law is likely to be extended to cover such activities until Dec. 31st 1988, the immunity is not only absolute but permanent.

An interesting feature is that this retroactive legislation is being introduced by a party that was so violently opposed to such measures by its United Front (1970-77) predecessor that it made a dirty word of 'retroactive'!

Official sources told the SUN which made a frontpage lead story of the new bill that the government's intention was to prevent "frivolous" cases being filed against members of the security forces. Fair enough. But who is to judge what is frivolous or not? The Executive or the Judiciary? In any event, this Bill when it becomes law does not permit any legal action to be instituted. It states:

**"No court of law or tribunal shall have the power or jurisdiction to entertain or inquire into or hear and determine any such action or proceeding..."**

In order to prevent 'frivolous' charges, all legal proceedings against security personnel will be automatically disallowed. In other words, security personnel, including those who may have committed 'unlawful' acts, such as murder or torture, will be affectively above the law and the Constitution. **Security personnel become a special class of citizen.**

This step, shocking and horrendous as it is, does not reflect badly on this or that 'law enforcement agency' of the Government or its Army, Navy or Air force. Or of any particular Police Chief or service Commander. Indeed its enormous importance lies in

precisely that fact — the far-reaching legislation change to afford extraordinary immunity to an institution — the country's armed forces and police.

A few days after 'black July' (1983), Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, answering a question on its likely consequences, surprised the present writer with this brief reply: 'The army has thrust itself into politics'. Of course, he meant the services.

The armed conflict created an increasingly larger role for the 'law-and-order' agencies, the police unable to contain the conflict on its own.

Indeed, such was the 'security threat', new specially trained units were established to cope with the variegated challenges of this threat to the State. One was the Special Task Force (STF) an elite police commando unit, trained by foreign mercenaries brought here by the KMS, a Channel Islands based British Firm formed by former S.A.S. ('Dogs of War') personnel, and by Pakistani, Israeli instructors. We then had the 'Home Guards' and other paramilitary units and militias. Defence spending, the Finance Minister kept complaining bitterly, rose from 2 percent of the annual budget to nearly 20 percent.

The L. G. chose to call this 'the militarisation process' there was no rapid transformation of the nature of government and State, no dramatic transition from civilian government to junta via coup d'etat or power sharing arrangements, a change so familiar to the Third World. The Presidency



and indeed civilian Authority were very much in command. But all these visible, radical changes amounted to a process, distinctly Third Worldist in character. It is a new 'period of transition' but not of the type which Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike sought to announce in a characteristically rhetorical fashion.

The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord brought an end to the Army's direct participation in the northern conflict. But on the very day, it was signed, a new security threat emerged even more dramatically — the violent opposition of the Sinhalese majority, which was soon to assume a more well-defined character and invite the descriptive title of 'the JVP threat', or in Sri Lanka idiom 'Southern terrorism' and in the mainstream, state-run media, 'Southern subversives'.

The Southern Province Polls, both a prestige battle for the UNP as well as a UNP-JVP tussle to demonstrate each other's 'effective control' of the deep South, now over. A new phase begins.

The administrative and operational changes are explained in this report from the WEEKEND, a summary of the weekly 'Situation Report', by the exceptionally well-informed Iqbal Athas.

"The government will effect a major reorganisation of the security set up in the South with immediate effect.

'WEEKEND' reliably learns that measures will include a phased withdrawal of the Police Special Task Force (STF) and the appointment of new Military Co-ordinating Officers to areas affected by subversive activity.

With these changes, the security forces and Police will launch a massive public relations drive intended to overcome the fear psychosis created by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.

Details about the proposed changes, 'WEEKEND' learns are

now being worked out by General Cyril Ranatunga, General Officer Commanding the Joint Operations Command, in consultation with President J. R. Jayewardena.

The primary objective of the new exercise is to ensure normal conditions exist for the conduct of both General and Presidential elections.

Highly placed security sources said personnel of the STF who will be withdrawn from southern positions will be re-assigned.

A Brigade Commander is also to be named for the Southern sector. Colonel Lucky Algama, Military Co-ordinating Officer for Ragnapura who is based in Embilipitiya is being strongly tipped for this position."

Some political sociologists who have studied the intricate, multifarious ways in which armed conflict introduces the army as a major actor in the political drama have gone beyond 'militarisation'. When the armed conflict is not resolved but in

fact assumes a new, ever-changing shape, civilian regimes need to rely more and more on the military which in turn demands not only more power, and more resources, but a special status and privileges. In the end we have the emergence of a 'military system' which is quite different from that which exists in First or Second world societies, argues Johann Galtung in his essay 'Military Formations and Social Analysis'. His focus is not on the military system as it operates in conflicts between States but within States. The Third World phenomenon. In any case, says Galtung, the growth rate of the military system is much higher in the Third World. The special emphasis of his study is on how the military system relates to "social structure in which it is embedded the society that produces and reproduces the system, the degree of interdependence — the society forming the military system and vice versa — becoming" more pronounced as the military system becomes stronger and more 'developed'.

## Sri Lanka hopes to raise 500 million Dollars in aid

Sri Lanka hopes to obtain about five hundred (500) million US Dollars in aid from the world bank sponsored consortium when the Island's eighteen donors and multi-lateral agencies meet in Paris on June thirtieth Finance Minister Mr. N. H. M. Naina Marikkar told the press the World Bank's report on Sri Lanka and the Government's public investment progress for the next five years will also be discussed.

Mr. Marikkar will tell the donors that the government plans to reduce inflation from thirteen this year to five percent by 1990, and the debt service ratio, now at 28 percent to 27 percent by 1992, the Island's growth rate has dropped to 1.5 percent, the lowest since 1977.

largely due to the Tamil revolt the violence in the south and severe drought conditions. Last December the World Bank sponsored a special meeting of donors to raise funds for a rehabilitation and recovery program in the insurgency-hit North and East. Sri Lanka which requested three hundred and seventy five million dollars (375) received pledges totalling four hundred and seventy four million (474). Two World Bank teams have identified priority projects, for re-construction, however only minor repair and maintenance work has been undertaken so far since Indian troops have not totally subdued the main Tamil militant group, the LTTE.



# The Exiles Return

Holed up in a third floor room in the 'Hotel Taprobane', TULF leader Mr. Amirthalingam who just returned to the island after five years of self-imposed exile, looked much mellowed, showing little trace of bitterness. In hindsight, it is the Sri Lankan government, if not the entire political establishment and probably all intelligent Sinhalese that perhaps have cause to reflect bitterly on the tragic error of the constitutional amendment which forced the elected representatives of the Tamil people to quit parliament.

By doing so, the party which won every seat in the northern province, and many in the east, created a leadership vacuum in Tamil politics. The "tigers", once the TULF young admirers but already furious over the evident helplessness of the TULF in the face of the UNP gaulthers and the mobs who set the Jaffna library ablaze, seized the day.

From then on, the rise of the 'Tigers' to unquestioned dominance was swift as soon as they had dealt with the rival TELO with characteristic fury and despatch. It was then the turn of the "gandhian" TULF M.Ps. One by one, the LTTE liquidated them or forced them into sanctuary in the south or exile overseas, mostly Madras or Delhi.

In the end, the party was "banned" from politics in the north by the LTTE and its leaders, Mr. Amirthalingam, in particular, served with a 'death sentence' if he dared to set foot in what had become 'tigerland'. The irony is that a short-sighted Sinhalese regime had stripped the elected leaders of the Tamil community of not only legitimacy as M.P.'s but left them little choice except to become political exiles.

## POWER SHARING

Today's issue is none other than that. How much power will the "tigers" concede to the party for which the Tamils

voted overwhelmingly at the last elections? The LTTE's short answer is "zero". Many a young 'tiger' is insulting the TULF leadership with a rude Tamil version of the western "Where were you, during the war, daddy"? It is the Indian government that has to extract concessions from the 'tigers' when a pre-polls 'rehabilitation committee' takes charge of affairs in Jaffna. All administrative arrangements and control of funds given to the "council" from the Sri Lanka government, India and most of all from the world bank-sponsored donor group for economic reconstruction and rehabilitation will fall within the jurisdiction of this interim "council" or "committee".

## IPKF VIEW

While the precise composition of an inevitably LTTE-dominated "committee" is the main political issue, the surrender of arms remains the sticking point in the secret negotiations between the 'Tigers' and R.A.W. But these talks are influenced by the IPKF operations and the shifting military balance, the shift always in the Indian army's favour. As a result, the IPKF smells 'tiger' blood and the sweet smell of a victory that has too long eluded it. Like any army, the IPKF does not wish to be robbed of this trophy, particularly when it is part of the world's fourth largest army, humbled by five thousand 'tigers' in a protracted guerrilla war that has cost the Indian army more lives than in its war against Pakistan or Bangladesh.

While the army wants to go for the "kill", RAW is not surprisingly apprehensive about the possibility that the quest for a total military "victory" may open the slippery path to a Vietnam or Afghan morass. Better a political settlement and a honourable withdrawal as early as possible than a messy, prolonged

anti-guerrilla war. That suits the diplomats and South Block, both under pressure from an increasingly embattled President Jayawardene for an early restoration of stable conditions in the north-and-east, and provincial polls. India, anyway is far behind its own time-table. The accord spoke of provincial polls by December Thirty first (31) last year. President Jayawardene has gone through polls in the seven southern provinces at tremendous political cost. By December, he faces the most critical test of all, presidential polls. His position vis-a-vis a hostile Sinhalese electorate will be strengthened if he could point to the 'tigers' camed, and occupying seats in a provincial assembly.

Mr. Amirthalingam and TULF have a role cut out for them, and they seem quite clear about it. It is a much smaller role than they bargained for. Yet it is an honourable one. "The tamils want peace. The pursuit of a military solution any longer cannot ensure that," he told me.

When I asked him what was the first step he would recommend, he replied "The surrender of arms not only by the 'tigers' but by all armed groups in the north and east, tamil and non-tamil, and by state-sponsored militias like home guards". Next, he added, the IPKF must guarantee the safety and security of the LTTE cadres and other militants. Thirdly, resources must be found for the rehabilitation of the LTTE cadres. Finally, the 'tigers' must be persuaded to voluntarily enter the political process on condition they are ready to co-operate in the implementation of the "peace accord, whatever reservations they may have. "I might add that we of the TULF have many reservations too. Yet we are prepared to help implement the accord". As for the Sri Lanka government's obligations, Mr. Amirthalingam specified two. "Guarantee a free and fair poll, and an announcement of the north-and-east merger prior to the elections".

— M.



# Has Delhi a hidden agenda?

Aziz Haniffa in Washington, D.C.

American specialists in South Asia discount the popular theory gaining currency in Sri Lanka and being fuelled by the opposition parties that the infusion of thousands of Indian troops into the island nation is a manifestation of New Delhi's "hidden agenda" and not a serious effort to implement the terms of the Indo-Lanka accords signed last July.

However, these experts acknowledge that despite the Indians being invited by Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene, New Delhi was seemingly caught up in a situation analogous to the US involvement in Vietnam or the Soviet quagmire in Afghanistan.

Howard Wriggins, former US Ambassador to Sri Lanka and now a professor at Columbia University specializing in South Asian politics, conceded that perhaps "there are some Indians who do have a hidden agenda, as there are in every effective bureaucracy".

He said, "There are always those who are out beyond where the government itself wants to go and they have to be watched." But, he pointed out that this was "true in our government and its true in the Soviet government and its true in the Indian and its probably true in the Sri Lankan government."

While reiterating that "there are some who no doubt want to consolidate a position in northern Sri Lanka," Wriggins noted that "there is no persuasive evidence to me that the (Indian) government has come to that or wants that."

However, according to Wriggins, the burgeoning obsession in Sri Lanka that New Delhi had a "hidden agenda" was a manifestation of "an enormous amount of paranoid suspicion in this part of the world and this is another reflection of it."

Marshall Singer, Chairman of the Department of International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, who has written extensively on Sri Lanka, including a book on Sri Lanka's emerging elites, echoed Wriggins' views.

"I think they (the Indian government) would like to get their troops out as early as possible and get the thing settled," he said.

But, according to Singer, "it depends on who has what (agenda)". "If you are talking about Rajiv Gandhi, I think he would like to get the troops out and get the whole thing settled and have a nice moderate government in Sri Lanka he can deal with. However Singer acknowledged that "There are Indians who feel that if they destroy the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), Jayewardene has no reason to negotiate any more."

Singer said he was privy to information that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) — the government's intelligence arm, "doesn't want to see the LTTE stamped out and in fact is encouraging the LTTE to go ahead and do some of these missions against the Sinhalese civilians".

However, he acknowledged that he couldn't comprehend the rationale behind such a strategy, because New Delhi would definitely enjoy more leverage with a moderate Tamil leader like Appapillai Amirthalingam than a militant like Prabhakaran who simply refuses to compromise".

Thomas Perry Thornton, adjunct professor of Soviet and Asian studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies here also said that he did not see "any malign Indian involvement in Sri Lanka." Thornton, who has served on the policy planning staff at the State Department and during the Carter ad-

ministration, as a senior member of the National Security Council staff, said he believed that although the "Indians, are in a sense behaving responsibly the problem is that they have finally run into somebody else's nationalism."

"It is analogous to Afghanistan and Vietnam in a way," he said, where as did the Soviet Union and US, New Delhi had miscalculated in thinking that in few days they could take care of this. "It turns out you can't. Guerrilla warfare is a nasty business," he added. Thornton was of the opinion that "what India wanted out of this more than anything else was what it got in that exchange of letters that came with the agreement, which was to punish Sri Lanka for looking abroad and ensuring that it not do it again for some reason, which I've never understood, to insult the United States in the process."

He was apparently referring to India's apprehension that the massive Voice of America transmission station in Sri Lanka would be used for electronic surveillance of India's naval exercises and that the United States had an interest in Sri Lanka's natural Trincomalee harbour.

Thornton said Jayewardene's whole foreign policy, but more immediately bringing in Pakistani and Israeli trainers and things like that."

On Capitol Hill, senior congressional aides said that the perception was that while India had got involved in the Sri Lankan imbroglio with all "good intentions", the situation in Sri Lanka was "just as bad or nearly as bad as they were six, nine months ago and yet the Indian investment" had far "escalated without any solution to either the problem of terrorism or resolving the Indian commitment."

(Continued on page 11)



## Rajiv's electoral defeat — a foretaste of Tamilnadu?

It was the Nehru family seat in the heart of the Hindi belt. The Congress candidate was former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's son — and Allahabad knows Lal Bahadur as a 'favourite son'. The seat has been won 8 out of 10 times by the ruling party. The Congress challenger was Prime Minister Rajiv's former Finance and Defence Minister.

"Allahabad decides the course of national politics till the next general elections... let's no doubts about on that, said the Janata Party's new chief Ajit Singh. Inclined to concur, *India Today* added: "Allahabad was certainly among the most significant by-elections in the nation's history..." Others disagree, pointing out that it takes a united opposition to defeat the Congress, and since the Left (CPM and CPI, which control three states) will never join the Rightist 'front', Mr. V. P. Singh can never be a serious challenger to Gandhi, although his personal popularity is undoubtedly immense. Anyway, Gandhi has decided not to take any chances. He has engaged to his favourite exercise, next to piloting a plane — Cabinet-making and re-making. Another shuffle, with six new Ministers, and two new Chief Ministers for Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, both key states. General elections are due late next year.

Corruption was the issue.

"V. P. Singh ka ek sawaal paiza khaya, kaun dalal?"

That was the main slogan:

"V. P. Singh asks only one question: Who was the agent that earned the commission?"

And lack of consistency. Sri Lanka was an example.

One day, the government rains food over Sri Lanka, the next day bullets; one day they back Janaki, next day Jayalalitha!

The Indian opposition has found a personality. Can the associated parties get their act together?

Of more direct interest to Sri Lanka: Is the Tamilnadu election, postponed by the imposition of Presidential rule after MGR's death. This editorial in the *DECCAN HERALD*, published in Bangalore, capital of neighbouring Karnataka, puts that issue in perspective:

While the elevation of these by-elections in constituencies spread over seven States in the north, the west and the east to the level of a mini-general election can be dismissed as a media hyperbole, the verdict deserves to be examined closely by both the ruling party and the Opposition for they contain indications of the popular mood which they cannot afford to ignore. More so, since these were the first set of by-elections to be held in a long while, the Congress (I) having manipulated to delay the filling of vacancies in the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies using one specious excuse or another. When the by-elections were finally allowed, the southern States were kept out of the schedule.

All the seven Lok Sabha seats that figured in the by-elections were earlier held by the Congress (I). During the past year the party had attracted serious charges of corruption in defence deals, and these constituted the major theme of the Opposition campaign. In Allahabad this issue came into sharp focus since the by election there was necessitated by the resignation of Mr. Amitab Bachchan, whose name had come up in connection with allegations of mis-demeanour in high places, and Mr. V. P. Singh entered the contest as the candidate of the combined Opposition. No amount of posturing can hide the fact that the voters have given a verdict against the party ruling at the Centre. This raises the question whether Mr. Gandhi's massive mandate of 1984 still holds good. The Opp-

sition is well within its rights in calling for fresh parliamentary elections.

In the Assembly by-elections the Congress (I) has fared comparatively better, wresting three seats — one from the CPM in West Bengal, another from the BJP in Rajasthan and the third from an independent in Gujarat — while conceding two to its rivals — one to the BJP in Gujarat and the other to the Lok Dal (B) in Uttar Pradesh. Its good showing in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, however, appears to be not so much due to its own strength as to the weakness of the Opposition.

There are evident pitfalls in attempting to project that verdict of these scattered constituencies as reflective of the national mood. Yet, if Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was considering the possibility of calling an early election to the Lok Sabha, he must be having second thoughts now. There appears to be little chance of his being able to take the North by storm even with the help of the spurious small-screen gods. As for the South, with its own tinsel goddesses, some indication of the popular mood will probably be available when Tamil Nadu goes to the polls. Mr. Gandhi has stated that it is for the Governor and the Chief Election Commissioner to set the date for the Assembly elections in the State. These constitutional functionaries, however, appear to be waiting for a nod from the Prime Minister. It is time for Mr. Gandhi to stop play-acting and permit elections in the State.

One of the sharpest foreign observers of the Indian scene, the F. T. correspondent thinks that the south-west monsoon will be a better guide to the political weather than the recent by-elections. In any case, storm over Bofors, he says, has blown over.



The result, announced at Allahabad in northern India at the weekend, formally establishes Mr. Singh as one of the country's most significant opposition leaders, who might now be able to go on to develop a national image and appeal.

But it is far too early to predict a defeat late next year for Mr. Gandhi, who has been showing increasing signs of confidence and authority recently. He is also emerging from the series of crises which hit him a year ago, including major corruption allegations.

Opposition leaders are pursuing the allegations, which, however, are causing Mr. Gandhi far fewer problems than they were a year ago.

Despite a continuing series of by-election defeats, there has been scarcely a dent in the huge 75-25 Lok Sabha (lower house) majority.

There are also now no signs of other Congress (I) leaders conspiring to unseat him, as was happening during last year's crises.

In the next few weeks, the course of a far more significant factor that will influence next

year's election will emerge. This is the south-west monsoon, which carries the promise of good rains, rich harvests, faster economic growth, and a more contented electorate.

The monsoon is now moving up through south and central India on schedule, and is bringing the prospect of good news for Mr. Gandhi.

But the defeat in Allahabad is serious. The city is part of a Gandhi family and Congress Party stronghold in the state of Uttar Pradesh. This is the centre of what is called India's Hindi heartland belt, the base of Congress (I) political power. Mr. Gandhi cannot afford to do badly here in a general election.

Mr. Singh has strong links in the area and is well-placed to cause problems for Mr. Gandhi.

The Allahabad result and mixed results over the weekend in six other parliamentary by-elections and 11 regional assembly contests, also show that India's opposition can do well when it unites to fight Congress (I).

Mr. Singh provided the catalyst for that unity in Allahabad, and now needs to spread it across the country. □

## U. S. A: More non-aligned

In a response perhaps to the criticism that the U.S.A., though independent, is more anti-SLFP than anti-UNP, the Alliance has decided to adopt a 'strict non-alignment' in the coming by-elections. It would allow its supporters a 'free voice'.

"We are not asking our supporters to keep away from the polls or calling for boycott of these four parliamentary by-elections, although we are not fielding a candidate" is the view of the SLMP's general secretary, Mr. Y. P. de Silva. "Any attempt, violent or non-violent, to stop people from exercising their voting right savours of a dictatorial inclination" he has said. As a matter of principle, the party has not contested by-elections from Mullerigala onwards. But we cannot ask our supporters to refrain from exercising their democratic right according to their wish.

## Opposition urges National Identity Card to be produced by voters

While a seven party opposition group called for international observers to monitor the expected Presidential and General Elections, amidst widespread fears about polls rigging and violence, LSSP leader Calvin R. de Silva said in a press statement that an international team would serve no purpose. He said that a team of monitors representing local political parties would be more effective. Foreigners, unfamiliar with local conditions, would not be able to follow what was going on, the LSSP leader said.

Parties that have asked the Government to permit an inter-

national team to monitor future elections are the SLFP, the ELIP, the MEP, the DWC, the SLMC, the TC and the Liberal Party.

Most opposition parties have also urged the Government to implement a recommendation of the Elections Commission which would make the production of the National identity card mandatory before a ballot paper is issued to a voter. Without this rule the prevention of impersonation would be impossible, the Commissioner of Elections has said.

There has been no official response from the Government on either issue.

But, earlier, when Mrs. Bandaranaike, the SLFP leader, first called for an international team of monitors to watch elections here, President Jayawardene's reaction was to dismiss it with: "She should have her head examined".

Meanwhile, police grilled two recently elected UNP members of the Western Provincial Council in connection with alleged malpractices during the June 2 elections, the Sun reported.



## “Amnesty” on killings, disappearances

Nearly a year after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord, human rights abuses continue to be reported in Sri Lanka, including “disappearances of dozens of Sinhalese in the south of the country, Amnesty International said today. (Tuesday 21 June 1988).

The worldwide human rights organizations says these violations are of particular concern in view of the Sri Lankan government's decision to go back on its assurance to allow an Amnesty International mission to visit the country in April. President Jayewardene gave the assurance during a British Broadcasting Corporation radio interview in February 1988.

Amnesty International says there have been reports that members of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), stationed in northern and eastern Sri Lanka as part of the July 1987 accord, have been responsible for rape and other acts of brutality, as well as the killing of unarmed civilians in reprisal.

Also since July, hundreds of Sinhalese men and women — most allegedly members of the banned People's Liberation Front (JVP) — have been arrested and detained without charge or trial the organization says. They are suspected of acts of violence including killings of government officials.

In a document reviewing human rights abuses in Sri Lanka, presented to the Sri Lankan government on 1 March 1988, Amnesty International says the country's security forces were responsible for the “disappearance” of 685 Tamils between 1983 and July 1987. The document lists the names of all 685 “disappeared” and states that none of the victims have been accounted for.

These events took place in the context of armed conflict in northern and eastern Sri Lanka when violence between armed Tamil groups — fighting for a separate Tamil state — and the Sri Lankan security forces increased.

Amnesty International says there is evidence that many of the “disappeared” had been tortured while held incommunicado and that others had been shot after arrest and their bodies disposed of in secret.

“The continued use of prolonged incommunicado detentions and the inadequate inquest procedures used under emergency regulations can only encourage further torture, extrajudicial killings, and ‘disappearances,’” an Amnesty International spokesperson said.

The organization says while allegations of “disappearances” have continued on a smaller scale since July, “disappearances” now include not just members of the minority Tamil community, but also members of the Sinhalese majority living in the South.

Some Tamils have also “disappeared” in the north after having been arrested by the IPKF, Amnesty International has also raised reports of abuses by the IPKF with the Indian authorities.

Many of the thousands of prisoners released in an amnesty after the signing of the accord have made sworn statements that they were the victims of prolonged torture by the security forces, Amnesty International says. Some of them witnessed the death as a result of torture of other detainees.

The organization also notes that nearly 650 Tamils remain in detention without trial under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations despite provisions for their release as part of the July amnesty.

Amnesty International has urged the Sri Lankan government to take immediate action to remedy past human rights abuses and to address the latest developments. Among its recommendations are the establishment of impartial and independent investigations to determine the fate of the “disappeared” and to investigate complaints of reprisal killings by the Sri Lankan security forces as well as the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

## Indian HC refutes AI allegation

The Indian High Commission yesterday in a rebuttal of an Amnesty International report in which it is stated that “There have been reports that members of the IPKF have been responsible for rape and other acts of brutality, as well as the killing of unarmed civilians in reprisal”

“The IPKF has operated in Sri Lanka with the utmost restraint, and used the minimum possible force in order to avoid or reduce civilian casualties as far as possible. As a result of these precautions, the IPKF has taken extraordinarily heavy casualties, a sacrifice which only a highly disciplined force is capable of.

“The charges of rape and brutality made against the IPKF are

fabricated and unfair. Every specific complaint received from any source about the behaviour of IPKF troops has been investigated. Most of these charges have been found to be baseless. Wherever such charges have been proved, quick and salutary action has been taken against the guilty.

“The Indian Army is a highly professional body of troops, and acts according to a professional code.

There is no question of the Indian Army or of the Government of India tolerating any action by its soldiers which would violate the rights of the very people whom they have gone to Sri Lanka to protect.”



## Tutories — hot beds of subversion?

**A**nother hot bed of subversion has been discovered by the authorities, possibly swelling the ranks of the SS (Southern subversives). This time, private tutories. The Ministry of Education has directed all Directors of Education to keep a sharp eye on private tutories following a spate of complaints alleging that some private tutories were involved in subversive activities, says a report in *The Island*. The report quotes a spokesman of the Ministry of Education.

According to this source, some teachers employed in government schools, who also run tutories, have been responsible for instigating students to violent activities.

Ministry sources added that a large number of teachers were involved behind the scenes in student demonstrations in connection with "the university crisis".

Education officials have been empowered "to take necessary measures even to the extent of closing down a school if circumstances warranted it"; and the police have been asked to inspect any tutory "which they suspect is a breeding ground for subversives".

The Ministry has listed a large number of such tutories in Matara, Galle, Hambantota, Ratnapura, Anuradhapura and Kegalle.

Meanwhile, the Government has ordered an inquiry into death of the Dickwella maha vidyalaya student who was killed when security services personnel reportedly opened fire on a group of school children. Investigators will probe whether "outsiders" were responsible for inciting students. Stern action is to be taken against school principals who did not keep their charges in check.

## After the shooting, it's the teachers who'll be rapped

Education Minister Rani Wickremasinghe has informed school principals and teachers that they would be held responsible for 'illegal acts' committed by their students, according to news reports. Severe disciplinary action is to be taken against principals who fail to control student indiscipline.

This follows the killing of an 18-year old student and the injuring of several in a shooting incident involving government security services personnel, at the Dickwella Vijitha Maha Vidyalaya. Investigators from the Ministry of Education have discovered that the principal was not present when the shooting took place, and that he had not informed the Ministry of a boycott of classes by students.

In that incident, the students had blocked the road, before the shooting. Ministry officials believe that the students could have been instigated by outsiders. □

## Normalcy soon, says President

President Jayewardene promised normalcy soon in the South when UNP Members of Parliament representing the Southern Province met him to discuss the situation there.

The MPs told the President that the people lived in constant fear, and asked for the deployment of additional security forces. National Security Minister Lalith Achulathumudali and services chiefs were also present. □

## Killings in the south

In the thirty days between May 15 and June 14, sixty-six people were murdered in areas outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces, Minister Vincent Perera told Parliament, reciting his monthly litany when opening the debate

on the renewal of the Emergency regulations. Forty-three of these murders were listed as political killings.

## Nurses stir again

**T**he Nurses union which launched a strike that recently crippled the major hospitals in Colombo and in the main towns, with the GMOA too resorting to strike action, is stirring once again.

This time it is about recruitment. The PSUNU claims that all has not been fair with the selection of nurses for a special training course in the Post-graduate Nurses Training Institute. Some candidates have not been admitted though they are reported to have scored higher marks than some of the lucky ones. So once again the PSUNU is nursing a grievance that can lead to a partial paralysis of government hospitals.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

#### Air Mail

Canada / U.S.A. for 1 copy L/G  
US\$ 50.00 for 1 year  
US\$ 30.00 for 6 months

\* \* \*

U.K., Germany, New Zealand,  
Australia, Netherlands, France,  
Japan, Holland, Philippines, Aus-  
tria, Norway, Sweden, China,  
Ireland, Switzerland, Nigeria,  
Belgium, Denmark, Paris, London  
US\$ 40.00 for 1 year  
US\$ 25.00 for 6 months

\* \* \*

Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Du-  
bai, Bahrain, Arabian Gulf  
Syria, Singapore,  
US\$ 35.00 for 1 year  
US\$ 20.00 for 6 months

\* \* \*

India, Pakistan,  
US\$ 30.00 for 1 year  
US\$ 17.00 for 6 months

\* \* \*

Local  
Rs. 140/- for 1 year  
Rs. 75/- for 6 months



# Post-Accord Situation

V. Prabhakaran

(A message to the International Tamil Conference, London)

I am delighted to know that the World Federation of Tamils has organised an International Conference in London to focus on the Tamil national liberation struggle and on the implications of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. Such a convention, participated in by the Tamil patriots all over the world, is most timely and urgent in view of the critical and dangerous situation that has developed in Tamil Eelam since the signing of the Accord.

You are aware that within a short span of time after the so-called Peace Accord was signed, the Indian troops, which landed on our soil with a peace mission to protect our people, embarked on a ruthless war against our liberation movement, the consequences of which are catastrophic in terms of civil deaths and destruction of property. This war, which was started on the 10th of October last year is continuing, unabated, with ever growing fury, bleeding the Tamil nation profusely. The continuation of this war with its violence and bloodshed clearly demonstrates that the Accord has miserably failed in its acclaimed objectives of bringing peace and harmony to our people. It is no more a peace agreement. It can only be characterised as a war accord, as an accord of military alliance between India and Sri Lanka, the strategic aim of which is to destroy the Tamil freedom movement and its armed vanguard.

For the last seven months, we have been fighting to defend ourselves against a formidable military apparatus whose sophistication in war technology and in man-power is far superior to ours. It is sheer will power, courage and our fierce determination not to surrender in humiliation, and above all, the morale and, the moral support provided by our people, that have contributed to our survival as fighting force

against the military might of a super power. Our capacity to resist in this prolonged war should be a bitter lesson to India that the will of a nation cannot be suppressed by military means, however formidable it may be.

It is with profound sorrow and pain we took to arms to resist, since India offered us no alternative other than to defend ourselves or perish. We consider India as our friend and ally and we despise this war. I have made several appeals to the Indian Prime Minister for peace, for negotiations and reconciliation. But to our deep dismay India has turned down our genuine plea for peace. There seems to be a callous and calculated determination on the part of India to wipe out the Tiger movement and thereafter to induct an electoral process in Tamil Eelam at the point of a gun, to impose upon the Tamil people a deficient political framework. She has thus chosen to betray the interests of the Eelam Tamils in order to strengthen and consolidate her relationship with Sri Lanka and to secure their geo-political objectives.

As a consequence of India's direct and violent intervention in the Tamil National problem through the medium of this Accord, the future of our people and their socio-political existence have suddenly been thrown into the darkness of uncertainty, confusion and gloom. Our political struggle for self-determination which is a product of a lengthy evolutionary history extending over forty years, a product of national campaigns, of mass agitations, and of revolutionary armed resistance, is faced with the danger of being stamped out. The ultimate consequence of the Indian intervention is the grave danger of the complete subjugation of our people to the dictatorial dominance of Sinhala ruling class and the perpetuation of oppression, state terror and genocide.

In view of this grim situation facing the people of Tamil Eelam, it is the national duty and solemn responsibility of all the Tamil patriots living abroad to organise and mobilise themselves into a powerful International voice of reason to fight for the redemption of their motherland caught in a monumental historical tragedy. The patriotic Tamil intelligentsia living abroad should lead an effective global campaign to stir the conscience of the civilised world about this tragic human condition of betrayal and oppression. We fervently hope that the international Tamil community will understand and support whole heartedly, the determined struggle of our liberation movement to fight for the cause of justice for our oppressed people.

My congratulations and good wishes for the success of the International Tamil Conference.

Has Delhi...

(Continued from page 6)

"It appears to be a sort of no-win stalemated situation", they added. However, they acknowledge that India bashing, particularly by those on the far right among conservatives "who are inclined to be critical of India," was "bound to increase in the future and they will use this as another example of India's desire for hegemony in the region. Its aggression and so forth". The sources said that it was likely that the next time "there is an appropriate occasion, India's role in Sri Lanka will be mentioned in an unfavourable light," particularly by those pushing for more US security assistance for Pakistan.

(Courtesy: SUN)





## **A unified and unique contribution through diversification**

The Browns Group of Companies cover almost every aspect of trade, industrial and agricultural development in Sri Lanka. With the accent on Group Progress through diversification and specialisation, each Member of Associate Company is equipped to provide services and goods of the highest standard. Yet the Group, as a whole, is based on a concept of unified service, which assures you of the overall benefits of its combined resources.

### **THE BROWNS GROUP OF COMPANIES**

481, Darley Road, Colombo 10. P. O. Box 200, Tel. 597111

**AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, ENGINEERING, TRANSPORT,  
TOURISM, EXPORTS, TRADE.**



# The Universities

Rajan Hoole

The story of University education in this country is one of sycophancy at the highest levels, which has eroded the esteem in which University dons were held and their ability to influence the courses of education in this country. This surrender was almost voluntary. Until 1977 the University of Ceylon, with several campuses was the sole University in this country. At present there are eight Universities.

Into the late fifties, the University of Ceylon was an autonomous institution, which was largely self contained and had its own University Entrance Examination. Hence there was a close tie up between University and school education. The latter could not be determined by a couple of ministry officials. There was a need for change at this time. A situation was arising where all those who passed the University Entrance Examination could not gain admission to university. Hence a more multi-purpose school leaving certificate such as the G. C. E. Advanced Level was deemed more appropriate. The other was the popular rhetoric against English at that time, mainly from people who spoke English at home and had changed their views overnight to swim with the new political tide. The University could have fought and argued its case and have made adjustments which did not vitiate its initiative in educational policy. But by now the conduct of the University was determined by the power politics and the authoritarian character of the Vice-Chancellor, Nicholas Attygalle, and the willingness of the general run of dons to please.

Attygalle was elected Vice-Chancellor for a third term and until the student protest of

1965 few dared to cross him. On seeing his car Deans rushed to open the door for him—something that very much embarrassed students who witnessed the proceedings. In 1961 the University was set to admit the first batch of Arts students who had used one of the native languages in school education. Many felt that those admitted must have an adequate knowledge of English for their reference. Some such as Mr. K. Nesiiah had advocated that for an adequate grasp of English to be maintained, some subject must be taught through English even at school level. When the matter came up before the Senate, there was one proposal to do away with an English requirement altogether, and another by Mr. Nesiiah insist on G.C.E. (O.L.) pass in English or two subjects in English at the A.L. as the minimum. The Vice-Chancellor advocated the first stating that if the latter motion was seconded, the political authorities will be offended. This wish was carried with even those who had held out against the use of native languages in University education remaining silent. This was typical of much that was to come later.

The NCMC (North Colombo Medical College) issue came before the Senate of the University of Colombo in 1980. The proposal was to award University of Colombo Medical degrees to graduates of the NCMC, a private college admitting those with means who could not get into one of the national Universities. There were many influential persons, including members of the Senate, whose offspring had been admitted to the NCMC. The proposal was accepted by the Senate. This unprecedented privilege was not granted as a matter of conscience. The advantage accruing to the NCMC

was that of a short cut to British Medical Council (BMC) recognition, which was enjoyed by the University of Colombo. Medical degrees of the University of Jaffna do not enjoy this recognition because of war difficulties, and this University comes within the national scheme of admissions, which includes those high on the national merit list.

At one time it was proposed to provide certain clinics for NCMC students at the Colombo teaching hospital, to make up for what the NCMC was lacking. This was abandoned after a strong protest by Colombo medical students. The questions why not provide these facilities for medical students from Jaffna and why not University of Colombo degrees for Jaffna medical students were neither raised nor answered. The conduct of the Senate which was seen as unprincipled, heralded periodic disruption in the University of Colombo, leaving many of its students over two years behind.

In its history the academic community will be hard put to find any great moments or instances of having been in the vanguard of any great cause. Politicians were able to mismanage the country and drag it into a civil war with hardly a protest from the academic community. Not surprisingly, the politicians, students and the country at large formed a not very flattering impression of this community. In 1966, Mr. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolla, Minister of Education introduced a new University Act which brought in a series of civil servants as Vice-Chancellors. When the Academic community protested about the loss of autonomy, Iriyagolla was able to call its bluff by pointing to its servile conduct under Vice Chancellor Nicholas Attygalle.

The writer is a lecturer at the Jaffna campus.



In former times Vice-Chancellors were elected by the Court of the University, which included a variety of interests, including the Academic staff and Alumni. At present, the President of the country seeks advice from the University Council which submits a list of three names. The Council in Jaffna consists of the Vice-Chancellor, 3 Deans, 2 Senate nominees and 7 outside members. The latter are appointed by the University Grants Commission (UGC). Given the strength of patronage in this country, it is a system where the government of the day can ensure that its wishes are looked after. Beyond that, it is not a system that is sensitive of the needs of the local community or the region. Except when there is an exceptionally fair minded councillor who would not tow the line and is very able, the system as shown by experience is not likely to be sensitive even to the needs of justice and fairplay. The balance of power has passed from the academics to the administration. This is the logical culmination of a process begun in the 1950s where the academics voluntarily surrendered their initiative and their self-respect. The drift towards authoritarianism was compounded by the abolition of Student Unions. When student trouble flares up no one knows whom to talk to. With the abolition of popular unions, the path has been opened to a few individuals exercising power to disrupt, using methods of terror. Having obtained more power than was wise or desirable, the government is unable to exercise it in keeping the universities open. With the machinery of consultation having broken down, it became easy for the authorities to blunder themselves into explosive situations — such as recent attempts to conduct examinations under police protection. The state of the universities where democratic consultation together with a principled approach has broken down has gruesome extensions in the country at large.

When it comes to determining the nature and character of the academic staff, the universities

have lost much authority which should have been rightly theirs. Appointments to academic posts are hommed in by regulations which make it a bureaucratic affair. Elaborate point systems too have been devised which has created a tendency for people to take on responsibilities which they hardly intend to discharge for the sake of securing points. This is a system in which exceptional geniuses, such as Einstein or Ramanujan who may be failures in the normal academic mill, will not see the light of day. These regulations were necessitated by experience, that if minimum qualifications are not rigidly specified, there was a tendency for academic post to become sinecures for undeserving favourites. These inroads made by the state in the 1960's are largely the fault of the value system of the academic community. Trying to beat the system is now a part of the game. The loss of self-determination and a sense of responsibility by the academic community and the increasing role of the state are cumulative processes that have been interdependent.

### THE HUMANITIES

In the present state of uncertainty as to what education in this country is accomplishing, the academics are themselves faced with a crisis of identity and about how they establish their value. In a national outlook oriented towards the market economy, this is easy for academics in the science based disciplines. Most of them have foreign qualifications which are internationally recognised, and can make reference to their earning capacity in the private sector or abroad, although they may not contribute much to improving the cone of life in the universities are of course judged by very different criteria. The country must feel that they are contributing towards its intellectual health. Starting from 1958, the country has gone through four major bouts of racial violence, one short, and two long insurgencies. Did a sufficient number of academics

come forward, clarify issues and take a just stand which the rest of the country could look to for guidance? The honest answer to that is no. Views of academics on History and on the Tamil Homelands question have been beset by communal differences, with the government eagerly patronising one group. Whether one can solve modern problems by a reference to feudal titles is a question seldom asked.

There are other developments in the humanities which make the dons easy victims of patronage. In the old days, those recruited on to the staff were sent to well know universities abroad for their doctoral degrees. Owing to financial constraints and lack of competence in English, very few are now sent abroad. Many secure their permanency by submitting MA theses in Tamil or Sinhalese to the same university. In a country where academic traditions are weak and the humanities of the different universities function in an atmosphere of growing insularity, such a practice cannot yield very happy results. As a result, the tradition of open discussion is on the decline. In addition to a reluctance to expose themselves to the outside world. One can sometimes see an almost xenophobic attitude towards the use of English. In this country itself there is little communication between the humanities staff of different universities and almost none across the communal division. Over time such isolation and the accompanying prejudices are self-reinforcing, that vitiating the purpose of the Humanities. This is not to say that the academics of today. One can only say that the former had fewer excuses for being what they really were.

### LOSS OF DIRECTION

In today's situation where the teaching profession at the highest levels has no clear vision of what it accomplishes, it is not hard to imagine the plight of the students. If the teaching profession had stood up for its



independence, rational direction could have been given to changes forced on by political pressures.

For everyone who graduates, there is the disturbing question, what am I worth after all this study? Few teachers dare to give an honest answer. Very often the employment prospects of graduates are governed by accomplishments outside the mainstream of formal education. It is also a sign of the inertness of university staff that they can often be moved to face real problems only when students raise them. On these occasions it is the rowdy behaviour of students that comes up for criticism. It is true that this behaviour is often destructive, arbitrary, inconsiderate and does not contribute towards the health of educational institutions. But in almost every such outbreak — 1965, which ended with Nicholas Attygalle quitting; 1969, when an attempt was made to quarter the army in the Peradeniya Campus; 1980, NCMC issue — there has been a failure on the part of the staff to take a principled stand and explain to the students the justice or injustice of the matter. Some issues such as the NCMC were clear-cut. But the 1969 issue referred to above was not so.

The way the government put it to the public, it was simple. The army was needed in Kandy for the Independence day parade of 4th February 1969, and the university gymnasium seemed a good place to quarter them for a few days. There were of course rowdy elements amongst students itching for a confrontation, and amongst many students there was a feeling of misplaced elitism — that they were superior to the soldiers and hence the latter had no right to the university premises. There resulted clash ending in the closure of the university. The government was led to this blunder by its earlier success in curbing university autonomy and its general concept for the University. Having a Civil Servant as Vice-Chancellor too did not help. In this situation the academics ought to have been able

to tell the government firmly that in no civilised country is a University used to quarter troops in peace-time, and at the same time explain to the students that their elitism was misplaced and destructive. As a body the academics had failed.

Today the loss of initiative on the part of the staff is such that, while students may not act from the highest motives, student anger, however uninformed, seems fated to be a part of the cure. One cannot say with a good conscience that justice is seen to be done in our universities. Governments cannot be blamed for this situation. If complete auto-

nomy is granted to the Universities overnight, things are not going to come right. At present scrutiny and supervision by the UGC in many cases ensures that things do not go hopelessly wrong.

On the matter of human rights violations by governmental and non-governmental agencies, with killings and disappearances reaching alarming proportions, the universities have up to now only given the matter token attention. Given such a history, the general public can be excused for thinking of the role of academics and of universities to be of little consequence.

(To be continued)

## FATHER MICHAEL RODRIGO

30th June 1927 — 10th November 1987.

Camilo Torres Restrepo, the remarkable Colombian priest, whom many people regard as the greatest Catholic idealist of this century, died as a guerilla on the 25th February 1966. He ended his life saying he had taken off his cassock to be more truly a priest, and warning his flock that "The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin." He had reached and realized his personal goals of liberation and revolution in thought and in action. Priest, theologian, sociologist, agitator, political fighter, and mass leader he stood up though the path of armed resistance when he recognized that a corrupt and authoritarian oligarchy had choked all avenues towards truth, justice, freedom and equality, and faced the people with its final weapon — state terrorism and military violence.

I did not know Father Michael Rodrigo, had never met him, but had followed his unusual career from the time he turned his back on the official Church in 1972, and decided his true role as a priest was with the peasants of the Badulla hinterland. I read all his writings before he retreated finally into the remote village of Alukalavita in Buttala and took off his cassock to be closer to the people he wished to serve, and to

become a genuine healer of souls. No longer was he satisfied with the half-life between two worlds, one ending and the other struggling to be born. No clerical meditations, no spurious truces, no half-way houses of ficial social encounter and endless dialogue offered sustenance to his radical aspirations.

He was no political activist, however, and scorned the paths of violence, even when he became aware that his unique ministry among the poor was inviting the suspicions of the powerful. He lived and died testifying to his faith in the human spirit, and the eloquence of becoming one with the dispossessed and the forgotten. Suba Seth Gedera (The House of Good Wishes), a humble thatched cottage, was both sanctuary and frontier post in the unceasing struggle to elevate the simple peasant to a true understanding of his dignity as a human being, and his rights as a free and equal citizen of Sri Lanka. In my opinion, an unbeliever's nonetheless, Father Mike was the most exemplary priest in modern Sri Lanka, who paid the ultimate price for his total submission to his ideals. There may, sadly, never be another like him.

— H. A. I. Gonetilleke



# Dutugemunu, state power and morality

Newton Gunasinghe

Professor Gananath Obeyesekere, the Chairman of the Princeton University's Department of Social Anthropology, who has made major theoretical contributions to our understanding of Sri Lankan and Indian social formations concentrating basically on social structure and ideology has now written a reflective essay on an interesting historical theme. With his extensive knowledge of history and myth-making, he has dealt in analytical depth with the "Dutugemunu Myth" situating it within historical and contemporary social contexts.

In order to introduce Professor Obeyesekere's essay, I am obliged to locate it within the general theoretical discourse that he has followed for a number of decades. After writing a major work on land tenure in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka, he moved away from the economic infrastructure to the ideological superstructure, producing two most informative and analytical work on religious practices and religious ideology: *Medusa's Hair* dealing basically with quasi-religious cults centering on certain alienated females, who have been successful in founding a following from different social layers of Sri Lankan society which has emerged as a response to recent structural changes in a period of social uncertainty. His masterly work on "The Cult of the Goddess Pazhithini" in my view deals with the religious and structural commonalities of South India and Sri Lanka, which emphasizes the importance of goddess cults in basically peasant and matrilineally oriented social formations while attempting to bring in a theoretical framework of analysis informed by the concepts of Freud, Weber and Ricoeur.

Professor Obeyesekere's new essay, which is a revised version of a key note address delivered at South Asian Studies Association in the U.S.A., I think

The author is a senior lecturer of the Colombo University.

Gananath Obeyesekere's A Meditation on Conscience: Social Scientists' Association, Occasional Paper No. 1, May 1988, Colombo.

should be located precisely in the previous theoretical discourse that he has followed, especially in the major work on the "Pachithini Cult". The fundamental problematique that the essay "On Conscience" deals with is that of Dutugemunu, in relation to the accounts present basically in the chronicles such as *Mahavamsa*, *Saddharmakathana* and *Rajavaliya*.

These ancient chronicles agree on the problem of a conscience that Dutugemunu apparently suffered from; he had been compelled to kill so many Tamils in capturing "Rajarata" from Elara, the Chola king and this conflicted with his view of himself as a non-violent Buddhist, a conflict which in a way echoes the sentiments of Ashoka who suffered from similar guilt feelings. According to Pali texts written by the Buddhist monks, at the time the King's conscience was disturbed, he was visited by some "arahats" i.e. monks who had attained nirvana; they advised the King "from this deed arises no hindrance in thy way to heaven. Only one and half human beings have been slain here by thee, O lord of men. The one had come unto the (three) refugees, the other had taken unto himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, not more to be esteemed than beasts". (*Mahavamsa*, W. Geiger edition, London, 1912). It is also interesting to note that the concept of "unbelievers" did not exist in the classical Hindu-Buddhist religious tradition.

Here, as analytically posited by Professor Obeyesekere, a fundamental question pertaining to religious ideology arises. If one were to take Buddha's ori-

ginal message seriously, which consist of Impermanence (*aniccika*) sorrow (*dukkha*) and an absence of an ever-lasting soul (*anatta*) with a strong emphasis on non-violence, who is the better Buddhist, was it the King (i.e. Dutugemunu) who felt a guilt of conscience, because he had killed many people, or the so-called "Aarahats" monks who advised him that the people killed are "not more to be esteemed than beasts"? In the original non-violent message of the Buddha even killing an animal is not approved. As Professor Obeyesekere observe, "the troubled conscience of the King however, has been a troublesome one for Buddhists, and especially for monks. How could killing be justified in Buddhism, a universal religion emphasizing a fundamental ethic of radical non-violence, and how could "arahats" who have achieved the goal of final release, nirvana, justify violence?"

Here, I may return to the old problematique laid down by Max Weber, that classical Indian Buddhism was basically a religion of monks who had undertaken the path of achieving Nirvana and in which the laity merely performed the role of "tolerated infidels", as in the multi-cultural and multi-religious Islamic empires. Weber's point therefore, is that the relationships between the clergy and laity in classical Indian Buddhism was radically different from those of the religions of the Judeo-Christian traditions; (i.e. Judaism, Catholicism, Islam and later varieties of Protestantism). Because in classical Indian Buddhism the fundamental ideal of religion, nirvana was not practically attainable by the lay people, who therefore were given only consolation prizes in the form of sensual heavens and various stages of semi-perfection such as "sovan" and "Sakrudagami". In the Judeo-Christian tradition, on the contrary, there is no



distinction between the heaven or the hell that a Pope or an Ayatullah may attain or what a common man on the street may attain. I wonder whether this radical disjuncture, between the laity and the monkhood has led to these different perceptions on the part of Dutugemunu and the "arahats"? Because although a king, Dutugemunu, was "merely" a layman, whereas the "arahats" were undoubtedly monks; and many of the chronicles were written by monks. Is it possible that the monkhood, although organised in a segmentary form of hierarchy displayed a certain degree of ideological coherence that maintained an uneasy relationship with royalty and the different perceptions of the king and the monkhood may be attributed to these covert contradictions? As the old masters of political theory, i.e. Machiavelli and Gramsci have always emphasized, a ruler or a ruling regime is under an imperative to take a path dictated by the necessities of the state, distinct from those paths taken by certain ideological social groups.

Here, I would like to link certain concepts introduced by Max Weber and Gananath Obeyesekere. Weber in his classic work on Indian religions defined Buddhism as (i) a protest religion against Vedic Brahminism (ii) emanating from privileged social strata; and (iii) located mainly in the urban centres of the Indo-Gangetic plain. In other words, classical Indian Buddhism was not a peasant religion; its social base consisted of urban and privileged social strata, who however, happened to be ideologically opposed to Brahminic dominance. When Buddhism came to Sri Lanka, which composed mainly of landlord and peasant social strata, with a lesser degree of urbanisation than present in the Indo-Gangetic plain, it had to undergo certain ideological transformations in order to suit mainly a peasant social structure as observed by both Professor Obeyesekere and Professor Tambiah respectively in relation to Sinhala Buddhism and Thai Buddhism in their Cambridge essays in 1962. So Buddhism both in Sri Lanka and Thailand was obliged to undergo,

an "epistemological rupture" as Althusser would call it and transform itself into a religious ideology suitable to a peasant social structure, while overcoming its original heterodox orientations and increasingly taking an ideologically conservative position, although the monkhood retained its covert contradictions with the royalty, which perhaps underlies the "disagreement" between Dutugemunu and the "arahats".

If we get back to Weberian problematique of the "tolerated infidels" in the great Islamic empires, perhaps the theoretical approach to the question would be clearer. The Islamic ruler, as a descendant of the Holy Prophet as it was generally maintained in the religious tradition, in strict canonical terms should have maintained a responsibility not only towards the social welfare of his subjects, but also with regard to the well-being of their souls, which means that they should have become, followers of the correct faith, either through persuasion or through force. But there is always a disjunction between the necessities of the state and the ideologies propagated by certain fundamentalist sects, without rising above which the state and political stability cannot be maintained. It was the great Islamic emperors, such as the Moghul emperor Akbar, who were responsible for introducing the concept of the "tolerated infidels", while employing the Rajput Hindu prince Man Singh as his Commander-in-Chief because it was needed to maintain their extensive empires as stable political systems in social formations that were ethnically and religiously divided; it is obvious that such concepts would not have had much support from the Islamic religious dignitaries and orthodox theologians. Although the Sri Lankan kingdom was geographically much smaller in comparison to the Moghul empire, is it not possible that Dutugemunu as a realistic statesman realised that in a social formation segmented, his chivalier gesture of paying due respects to his fallen enemy, Elara would help towards keeping his state and the political system together and stable, which the

"arahats" being more other worldly oriented than the sober king could not have perceived?

Professor Obeyesekere's earlier conclusions taken together with Max Weber's perceptive remarks oblige us to comment that one may recognise three varieties of Buddhism in the South Asian and the South East Asian social formations — (i) Classical Indian Buddhism; (ii) Peasant Buddhism in societies like Sri Lanka and Thailand which may basically be a form of syncretic religion absorbing folk gods and deities, while being tolerant of other religious ideologies, at the same time orienting itself negatively against the Buddha's ideal of nirvana; and (iii) Protestant Buddhism, which Professor Obeyesekere has linked with Anagarika Dharmapala, within the Sri Lankan context, which ran parallel to the growth of a bourgeois professional social stratum.

One of the most interesting questions in social theory is the continuity and discontinuity of religious ideology in relation to modes of production and social formations. Professor Obeyesekere takes into account in this essay a long period of myth making in relation to social structure. May I conclude this review with an observation by the author, which I regard to be of importance, as a crucial juncture in the structural dynamics and social processes in Sri Lankan society.

"The intellectualist view of Buddhism comes from a very important strand in Western ideology of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth century Western intellectuals were agnostics for the most part and used Buddhism as a foil against Christianity which had a belief in an omnipotent God and a theory creation that went counter to the dominant scientific belief in Darwinism." . . . "Parallel with the intellectual movement was a social and political one spearheaded by the great nineteenth century leader Anagarika Dharmapala. Briefly stated Dharmapala led a powerful movement

(Continued on page 19)



# 'MADNESS' in Sri Lanka — issues of mental health

Mirko Fryba

Oriental folklore claims that the 'Golden Age' of the happy and healthy life has been steadily deteriorating since ancient times. On the other hand, most Westerners believe in the scientific approach to control hostile external forces before trying to improve the inner life. In practice, however both East and West are preoccupied in subduing mental illness, leaving questions of mental health for theoretical speculation.

In the West, the commonly accepted notion of healthy man is the active individual whose efforts are constantly improving. His achievements are judged by the promotions in his jobs, his career in politics, the expansion of his business activities, the increase in his standard of living and his accumulation of knowledge. However, a knowledge of human nature is in the West limited to biology and other sciences which grasp the man from only the outside.

Outer actions and the material substratum of life are the targets of problem-solving. Not many people can yet afford to profit from modern achievements of the young science of psychology. Western ideas of mental health are also influenced by notions of 'progress', 'domination', 'order', 'healthy aggression' and 'aggrandisement'. Until recently, these terminal values (a technical term of social psychology) were never criticised and seldom consciously reflected on in the West.

In the East such striving for 'growth', 'control' and 'order' are accepted as means or instrumental values for becoming heal-

thy. Yet they also emphasise as terminal values, 'endurance', 'generosity', 'conciliatory yielding' and 'moral self-restraint' which are expressed in a Sri Lankan idiom as 'ahimsa', 'shanta-danta', 'laja-bhaya' ecc. Healthy harmony is not seen as the order resulting from external progress and domination but rather conservation of stability and inner control. The knowledge about human nature is, in Eastern tradition, acquired mainly through introspection. The problem-solving is realised in the inner world of the healthy person.

The interpersonal confrontations between Eastern and Western values are now taking place more and more within the personalities of each of us. But the resulting intrapersonal goings on are not always wholesome. For instance, the once boundless progress of Western man is being impeded under the influence of Eastern traditions.

As some believe, the unwise import of Eastern spirituality creates big problems in the West and gives rise to mental illness. The hippie movement and the new sects based on partially understood oriental religions are just two examples of the infiltration of Eastern values in the West.

The psychological make-up of Western man, his basic personality, is shaped not only by Western values but also by his habitual ways of perceiving and handling the facts of life. In that setting Eastern values do not seem to match the Western habits. The uncritical introduction of Western values in the East, on the other hand, is no less detrimental as we shall presently see.

There are so far no professionally trained psychologists in Sri Lanka. There are, however, a few psychiatrists here whose professional training and skill is equal to that of their colleagues

abroad. Several of them have even some psychological training and would be theoretically able to practice psychotherapy in addition to prescribing drugs.

Millions of Sri Lankans do reply upon the professional help of indigenous specialists in the field of mental illness. The indigenous healers such as *vada-mahattayas* and *yakadheras* have proved throughout long centuries the efficacy of their methods. I shall not elaborate on their techniques of treatment here which even today remain unknown to researchers in Western psychotherapy. It is also less understood by their social scientists who describe them in terms of folklorist art or rituals.

There is an expanding group of Sri Lankans from the urban middle classes and affluent village families who are victims of totally misconceived Western values. These people are turning away in disdain and contempt from the cultural traditions that shaped their basic personality. The more ashamed they are of their origins, the more aggressive is their pursuit of what they deem to be Western values.

Some may be intelligent and quick to grasp all available Western knowledge — just the knowledge only but not the skills. Owing to their soft Eastern upbringing, so different from the toughness found in the West, they are not emotionally equipped to cope with the frustrations arising in a Western context. Unable to master the conflict of values, they easily succumb to depression and agitation.

The confusion of Eastern and Western values and means certainly not the only cause of the growing madness in today's world. Nonetheless a preoccupation with the causes should not prevent us from an urgent search for solutions, to search for values and means that will give us a basis for promoting mental health of those who may be able to cope with madness within our immediate surroundings like families, schools and business establishments.

*Dr Mirko Fryba's experience in training for mental health extends over 20 years. His methods and practice appear in his book *Guidance To Happiness* published by Bauer, Freiburg, Germany. These excerpts are from a lecture given at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Fulllight Program held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute.*



Following are some astounding everyday examples of madness taken from newspaper reports; the word 'madness' is used here to indicate irrational, harmful actions which are outside the clinical scope of mental illness and occurs in society at large:

An ambitious young man expects a promotion but instead is reprimanded by his boss. Consequently he hangs himself.

A school girl is not allowed to go with a friend to the cinema, she commits suicide by drinking an insecticide.

Every single day fourteen Sri Lankans commit suicide for apparently minor reasons and about half the cases are young people below thirty. There are also occurrences of madness not seen twenty years ago but are rather normal nowadays:

A 'gentleman' in trousers shoves aside a decrepit man clad in sarong, upholding thus his prerogative to board a bus; the old man falls...

A ferry driver asserts his mechanised superiority by not turning aside from the middle of the road and causes an approaching motor cyclist to hit a pedestrian.

Then there is ragging, a form of collective madness which may begin as an expression of concealed stupidity or a harmless joke, by academically disappointed students or students who are emotionally deprived. These injured in the rag are planning the same for the next year or consider it a means to find a friend.

Although it is often impossible to understand definitely the destructive actions of the mentally ill, there are some things visible even in the few examples above. It is a psychological law that unmastered frustrations lead either to depression or to aggression, unless the blocked energy is skillfully redirected towards harmony at a higher level of life.

When the mind is polluted by hate, it is not free, there is no satisfaction, no pleasure, no happiness. Those who are repeatedly

subject to unhappy states of mind are bound to end in the realm of mental illness. This is equally true of relatively happy people who are out of touch with reality here and now. They are the ones who live in their imaginations. Their suffering is caused by their unrealistic wants, by their greed for material things, greed for achievement and greed for power. Thus greed is the very root of frustration and suffering.

Traditional as well as modern cultures create ideologies and myths in order to master the problems at a symbolic level. In modern myths, the 'demons' and 'gods' are replaced by popular notions of 'viruses' or 'complexes' (they have little to do with the intricacy of real problems) and images of redeeming 'projects' or 'superpowers' (euphemisms for fallible men in key positions).

The myths are useful as a means to grasp the fearful projections and to seek solutions through religious, political, or cultural activities, thus preventing many a destructive action in direct interpersonal relationships. But when the imaginary worlds of myths and ideologies prevail over actual life, they become destructive and, instead of the symbolic mastering of the problems, they incite prejudices and promote madness.

Most tragically, the political or religious ideologies which justify acts of violence lead the mad persons further away from a personal sense of responsibility and prevent any ethical self-criticism. For a victim of his own ideologically justified madness, it is impossible to admit that his madness is a mental illness and to seek a remedy from a professional healer.

In the past, the East has developed methods to purify, harmonise and cultivate the mind. But these methods have been effective only within a context of clearly regulated and stable social life. Modern Western wisdom sees mental health as prevention of madness by developing skills to

reach satisfaction and progress without damaging one's own cultural and natural ecosystem.

Towards this the West can offer social skills like democracy and self-discipline. Mental health means then helping each other to learn creative communication, self-mastery and self-sufficiency. It has to be guided by understanding that the better off, the happier and healthier the others are, the better are the conditions for one's own health and happiness.

But interpersonal skills, on which true democracy is founded, are rather unknown in the East. They are thought of in the East as clever tricks on how to manage people and how to exploit their potentials. The interpersonal solidarity, social wisdom and skills of team work on which democracy rests, are in the East largely neglected. If they exist at all, the haves treat it as a right to be arrogant while the have-nots look upon the newly imported democracy as a 'freedom' that is conferred on them to be non-co-operative, to defy agreements and to protest destructively.

It is in a way risky to speak about mental health to people who are in a hurry for quick results and immediate gain. Wisdom does not work quick. Happiness cannot be reached by the reckless ones who aim to profit from the loss of others. Cultivation of wisdom and shared happiness is a slow process. There are no short-cuts to mental health.

## Dutugemunu...

(Continued from page 17)

against the British rulers and the missions, and initiated a new form of political Buddhism. He stressed the doctrinal tradition; rejected peasant religiosity, and invented for an emerging bourgeoisie a new code of Buddhist ethics and morality compounded of Buddhist and Victorian Protestant Values".

(A Meditation on Conscience — Pages 38-39).



*The best video in Town*

# LARNAS

**TRADITION OF  
EXCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE  
IN VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT  
CONTINUES**

As always  
LARNAS shall continue to bring  
superlative NEW 'A' Grade movies  
of exciting Action, Drama, Danger,  
Suspense, Intrigue, Scandal  
and many other provocatively  
bold and contemporary stories  
from today's headlines.  
Don't miss LARNAS catalogue  
of spectacular International  
mini series.

So pick up the action with  
LARNAS VIDEO MOVIES  
on your TV sets  
every night!



We are committed to  
the goal of bringing  
to Sri Lanka a broad  
spectrum of quality films  
which continue our  
tradition of excellence.  
Be sure to be with LARNAS  
for Video's finest hours.

LARNAS now stands on  
a new and exciting threshold of  
dynamic expansion into the  
wider fields of film and TV.



**LARNAS (PVT) LTD.**  
302, HAVTI OCK ROAD, COLOMBO 5.  
TELEPHONE : 689926  
FLEX : 21 757 LAGOONVALE.

5118

SRI LANKA'S FIRST NAME IN VIDEO HOME ENTERTAINMENT



# COSMIC MAN AT THE GOLDEN GATE

## Some reflections on Vikram Seth's *Novel in Verse*

Izeth Hussain

1

Vikram Seth's novel in verse 'The Golden Gate' is unusual in Commonwealth literature. Here we have an Indian writer who sets his story in California and deals with white American characters, apart from just one character of partly Japanese descent who nevertheless has been totally absorbed into white American culture. There are no Indian characters in the book at all, and Vikram Seth himself seems to be completely at home in white American culture. In dealing neither with any of the Afro-Asian or Caribbean societies nor with their immigrants in the West, this book seems a curiosity in Commonwealth literature.

Though unusual it is not unique as one of V. S. Naipaul's early novels, *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*, deals with English characters in England. However, the *Golden Gate* is a work of extraordinary literary quality. It engages some of our deepest concerns, and it cannot be dismissed as a curiosity which has no more than some entertainment value. It is worth exploring the significance of its unusualness.

It can be seen as significant in relation to the contrary pulls in the modern world of ethnicity on the one hand and of what might be called universalism on the other. The pull of ethnicity is seen not only in the ethnic rebellions taking place in some countries, but also in the withdrawal into provincialism and other forms of particularism in

The writer is Sri Lanka's Ambassador-designate of Paris and a senior member of the S. L. Foreign Service. This is the text of a paper presented at the ICES, Colombo.

the West. This is happening paradoxically while in many ways the globe is shrinking into a village through the power of modern technology, and while cultural interaction is increasing on a global scale. Both the pulls of ethnicity and of universalism are characteristics of our time.

The pull of ethnicity can be seen in the *Golden Gate* through an Indian sensibility, values and outlook, shown in ways that are not obvious. At the same time, this book in dealing so successfully with white American culture displays obviously enough the power of universalism in our time.

Unfortunately, as far as the present writer is aware from a reading of the reviews at the time, the widespread critical acclaim which greeted this book when it appeared a couple of years ago focussed entirely on its unusualness as a *tour de force*. One is reminded of the similar acclaim for G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* when it appeared four decades ago. It is however quite understandable that the reviews should have focussed on Seth's book as a *tour de force*. Its virtuosity certainly leaves the reader dazzled.

But this virtuosity can itself be seen as significant for revealing something Indian, or at any rate non-English and non-American. Seth uses a weirdly complicated stanza form, modelled on Charles Johnston's translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, beginning with a quatrain, followed by two couplets, another quatrain, and a concluding couplet. As if this were not complicated enough, he sticks right through to a rigid scheme of feminine rhymes, that is, rhymes with the accent on the penultimate syllable. The first quatrain

end in feminine rhymes, likewise the two lines of the second quatrain. To sustain so elaborate a stanza form right through an entire novel in verse, so fluently and with hardly any sense of strain, is breath-taking. There seems to be nothing comparable in the entire corpus of English or American literature.

This kind of virtuosity might give the impression that what we have in this book is a case of artifice, not art, of a writer with nothing much to say displaying his technical prowess for its own sake, after the manner for instance of Swinburne in much of his poetry. But Seth's book successful as a serious work of literature, and in such work technique has to be functional. His complicated stanza form serves the purpose of the novel in verse admirably. The feminine rhymes, which loosen a structure that may otherwise be too tight, are suited to the narrative flow and the conversational ease that are needed for a successful novel in verse. And the feminine rhymes of the second quatrain enable the concluding couplet to come through sometimes with the finality of a *coup de grace*.

There could be something Indian or oriental about Seth's virtuosity. In Pushkin's case one might perhaps recall the Byzantine traditions of Russia. In Seth's case, one thinks of the Indian predilection for the ornate and the elaborate which is to be seen for instance in Hindu architecture and sculpture, and in the unimaginably complicated rhythmic sequences of some Indian classical music. At any rate, this kind of virtuosity seems non-English and non-American.

The outsider to the norms of contemporary Anglo-American literature can be seen in Seth's



book in many ways, one of which is his exuberant delight in using the resources of the English language, something that reminds one of the handling in the Elizabethan age. That was a time of bursting out from the constrictions of the medieval world, of geographical discovery and a cultural opening out in the Renaissance, all of which extended the resources of the English language. There could be a comparable sense of the new, a bursting out from the constriction of one's own society, when non-English or non-American writers of exceptional ability choose to write in the English language. One thinks of Conrad the Pole, Synge and Joyce the Irishman, Hugh McDermid the Scotsman, and Nabokov the Russian. And among Indian writers, one thinks of Desani's *All about H. Hatterr*, Nirad Chaudhury's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Kamala Markandaya's *Possession*, and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children and Shame*. There is a baroque richness in some of their prose that is so different from the clean economical language used by so many distinguished English and American writers who convey their message without drawing attention to their medium. In the handling of his medium Seth belongs with those Indian writers. His language ranges from the formal and poetic to the colloquial, and his vocabulary includes words of technical or scientific origin such as "analgetic", "metastasized", "pleonastic", slang words such as "brunch" or "yuppie" and even obsolete Middle English words such as "swive" and "grame". He is the outsider to the English language revelling in its riches.

The outsider can also be seen in the mocking dismissal in the book of Jackson Pollock, John Cage, the representatives of fashionable ultra-modernism. It is to be noted that the titles given to the sculptures of one of his main characters, Janet — such as "Moocher Hen", "Three Eggs", "An Adolescent Lion" — indicate that they are representational, not abstract. One of

her reviewers scolds, "Where has she been these thirty years?"

It is significant that the form he has chosen for his book, the hybrid novel in verse, has been obsolete in English literature since the 19th century which saw the publication of Byron's *Don Juan*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* — under-rated and long forgotten but now resurrected by the feminists — and Clough's *Amours de Voyage*. And it is significant also that unlike most modern poetry Seth's novel in verse is easily readable, presenting no difficulties for the average reader who can enjoy it like any other novel. He has chosen his position outside contemporary American norms by using "reason, rhythm, rhyme", the traditional resources of English verse which also characterize his earlier books of poems "The Humble Administrator's Garden". One gets the impression reading those poems that Seth who did post-graduate work at Stanford University — thought not in English literature — came under the influence of the school of Yvor Winters, the great irascible debunker of modernism and pretentious obscurity, and arch-priest of reason and rigid classicism. It is probably easier for an Indian writer, than for his Western counterparts, to revert to the classical resources of "reason, rhythm, rhyme", and to adopt the outmoded form of the novel in verse to write a mature work of literature.

It is interesting that Seth himself cannot explain why he has chosen to write in complicated stanzas and an outmoded literary form. In his book, after shocking an editor by revealing that he is in the process of committing a literary solecism by writing, of all things in this late twentieth century, a novel in verse, he ponders on his own motivations. Who this stanza form, why these feminine rhymes, and why what he calls this "whole passe extravaganza?" He concludes "The truth is, I can't justify it," but he might as well "have fun and try it". The explanation really is that he is Indian, an

outsider to the norms of contemporary Anglo-American literature. The inability to recognize his own motivations shows the power of ethnicity, the gravitational pull of one's own culture of which one may not always be conscious.

## II

It might be argued that what this examination of the technical aspects of the Golden Gate establishes is that Seth is the outsider from a country where modernity has not swept everything, and that is why he finds outmoded literary forms and techniques congenial. It does not establish anything specifically Indian in his work. However, the content of his book, as distinct from its technical aspects, shows more clearly an Indian sensibility at work. This could raise questions about what exactly is uniquely or distinctively or specifically Indian when we are speaking about a country noted for its cultural diversity. What can be said is that Seth is an Indian and what seems non-Western about his work shows the pull of ethnicity, the power of his own cultural background.

This book has four main characters, John, Phil, Liz, and Janet. John, who might be regarded as the central character, poses the problem of modern Western man who is successful and enjoys all the material and cultural benefits of an advanced industrial civilization but is lonely and unhappy. He is brought together through the advertisement column with Liz, an attractive female lawyer of Hungarian descent, with whom he has a stormy love affair. This is arranged by John's former girl-friend Janet, a sculptress of partly Japanese origin. Liz precipitately breaks off her affair with John to marry his friend from college days, Phil, partly to appease her dying mother's yearning for a grandchild. Phil, who had been lonely and unhappy after a divorce, is an outstanding electronics expert who has chucked up a lucrative job to devote himself entirely to the anti-nuclear campaign. John and Janet get together again as lovers, but Janet dies in an



accident and at the end of the book John, who has been in a state of breakdown, is restored to normalcy by becoming godfather to the child of Phil and Liz.

This bare outline of the main story suggests that the theme of the book is the loneliness of modern man and his need for community, which is to be achieved firstly by marriage and the founding of a family. The underlying value, apart from community is reverence of life.

An Indian sensibility and outlook is shown in several ways, one of which is in the attitude to marriage, seen as a relationship requiring for its success sensible accommodation between two people for the founding of a family. John and Liz are brought together through the advertisement column implying that marriage is a question of matching two people on the basis of their personalities and circumstances, and not a question of inexplicable chemistry drawing them together. This is arranged surreptitiously by Janet, who is notable for her maturity and sympathetic understanding of people. The book is quite explicit on the point that romantic love is not an adequate basis for a stable and happy marriage. When John, trying to

persuade Liz to marry him, says "We love each other well enough", she replies "There's more to life than love, I've got to think this out." When she suddenly decides to marry Phil, she tells her father that she does not love him but merely likes him. And the reader is left in no doubt whatever that the ensuing marriage will be quite satisfactory. The romantic intensity of her affair with John might be lacking, but they are well-matched and that's what matters.

There is here unmistakably a depreciation of the romantic love that has been so great a value in Western literature since the time of the troubadours, of the myth of Tristan and Isolde, and of the great story of Gudrum and Kjartan in the Laxdaala Saga, way back in the thirteenth century. Incidentally, it is interesting that this book, which is full of literary allusions makes ironic use of Thomas Hardy who wrote some of the most intense love-poetry in the English language. Seth writes of John awaiting Janet for an entirely unromantic encounter. "But as the hope-hour strokes its sum, 'He fidgets', an allusion to Hardy's *The Broken Appointment*. "He fidgets" is deliberate bathos.

Seth seems to favour the clan and something like the Indian tradition of the extended family against the nuclear family prevalent in the West. At the Thanksgiving festival there is a getting together of "the scattered clans" of the Doratis, Liz's family, and their neighbours, and Liz's sister Sue "looks at her extended clan." Phil, who had been lonely after his divorce, suddenly finds himself with a family of seven after marrying Liz — including children and cats — and this is seen as satisfying, not an encumbrance. Seth cannot be unmindful of the fact that more often than not the extended family can be claustrophobic, even while it provides a sense of security, but his book does give the impression that extended family links are valuable.

The great positive in the book, apart from community, is reverence for life which is explicit in the substantial account of an anti-nuclear protest meeting. A homosexual relationship between Phil and Liz's brother Ed is regarded with general tolerance, but is finally rejected as for Ed it is against God's purposes in being infertile. Fertility is presented in the book in rich concreteness, in the celebration of the fertility festival of Thanksgiving, in olive-picking and pickling, in the descriptions of the Doratis vineyard. And finally, the apogee of fertility is reached at the conclusion of the book in the baby of Phil and Liz, celebrated in some of the best serio-comic verse of this century.

An aspect of this reverence for life is shown in the importance given to non-human forms of life, with a respect for their otherness which might be regarded as more consistent with Hindu and Buddhist traditions than with Christian and Western ones. Part of the unsatisfactoriness of John is shown not only in his inability to relate in a wholesome way to other human beings but also to Liz's cat, Charlemagne, which plays what would normally be regarded as an inordinate role in breaking up their affair.

(To be continued)

## RECONNAISSANCE

*Spy through the glass this clearing  
Crystal falls of light, the forest hums  
Leaves glint on breathing boughs like polished brass  
So calm, beneath the heavens  
How was it, Mao said, disorder?  
Even the surly clouds on their South West diagonal  
Slant sun on jockals nuptials,  
But glance closer at the feast,  
Young flesh mangled by the raving barrel  
Mao said was fount of power,  
And power sits agony on that young brow  
The raving glass circles for our vision  
Defiant amidst his dead, his young shoulders futile  
Crossed with burnished cartridge belts,  
He bears the burden, History piously heaps  
On its young. He's too shot down,  
Beneath this quietly troubled sky  
No storm shakes the quarled trees that dwarf him  
They quietly shed bronze leaves to mask spent shells  
And his own swift change to bone.  
For those who sent him and survive, does power lie  
In the gnawed bone, or the barrel?*

U. Karunatilake



**SMOKE FREE  
SOOT FREE  
TROUBLE FREE**

# **Timco Clay Cookers & Timco Wood Charcoal**

**— the cheapest way to cook**

Timco cookers scientifically designed and used with Timco wood charcoal ensure minimum heat loss and give an even heat that makes your cooking and grilling easier and tastier.

**Timco Clay Cookers Rs. 25/-**

**Timco Wood Charcoal (3 kilo & 9 kilo packets):**

**Rs. 9.90 upwards.**

**Every kitchen needs a Timco.**



**State Timber Corporation**

746 Galle Road, Bambalapitiya.

Tel: 500515

MINISTRY OF LANDS & LAND DEVELOPMENT



# Yevgeny Zamyatin's Anti-Utopia

## On reading the novel 'We'

Yevgeny Zamyatin's novel *We* was written in 1920, and at the time refused publication in the Soviet Union. It first appeared, in English translation, in New York in 1924. This year — sixty-eight years after it was written — the original Russian text has been published in Moscow. This article by a Soviet critic appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*; it is presented here in a shortened and translated version.

So there has come at last the long-awaited turn of Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, his most outstanding and artistically most perfect creation. The novel, which has given birth to a whole literature in the West, which has been published (and republished) in all European languages, and was locked up, apparently beyond hope, in our country in special security library safes, is now available to the Soviet reader in a run of half-a-million copies in two issues of the journal *Znaniya*.

Even in the context of removing all the 'blank spots' in the extremely rich Russian literature of our century, this is, unreservedly, an event, a phenomenon.

*We* is a short artistic abstract of a possible distant future, prepared for humanity, a daring anti-utopia, a novel of warning. At the same time it is a pointedly contemporary object, which in the most radical manner has its effect today on *perestroika*. Written in 1920, in hungry, unheated Petrograd, in the conditions of war communism with its enforced (and often unjustified) harshness, its violence, its suppression of individuality, its atmosphere of the propagated, conviction of the possibility of a swift leap straight to communism, the novel plunges us into that future society, where all humanity's material problems have been solved, and where there has been successfully worked out a common, mathematically verified happiness through the annulment of freedom,

of human individuality, of the right to independence of will and thought.

"As always, the Music factory with all its trumpets sang the March of the Single State. In measured ranks, by fours, triumphantly beating out their steps, marched the numbers — hundreds, thousands of numbers — in bluish uni-forms, with gold plates on their breasts, bearing the state number of each one of them. And I, we, the four of us, were one of the countless waves in that immense current. To the left of me was O-90 (if one of my shaggy ancestors a thousand years ago had written this, he would probably have called her by that ridiculous word, 'mino'). To the right were two unknown numbers, a male and a female.

"The blissfully blue sky, the tiny childish suns in each one of the plates, the faces unclouded by the madness of thought..."

This is a society of transparent walls, of the integrated life of each and all, of pink tickets for lovemaking (for the registration of a number's right to draw the blinds of his room), an identical petroleum food, the strictest, most rigorous discipline, mechanical music and poetry directed to one purpose — to sing the wisdom of the highest ruler, the Benefactor. Happiness has been attained, the most perfect of anthills has been erected. And already a cosmic supermachine is being built — the

'Integral' — which should spread this unconditional and compulsory happiness throughout the whole universe.

At the time he wrote the novel *We*, Zamyatin was 36 years old. He was already acknowledged as a master, a teacher, a mentor by a whole group of young and greatly talented writers — the Serapion Brotherhood. He had been born into a priest's family (how many rebels, insurgents, revolutionaries our pious Russian fathers have given us!), and all his life he fought, defending his right, inconvenient for others, to independent thought, to the unpalatable truth.

The great heretic ('heretic' was a favourite word of Zamyatin) — that, perhaps, is the name most appropriate to him.

In the first Russian Revolution (1905) he was with the Bolsheviks, and passed through the whole scale of ordeals laid down for a revolutionary. In 1914 he had been prosecuted on a charge of defaming the army and the officer class with his expose in the scory *Na Kulchikakh*; in 1929 he was subjected to persecution for his 'slander against socialism' (after his novel *We* had been published in the Prague journal *Volya Rossii* without the knowledge of the author and in a re-translation from the English), was deprived of access to publication, and left the All Russian Union of Writers. He was exiled to Kam by the Tsarist regime, and in the 1920s by the Soviet government. In 1916, as if in voluntary exile, he had left for Britain to build icebreakers; and in June 1931, doomed to creative silence, and seeing no other way out than to go abroad, he wrote to Stalin: "One who has been condemned to the most extreme punishment — the author of the the present letter — appeals to commute that sentence to another."



Two sensibilities, "two wives", (in his own words, or more accurately, in the witticism he had borrowed from Chekhov) ruled Zamyatin — literature and technology, the craft of shipbuilding.

The 'two wives' lived peacefully together for a long time (which does not happen, as we know, in ordinary life). They had a beneficial effect one on the other. The artistic gift of fantasy helped in producing daring blueprints on Whatman paper (through Zamyatin's hands passed the first project since the "Yermak" of an icebreaker, the "Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich", and later in Newcastle, Britain, he participated in the creation of a whole fleet of icebreakers). The world of exact numbers and geometric lines, in their turn, invaded the 'chaos' the 'dream' of creation, assisted in the construction of themes, the crystallisation of characters. Zamyatin was truly the first writer-intellectual in Soviet literature.

Zamyatin was a witness to the gigantic geological and tectonic displacements when separate individuality (whose destiny was always at the centre of our classics) ceased to be a self-sufficient value. The collapse of traditional humanism, the mutual brutality, such as can perhaps manifest itself only in a civil — that is, to say, a fratricidal — war, the apparatus for the repression of dissident thought (reminding us of the 'Bureau of Guardians' in *We*), the holy but naive faith in the possibility of happiness very near to the threshold, the dissolution of 'I' into the million 'We' (of this virtually all the prolet-poetry of those years speaks: "All — we, in all — we, we are the flame, in the conquering light, we are ourselves, Godhead, and Judge, and Law", "We are one", "we are one", "we are one", "We and you — one body, we and you — indivisible") — all this amalgam went into the fabric of Zamyatin's principal work.

Still unknowing but only guessing what thorns lay ahead and what sacrifices would be required in the name of the sought for and cherished goal, Zamyatin strove to the extent of his capacities,

heretically no doubt, to warn of the threatening dangers which awaited the pioneers. It was, after all, a question of a grandiose experiment, unknown hitherto in human history.

And so, the question of questions: Do the great achievements, the goal, justify the means and the trials which fell to the lot of the people? Is this not the question that appears today at the centre of our spiritual life, of the burning controversies, of the demands — more socialism and more democracy?

However, Zamyatin's vision was directed not to the eyepiece of a microscope but to a telescope's lens. In the novel *We* the writer strives to speak (to use the words of P. Paltofsky in his afterword to another anti-utopia Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*) of "the mixing of socialist systems in the one technocratic cauldron". Zamyatin gave birth to a whole tradition, an impression of which can be given by a simple enumeration of names and titles: the already mentioned *Brave New World* of Huxley, Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*, George Orwell's *1984*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. But what is important for us is that Zamyatin was the first.

However, he too had his forerunners. Here, above all, I wish to recall Dostoevsky with his theme of the Grand Inquisitor.

This medieval archbishop, this Catholic shepherd, born of Ivan Karamazov's imagination, leads his flock to compulsory happiness with an iron hand. "He places to the credit of himself and his fellows," says Ivan to his brother Alyosha, "that he has overcome freedom and acted so as to make people happy." He is ready to crucify the returned Christ, so that latter should not hinder the people by his evangelical truths from "being united at last in one indisputable and harmonious anthill."

In *We* the Grand Inquisitor appears again — in the guise of the Benefactor.

In the hortatory conversation with the rebellious inventor of the "Intogcal" the Benefactor speaks of the same thing — of happiness forcibly grafted on humanity. "Remember — the blue hill, the cross, the crowd. One — above, his body drenched in blood, is being nailed to the cross; others — below, drenched in tears, look on. Does it not seem to you that the role of him above is the most difficult, the most important? . . . But the same Christian, merciful God, when he burns slowly in hellfire all those who are disobedient — is he not an executioner? And are those burnt by Christians at the stake fewer than the Christians who have been burnt? But understand: this God has nevertheless been praised down the ages as the God of love, Absurd? No, on the contrary: the patent for the inradicable rationality of man is written in blood. Even then — when he was a wild and shaggy creature — he understood: the true, algebraic love for humanity is necessarily inhuman, and the necessary sign of truth is its cruelty."

Here then appears the conflict between two polar opposites: for man or (apparently for his own good) against him; humanism or fanaticism, the latter proceeding from the fact that the people themselves need a harsh shepherd. It is not important who he is — a deified tyrant of a fierce Creator of all things: what matters is the possibility of driving man (for his own benefit) to the condition of a slave, an ant, a faceless "number". A question of the distant future and of the very recent past.

Zamyatin considered himself an incorrigible revolutionary in art, a heretic, a 'madman'. Evidence of this is there in the article of 1921, 'I'm afraid' — in its own fashion a warning.

"Most important is this," he said, "that real literature can exist only where it is made not by efficient and reliable functionaries, but by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels, sceptics. And if the writer has to be responsible, has to be orthodox in Catholic fashion, has to be immediately



useful, if he cannot whip everyone like Swift, if he cannot smile at everything, like Anatole Franco, then there is no literature of bronze, but only a literature on paper, a literature for newspapers, which one reads today and in which one wraps soap tomorrow. I am afraid there will be no real literature among us, until we stop regarding the Russian people as a child whose virginity it is necessary to protect. I am afraid there will be no real literature among us until we cure ourselves of any new Catholicism, which on less than the old fears every heretic word."

He loved the new Russia, had awaited the advent of the Revolution and lived by it ("I think," he acknowledged in his *Autobiography*, "that if in 1917 I had not returned from Britain, if I had not lived all these years with Russia, I could not have been a writer any more."). But he saw his duty, as writer and as citizen, not in composing odes of praise, but in applying himself above all to the sore spots of the time with the

aid of sharp criticism and bitter truth.

Zamyatin was not an emigre (in the sense of the emigres and exiles who remained unreconciled, casting off Russia as a result of the October Revolution and the Civil War). When he left his country, he definitely hoped to return, and he lived in Paris with a Soviet passport. For a time he even sent the secretary of the writers' publishing house in Leningrad, Z. A. Nikitina (thirty years later, she showed me his letter), money as rent for his flat.

A remarkable Russian writer, he was not the hopeless pessimist such as it is often sought to represent him (his anti-utopia, *We*, of course serving as the basis for this). In a later article titled 'Concerning my wives, icebreakers, and Russia', he defined his relationship to Russia, his faith in the providential character of what she had gone through, his faith that, overcoming stagnation and opposition, she was moving and would move onward:

"The icebreaker is a specifically Russian thing, as much as the samovar. No European country makes for itself such icebreakers. In no European country are they necessary; everywhere else the sea is open. Only in Russia is it bound by the ice of a merciless winner, and in order not to be cut off from the world, it becomes necessary to break those chains.

"Russia moves forward along a strange and difficult road, unlike the movement of other countries — a road uneven, spasmodic; it climbs up, and then suddenly it plunges down; around, there is rumbling and crackling; destroying, it moves forward."

Those words can be received today as an encouraging signal that Zamyatin sends us across the ice-hummocks and pack-ice, locked frozen by the hard, decades-long winner.

— Oleg Mikhailov

(Translated by  
Reggie Siriwardena)

**Ace Radio Cab—the city's only radio controlled cab service.**

- \* Computerised meters \* Can be summoned to your doorstep
- \* No call up charge within city limits \* Vehicle access from selected stands
- \* Receipts issued on request \* Company credit available

Call 501502, 501503 or 501504



**Aset Ltd**



Another Aitken Spence Service





## Thondaman re-Considered

In his recent statements Mr. Thondaman repeatedly keeps mentioning that his people have not gained anything worthwhile, in spite of the co-operation he has been extending towards the government. He goes on to say that the government is very reluctant even in granting the concessions promised.

When the Leader of the Indian Tamil Community in Sri Lanka joined the government, there were two opinions regarding the move, but the opinion that the community has about Mr. Thondaman, has always been the same.

Whether, Mr. Thondaman, joins the government or stands in opposition to it, he has one thing in mind—the well being of his people. That is the reason why this community, trusts him and endorses the trust by dowing the tools when he wants them to, by voting the way he asks them to etc. in spite of their being affiliated to various trade unions.

Has not the Indian Tamil community gained anything by its leader co-opting with the government? It has. Has that been adequate? The answer is No.

The government is giving excuses and has yet to grant citizenship even to those promised. No proper decision has been taken in the granting of houses or lands to these people. Even the vacancies on estates are being filled by complete outsiders. There has been many reports about the job of creche attendants being given to those who have no knowledge whatsoever of the child's language. The irony of the situation is that nothing is being done to correct the situation.

Already there is some murmur of dis-satisfaction in regard to the way that the community is being treated by the government. Though, not a single

Tamil candidate put forward by the U. N. P. has won a seat in the hill country (all those who were put forward by the C. W. C., but contested in the U. N. P. symbol) but two members from the U. S. A. have won the Provincial Council elections. The message is clear. What they are trying to say is, we still have confidence in you, but if you are not going to do anything then we will have no other alternative but to go elsewhere.

For long the Indian Tamil community cannot be treated like the goats given as sacrifice at the estate possai's, to save the government in power. The government must grant the rights of the people or else, just as Mr. Thondaman says 'it is time to re-consider the relationship'.

C. M. Navaratnam

Badulla.

## Harry Pieris — an Art of Life

I was encouraged to find that Tilak Gunawardena was provoked by my brief tribute "Harry Pieris — a Life in Art" (L. G. 01 May) to add some sociological brush strokes to what was meant to be a quick portrait of the artist I know. I agree substantially with Tilak Gunawardena's main observation (L. G. 01 June) that Harry Pieris never shook himself free of his colonial inheritance and his congenial establishment outlook on life. Consequently he was in no intellectual mood to derive any inspiration from the currents of political change and social upheaval going on around his carefully tended plot of a patrician past, in which he moved and his being.

He was essentially a creature of his cultural and economic environment, remaining securely moored in a leisured and affluent circle. This did not, however,

prevent him from striking out in certain bold directions in a conservative artistic climate antagonistic to such innovations, and for that we must remain grateful. He provided the stimulus for others to forage more audaciously than he was inclined to do. He also had the intelligence and perceptiveness to realise that other artists were unable to remain indifferent to the new manifestations of social and cultural change set in motion by the forces of independence, nationalism and socialism. Within his chosen limitations he strove to appreciate the new aesthetic urges, even if he may not have understood the reasons for their emergence in a larger society. He tried to identify and encourage these tendencies which he discerned that the creative talent was present.

The artistic history of twentieth-century Sri Lanka awaits a more studious research and a less restrictive approach. In the end, for better rather than for worse, art needs to be rescued from the clutches of a false sophistication and a spurious urban elitism, and restored as a natural plant and logical product of an enduring cultural mode, in keeping with the appropriate genius of a living society outside metropolitan walls. Colombo was not Ceylon even in the sixteenth century, and is even more estranged than ever before in contemporary Sri Lanka. It must be said, however, that it is not always necessary for art to reproduce or represent life, and to duplicate what we see. The artist makes us see, and some artists do so more than others. Harry, within his constraints, did just that, even though he may have belonged in the lesser category. Harry's art of life in Tilak Gunawardena's resurgent Asia certainly inhibited his search for daring experimentation and freedom of expression, but, to gently distort Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, every man can only become his own special kind of artist.

H. A. I. Goonetilleke



# YOU DESERVE A BETTER DEAL

Come to Sampath Bank  
with your NRFC

You've worked hard, may be for years, to earn your Foreign Currency. Far away from home. Perhaps in unkind climatic conditions.

You certainly deserve a better deal for your NRFC. We offer high interest rates for NRFC Savings Accounts in US Dollars and Pounds Sterling.

US \$ 7% p.a.  
£ Sterling 10% p.a.

Sampath Bank also maintains Fixed Deposit Accounts in foreign currencies.

NRFC Accounts - the earlier you start with us, the greater the reward.



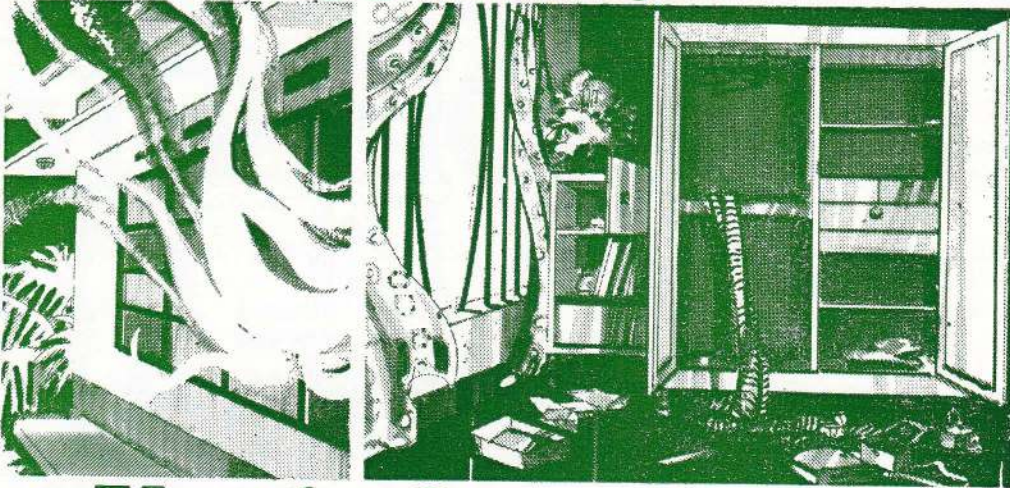
සමපතර බැංකුව  
**SampathBank**

SAMPATH BANK LIMITED  
55, D.R. WUEWARDENE MAWATHA, COLOMBO 10.  
TELEPHONE: 541332, 33582, 35085, 34431  
TELEX: 22760 ICBANK, 22761 SAMBK

*A truly Sri Lankan Bank for sons of the soil*



**You'll be the loser  
if this happens in your home.**



# Use the Security of a **Bank of Ceylon** Safe Deposit Locker.



Bank of Ceylon's Safe Deposit Lockers are available in three sizes, small, medium and large; large enough to accommodate all that very expensive jewellery you own, even those very costly sarees you treasure, and important documents, too. At very competitive prices,



Safe Deposit Lockers are available at the  
**PERSONAL  
BRANCH**  
Head Office  
75, Janadhipathi  
Mawatha,  
Colombo 1.



## **Bank of Ceylon**

Grant BJK&E BOC 1719