LSSP CONFERENCE — The rout of the rebels

LANKA GUARDIAN

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NEW ENEMIES

At closed-door meetings, seminars and public rallies where monks are the main participants, a new development confirms our report in the previous issue. Commenting on observations based on two such gatherings — one in Colombo (about 500 monks) and another in Anuradhapura (about 200) — a regular correspondent to the L.G. writes: "A common theme is emerging. The monks are identifying what they term the 'new enemies' of Sinhala-Buddhist culture. At the Colombo meeting there was only one reference to the Tamils, and it wasn't racial or rudely hostile as in the past".

Who are the 'new enemies'? Foreigners in general, notes our correspondent — Singaporeans, South Koreans, and even Taiwanese. Next, foreign land grabbers, meaning the Guthrie deal and other concessions to foreign firms. Finally, a fierce anti-Americanism.

TRINCO TALK

A strictly business transaction, with no political or military implications. That's the assurance that Colombo continues to offer Delhi over the US Coastal Corporation contract. Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel has followed in the footsteps of Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmudali who met Mrs. Gandhi herself in November.

Is Indian officialdom satisfied? If so, the Indian press is not. It remains openly sceptical. Last month the NATION (SLFP/S) republished an article from the influential **Times of India**. *An extensive report on Sri Lanka's foreign relations begins with a reference to an alleged "secret understanding" with the U.S. for the use of the "island's ports by the Seventh Fleet". It seeks to draw a parallel between facilities now enjoyed by the US in Egypt etc with the facilities the US expects in Sri Lanka. "In diplomatic circles here" the TIMES article concludes "there is already talk of the likelihood of granting base facilities.... Mrs. Bandaranaike heads the list of non-believers in the government's re-affirmation of commitment to genuine nonalignment".*

US. WITHDRAWAL

Suspicion in the Indian press persists despite other speculative accounts which should tend to underline any serious rationale for special facilities in Trinco. Recently, G. K. Reddy the veteran HINDU correspondent in the Indian capital suggested that there were signs of an American withdrawal from the Indian Ocean. Commentaries in the weekend press in Sri Lanka sought to elaborate on this somewhat tenuous thesis which might have acquired greater credibility than it deserved because Reddy is well known for his close contacts with South Block, the Indian foreign office. "But South Block is no monolith" was nicely phrased comment of an Indian journalist accompanying the other Reddy.

Joining the contingent of media sceptics were Anthony Mascerenhas, the wellknown Pakistan journalist, and Iqbal Athas, the senior Sri Lankan journalist. Writing in the widely read SUNDAY TIMES (London) they reported:

"Opposition politicians in Sri Lanka claim that the proposed deal is a thinly-disguised effort by the Americans to obtain a safe and convenient fall-back oil storage facility in time of crisis. Official spokesmen deny this. They say that the government has reserved the right to prohibit foreign naval vessels and customers using the tanks. But official sources privately admit that the attempt to prevent the diversion of oil to military purposes is illusory".

MEDIA MORTALITY

In the main media centres, state-controlled, professional life has always been a high-risk operation. This became increasingly evident in the late 60's and 70s. The mortality rate in the DAILY NEWS where the editor's seat is now styled 'the electric chair' is the classic illustration.

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The L. G. and Bala Tampoe

The Provisional National Committee for a Mass Workers' Party consists of the office-bearers and members of the Executive Committees of the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) and the Ceylon Estates Staffs' Union (CESU), and their respective general secretaries, as well as the office bearers of the Ceylon Plantation Services Union (CPSU). Keerthi Senevirathne, General Secretary of the CESU and CPSU, and I, General Secretary of the CMU, are the joint Secretaries of the Provisional National Committee.

The statement of the Provisional National Committee against the military dictatorship in Poland, and in support of the struggle

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HISTORY of LANKA — Great minds agree ?

NEWS BACKGROUND

President Jayewardene is often seen in the press receiving at his private residence assorted authors, some quite humble, and accepting copies of their latest work. It is well known that the President has not only a taste for books and a respect for scholarship but a special attachment to Sri Lankan history.

It was no surprise then that he lent lustre to a notable occasion last year when the respective publishers in Britain and India (OUP, India, and C. Hurst, London) of Prof. K. M. de Silva's book "*A History of Sri Lanka*" presented him a copy of this monumental study in the presence of the author. Not surprisingly the picture, it is reported, has been re-published in the widely known trade journal, *The Bookseller*, London.

The author whose outstanding academic record and scholastic achievements are listed in this book has been both Professor and Dean of the Arts Faculty at Peradeniya. In 1978, he was nominated to the University Grants Commission, and is also a Director of the Bank of Ceylon. Sometime ago, there was an unconfirmed report that he was working on a new book along with Dr. Howard Wriggins, the Columbia University scholar, and one-time US Ambassador in Colombo.

To use the author's own phrase, this is the first" comprehensive history" of this country since Sir Emerson Tennent wrote his book more than 100 years ago. Later writers — Codrington, Ludowyk, Arasaratnam — the author says "aimed at brief outlines, scholarly but impressionistic". So this imposing study is certain to occupy a niche in the whole corpus of historical writings on Sri Lanka.

In view of the gigantic scale of the study and the erudition obviously involved in such an undertaking the assistance of an academic association was invited in connection with a review. Hopefully, a full and formal review will be published soon.

In the meantime, a member of this academic body's "historians group" noted in a first run-through of the sections on economic history only, what he described as a series of striking "correspondences". The correspondences noted so far are with (1) an article by Michael Roberts and by L. A. Wickremaratne entitled "*Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century*". University of Ceylon, HISTORY OF CEYLON Vol. III (Colombo 1973); (2) a mimeographed work "*The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*" prepared by S. B. D. de Silva in 1975. A bound volume of this is in the S. S. A. Library. (3) A. D. V. de S Indraratne "*The Ceylon Economy from the Great Depression to the Great Boom*" (Colombo 1966).

What do these 'correspondences' mean? A meeting of minds? A pure coincidence? A simple secretarial or typist's error and an absence of inverted commas? Then, where are the inevitable mass of footnotes and acknowledgements? An inexplicable act of academic negligence or a freakish trick of memory? On the other hand, has Prof. de Silva opened himself to allegations of plagiarism. Since the word is derived from 'plagiare' (kidnap) could this be construed as academic kidnapping?

The readers of the *'Daily News'*, like our own readers, must wonder what this is all about when the author has been hailed as 'the wizard of Peradeniya' by fellow Peradeniya Professor, Dr. A. J. Wilson, now the Brahmin of Brunswick, Canada. This journal does not have researchers on its staff to give an authoritative answer. So the matter must be open to academic discussion, and most of all to some explanation from the author. Naturally, the L. G will not only welcome such a response but give it the prominence it would certainly deserve.

Meanwhile, we publish some of the 'correspondences' already noted. The reasons are obvious. Some of the authors whose writings are quoted but without acknowledgement, are in no position to complain, protest or intervene in any form. For instance, John Ferguson and T. L. Villiers.

Secondly, academic rigour and a scrupulous attention to academic procedures and proprieties are the necessary foundations of an academic tradition in this or any other country. The question in itself is a matter therefore of public interest and importance. Thirdly, this is a book on Sri Lanka; indeed, in Dr. Wilson's phrase, 'the last word' on it. Thus, it is of national concern.

In what follows the passages noted "A" are from Professor K. M. de Silva's book, and those marked "B" are from the respective authors who wrote on these subjects earlier.

Michel Roberts, Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century'. University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, vol. III (Colombo, 1973)

A: "Soaring coffee prices encouraged planters to expand production" (p. 286)

B: "Soaring *market prices encouraged planters to expand the area under coffee*". (p. 102)

A: From the beginning of the 1880s the decline was swift and almost total. The coffee plantations in Uva, seemingly more resistant to the disease than those elsewhere, survived into the 1890s but these too eventually succumbed." (pp. 286–7)

B: "*From 1881 the decline was rapid and comprehensive. The coffee grown in Uva showed the greatest*

resistance to disease and enjoyed an Indian summer in the 1890s, but it succumbed eventually." (p. 102)

A: "The sale of crown lands to Sri Lankans for coconut cultivation increased by over 200 to 300 percent in the North-Western Province during the 1880s, in complete contrast to trends elsewhere in the island." (p. 287)

B: "Land sales to 'natives' actually increased two fold and three fold in the North-Western Province during the 1880s in contrast to the trends elsewhere." (pp. 103-4).

A: The acreage under coconut constituted 37 percent of the total area under cultivation in 1871 (more than the area under coffee which accounted for about 21-23 percent); it increased to 41 percent of the total cultivated area in 1900 (when tea was 20 percent and paddy 32 percent)." (p. 287)

B: "The acreage under coconut constituted 37 percent of the total area under cultivation in 1871 (more than coffee which accounted for about 21-23%) and 41% of the total cultivated area in 1900 (when tea accounted for 20% and paddy for 32%)." (p. 104)

L. A. Wickremeratne, 'Export Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century'. University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, vol. III (Colombo, 1973)

A: "Tea cultivation in Sri Lanka as distinguished from amateurish experimentation, had begun in the 1860s." (p. 288)

B: "Tea cultivation in Sri Lanka — as distinct from amateurish experimentation may be said to have begun in the 1860s." (p. 106)

A: "The interest in tea cultivation was part of a wider attempt by coffee planters to introduce a variety of other crops which could be conventently grown alongside coffee at no great additional cost. (p. 288)

B: "The enthusiasm for tea cultivation at this time was part of a wider interest of the planter trying his hand at a variety of other crops which he believed could be conveniently grown alongside coffee and at no great additional cost. (p. 108)

A: Interest in cinchona, had much in common with that in tea, and in contemporary eyes its future potential was virtually on a level with that of tea." (pp. 288-9)

B: Interest in cinchona was as popular with the coffee planters as tea was, and with regard to future possibilities it was in contemporary eyes virtually on a level with tea." (pp 108-9)

L. A. Wickremeratne, 'Economic Development in the Plantation Sector, C. 1900 to 1947' University of Ceylon, vol. III (Colombo, 1973)

A: "When the British Government released the reserve stocks of tea which had been built during the war, hopes that improved shipping conditions and removal of wartime restraints would result in a return of the prosperity of the industry in Sri Lanka had enjoyed just before the war, was shown

to have been too sanguine." (pp. 402-3)

B: "The British Government released the reserve stocks of tea which it had accumulated as a wartime measure. Meanwhile the producers who had chafed under wartime restraints found themselves much better placed now with regard to shipping space, and this facilitated the expansion of exports." (p. 432)

A: "By 1920 the prices of the common varieties of tea had dropped sharply." (p.403)

B: "By 1920 the prices of the common varieties of tea fell sharply." (p.432)

A: "Under the stimulus of wartime conditions, the acreage under rubber had expanded between 1914 and 1919 by 25,000 acres, and this was sustained over the years 1918-20 when a further 32,000 acres were added." (p.403)

B: "Between 1914 and 1918 under the stress of war demands there had been an increase in the acreage amounting to approximately 25,000 acres, and in the period of 1918-20 the rubber acreage had increased by a further 32,000." (p.435)

A: "Prices fell by 1921 to 7d. a pound, which was well below the costs of production for most rubber producers" (p.403)

B: "In 1921....the rubber prices for that year averaged a paltry 7d. which, for the bulk of the producers, was well below the costs of production." (p.435)

A: "The producers in India and Sri Lanka, the main areas of tea production, responded to the hard times with voluntary restrictions on productions and this almost immediately had the desired effect. Prices improved, and indeed these new schemes of restriction worked so well that by 1926 the principle of restrictions itself was abandoned." (p.403)

B: "Faced with the crisis, tea producers, especially in India and Ceylon, resorted to voluntary restriction. In practice this was successful because tea production was really concentrated in India and Ceylon... Indeed with prices tending to rise the point was reached when there seemed to be little justification in prolonging these schemes of voluntary restrictions, and they were finally abandoned in 1926." (p.433)

A: "In the period of 1920-30 the area under tea production expanded by 53,000 acres but this recovery proved to be shortlived." (p.403)

B: "In the period of 1920-30 the area under tea increased by 53,000 acres. But the recovery was shortlived." (p.432)

A: "Only the bigger and more commercially viable producers were anxious for restrictions and the smaller firms and smallholders were reluctant to join in such schemes." (p.403)

B: "Inspite of the ready and favourable response of the larger companies to impose restrictions on themselves, smaller firms and smallholders were reluctant to do so." (p.435)

A: "Although the Colonial Office would not yield to insisting demands from the larger producers to have restrictions on production imposed on the whole industry, the British Government nevertheless stirred itself to some action with regard to the formulation of a comprehensive scheme to restrict production, but the obstacle this time was that the Netherlands would not join it." (p. 403)

B: "The big rubber producers began to bring pressure on the Colonial Office to implement compulsory restrictions. The Colonial Office was however unsympathetic. Nevertheless the British Government stirred itself to appoint a committee under Sir James Stevenson to review the problem. The hope of successfully formulating a restrictive scheme... was however nullified by the openly expressed unwillingness of the Netherlands to join such a scheme." (p.435)

A: "Eventually a scheme applicable to British Malaya and Sri Lanka, the principal sources from which the Empire obtained its supplies of rubber was devised — the 'Stevenson Scheme' — and was in force from 1922 till 1928. This was the first attempt to regulate the production and supply of rubber." (p.403)

B: The Stevenson Committee therefore settled for a scheme or restriction which applied to both British Malaya and to Ceylon, the principal sources from which the Empire obtained its supplies of rubber. The Stevenson scheme which was in force from 1922 till 1928 was the first formal attempt to regulate the supply of rubber." (p.435)

A: "By 1924-25 the price of a pound of rubber had risen to 2s. 3d.. by 1930 the price of rubber was a mere 5 5/16 d. In 1932 it had sunk even lower to 2 5/16 d." (p. 404)

B: "By 1925 the more important rubber companies in Ceylon were able to obtain 2sh. 3d. per pound.. By 1930 the price of rubber had fallen to 5 5/16 d. per pound in 1932." (pp.435-36)

S. B. D. de Silva, The Political Economy of Underdevelopment Mimeographed typescript, 1975. Available in the library of the Social Scientists Association

A: "The period for which working capital was required in coffee production was governed by the long time-lag between the expenditure of money and the realisation of the proceeds from sales of the crop.." (p.273)

B: "The period for which working capital was required in coffee production was governed by the long time lag between expenditure and realisation of the plantation proceeds." (p.398)

*A: "It took nearly a year between the harvesting of the crop and its sale in London." (p.273)

B: "From the time that the (coffee) crop was sold in London it took nearly a year so that financing was an all important part'." (T.L. Villiers, **Some Pioneers of the Tea Industry** (Colombo, 1951), p.7) (p.398)

A: "..despite the low wages of plantation labour, the absolute volume of current expenditure in coffee estates was large, and claimed a significant portion of the funds available." (p.273)

B: "..despite the low wages of plantation labour the absolute volume of current expenditure was large and claimed a significant portion of the available funds. (p.398)

A: "..because of the great vulnerability of coffee crops to

variations in rainfall, coffee cultivation involved extraordinary risks." (p 398)

B: "Coffee cultivation involved considerable risk due partly to the extreme vulnerability of the crop to variations in rainfall." (p.399)

A: "The coffee crop for the whole year was often dependent on the weather during a single month; a week's — or a day's — untimely or unseasonal rain might well destroy the chance of an adequate return for a whole year's labour." (p.273)

B: "'The coffee crop for the whole year was often dependent on the weather during a single month; or even a week's (or a day's untimely rain or drought might destroy the chance of an adequate return for a whole year's labour'." (John Ferguson **Ceylon in 1903**, (Colombo, 1903, 70.) (p.399)

A: "Fluctuating exchange rates and delays and difficulties in shipping posed formidable difficulties for those engaged in plantation agriculture at this time." (p.273)

B: "Fluctuating exchange rates, and delays and difficulties of shipping imposed other risks on export agriculture in this period." (p.399)

A: "Before direct financing by the capital market became the rule, the agricultural and commercial risks involved in early plantation investment strengthened the well-known reluctance of British commercial banks to purchase long-term securities, or to advance money on land or fixed equipment, in the belief that foreign plantations were 'the most objectionable of all fixed securities'."

B: "Before direct financing by the capital market became the rule, these agricultural and commercial risks of early plantation investment increased the well-known reluctance of British commercial banks to purchase long-term securities, or to advance money on land or fixed equipment. . In an issue of **The Economist** which Marx quoted in his discussion on merchant capital, foreign plantations were described as 'the most objectionable of all fixed securities'." (p.400)

A: "Despite initial discouragement from their principals in London, the agency houses regarded plantations as good investments."

B: "Despite initial discouragement from their head offices in Britain, mercantile firms regard plantations as a good investment for this surplus." (p.401)

A. D. V. de S. Indraratne, The Ceylon Economy, From the Great Depression to the Great Boom (Colombo, 1966).

A: "In general, the effects of the Great Depression were felt more severely in countries like Sri Lanka, producing primary commodities for export than in industrial economies." (p.464)

B: "The effects of this international spread of depression was more severe in primary producing export economies like Ceylon." (p.1)

A: "The revenue from exports plunged from Rs. 479 million in 1927 to Rs. 189 million in 1932, reflecting the decline in prices of her main exports, while the price index fell from 169 in 1927 to 65 in 1932, even though there was a slight increase — from 97 to 102 — in the volume of these exports."(p.464)

B: "The total value of Ceylon's exports fell from 479.0 million rupees in 1927 to 189.0 million in 1932. This fall was entirely due to a decline in export prices. For while the price index fell from 169 in 1927 to 56 in 1932 the volume index rose from 99 to 102." (p.2)

A: "The terms of trade registered a sharp fall from 99 in 1927 to 61 in 1930, the drop being as much as 15 percent per annum in the years 1929–32." (p.454)

B: "Ceylon's terms of trade continued to fall from 99 in 1927 to 61 in 1932. The percentage fall for Ceylon from 1929 to 1932 was 15%." (pp.2–3)

"The fall in the terms of trade contributed most to the decline in real incomes." (p.46)

B: "The factor which contributed most to decline in real income during this period was the fall in terms of trade." (p. 6)

A: It is estimated that over 9,000 Sri Lankans and 84,000 Indians lost their jobs between 1927 (sic.) and 1932. . . .Outside the plantations about one-tenth of those employed

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LSSP CONFERENCE

Resounding defeat for 'rebels'

"There were some heated exchanges of course — we are not a monolithic organisation, you know — but there was no explosion, no division" a top-ranking LSSP'er told the *Lanka Guardian* a day after the party conference. In fact, no vote was taken on the two resolutions. The "Essential basis of a programme for the next government" was unanimously adopted.

Expectations of a confrontation, if not an explosion, were raised partly by the reports appearing in the *DINAKARA*, the Sinhala daily of the SLFP (S). The *DINAKARA* seemed to be convinced that there was a sizeable section within the party that would challenge the leadership's line, principally its 'working relationship' today with the SLFP (M).

The position of the leadership of course is that it is neither pro-SLFP (M) nor pro-SLFP (S) and would dearly love to work with both as part of its declared strategy of building an 'anti-UNP struggle front' which may, hopefully, move into a higher stage of co-operation and coalition. It is not the leadership's fault that the SLFP (S) closed the door on the LSSP when it refused to participate along with the SLFP (M) at the first New Town Hall rally.

Another criticism directed at the leadership was on foreign policy, mainly its 'silence' (no official resolution or statement) on Poland.

There is only one thing common to these two groups. The leading spokesman of both is Anil Moonesinghe, the party's deputy secretary (political). Otherwise there are sharp points of difference between these "dissident" groups. A notable example is Sarath Nawanna, the editor of the party's (semi-official) daily JANADINA. He can be at times as intensely anti-Soviet as Anil but he is an N.M. loyalist to the marrow and therefore a virulent critic of Mrs. B., whose greatest admirer-cum-supporter in the party is Anil.

While the LSSP still retains residual traces of Trotskyism, it is no longer anti-Soviet. Firstly, it takes what it regards as a realistic view of the international situation and the global balance of forces, and its perspective is a Marxist 'class' approach. It therefore evaluates the general situation and each important international issue in relation to the interests of the working class. In doing so, it finds these interests and the interests of the peoples of the Third World closer to the socialist camp than to the camp of imperialism and neo-colonialism.

Thus, whatever its criticism of the Polish C.P. or of 'stalinist bureaucracies', it will not, objectively, identify itself with the US. Hence, it was theoretician Hector Abhayavardana's views on Poland that reflected the 'party line', and not the personal opinion of pamphleteer Anil Moonesinghe.

As far as the conference itself went, the important question was: how strong was this group of critics?

"It was a resounding defeat for the Anil group" said an LSSP academic who was elected to the Central Committee.

There were two tests of relative strength: (a) the number of places they would find in the Central Committee and (b) the actual placings on the final list of 51.

Most party members say that the Anil group increased its numbers slightly but they still do not add up to 10. Besides, none of them, Anil included, came within the first 10. (Even Carlo Fonseka who is on a sabbatical in Saudi Arabia) beat Anil Moonesinghe, some of whose 'comrades' were placed in the 40-to-51 tail-end.

Ironically, it was Anil Moonesinghe who presented 'the International report'. The first section is a review of the current situation. It highlights the atrophy of detente, phenomenal growth of armaments, the 'more aggressive pose' of imperialism after Regan, the economic crisis in the capitalist world, the rise of the Left and anti-war feeling in Europe, and the deepening 'contradictions' of capitalism.

While national liberation movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa, are tearing imperialism apart, the capitalist West is also losing its raw material sources and markets.

The section on 'Planned economies' notes that the rate of accumulation of capital in the socialist states, including the USSR, is seriously affected by the need to keep pace with imperialism in the arms race. This delays development of the economy in the socialist direction. Nonetheless the achievements of the USSR, Eastern Europe and China "shows the world the vistas of economic development possible under a planned economy".

However the emergence of a bureaucratic class has created political and economic weaknesses, and it is this which leads to shortages, inefficiency, waste etc, causing economic and political explosions.

History of Lanka . . .

(Continued from page 6)

in commercial firms belonging to the Employer's Federation were retrenched in the aftermath of the Depression." (p. 464)

B: "Between *1929 and 1932 above 9000 Ceylonese and 84,000 Indians lost their jobs. . . .In 1931, according to the Ceylon Employers' Federation estimate 10% of the total number of employees in firms belonging to the association were discontinued.*" (p. 4)

A: "Minimum wages of plantation workers were reduced." (p. 464)

B: "*The minimum wages of the estate workers were also reduced.*" (pp. 4-5)

India, the IMF and imperialism today

Gail Omvedt

The drama of the negotations of the $5.7 billion IMF loan to India, the largest in the history of the IMF, is a striking illustration of the changing dilemmas of imperialism today.

Opposition to the loan has come not only from Indian left and democratic force but also from an unexpecced quarter — from the U. S. itself. Questions were raised about the size of the loan even while negotiations were going on, the U. S. abstained during the final IMF voting on the issue, and a special Congressional committee has raised objections focusing particularly on the possibility that India may use some of its new foreign exchange for purchasing Mirage jets from France, i. e. for independent political purposes.

The Indian opposition makes the expected accusation that in accepting IMF "conditionality" the Indira Gandhi government has forsaken the country's path of self-reliance and is "selling out the country to a new foreign dependence" — while the U. S. opposition feels that not enough conditions have been imposed.

But both the oppositions have an interesting agreement on one point chat in spite of the huge gap in India's balance of payments, such a massive loan is not **really** necessary at this time. And this point has also been stressed by the Indian government, which argues chat because of the lack of an absolute crisis due to still substantial foreign exchange reserves, India has been in a strong bargaining position. As Finance Minister Venkataraman put it, "If I go to borrow with $3 billion in reserves I go as a borrower, if I go to borrow with $ 500 million in reserves I go not as a borrower but as a beggar."

Generally the Indian government has been little troubled by oppositional efforts to raise agitation against the loan, and Prime Minister Gandhi herself spoke only for two minutes during a parliamentary debate on the subject to say that it was "inconceivable" that India would accept any aid "which dictates terms not in consonance with the nation's policies."

India's IMF loan, though the biggest, is not the first of its kind. Pakistan last year took a $ 1.7 billion loan, also without devaluation being imposed, and the IMF recently has taken up a policy of making such "medium-term" loans, given over a period of years and with less conditionality than normal. Similarly, the relatively quiescent acceptance of the loan within India and opposition from the U. S. — paradoxical as this may seem to these for whom the IMF has been the biggest symbol of the imperialist "debt trap" imposing brutal subjugation on Third World peoples — is also becoming a general feature. U S opposition began with the new Reagan government's refusal to approve full funds for the IDA, the affiliate of the World Bank which gives "soft loans" at concessional rates to the poorest Third World countries. It was shown at the most recent meeting of the World Bank and IMF when it was decided to downgrade the role of these institutions in international lending relative to private bank lending. Finally, at the North-South Cancun meeting it was the Third World leaders who pleaded for an expanded but "nonpolitical" role for the IMF and World Bank in meeting the international economic crisis, while Reagan extolled the role of private capital.

It seems that the IMF and World Bank have become for Reagan and his advisors the symbol of an international public sector and so "world welfarism". In this context it is natural that India, which has been the biggest recipient of IDA "soft loans" (it received 41% of total IDA loans between 1961 and 1978) and has yet had an occasionally "anti-American" foreign policy, should come in for the brunt of right wing wrath. But beyond this the changing nature of IMF and World Bank lending, their changing roles in the world, and the changing attitudes towards them of Third World and imperialist countries, are crucial indicators of the new situation of imperialism today.

India's loan

As for India's loan, the facts are relatively simple. India has not yet borrowed any money; it has gained access to a line of credit of 5 billion SDRs ($pecial Drawing Rights) or about $ 5.7 b. The first installment of 1000 SDRs will be released by June 1982, and the next two installments in the following twoyears, assuming continuing approval of Indian policies by the IMF. Half the total loan will be at a concessional rate of 6% interest at something less than the open market rate of 20%. Repayment will begin in the fourth year and total interest rates will add an estimated nearly $ 4 billion to India's debt.

As for conditions, an IMF loan without conditions is like a soldier without a gun; the question is only of the degree of armament. With each IMF application, the country applying writes ac "letter of intent" in which it expresses as its own policies the terms agreed to in previous discussions. The terms of India's letter, which the government had cried to keep secret, were leaked to a representative of an Indian daily by a Latin American director of the IMF.

In its letter the Indian government promises to: continue current agricultural policies including prices for farm products sufficient to stimulate production; maintain policies appropriate for stimulating production and capital investment in the private sector; raising prices of public sector goods and services in line with cost; raising indirect taxes to compensate for reduction in direct taxes, lessening restrictions on multinational companies that come in the way of export limits on raising government expenses; lessening restrictions on imports

all practical policies directed at increasing exports; and, finally, consultation with the IMF on all major policies and providing all necessary information to the IMF.

Devaluation, the main previous IMF bugbear, is not included in this, but it is clear that the Indian government is taking the direction of fulling opening its economy to western investment and selling, and is ready to allow the IMF a major voice in determing the specific policies appropriate to this stategy. Yet the Indian government is also right in saying that these policies have not been "forced" on it by the IMF but are rather its own policies. In fact the loan itself is only a result of the turn that is being taken in India's economic development — not the cause of it.

Two paths of capitalist development

To understand the background to this, we can begin by noting that the efforts of third world governments at achieving capitalist development have taken varying forms. Generally, though, two main paths can be discingulshed:

(1) Many countries have followed a "national-populist" path which emphasizes relative self-reliance, a stress on the public sector especially for building infrastructure and core industries (steel, oil, heavy machinery), tariffs and import substitucation, licensing and other forms of control over both national and foreign monopolies, and land reforms aimed at cutting the power of the traditional big landlord class. All these are normally undertaken under the name of "socialism" and with a pro-Soviet foreign policy.

(2) Other countries have chosen a more "neo-colonial" path, involving fewer controls, a more limited public sector and far more openness to foreign investment. States following such a path are more pro-Western in their foreign policy and normally more dictatorial internally, but often achieve relatively high growth rates.

These are both paths, or varying policies, of development **within** the framework of the imperialist world economy (and both types of countries can be said to be within the capitalist system, whatever the degree of their pro-Soviet foreign policy, in contrast to post-revolutionary societies). Both maintain and develop the power of a native bourgeoisie, exercize internal repression, and show a great deal of internal inequality in the face of whatever development they achieve. Even in the "national-populist" path a bourgeoisie develops (though sections of it may be suppressed for time), the private sector in industry and agriculture retains considerable importance, and popular movements and local communist parties may be brutally crushed. Conversely even the most "neocolonial" countries maintain some public sector, put some restrictions on foreign capital, and go through phases of encouraging local bourgeois development through import substitution policies.

In fact there are frequent examples of countries veering from one path to another. The national-populist policies seem especially fragile, because of the inherent contradiction in trying to maintain mass welfare programs (let alone real "socialist" policies) within the capitalist framework, and there are many cases of countries which have followed populist and state-sector oriented policies for decades veering suddenly and starkly to a pro-Western orientation: Indonesia in 1965 after Sukarno's death, Egypt in 1970 with the shift from Nasser to Sadat, Pakistan in 1977 with Zia replacing Bhutto.

And now, perhaps, India.

With the exception of a few years of uncertainty after independence, India has been a prime proponent of a national-populist developmental path, which it itself has described as "socialist". A large public sector, land reforms, controls and licensing procedures, and heavy import duties have all been part of this. The first wave of such development came with the Second Five Year Plan in 1955, and in 1956 an important industrial policies resolution classified industries in three main categories and reserved all new growth in 17 "basic and strategic" industries (including iron and steel, atomic energy, defence, heavy electricals, coal, petroleum, mining, railways, communications, electricity) to the state; the private sector was allowed only limited participation in another 12 "essential" industries.

Though this policy has by and large been maintained, there has been relaxation at various times, under U. S. pressure. Then in 1969-70, after a major political-economic crisis in which the ruling Congress party had suffered heavy losses, a "left turn" was taken under the leadership of Indira Gandhi who had just come into power. With the slogan of "remove poverty" (*garibi hatao*) came bank nationalisation (1969), the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTPA, 1969) and the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA, 1973) which required foreign companies to dilute their foreign capital to, in most cases, 40% or under. When FERA was enforced under the Janata regime in 1977-78, two major multinationals, Coca-Cola and IBM, chose to leave India rather than allow Indian participation in management and shareholding.

One result now is a fairly strong public sector, which as 67% of employment in the organized sector (this includes of course all government administration, and represents only 6% of the entire economy) and about 23% of employment and 25% of sales of the manufacturing sector. Public sector dominace is relatively higher among the very largest companies, and represents nearly 100% of iron and steel, oil, mining, banking etc. One estimate has it that the two largest public sector companies (Indian Oil and Steel Authority of India, Ltd., which rank 94th and 204th respectively among the largest non-US world industrial corporations) are about equal to the two big private business houses, Tata and Birla, which of course include numerous companies under various names and with various degrees of control.

Along with this, India has relatively less foreign capital than most Third World countries. Here estimates are very hard to come by — one is that only 5% of India's exports of manufactures are MNC-

controlled in contrast to 40–90% among other major Third World exporters. But one scholar has estimated that in 1972 foreign companies, defined as those with over 25% foreign capital, had 24.4% of the sales and 46.5% of gross profits of the total corporate sector (including government companies). A more recent estimate, for 1977 78 (after some significant nationalisations had occurred) showed that of the top 200 industrial corporations, companies with over 40% foreign capital represented 15.2% of all sales — contrasted with 50.4% sales held by public sector companies.

The problem in assessing such figures is one of defining exactly how much foreign capital (10%? 25%? 50%?) is necessary for foreign "control"; the issue is crucial because in India as in most Third World countries the tendency is for the relative share of foreign capital to decline in the companies associated with them, under pressure of policies of nationalisation, "Indianisation" and the like. Does such a decline mean that the local bourgeoisie or state is gaining real control — or only that the MNC is gaining access to local capital and local junior partners? While often only a small share of total capital can mean significant foreign control, it is also true that transnational corporations have resisted selling their stocks in large chunks to large Indian companies or the government, partly out of fear of losing control. On the other hand even big Indian monopolies and huge public sector corporations remain highly dependent on foreign technology and collaborations where direct foreign investment may not be involved. Nevertheless, when compared with countries like Brazil, the Philippines, South Korea etc. India has clearly more of a public sector, a more sophisticated domestic bourgeoisie, and relatively less foreign capital.

But India has also had slower growth. Recently some 10 Third World countries have been hailed as NICs, "newly industrialized countries", the real international "success stories" with over 20% of employment and output now in manufacturing. These include South Korea, Hong Kong, Philippines, Singapore, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Columbia, Taiwan and Egypt. These have all had relatively high growth rates per capital between 1960 and 1980 (up to 4 to 7%), and have a relatively high percentage of their manufacturing exports from MNCs located within their borders. (20–80%). India, with still less than 10% of its GNP in the manufacturing sector, has been out of this league and is a major Third World industrial nation only by virtue of its size. Its growth rate has been slower, and between 1960 and 1976 it sank from being the 18th largest industrial nation in the world (measured by total value added by industry to GDP) to the 22nd; now it is out-ranked by five Third World countries — China, Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Mexico. China itself has four times the GNP and 10 times the industry of India. Similarly, in terms of percent share of Third World manufacturing exports, India has sunk from second place in 1965, with 17.6% to 7th place in 1975s with 6.3%.

Put briefly, India's efforts at populism and self-reliance, aside from maintaining the exploitation of the toiling masses by the Indian and foreign bourgeoisie, the state and rich landowners, have resulted in only halting development. Populism within the framework of imperialism is internally contradictory and it is perhaps natural that now India's ruling classes — who after all have no desire to break this framework — are casting envious eyes abroad — at countries like Brazil, South Korea, the Philipinnes which have been following a path of open dependence. Why maintain populism when it leads not to real self-reliance but only to weakness? "And so the state is turning to "export-oriented" development involving massive infusions of foreign capital and technology and reliance on institutions like the World Bank and IMF.

Indira Gandhi's new policies

Although tendencies to "liberalization" of economic controls were developing under the Janata regime, the clear change came with the return of Indira Gandhi to power in January 1980. Gandhi, whose *garibi hatao* slogan heralded the "left turn" of 1969–70, is now leading the opposite turn.

On the one hand, recent policy statements have signalled a significant relaxation of the traditional industrial policy, including allowing private (including foreign) participation in many "basic sector" industries, regularizing "unlicensed" capacity (this means permitting private monopolies to produce openly and legally what they had previous been producing in defiance of government restrictions), allowing foreign oil MNCs to participate in off-coast oil exploration, and promising that there will be no more nationalisations. On the other hand the turn also includes heightened repressive laws such as the National Security Ordinance (NSO) and the ban on strikes in "essential services".

Plans and calls for "modernization" of industry are being heard everywhere. The mouthpieces of the Indian bourgeoisie have been proclaiming for some time the inefficiency and archaic nature of much of India's current capital stock and calling for vast amounts of new investment which can only come from outside the country. A modernization process has begun, for example in textiles, India's number one industry, involving the purchase of new machines of immensely higher productivity which are invariably foreign, and there is a drive to step up this process. In steel, where India's production has been stagnant in spite of several major steel mills, two new plants are projected. And in spite of three decades of public sector steel plants and engineering technology development, in spite of the fact that Indian consultants are helping countries like Nigeria to build steel plants, the new plants will be built on a "turnkey" basis with 100% foreign aid. One at Visakhapatnam will be built with Soviet aid, and one at Paradip in Orissa by a British company. Similar "modernization" plants, involving similar purchases of capital equipment from abroad, can be seen in almost every sector from railways to electricity. It seems clear that though imports of capital goods as a percentage of total capital formation in India declined from 43% in 1960–61 to 9% in 1973–74, this will now be reversed.

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All of this obviously means that, quite apart from oil bills or imports of vegetable oil or any other "necessary" items, a vast amount of foreign exchange will be required. And this comes at a time when traditional sources of foreign aid from capitalist governments and concessional agencies like IDA are drying up. So India has been looking abroad for capital, from foreign commercial banks, from public agencies like the World Bank, from Japan from the Arabs, anywhere. It has naturally then seemed quite logical for the government to try to get one huge loan now, from the IMF when it is available and when the country is in a relatively stronger position, for though interest rates will be high they and the resulting debt-service will still be lower than equivalent commercial borrowings.

Thus Indian critics who only accuse the government of taking a loan that is not "necessary" in terms of immediate balance of payments problems are missing the point; the government is not concerned about a balance of-payments crisis as such but about "development" — about financing the form of dependent capitalist development it is aiming at. The IMF loan, in a very real sense, is as much for "development" as for balance-of-payments (and this also says something about changes in the IMF). The Indian government is gambling that though the debt service will be high it will not be unbearable and that it will be no higher than the debt services under which other Third World countries have achieved significant growth. Before it are examples of such "successful" developing countries as Brazil, Argentina, South Korea, the Philippines etc. And it is by no means adverse to the brutally dictatorial and anti-working class policies of these regimes. For the organized working class in India has been waging powerful and sometimes uncontrollable strike struggles in the last ten years, and the unorganized urban and rural toilers have also been stirring. Finding a way to control such toilers movements, finding a way to halt mass movements (sometimes reactionary, sometimes progressive) among rich farmers and higher castes, and in various regional-national areas such as Jharkhand, Assam and the Punjab, has become a major worry of the state. Thus neither the pro-western openness of IMF policies nor the repression these inevitably involve are at all at odds with the current strategy of the Indira Gandhi government.

And here it seems clear that the Indian bourgeoisie as a whole is with it. The bourgeoisie has called for, not opposed, pro-Western investment policies and "liberalization" measures. Opposition bourgeois political parties, and even the socialist forces now in the Janata party have been consistently sabotaging all recent efforts proposed by left forces to unite in opposition to anti-working class measures. And the bourgeoisie has questioned the IMF loan only recently when it has seemed as if the U.S. right wing was going to far in attempting to impose "political" conditions on top of the already accepted economic policies. The Indian bourgeoisie has warned against complacency as a result of the loan and has challenged the "new strident posture" of the Reagan regime, but this involves no real opposition to Indira Gandhi, who continues to be its best political representative.

Thus India's IMF loan reveals a situation where IMF "conditions", specifically the maintenance of a capitalist path, are (in diluted form) not simply forced on Third World nations but acceded to without much disagreement as a result of the crisis coming from the nature of their own capitalist development.

U.S. and Bretton Woods institutions

But why is there **U.S.** opposition to the IMF loan now? Why is the Reagan administration turning against the efforts of World Bank and IMF officials to widen the scope of these institutions, seemingly trying to cut down the very institutions American imperialism had given birth to, which have served it so faithfully all these years? This has now become a crucial question; its answer points to the changing nature of imperialism today, but to understand this again we should go back to the founding of the IMF and World Bank at Bretton Woods in **1944.**

It was clear that after the war there would be a resurgence of capitalist development throughout the world, in the context of reconstruction in Europe and new developmental efforts of post-colonial Third World nations. It was also clear that this would take place in the context of a socialist challenge and desires for independence by Third World countries. What was necessary were some form of "public" institutions — to insure a flow of necessary capital where private capitalists were unwilling to go to provide protection for private capital, and to ensure that whatever development occurred was in the framework of imperialism itself.

Only there were from the beginning differences about the nature of these institutions: Britain's Keynes proposed a plan that would have involved more public funds and balance-of-payments lending that left the borrowing countries free to impose tariffs and other protective measures for their own industries. In contrast, the U.S.'s White Plan proposed that (1) The new bank should lend only to the extent the private capital was insufficient and serve mainly to guarantee private investment; as one World Bank publication puts its, "the emphasis from the beginning was not so much on what the Bank could lend out of its paid-in capital as on the concept of the Bank as a safe bridge over which private capital could move into the international field." (2) The new lending fund should have power to interfere in the internal affairs of borrowing countries, and specifically to demand the abolition or lessening of restrictions on "free trade" (freedom for imperialist nations to invest and sell) and measures like currency devaluation.

It was the United States proposals what came to prevail, and the new institutions that were set up — the World Bank for "developmental" lending, the IMF for balance-of-payments crisis short-term lending — were more or less along the lines of the White Plan. Further, since voting power as according to the amount of contributed capital, the U.S. also had the dominant voice, with 36% of stock at the beginning. Since an important issuse an 80% vote is mandated, the U.S. also had effective veto power.

(To be continued)

FANON — (3)

The Socialist alternative

Marguerite Jayatilleka

The main theme in 'The Wretched of the Earth' is that the anti-colonial national liberation struggle should be in the first phase of a single revolution which, in the last analysis is essentially a socialist revolution, and that this end could only be achieved through the means of armed struggle. Fanon, as we noted earlier, identified two phases of the Revolution. The struggle is not only against the colonial power, but now it has also to be waged against the native bourgeoisie. It is in this manner that genuine national independence and liberation are guaranteed. Fanon is now the socialist revolutionary. In the Preface to the book Jean-Paul Sartre is very correct when he writes:

> "In order to triumph, the national revolution must be socialist; if its career is cut short, if the native bourgeoisie takes over power, the new State, in spite of its formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialists".

We see the development of Fanon clearly in the chapter 'Concerning Violence'. He deals with the question of decolonization very comprehensively, and carries out a scathing attack on the native bourgeoisie. Here, it is the socialist option that Fanon embraces. Fanon provides us with ample reasons as to why the national or native bourgeoisie should be by passed in a national liberation struggle. We could raise the question as to whether certain traditional CP ideologues are correct in criticing Fanon for 'welding together' the national liberation movement and the socialist revolution. Some Trotskyists, on the other hand, have tried to adopt Fanon for this same reason. In the article 'The First Truths on the Colonial Problem' which appeared in 'Toward the African Revolution' it is very clear that Fanon identified the **two** distinct phases of the revolution. However, he is correct in saying that the national middle class or native bourgeoisie is incapable of carrying through the tasks of the first phase, and thus a national revolution should move into the second phase, i.e. socialist revolution, without falling into the trap of neo-colonialism.

Fanon was basically correct in his assessment of the native bourgeoisie and the nationalist parties. This national bourgeoisie consists of the "economic elite", an "elite engaged in trade", and the "intellectuals, who have learnt from their colonial masters". (Wretched of the Earth'). This national bourgeoisie adopts non-violent means of struggle, and carry on a continuous dialogue with the colonialist bourgeoisie. After they secure nominal independence, they are incapable of transforming society and become increasingly dependent upon the West. Fanon exposes them in a fine piece of writing:

> "Spoilt children of yesterday's colonialism and of today's national governments, they organize whatever national resources exist. Without pity, they use today's national distress as a means of getting on through scheming and legal robbery, by import export combines, limited liability companies, gambling on the stock-exchange, or unfair promotion "
>
> (Concerning Violence)

Then again, trying to show that they were too weak and incapable of struggling for genuine national liberation, refusing to "follow the path of revolution", Fanon states:

> "The national middle-class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace".
>
> (The Pitfalls on National Consciousness)

He was also correct when he said that:

> "The national bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of the former European settler... The national middle class discovers its historic mission that of intermediary . The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie's business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner .... "
>
> (The Pitfalls of National Consciousness)

Business, agriculture and the liberal professions are the main types of activity that this national bourgeoisie engages in. After they have gained national independence, Fanon points out that tourism is built up, as a national industry. "It will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe." (Ibid) More than that, the only type of industrialization that it will be capable of is a "neo-colonial industrialization", mainly consisting of "assembly plants". It is a dependent industrialization (i.e., an industrialization dependent upon international capital and markets). This is no true bourgeoisie: "There is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, ... So, if this bourgeoisie is "Good for nothing", Fanon writes:

> "In under-developed countries, the bourgeoisie should not be allowed to find the conditions necessary for its existence and its growth. In other words, the combined efforts of the masses led by a party and of intellectuals who are highly conscious and armed with revolutionary principles ought to bar the way to this useless and harmful middle-class".
>
> (The Pitfalls of National Consciousness)

Fanon's indictment of the national parties follows from his analysis of the national bourgeoisie. During the colonial period, he points out that their action is of an electoral type. Their programmes are of a reformist nature and are ambiguous on the question of armed struggle. In the chapter 'Concerning Violence' Fanon has this to say about the leaders of these parties: "They are violent in their words and reformist in their attitudes". An error that Fanon makes is that he does not make a distinction between the interests of the leaders of these nationalist parties and those of the rank-and-file, who include "workers, primary school teachers, artisans and small shopkeepers". This was why he was able to write off the working class by mistakenly identifying working class interests as identical with the interests of the national bourgeoisie. He also takes the urban-rural dicho-

tomy to its extremes, reaching to the fact that these nationalist parties were urban based.

Despite these errors, his description of the bourgeois national parties per se, is valid. That is, their reformism, susceptibility to compromise, rejection of armed struggle, etc. Most of all, "They avoid the actual overthrowing of the State". Rather than smashing the colonial state apparatus, the national middle class 'inherits' it, and 'perfects' it for its own utilization.

After independence, this national party becomes the sole political party: the party of the ruling bourgeoisie:

> "Powerless economically, unable to bring about the existence of coherent social relations, and standing on the principle of its domination as a class, the bourgeoisie chooses the solution that seems to it the easiest, that of the single party".
>
> (The Pitfalls of National Consciousness)

Now the party becomes a "company of profiteers". It becomes a "means of private advancement" and can no longer embody the aspirations of the people "for independence, political liberty and national dignity". Rather, "the single party is the modern form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked, unpainted, unscrupulous, and cynical". (The Pitfalls of National Consciousness)

So, it is precisely because of their weakness, inauthenticity, dependence upon the West, and also because of the bankruptcy of their national parties that the national bourgeoisie is incapable of solving even the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution and guarantee bourgeois democracy. As for genuine national independence and socialism, these are unthinkable.

Fanon was greatly influenced by the Vietnamese Revolution and in his writings he admired the resistance of this 'backward', agrarian nation, against a powerful French imperialism. It would not be inappropriate therefore to quote the leading theoretician of the VCP, Le Duan, in order to establish' positions on the national bourgeoisie, the national liberation struggle and the socialist revolution.

"In our time, the national liberation movement and the movement for democracy are closely interrelated and cannot but aim at socialist revolution".

> "It is crystal clear that the ruling national bourgeoisie in the national countries does not want to and cannot thoughly carry out the national and democratic tasks, let alone take their countries to socialism".
>
> (Le Duan — Selected Writings) p. 43

On Violence

Fanon was very specific when he spoke of the mode of authentic decolonization. "Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon" stated Fanon. "If colonialism had established itself within the country through violent means, if it increasingly resorted to violence and torture to keep down the upsurge of the masses, then this violence had to be met with counter–violence. The colonialist oppression could be broken only with the use of force. This was one of the issues on which Fanon excoriated the national middle class. They were pacifist in their methods, subject to compromise and were quite satisfied to step into the shoes of the colonial power. If decolonization takes place through non–violent means, then the colonial state would remain intact. There would only be a new nation and not a new state. The colonial state apparatus would now become the instrument of the national bourgeoisie, and this very state machine would now be used to repress their own peoples once the new contradictions come to the fore. Thus, "liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force". (Concerning Violence). If not, independence would be a fake independence. In such a situation says Fanon:

> "The peasant who goes on scratching out a living from the soil, and he an unemployed man also never finds employment; do not manage, in spite of public holidays and flags, new and brightly coloured though they may be, to convince themselves that anything has really changed in their lifes "
>
> (The Pitfalls of National Consciousness)

If true liberation (and eventully socialism) are to be achieved by the masses, then the smashing of the colonial state is imperative. The colonial power would have to be overthrown through armed struggle, for if decolonization is non–violenc and independence "granted", then it is the national bourgeoisie who would wield state power after independence.

It is true, as David Caute points out, that "Fanon makes no reference to the various arguments within the Marxist movement" when spelling out his theory of violence. Further, Caute says, "Fanon sees the colonial world as not only oppressive, but as static, locked, petrified: it had to be burst asunder. Marx and Engels and Lenin had not regarded social violence in this light. The worker's violence was pragmatic, not existential; it was a structural, not a psychic necessity". But we can infer from Fanon's comments concerning the national bourgeoisie, decolonization and violence that he had grasped the **necessity** of smashing the colonized state. In this sense, for Fanon, violence was 'necessary violence'; it was instrumentalist and functional.

Caute's error is that he fails to recognize that for Marx and Engels too violence was more than merely instrumental:

> "Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew"
>
> (Marx and Engels 'German Ideology Chap. 1)

Fanon's insights into the psychological impact of the use of violence in the context of the national liberation struggle are original. He recognizes the transformation of the native during periods of armed struggle. The impact of violence is a necessary impact, if the individual is to liberate himself from archaic traditions and inferiority complexes. Violence, which had been 'internationlized' by the individual and later manifested against his own people is now directed towards the colonizer. It is here that Fanon makes the switch from the personal to the social. In the liberation struggle violence becomes "socialized", collective and revolutionary. The armed struggle unites the people, while at the same time

(Continued on page 18)

Family and the problem of solidarity in Sinhala Cinema

N. M. M. I. Hussain

It is not the purpose of this article, which arises out of the controversy over Lester James Peiris "Baddegama, to undertake an evaluative examination of Sinhala films, for which the present writer lacks the requisite skills. The purpose is to examine a recurrent theme in the more serious Sinhala films, though not in all of them, and in doing so to suggest that between the films of Peiris and those of younger directors like Pathiraja and Dharmasiri Bandaranayake there is a remarkable continuity, not a hiatus. There are certainly differences between them, but the continuity is more striking.

The theme which recurs in the more impressive Sinhala films seen by this writer concerns the family. In some the family undergoes strain or is disrupted, until equilibrium is finally restored through the re-establishment of family ties, which in others the tragedy arises out of the disruption or the failure of the protagonist to found a family. The society in which the family drama takes place consists for the most part of passive onlookers.

The family is the central value in the films under discussion, and the reason for what looks like a monomaniacal insistence on the family as practically the only social unit of real value is probably our sense that the society in which we live is characterized by weak social bonds. Sociologists make a distinction between the "cohesion" of a society and its "solidarity". All societies have to have an important degree of cohesion, the sense of its members that they are parts of a group, as otherwise there is no society. But solidarity, in the sense of the social support available to the members of a society, can vary greatly between one society and another. Where solidarity in this sense is very weak it is to be expected that the family will come to seem almost the only thing of value in a society; and it might be expected also that in the work of its more sensitive film makers the restoration of equilibrium through the re-establishment of family ties can become almost an imperative.

This point can be illustrated through some, not all, of the better films of Peiris, which end with equilibrium being restored in the bosom of the family. Baddegama does not, of course, fit this stereotype as there can be no question of restoring equilibrium at the end of this film — to have attempted to do that would have made it a monstrosity — but there are some curious, and revealing, details in the film which seem to be significant for the argument pursued in this article.

A film — maker in transforming book into film certainly has licence to omit or add material. This article is concerned at this point only with the significance of what has been omitted or added in Baddegama. A striking omission is that Punchimenike does not accompany Babun to his trial, unlike in the book. Was it because the full portrayal of Punchimenike's agony would have been truly harrowing, unlike the tomato ketchup sensationalism in the killing of her sister? Thereafter she is shown in the village, not in the state of a person who has undergone a very terrible experience, but as the prudent female trying to prevent her impulsive father doing something rash. More important is that the film introduces new material by beginning and ending with the magistrate seeking out Punchimenike, an expression of solicitude on the part of goverment and society for the wronged victim which is totally unrealistic and very far from the spirit of the book. There is an attenation of the tragic power of the book in the film, and one has to ask the question whether — since in this film there is no question of the familiar restoration of equilibrium in the bosom of the family — the director felt himself under some sort of compulsion to suggest the possibility of equilibrium through the fantasy of the magistrate seeking out the wronged victim to re-integrate her into the bosom of the society. Is it that the consequences of the break-up of the family are too terrible to face, and therefore the suggestion has to be made that the society in which the tragedy takes place is, after all, not too bad a one even though it may not be entirely alright?

These remarks on the changes made in transforming the book into film could explain an important part of the dissatisfaction felt over it. It has to be admitted that the foreign accolades for the film — to which Peiris has triumphantly pointed in refutation of his critics — certainly show that by international standards this film is a much better one than has been made out by the local critics. Why, then, the storm of adverse criticism? It can hardly be that local critics failed to take account of the fact that in transforming book into film certain changes have necessarily to be made. Surely this is quite well known. (There is more to this problem as recognised by A. J. Gunawardena in his interesting article in the L. G. of 15 th August 1981. It is rather the kind of changes made that has caused the furore. Those changes support the notion that Peiris is at his best in the gentle art of resolving conflict through the re-establishment of equilibuum in the bosom of the family, and can hardly be expected to make a cinematic masterpiece out of the terror and tragedy of the Village in the Jungle.

The family is not, of course, the subject of all Peiris films. But that it is a concern of his is known: in extracting what he wanted from Woolf's complex book he chose the story of a peasant family living in a certain social milieu at a certain period of time (see his article in the L. G. of October 1, 1981). The pattern of family equilibrium being restored is to be found obviously enough in such of his films as Gamperaliya and Ahasin Polowata. It may not be equally obvious in some films, for instance Golu-hadawata, but significantly in that film the despairing young man is re-integrated into his brother's family at the end, no doubt until he proceeds to establish his own family. Equilibrium is not restored in every one of his films — Nidhanaya is a notably good film in which that does not happen — but the formula of restored family equilibrium certainly seems more characteristic of his work. As for his films in which the family is not at the centre of the action, they do not seem to be particularly compelling even when they are good films, probably because they do not answer to our deepest concerns at the present time. For instance Madolduwa, made in 1975, would perhaps have been a more compelling film if it had been made three decades ago when the pioneering spirit celebrated in Martin Wickremasinghe's novel had more resonance to it in the Gal Oya era. Since then changes have occurred in this country which make the family a more serious preoccupation for us.

The family seem to be at the centre in the best work of the younger directors as well, and this constitutes an important thematic continuity between Peiris films and theirs in spite of the obvious differences. At first sight a film such as Pathiraja's Bambaru Avith seems very different from anything made by Peiris but in that film too the family is a central concern: the intrusion of urban capitalism into the village is portrayed in terms of the impact on sexual and family relationship. The young mudalali from the town displays his irresponsibility and casual destructiveness by compromising and then abandoning a young female of the village, by being frivolous about the human need to found a family. The servant commits a murder because of an abortive love affair, that is, because of his failure to found the family he wants. Most interestingly, the difference between an urban capitalism that is corrosive of human relations and the stable village order is made explicity through the concrast between the sexual irresponsibility of the town mudalali and the village mudalali's acceptance of responsibility towards his many mistresses. In this film urban capitalism is seen as purely destructive and nothing else, but this is not historically true, not even of its impact on family relationships. It is ironic, in fact, that a fishing village should have been chosen to show that destructiveness as it was out of those fishing villages that there came the most effective modernizing group known in this country until very recent decades, setting in motion a complex, a necessary and inevitable, process that surely cannot be viewed entirely negatively. But the film gives the impression that a traditional order, no matter how inequitable, had better be left alone as socio-economic changes could threaten traditional family relationships.

Pathiraja's Soldadu Unnahe seems to get away from the drama, but significantly of the four derelicts at Galle Buck three have had problems about family relationships, while nothing is revealed about the background of the leader of the group. An abortive love-affair was a crucial determinant in the life of soldier; the character played by Henry Jayasena cracked up because of his wife's infidelity; and the prostitute has to desecrate the family in order to preserve it. If the soldier had founded his own family, and the other two had wholesome family relationships their fates could have been very different. The conclusion of this film, in which the soldier addresses passers-by who can show no more than a momentary interest in him — except for the tourists who snap him to add to their gallery of local curiosities — is particularly interesting for portraying the society in which the drama takes place as characterized by indifference to the plight of the derelicts, an image of a society from whose consciousness any and every enormity can be expected to slide off like water off a duck's back. At the end of Bambaru Avith the indifference of the crowd to the oration of the left-wing intellectual was evidently meant to be a condemnation of left-wing rhetoricians who have their heads in the clouds. Here the indifference of the crowd is a condemnation of the crowd. And here we have a potent image of a duck-back society - characterized by weak solidarity — in the sense defined earlier in this article — which could explain the obsessive concern with the family in many of the better Sinhala films.

Dharmasiri Bandaranayake's Hansa Vilak is very striking for using the techniques of avant-garde cinema, and this could make it seem very remote from the cinematic world of Peiris. Actually the film is notable for the contradiction between its technique and its content which is thoroughly conventional: two families are disrupted because of adultry, but at the end equilibrium is restored by the errant couple getting back to the bosoms of their families. Soon after the protagonist starts living with his mistress he enters into an internal nightmare world, which seems to be unmotivated but is the result evidently of the disquilibrium caused in him by breaking the sacred ties of the family. A comparison with some aspects of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina could be illuminating for the purpose of his article. In that novel the social opprobium cast on adultery is a very important factor in upsetting Anna's relationship with Vronsky, and he himself feels the breaking of ties with his social sub-group — the aristocratic military caste to which he belongs — as a serious deprivation. In Tolstoy's novel, as in the best work of Lawrence, the relationship between a man and a woman cannot be wholly satisfying unless it is inter-related to a society. In Hansa Vilak there is no sense of a

society at all, and the office in which the protagonist works merely provides him with his means of living, an external milieu which cannot serve as his sub-group satisfying any of his deeper needs. Instead of a society we have a city-scape that is shabby, mean-spirited, even sinister, a sprawling conurbation that gives the sense of a break-down in human community, the image of a society very weak in solidarity. In such a society a quiveringly sensitive young fellow who steps out of line, such as the protagonist of this film, has to feel that he hasn't a dam thing else to fall back on except his family. Naturally he has to scuttle back to its safely.

The films of Gamini Fonseka are not usually taken very seriously as they are partisan and propagandist, melodramatic pop art not art-films like those of Peiris or Pathiraja. Curiously the two films of his to be considered here, Uthumaneni and Sagarayak Meda, are very far from having any escapist box-office appeal and yet they have been immensely popular obviously because they answer to some of the deepest preoccupations of the Sinhala cinema audiences. There is no denying their raw power, and they have to be taken seriously for their symptomatic interest.

Uthumaneni has several points of similarity with Woolf's Village in the Jungle. An innocent family is destroyed by the village politician, the equivalent of Woolf's headman; the two families are related as are Sitiadu's and the headman; the two families; the quarrel between the two families originates over land, while a major problem for Silindu is the denial of land for cultivation; the judge is portrayed very sympathetically as in Woolf's novel; yet there is a miscarriage of justice as the politician can fix the evidence just like Woolf's headman; and the films ends in gory killings just as Silindu kills, the only meaningful riposte available for the wronged. There could be other similarities as well: the film seems to see Buddhism us something not quite relevant to the problems of a society as does Woolf's novel. Most important for the argument of this article is the characterization of the society in which the family tragedy takes place. Presumably the village politician could fix the evidence as there was no question of the villagers siding against him on behalf of the wronged family just as Woolf's villagers would not have testified against the headman; as in Woolf's novel we have in this film also a society capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, but not of supporting the right if it could lead to a confrontation against a powerful personage. In fact this films goes further than Woolf's novel in its indictment of a society — perhaps subconsciously or not quite intented — as it is suggested that if hot for the gory denouement the villagers would have participated in driving out the wronged family from the village, which seems a sadomasochistic excess. In this film we have a family tragedy set in a society devoid of solidarity. The similarities between this film and Woolf's novel do not mean that there has been some sort of plagiarism, but rather that Woolf provided a paradigm of "social reality" which in the perception of many Sri Lankan continues to this day. And Peiris in making Beddegama from that book also dealt with the "social reality" of our time, which is probably the reason for the local popularity of his film in spite of all the adverse criticism.

In Sagarayak Meda we have again a family tragedy with a son killed and a disgraced father in prison. This film is particularly interesting as the society in which the family drawn takes place is more than a shadowy background: we are shown youthful rebels confronting power, and the doctor enjoying the sympathy of his associates. For the purpose of this article what is significant about this film is that the doctor in spite of all his fortitude and manly defiance during his spell in prison looks forward not to coming out and fighting the good fight but to disappearing into a remote rural area. His life is to have its consummation in political quietism which belies everything else in the film. Evidently it is difficult to believe in meaningful social and political struggle with our underlying sense of a society that is very weak in solidarity, and all that struggle in the film has to be regarded as not much more than cinematic rhetoric.

(To be continued)

The Socialist. . .

(Continued from page 15)

transforming them. This 'cleansing force' inaugurates the people and gives them hope. Violence is now organized and directed against a single enemy.

The fault of Fanon was that he emphasized the 'existential' and 'psychic' aspects of violence, over and above its 'instrumentalist' aspect. But this does not mean that Fanon ignored the fact that violence could be instrumental functional and structural.

> "Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its ledars, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the keys to them"
>
> (Spontaneity: Its Strength and Weakness).

Now that Fanon is socialist revolutionary, and has set out his project, that is, national liberation through armed struggle eventually leading to socialism, we bring ourselves to the most important question. If the national bourgeoisie is incapable of leading the masses towards authentic national independence, democracy and socialism, and if the feudal chiefs were too conservative, then which social force was capable of playing this leading role?

In other words, Fanon posed the question: **'What** is to done?' His answer was genuine national liberation, through socialism. The next question was: **'Why** socialism?' The answer to this was that the bourgeoisie could not fulfil its national and democratic tasks. To the question: **'How** was this to be done?'; the answer was revolutionary violence. The final and unavoidable question then remains: 'By **whom**?'

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

of the Solidarity movement for workers' democracy in that country, was issued under the signatures of Keerthi Senaviratne and myself, as the Joint Secretaries of the Provisional National Committee.

The Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) underwent a split in March 1981. Long before that, in January 1979, the Central Committee of the RMP had decided that a mass party of the working class, with an independent class programme, was necessary in Sri Lanka. Thereafter, also well before the split a political resolution of the RMP, unanimously adopted at a Party Conference, held on 7th/8th June 1980, endorsed that decision.

In September 1980, a Delegates' Conference of the CMU also unanimously adopted a resolution on the necessity for a mass workers' party in Sri Lanka. It was in pursuance of that decision and in pursuance of independent decisions of the CESU and CPSU, that the provisional National Committee for a Mass Workers' Party was set up in July last year.

In the circumstances, it is a misrepresentation of fact, and politically misleading, to say that the statement of the Provisional National Committee on the Polish dictatorship was "in effect" a statement of mine, in pursuance of a "search for a political platform", following the split in the RMP, as your commentator "J. U." tried to make out. (L. G. JAN 15)

"Trotskyist Tendencies": Your correspondent, Patrick Fernando, has stated that Edmund Samarakkody had exposed "the activities of Tampoe, his private meeting with US Secretary of Defence, McNamara, and so forth". This is a repetition of a misrepresentation of fact. It gains nothing from the fact that it has been repeated previously by political opponents of mine or of the Fourth International, of whose International Executive Committee I am a member, in this country and abroad.

I have had no "private" meeting with U. S. Secretary of Defence, McNamara, at any time. I attended the Harvard International Seminar in the United States in 1967, together with participants from over 40 other countries. As part of the activities of the Seminar, the participants, as a group, met various representatives of the U. S. Government, and questioned them. One of the officials whom we met and questioned, particularly with regard to the U. S. war in Vietnam at the time, was Mr. McNamara, who was then the U. S. Defence Secretary. Edmund Samarakkody chose to make public reference to this as a "private" meeting, in 1969, soon after he had ceased to be a member of the Fourth International. The Spartacist League in the United States seized upon this statement and similar misrepresentations of fact concerning me, for their own sectarian attacks upon me and the Fourth International, there after.

As to the opinions that persons like Patrick Fernando or other contributors to your journal may choose to express about me, by reason of my political or trade union activities or connections, I think it unnecessary to comment.

Bala Tampoe

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

A **Sri Kotha** *favourite whose political punditry straddled both the Lake House and Times groups in the latest casualty. An old Delhi hand, Chanakya alias Maditha has received his marching orders, and Lake House itself is in the throes of another 're-organisation' with the return of an ex-editor of the CDN.*

SRI LANKAN FILMS — (2)

Rupavahini and the Idiot Box

Lester James Perles

I heard the other day that even the Minister of State was deeply perturbed by the lack of any standards of policy and had appointed a consultant. With the opening up of government sector documentary to directors from the private sector, there might be a revitalisation of this very important arm of Government Information. An infusion of new talent alone is not enough. Though the Government Documentary Films Division is in the unique position of being free of commercial pressures, which in feature film making is a nightmare from which one never really wakes up — political pressures can be more crippling to a medium which has to hold its audience without the advantages of actors and stories with which audiences are far more ready to be involved in, however querile the film may be. It is in this area of the cinema that the most important work of educating the masses and enlightening them on the country's development resides. What of sponsored documentary? — the short films commissioned by private companies. Here, too, the picture is pretty dismal.

There is no patron anymore like SHELL used to be when the company would finance Ramgopal in the Dance of Shiva, or Standard Oil UNDERWRITE Robert Flaherty's Louisiana Story and refuse even a credit. We live in an era of the HARD SELL. Having made as a bread and butter line (or should I say rice and curry) over a dozen sponsored films, I speak out of bitter experience. It's the advertising boys who are the new whizz kids of what cinema should be. It is the marketing boys who know all the answers — the instant expert in multi-media draws up the story board and reduces the director to an illustrator. There is an old saying in Hollywood that when a director dies creatively speaking, he becomes a photographer. Here, he becomes a copyist. Most sponsored documentaries demand that there be a story — you know the usual argument — give the wretched film some human interest — and what stories they are! — use a certain fertiliser and the poorest peasant family are on the road to affluence, a dowry for a daughter, a 3-in-one cassette-recorder for the home — now it is bound to be a TV set. Use a certain soap and romance is in the air — and on its fragrance, cupid will release the arrow that will propel any young couple to the altar or the poruwa. I once suggested a story-line on a multi-vitamin tablet that so shocked the sponsors that they were convinced we'd end up with a pornographic film. There is so little imaginative sense, so little wit or humour, that most short films sponsored by the private sector end up even losing credibility. In fact, there is more fiction in our documentaries and more factual authenticity in our better feature films today.

I am not suggesting that we should not resort to fictionalised documentary — though introducing the element of fiction to documentary is fundamentally a contradiction — infinitely more difficult to pull off unless the story is very subtly and discreetly introduced. For purpose of information or education or even commercialising a product, the classical documentary approach, that is the presentation in images, words, narration, music and natural effects in the most eloquent form — without recourse to story-telling devices — is still the best — mixing fictionalised elements to documentary has done more to reduce the credibility and disturb the authenticity which documentary strives for. If powerful and affluent private firms in this country are seriously desirous of helping the cause of the country's development, they could, as in the States, spend a fraction of their vast profits on sponsoring worthwhile documentaries.

We are now on the eve of a new revolution in mass-communications — with the launching of RUPAVAHINI on an island-wide scale, a medium more powerful, more pervasive than the cinema or the radio would be within the reach of an audience that will be hypnotised by the magic box — which is TV — it is futile to make derogatory remarks about the impact of TV — to refer to it as the IDIOT BOX — we are, to coin a phrase, VIDIOTICS with a vengeance. Though TV is the natural enemy of the cinema, I am unashamedly hooked on TV — the willing addict — and as TV has a voracious appetite for material, film-makers should not feel threatened but learn to live with TV — and work in the new media. Whatever the local pundits may say and all the electronics experts, TV — say in America, still relies — and here I am referring to Prime Time TV — on 81% of its telecasting on material shot on film. There is no important TV series, except talk shows, musicals, special TV dramas that aren't shot on celluloid. In fact, the sponsors of the 3 series for International TV — the series on Robert Knox, on Wilhelm Geiger and on Seligman have insisted that they be shot on film. Eventually, perhaps in the 1990's, celluloid, according to specialists forecasts, will be out and replaced by VIDEOTAPE, the VIDEO CASSETTE, CABLE TV, and the laser beam and hologram are on the way — creating a whole new revolution in the transmission of moving images and sounds.

What TV's impact will be in Sri Lanka is incalculable — Sri Lankans are popularly supposed to accept even a headache if it is free — and TV is almost that — a feature film everyday and six hours of varied entertainment in your own home. But will Rupavahini

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Leonard Woolf's Village in the Jungle — a socio – psychological perspective

Ranjith Goonawardena
(Dept. of English, University of Kelaniya)

Leonard Woolf shows an inward understanding of a peasant culture. In many peasant cultures, the fear of mysterious evil forces forms the foundation of peasant psychology. The evil is physical: it is real and it is rooted in the socio-economic, political structure of peasant society. But the peasant is unaware of the real source of evil and he attributes it to an elusive mysterious force. Here it is relevant to quote Frantz Fanon's observations on peasant behaviour in African peasant cultures:

"Meanwhile, however, life goes on and the native will strengthen the inhibitions which contains his aggressiveness by drawing on the terrifying myths which are so frequently found in under developed communities. There are maleficent spirits which intervene everytime a step is taken in the wrong direction, leopardmen, serpent-men, six-legged dogs zombies — a whole series of tiny animals or giants which create around the native a world of prohibitions, or barriers and of inhibitions far more terrifying than the world of the settler. This magical superstructure which permeates native society fulfils certain well-defined functions in the dynamism of the libido. One of the characteristics of under developed societies is in fact that the libido is first and foremost the concern of a group, or of the family. The feature of communities whereby a man who dreams that he has sexual relations with a woman other than his own must confess it in public and pay a fine in kind or in working days to the injured husband or family is fully described by ethnologists. We may note in passing that this proves that the so-called prehistoric societies attach great importance to the unconcious.

"The atmosphere of myth and magic frightens me and so takes on an undoubted reality. By terrifying me, it integrates me in the traditions and the history of my district or of my tribe, and at the same time it reassures me, it gives me a status, as it were an identification paper. In under-developed countries the occult sphere is a sphere belonging to the community which is entirely under magical jurisdiction. By entangling myself in this inextricable network where actions are repeated with crystalline inevitability, I find the everlasting world which belongs to me, and the perenniality which is thereby affirmed of the world belonging to us."

Silindu is treated and referred to as 'Tikak Pissu' and his family is treated with contempt by his fellow villagers:

"Go and lie with your brother, the madman, the vedda, the pariah". Though the villagers treat him as an outcast and are 'astonished' and 'shocked' Silindu went his own way". It is through a psychological act of identification with the jungle, that he develops a sense of belonging, an identity and above all, an inner courage and strength of character to defy the values and attitudes of the village community. The jungle frightens him but it integrates him with the traditions associated with it and its way of life.

"Am I mad? And what if I am? Haven't they always called me mad, the mad vedda. Well, now let them see if I am mad or not. Have they not hunted me for all these years and am I always to go running like a stupid deer through the jungle? No, no, little Arachchi; no, no. This time it is the old wounded buffalo. Three times, four times that night in the hut when I saw it first I got up to get my gun and end it. And again, after the court, I would have done it, had I had a gun. But I thought — no, not yet, for once we must act cunningly, not in anger only. The buffalo's eye is red with anger, but he stands quiet until the hunter has passed. Then he charges".

Silindu identifies himself with the wild buffalo. The intensity of the psychological identification with the spirit of the jungle with which his identity and personality and innermost self are inclmately linked, gives him an awareness of his own power and the courage and determination to kill both Babehamy and Fernando. Woolf shows remarkable understanding of the psychology of identification or transferance. Identification is a familiar psychological process Ronald Laing defined it thus:

"Two separate subsets are taken to be one".

— (The Politics the Family and Other Essays — R. D. Laing)

Though this process is universal its manifestations are determined by a variety of external factors like cultural values and religious values, the structure of beliefs and socio economic and political factors. Thus the behaviour pattern conditioned by this psychological process; in the ultimate analysis is determined by conditions peculiar to an individual culture or a way of life. Woolf's imagination reached out to and captured the shapes it assumes in a peasant culture of Sri Lanka.

The character structure of both Hinnihamy and Punchi Menike is conditioned by the spirit of the jungle.

"And so it came about that Punchi Menike and Hinnihamy grew up somewhat outside the ordinary life of the village. The strangeness and

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TRANSLATION

Dexterous craftsmanship

"LUKAGE RAHASA" (The Secret of Luca) — Ignazio Silone

Lakshmi de Silva

"The aim of translation" writes Louis Simpson "is to find works that bring over the sense and spirit of the original so that they are understood". And felt. Unless this impact is made, we have nothing but a gallant effort. It is this that makes the "MARGA" translation of Silone's "The Secret of Luca" satisfying to read. Indrani Rodrigo has achieved a profitable balance in this traffic between two cultures. There are two dangers that dog the way of the translator. The more apparent is that of being too remote from one's readers, unable to bridge the gap between habits of thought, or of daily experiences. But the more insidious danger is that of localising too thoroughly, using such smooth-worn phrases that the reader is rendered insensitive to the foreignness that is an essential ingredient of the experience. Here however the writer's clear stylistic sense has enabled her to make fluent and expressive use of her Sinhala while deliberately avoiding the tendency to slip into our characteristic sentence-structures, and the reader benefits by a sharper awareness of the milieu. Yet the frequent use of familiar idioms functions well within this framework, enhancing the natural movement of the dialogue and conveying the impression of full flavoured vigorous speech.

Comparing the book with the Mondadori translation published in 1962, one finds a difference instructive to any practitioner of the craft of literary translation. The English version is evidently competent but of little distinction. It suffers from a relaxed style that fails to reveal the tension inherent in the content. In contrast, the Sinhala version compellingly conveys the intensity of the experience undergone by Luca and Andrea. Apart from a sensitive ear for the cadence of a sentence Indrani Rodrigo has a strong visual sense that gives a dramatic impact to her narration. This is strikingly apparent in the two passages in the opening chapter that describe the peasant woman by the cross and the gaunt blind woman groping her way to the balcony to call out at the sound of familiar footsteps. In comparison, the English version seems colourless, void of emotive shading. In the first passage where "a woman huddled on the ground behind the cross.... it was hard to tell whether she was resting or praying" by employing a word nearer "prostrate" the Sinhala translator brings out the relationship between posture and the idea of prayer in a way that "huddled" fails to suggest. In the second passage the dramatic quality of the moment is conveyed effectively and economically. "Is that you?" Now the woman's tone was plaintively anxious; she called out several times "Is that you?" "E umbada?" a kannalau kalaya "doviyane e umbada" It is there in the use of the phrase? "hitha keeri gahiyana sey berihange dunneya" for "Beware of bogus tramps, shrieked the blind woman." Incidentally, how the introduction of a slang term "bogus", incongruous in the setting of the Italian village, grates on the reader! The weirdly melancholy incident is dwelt on in "Lucage Rahasa; the translator evidently subscribes to what may be termed the "doctrine of selectivity". This is the belief that the translator occasionally needs to move further from the letter of the text in order to come closer to its spirit.

Golomina's account to Andrea of her mental suffering, while it is true the image of a sword in the heart would come naturally to an Italian peasant accustomed to such pictures of the Virgin, the substitution of "ulkatuva" makes it less rhetorical, and the remodelling of the whole passage lends a moving restraint to what is almost embarassingly harrowing in the English version. The occasional excision of phrases contributes tautness, and an effect of stark force which emphasise that the central element of Silone's novel is "the essential grandeur of a human being". Silone's novel combines sound craftsmanship with simplicity; its relatively small compass does not exclude the presence of warmth, poignance and nobility within a plot-structure as taut and suspenseful as any well-told thriller — certainly a marvellous choice for translation, if only to remind our Sinhala novelists that a plot does not need to meander along forever. Still despite the fact that a sufficiency of Silone's satiric salt has been retained one regrets the decision to omit Don Franco's "second thought" when the scandalized Town Clark vetoes the idea of a sculpture of "Glory embracing Sacrifice". "Red faced, the priest hastened to propose some variations. "We could have Glory stroking Sacrifice's head in a sort of maternal caress" he said "or would you rather she just smiled at him?"

A more serious flaw is the substitution of "usas danapathi" in chapter 6 — for "radala" since the reference is to the aristocracy.

However, this I confess, is carping. As a whole the Sinhala translation has the rare quality of getting through directly to the reader. Nowhere is the translator's mastery of her medium so evident as in the 5th chapter where Andrea tells Luca of the effect the interaction of their lives has had on him. This section of the book is of peculiar interest because it concerns an experience which Silone has dealt with, in first person narration, and at a less intense level in "Return to Fontamara." ".... how profound an effect that correspondence would have on me ...

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Rupavahini. . .

(Continued from page 20)

succeed in holding on to its audience — once the novelty wears off. In India, TV has hardly made any erosion on film audiences — hours of TV devoted to cookery, heavy doses of classical music, the total ban on all new films from TV — and one almost suspects that the giants of the world's largest film industry have succeeded in seeing to it that TV in India is so dull that more people will rush to the cinema and even pay to see something more worthwhile and entertaining. With TV, a whole new area of programmes, documentary, instructional, educational, will open up.... and Rupavahini has to do better than the Sri Lanka cinema and Sri Lanka documentary to capture an audience, which unlike in the cinema is non-captive. You can turn your TV set off — you can't stop the projector in a cinema. Of course, you can walk out, but if you've paid 10 rupees for a ticket and the film is dull, you can always find it a perfect cure for insomnia. Will TV fill the gap, exploit its undeniable advantages over film as an aid to the development process in Sri Lanka? With imagination, creativity, freedom from political and commercial pressures, it can be an open university, a forum for debate so necessary and vital to the democratic system, an entertainment medium of such immence potential, that we are still witnesses to the birth of a new form of communication, still in its infancy. The mistake we made was that moving pictures on celluloid could never extend its frontiers or renew itself as a continuing dialogue between people and a technical discovery. We tended to forget that the art of motion pictures is only 80 years old — in terms of the other ARTS — music and drama especially — it is in its primitive stage. In relation to Literature, for example, as an analogy, we are in the period of Beowolf and Chaucer — and before it can develop its true potentials. TV comes along — a whole new concept of transmitting images and sound — what is even more pertinent is that we still know very little of how precisely images impinge on our consciousness. For eg., a young underground film-maker, without any calculation or scientific premise, discovered that a combination of blank black frames and white frames produced epileptic fits in the audience. A single frame lasting 1/24 th of a second, unperceived by the eye, can still be registered in the sub-conscious mind of the viewer. For purposes of brain-washing, even commercial exploitation of products surreptitiously slotted in a film, can increase sales of the product — a form of subliminal advertising banned in the United States of America. Beyond the video cassette, the laser beam, the video disc, the hologram, who knows what is in store for us in the new frontiers of communication? Verbal communication, a knowledge of language was considered to be the only form of literacy — which is why literacy pundits still can't understand the nature of film or for that matter, any other form of audiovisual communication. Recently, in a very highbrow magazine, I happened to read an article entitled — GOODBYE GUTTENBERG — HELLO HOLLYWOOD — it had, curiously enough, nothing to do or very little with Hollywood as the celluloid dream factory. Hollywood was now gearing itself to a whole new era, where audio-visual communication might develop into forms which can't even be described in words. With that sobering and rather disturbing thought it is best for me to stop speaking.

NEW RATES

In view of the new postal and airmail charges the Lanka Guardian, has been compelled to change its subscription rates.

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Leonard Woolf's. . .

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wildness of their father hung about them; as the other women said of them, they grew up in the jungle and not in the village".

Hinnihami's courage and strength of character are drawn through her emotional and psychological identification with the jungle and its way of life. This identification, not only gives her an identity but the courage to defy Punchirala.

> "Ohe! Are you frightened, Punchirala? The binder of yakkas is frightened of the yakkini. You can tell her, they say, because her eyes are red and unblinking, and because she neither fears nor loves. It is better for you that I should go — to the trees from which I came, mighty vedersla. Otherwise, I would strangle you, and eat you in the house. Come, Appochchi, we will go out into the jungle together again as we did long ago. . . "

Punchi Menike decides to remain in the village while all the other fellow villagers abandon it. Her decision to remain all alone, is because her identity and her innermost memories and experiences are linked up with jungle. Her most meaningful and intense experiences are bound up with the jungle. The strong bond of affection between her and Silindu, her husband, and her sister are stored up in her memory. Her past gives her life an emotional fullness though she is fast dying. She clings to her memories with greater and greater tenacity and ferocity when she loses her hold and grip on life.

The behaviour of Silindu and his family does not conform to the cultural norms and rules of the village community. Laing in his penetrating analysis shows the tragic consequences of this kind of 'deviant' behaviour.

> "Once any part of the social world system comes to be governed by such rules, each part of the social system
>
> (1) is endowed with a value by the fact there is a rule governing it.
>
> (2) There may be a rule that this value must not be changed, challenged, **questioned**, or even **seen**".

The direct breach of basic rules at the first level can be punished by death. The person earns attributions of treason, treachery, heresy: he is liable to be seen as being evil wicked, depraved, degenerate. People commonly feel that no punishment is good enough for him."

Thus Silindu is referred to as blighter of others' children, eater of offal, the madman, vedda and pariah, children die, because of "Silindus' evil eye". The following comments of Laing provide more insights which illuminate the reasons the villagers treat Silindu and his family as outcasts.

> "If our wishes, feelings, desires, hopes, fears, perception, imagination, memory, dreams. . . do not correspond to the law they are outlawed and excommunicated. Outlawed and excommunicated, they do not cease to exit. But they do undergo secondary transformations".

The secondary transformation they undergo is determined by a combination of socio economic, psychological and political factors specific to a particular culture. The villagers of Boddegama psychologically transform Silindu and his family to demonic, malefic agents of calamity and disaster. Silindu and his family are treated as outsiders, and hence the villagers can attribute their misfortunes and direct their collective hatred and anger towards them. But Hinnihamy and Punchi Menike are physically strong. Thus they provoke the envy and jealousy of the other village women. Frantz Fanon comments on the psychological basis of collective hatred or what he terms 'collective catharsis' are relevant to an understanding of the general attitude of unbridled hatred towards Silindu's family.

> "In every society, in every collectivity, exists — must exist — a channel, an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released. This is the purpose of games in children's institutions of psychodramas in group therapy, and, in a general way, of illustrated magazines for children each type of society of course, requiring its own specific kind of catharsis".

Dexterous . . .

(Continued from page 22)

In fact, and I am not exaggerating — it may even have been crucial. It cut short my childhood; it was my introduction to human suffering."

What is mere information in the English version has a curious intensity and what I can only describe as an internalised effect in the Sinhala translation; the reader empathically experiences the sensations of a child caught up and bewildered by the surge of emotion and a knowledge of the world of suffering outside his capacity for comprehension, yet too close for escape, inextricably interwined as he is in his love for old Teresa and her love for her son, whom all in Cisterna condemn as a sinner if not as a criminal. Equally impressive, perhaps more so, since here she has to convey concepts unfamiliar to the majority of her readers is her achievement in rendering the long speech which precedes Ortensia's renunciation. These serve as a measure of Indrani Rodrigo's sensitivity to language, her ability to draw on all the rich emotive resources of Sinhala and the inborn skill of gauging exactly what will work on the reader. Her craftsmanship is dexterous. She handles the dialogues with sureness and perception, particularly the delicate task of conveying the unstated conflict in between Don Serafino and Andrea when it first emerges. Distinctions of style are not lost; the pointed formality of the old judge's near-epigram "Allow me to remind you, my dear sir, that form is everything in the law, just as in art" is perfectly preserved.

In Sri Lanka, we are starved for intelligent translations of books which are an essential part of what we might call mental capital. It is to be hoped that Indrani Rodrigo will be attracted to some of these — Alain Fournier's "The wanderer" for instance, and the work of Kezantzakis — and make them, her particular province.

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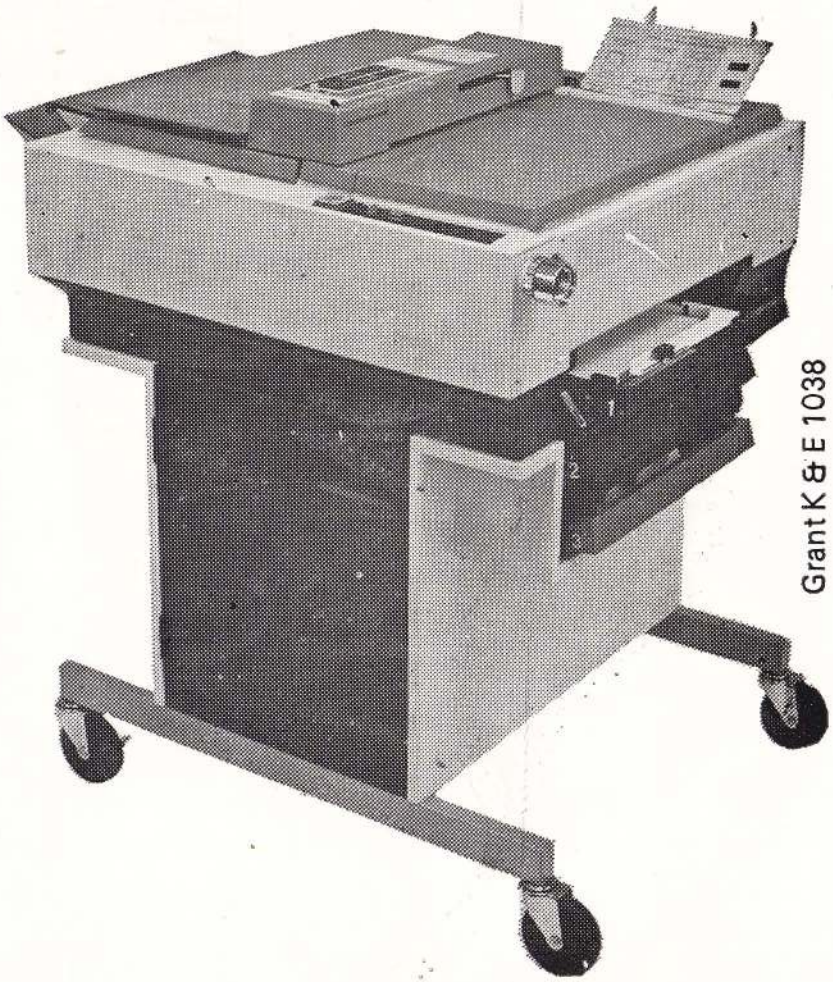

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