

GUARDIAN

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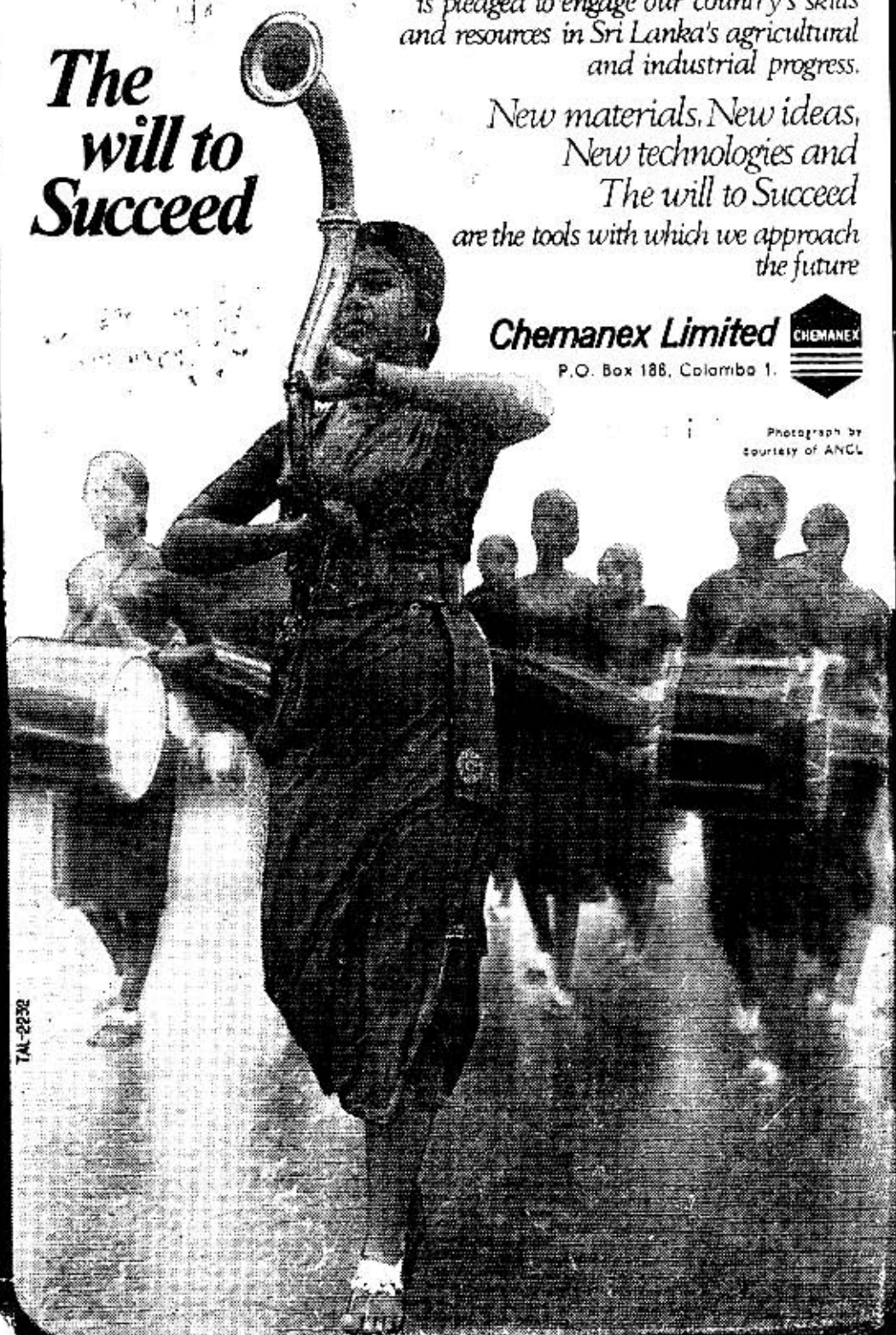
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TA-2232



LANKA GUARDIAN

Vol. I No. 14 November 15, 1978

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Published by Lanka Guardian
Publishers Ltd., Third Floor,
YMBA Building, 126 3/28 Main
Street, Colombo - 1.

Telephone: 29028.

Editor: **Mervyn de Silva**

Printed by Ananda Press
82/5, Wolfendhal Street,
Colombo - 13.

Telephone: 35975

Letters

Bangkok bungle

There was once a cricket team whose selectors approached their weekly chore with a commendable reverence for merit and pragmatism. Having regard to the resources of their club they first chose two car-owners before settling for their opening batsmen or bowlers. This sort of thing may be permissible in those circumstances but when it comes to national selection for international competition merit alone should count.

Right now the claim to represent the country seems to be dependent on the financial soundness of the selectee and the course seems to be chartered to despatch the second and even perhaps the third best. If this is true it is simply not good enough and the right to national representation must be withheld. I am sure that we can do without the dubious honour that Wimalasena Perera brought us when he completed his race in the Tokyo Olympics some 15 laps behind the winner.

This raises a fundamental question regarding the 'funding' of National representatives and whose responsibility it is. Is it that of the state or the parent body. Whosoever it is the fund raising should have commenced when the Teheran games ended, almost four years ago, giving rise now to

serious doubts about the planning and the planners. As a result of this bungling the premium seems to be on affluence rather than performance.

There is an even more fundamental question and that is whether we should participate in international events in this major fashion. Such competition can be approached in two ways and the primary one is that which allows an individual or team which has reached international standards, the opportunity of contest at that level. Competition for the sake of it and for those who will never reach such standards is only well intended folly.

The other approach concerns publicity and unless one is in entire agreement with the maxim that bad publicity is better than no publicity, such exercises are better left to the more prosperous nations.

As for us the most rigid standards must be imposed and by this yardstick possibly the 400 metre relay team and pushing it further perhaps the hockey team are all that merit consideration. I say Hockey because there appears a reasonable chance of securing the Bronze medal. But why oh why should a yachtsman be sent? Is it just to show off or is it that there is lurking in the shadows

(Continued on page 19)

Trends

TULF trials

At his press conference in Madras, the President confirmed the fact that the government will be ready to amend the constitution so that an MP who leaves his party will not automatically forfeit his seat. This leaves the door still open for TULF MP's to accept District Ministries.

An earlier (unconfirmed) report doing the rounds of parliament said that this was one of the matters discussed in an informal tete-a-tete abroad by a Minister and a TULF leader.

The TULF has angrily denied that it was contemplating action against any of its MP's. Some newspapers had named three potential defectors. Sources close to these politicians claimed that none of them had in anyway violated the party constitution.

The TULF's real troubles are rooted in its rebellious youth wing which is now planning to move quietly away from the umbrella of the parent organisation and establish links with other, more radical, Tamil youth groups.

Conference problems

The SLFP which successfully contained some of its internal tensions at last Saturday's Executive Committee meeting has still to decide when it would be advisable to hold its next party Congress. While Mrs Gandhi's comfortable victory has injected new confidence into the SLFP boss, her problems, both within and outside the party, are by no means over.

Meanwhile, the JVP, the bright young buck in the country's party politics, is also enmeshed in conference problems. Although the present leadership has only three of the original politburo of 40, the JVP's decision-makers are not as homogeneous a group as may appear to the casual student of politics. Young Wijeweera continues to play the super-star outshining everybody else.

Managing news

The multi-national news agencies launched a concerted campaign, both direct and through their Third World clients 'and supporters', against

(Continued on page 18)

Sinhaputra stirs the SLFP pot

Is the SLFP a party created by Bandaranaike and the party of the Bandaranaiques or is it a party, by, of and for the Bandaranaiques?

This is not the main question facing the SLFP nor is it the best way of formulating the issue that confronts the party leadership. The past, present and future of a political party, especially a party as historically important as the SLFP, must be seen and measured in the national political context, and in relation to the social forces which help to sustain it, and the economic and group interests it seek to serve and advance.

However the leadership question is the party's immediate problem. And this issue has in fact surfaced in the manner in which we have formulated it—in terms of personalities. SLFP insiders, if not its large legion of supporters, know that the problem will be dodged only out of a lack of understanding, a refusal to recognise realities, or out of a prissy, parlour politeness.

Demoralised by the party's humiliating electoral debacle, SLFP'ers looked for explanations. In such a mood of despondency, even party stalwarts do not search for the basic or the major causes, such as the economic situation, government policies, party alignments and shifting alliances or the changing correlation of forces in the country. They often find vicarious satisfaction in the ready answer and easy rationalisation. While several lakhs of rank-and-file supporters and sympathisers were overwhelmed by their own personal and family troubles in village and small town in the wake of crushing defeat and the cock-a-hoop outbursts of their victorious, traditional rivals, party opinion settled on one explanation at the middle and upper levels of the SLFP hierarchy.

Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, a founder member and senior minister, fired the first shot openly with his now famous confidential circular. (Exclusively published in this journal).

What Mr. Ilangaratne did was to put in simple, folksy and typically SLFP idiom the same sentiment that his one-time Cabinet colleague, the more cosmopolitan Mr. T. B. Subasinghe had expressed before he quit the party three months before the July 1977 battle. Mr. Subasinghe had spoken about 'an invisible government', another term for what SLFP insiders in the 1970-77 period (particularly after the LSSP was expelled in 1975) called 'the court circle.' It was a code word for the domination of the party and its decision-making process by the Bandaranaiques and Ratwattes.

As this internal criticism (or self-criticism) assumed significant proportions, Mrs. Bandaranaike made her first gesture. The need for an agonising re-appraisal and re-organisation was acknowledged.

Her main aim was to retain command of the party, hold it together without allowing a crack-up, the fate suffered by the Indian Congress. The device she chose was a re-organisation committee to make thorough-going analysis of organisational defects and recommend necessary changes in structure. Behind these moves and counter-moves was a critical issue which was not bluntly stated. Did re-organisation imply democratisation?

As with the UNP and the Senanayakes until pre-election 'Rukmanisation' ended that, family hegemony of the SLFP meant a feudal approach to party politics, and party organisation. ('Feudal', by the way, is a word which is used with utmost circumspection even by SLFP leftwingers, some Marxist-inclined intellectuals actually

Fears that serious disagreements within the SLFP hierarchy may lead to an open rift or even a party split *a la* the Congress in India were dispelled last Saturday when the 400 strong Executive Committee reposed the fullest confidence in party President, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Under transitional arrangements which will hold good till the next Congress is held as required by the new party constitution, Mrs. Bandaranaike will run the SLFP's affairs with the help of a 17 member 'special committee' named by her.

'The best sign of party unity' a top SLFP spokesman told this journal "was the proposer and seconder of the main resolution—the party's No. 2 and No. 3, Messrs Maitripala Senanayake and T. B. Ilangaratne."

While the Committee is quite representative, political observers noted the absence of Messrs Felix Bandaranaike, Kalugalla, Badiud-din Mahmud and other stalwarts of the past.

trotting out neo-Marxist theories to explain away the co-optation of feudal elements in broad social bloc supporting the SLFP 'forward' march to socialism in the "national-democratic" phase).

In what seemed a serious response to the mounting internal pressure for re-organisation, democratisation and modernisation of the party, and partly in a bid to play for time, Mrs. Bandaranaike appointed a committee of party intellectuals.

From the start, the committee was suspect in certain party circles, for various reasons. A founder member denounced one 'expert' as a Marxist infiltrator! But the main grounds for suspicion was that the Committee was totally dominated by Sirimavoists, a special breed of party radicals who were as loyal to Sirimavo as to Mao, and the China line in international affairs.

Adopting some elective principles and participatory processes com-

mon to socialist and leftwing parties, the Committee produced recommendations which seemed impeccably democratic. However some senior and middle echelon SLFPers were openly sceptical for two main reasons:

(a) a study of the actual mechanics of election to the key party bodies (specially the 'bloc' votes given to affiliate organisations like Youth, Women's front etc) suggested a perpetuation in practice of coterie control.

(b) In the transitional period ALL power was in effect vested in the party president. With the new constitution the power of the party bosses is made almost impregnable.

While Mrs. Bandaranaike was thus responding to internal pressures, she faced a new challenge from outside. Most of her energies were engaged in fighting a campaign launched from outside: questions in parliament, allegations of abuse and corruption, attacks from UNP, Old Left and JVP, court cases etc.

On September 26, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's death anniversary, this campaign assumed an interestingly new character. An attempt was made to de-mythologise S. W. R. D. and "re-write" SLFP history.

The hallowed centre page of the state-owned "Daily News" was given to Dr. N. M. Perera who had been sacked as Finance Minister by Mrs. Bandaranaike for what she called "vituperative politics", including a sacrilegious attack on her husband's memory.

It is not known whether Dr. Perera 'offered' the article or whether the 'Daily News' invited him and whether the idea was approved from Himalayan heights. While in many respects, Dr. Perera tried to evaluate S. W. R. D.'s achievements from a Marxist standpoint and broad historical perspective, his tone and style made his essay a scintillating example of vituperative journalism.

Then came the well informed and equally breezy articles by SINHA-PUTRA.

International news

Brazil: miracle revealed as myth

The Brazilian 'miracle' has been exposed as a myth. In the 1960's the economic model adopted by Brazil (following the fascist military take over of '64) was widely touted as a success story by Western economists and 'social scientists'. This claim was echoed by their mimics among the technocrats in many 'Third World' countries. Thus Brazil was presented as a developmental model for other Latin American, African and Asian nations. The Brazilian model was in fact adopted by, or rather imposed upon, the majority of Latin American countries by their privileged elites and military men, just as the Indonesian model (circa 1965) was 'introduced' in most South East Asian countries around the same period.

What was significant (and, in some eyes, sinister) was the special pitch made for the SLFP's No. 2, Mr. Maitripala Senanayake, and his contribution to the 1956 victory. Mr. Senanayake, the author said, was the one politician whom S.W.R.D. actually went out of his way to grant party nomination. Sinhaputra not only referred to his "charisma and integrity" but brought into the open an episode known only to top-rung S.L.F.P.'ers.

Seized by intimations of mortality (natural or political) many of our veteran parliamentarians celebrated their silver jubilees or long careers a few years ago. On the occasion of Mr. Senanayake's 30th anniversary celebrations, Mr. A.P. Jayasuriya, S. W. R. D.'s closest friend, wrote about how his leader made a special trip to Anuradhapura to persuade Maitri to join him. Evidently this paragraph was excised on orders from above.

Who is Sinhaputra? An ex-Stalinist (in his student days) turned Sinhala lion post-1956, his white mane was a familiar sight in the corridors of the Foreign Ministry a few years back.

Since its inception, the Brazilian pattern of economic growth has been severely criticized by radical academics in Latin America and the world over, as having fostered the development of capitalism by increasing dependency on U. S. neocolonialism and simultaneously pampering the majority of the population. These and other long standing criticisms made by the 'dependencia' school of leftwing academics has now been borne out through empirical data presented by impeccably 'neutral' institutions. In fact this data has now made its way into the Western press, and foreign correspondents in Brazil, appalled by the stark socio-economic disparities prevailing there, have filed hostile reports in leading Western journals and newspapers. So, enlightened sections in the West are beginning to be increasingly conscious of the effects of a 'free enterprise' dominated, profit motivated, market centred foreign investment based economic model—a model of which Brazil is a prime example.

In a recent survey in the *Financial Times* (London), Diana Smith reporting from Rio de Janeiro cites statistics presented by the capital city's authoritative Institute of Economics:-

- * 35% of Brazilians over the age of 5 are illiterate.
- * 53.1% have no piped water in their homes.
- * 34% still cook by wood fires.
- * 5% have no domestic cooking facilities at all.
- * 40% have no electricity.
- * 31.3% have no drains.
- * Annual inflation is around 40%
- * Real wages have fallen in the past two years.
- * The minimum monthly cost for food alone is around US \$ 90.39, which is above the national monthly minimum wage of US \$ 82.75.

- * Housing rent for a minimum wage earner is around 26.52 US \$ a month if the house is on the city fringes, but even a one bedroom flat (with no bathroom) closer to the city centre is around 50 US \$ a month, while a two bedrooomed house costs over 185 US \$ monthly. Rents have risen by 38% annually, in the city itself.
- * Transport costs are high (\$11.95 monthly) and have risen by 43% within the last year.
- * Electricity, water, gas and telephone rates rise constantly.

Diana Smith goes on to state that while Brazil's export oriented industrialization has grown massively, a clamp has simultaneously been imposed on domestic consumption. "It has been felt by Brazil's senior technocrats and military economic strategists that the first priority must be to enlarge the size of the national cake and that only then can income be more equitably distributed—on the promise that the higher earners are naturally the best savers and that through taxation, part of their wealth flows into public coffers. In practice however, the high earners have turned into high spenders, eschewing their savings books while buying cars, property and consumer durables" says Ms. Smith.

Citing official statistics, the same correspondent points out that the gap between the richest 5% of Brazilian society and the poorest 20% is widening all the time. Although the per capita income in 1977 was US \$1,400 and it had risen by 5.5% in comparison with 1977, this figure is in fact misleading, and masks the vital fact that the income of the richest 5% grew by 133.7% from 1970-1976, while the income of the poorest 20% rose by only 50% in the same period. Moreover, adds Diana Smith, the south of the country has developed industrially at the expense of the North and Northeast which remain poor and backward.

US viewpoint

THE POOR WORLD

You can begin right now to start solving what a top international official calls the most difficult problem in the world today.

* The problem is the inability of those who have known nothing but relative affluence to understand the despair and aspirations of the third world, including more than 600 million people with incomes of less than 15 cents a day.

* Your solution might begin by guessing which finance officer or which developing country said this:

"We are to a certain extent in the situation of a country excluded from foreign commerce. We can indeed obtain from abroad the manufactured supplies of which we are in want; but we experience numerous impediments to the sale of our own commodities.

"In such a position we cannot exchange with Europe on equal terms; and the lack of reciprocity would render us the victims of a system which would induce us to confine ourselves to agriculture and refrain from manufactures. A constant and increasing necessity on our part for the commodities of Europe, and only a partial and occasional demand for our own in return, could not but expose us to a state of impoverishment."

If you guessed Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury of the young United States of America, you are right. But you might have been pardoned for thinking it was the Ambassador from Colombia who began his tenure as President of the United Nations General Assembly a fortnight ago with a speech in similar vein.

To grasp that the now great industrial nation of the United States was once talking like an LDC (less developed country) of today is to sense what the third world needs, wants, and should be aided in achieving. It is not "handouts," as is emphasized by a man who should know—Bradford Morse, head of UN Development Program, the main channel of "development cooperation" for the third world. What the LDCs do want is self-reliance, dignity, easing of the inequities in an international system of which they feel themselves the "victims" as much as Alexander Hamilton's fledgling U.S. did.

But the industrial countries today—the equivalent of "Europe" in Hamilton's complaint—have been having such economic problems of their own that the needs of the third world have been receiving short shrift. The developing nations' "growing anger" over being "virtually ignored during the past few years" is reported to have been repeatedly stressed in Washington as the inter-

national Monetary Fund and World Bank prepared to hold their current annual meeting there.

More constructive emotions than anger are required to make progress in world development needs. The rescue of the foreign aid bill on the floor of the House showed that "Congress does respond positively to reasoned argument," in the words of a U.S. State Department official. And "reasoned argument" rather than rhetoric is what the angry third world ought to use in its campaign for economic justice. Yet the better-off countries and their citizens have to make the effort of intellect and empathy to understand the anger and frustration of lands that want to rise under their own power, as early America did, but find so many international cards stacked against them.

It was the UN's Mr. Morse who said this matter of understanding was the most difficult problem facing the world. Resolving it is important not only for the poor countries but for the whole world economy.

It ought to be enough, as Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal has said, to make a humanitarian appeal to those able to share of their bounty to help their neighbours help themselves. But development cooperation is the kind of bread cast upon the waters which comes back buttered.

The United States, for example, sells to the developing nations far more than it buys (except for energy), with far more jobs dependent on export to the third world than are lost through competition from-world imports. More U.S. manufacturers go to the third world than to Western Europe, Japan, and the communist countries taken together.

A flourishing third-world economy and market would mean not a less but a more flourishing "first-world" economy. And the humanitarian achievement of reducing hunger and meeting other human needs would be shared by all.

To get things going in the right direction, developing nations need a leg up through such means as financial, technical, and tariff assistance for their emerging industries; cooperation in stabilizing prices of their commodities; resisting protectionist efforts against their exports; fostering equitable exploitation of their natural resources. Such measures would help the international system to work for them, as Alexander Hamilton sought for his country in the 18th century, while they gain what any self-respecting country wants—the strength to stand on their own feet.

(Christian Science Monitor)

Secrets of Camp David

by Arnaud de Borchgrave

When Egyptian President Anwar Sadat reviewed a massed formation of troops near the Suez Canal to mark the fifth anniversary of the Yom Kippur war two weeks ago, the guns were pointed away from Israel in a symbolic gesture of peace. Instead, the Egyptian forces faced west, toward their old rival, Libya. Most of the Egyptian armour on parade is now being moved from the Sinai front to the western military district on the Libyan border. And both Egyptian and U.S. sources tell me that the strategic redeployment was one of the secret verbal understandings reached at Camp David between Sadat and Jimmy Carter.

For three years now, Sadat has been trying to persuade the U.S. to act more decisively against the expansion of Soviet influence in the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Arabian Peninsula. He was dismayed by Washington's attempt last year to bring Moscow back in to the Mideast peace process. He was deeply troubled by the war between Somalia and Soviet-backed Ethiopia (Sadat even offered to send a brigade of his own troops to help Somalia, but Washington talked him out of it). And he was alarmed by the Communist coup in Afghanistan and the turbulent demonstrations against the Shah of Iran. But finally, at Camp David, Carter told Sadat that nothing short of tacit cooperation among the U.S., Egypt, Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia was needed to contain Moscow's expansionist plans in a vital part of the world.

According to many sources, a more muscular U.S. foreign policy will be constructed around a series of secret undertakings at Camp David, none of which was committed to paper. The key points:

- The secret cooperation between Egyptian and Israeli intelli-

gence services, started at the time of the Libyan-Soviet buildup against Egypt at the end of 1976, will be expanded.

- The Egyptian Army will be reduced to about 200,000 men, half its present size, and will be restructured to protect Egypt and its friends from inroads by the U.S.S.R. and its surrogates, such as Libya. This new, streamlined army will require large numbers of U.S. armoured personnel carriers, self-propelled artillery, anti-aircraft missiles, advanced combat aircraft and ground-to-ground missiles—all to be paid for, presumably, by Saudi Arabia and the U.S.

- Carter and Sadat agreed that hardware deliveries should be linked to progress in carving out the Camp David accords, including the framework for settling the West Bank issue.

- Once Egypt and Israel begin to implement their peace treaty, U.S. economic and military aid to the two countries will be roughly equal. This was not a specific commitment, my sources say, but a private statement of Carter's intentions. What was pledged, however, was that any Arab aid to Egypt that is reduced or cut off in retaliation for the Camp David accords will be replaced by a consortium of Western nations organized by the U.S.

- Israel, for its part, will receive U.S. technology to build up its own advanced-armaments industry and thus lessen its dependence on the U.S. Israel will also be allowed to purchase all the F-15 and F-16 jet fighters that it has requested.

One of the main reasons why Sadat felt so confident of Saudi support for the Camp David accords was that he had finally talked Carter into pursuing a tougher policy against the Soviets—a key Saudi objective for years. In the end, the Saudis moderated their objections to the

Camp David deal when Sadat assured them that a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was definitely linked in his mind with progress toward solution of the West Bank-Gaza Strip problem.

But now Sadat, increasingly bitter about his Arab and Palestinian detractors, has backed away from this linkage and seems to be determined to go through with a separate peace. The Saudis fear that this would provoke a deeper split in the Arab world and a sharp increase in Soviet influence in the anti-Sadat states, thus defeating the new strategic equation worked out at Camp David.

India

Fighter engine deal

AGREEMENT HAS been reached with Russia on supply of a more powerful engine for the MiG-21 to be built in India under licence. This follows talks with a Soviet team on ways to accelerate the indigenisation of the improved version of the aircraft.

India already makes the MiG-21 in a three-factory complex and has tried hard to get a better engine to give the aircraft greater thrust in combat. This has now been agreed to and the improved version should be in service with the Indian Air Force by 1980.

This is two years before the Jaguar will be built in India under licence from the Aircraft Group of British Aerospace, which has just concluded talks here.

The company's team was led by the Aircraft Group's chairman, Mr. F. W. Page.

Mr. Page confirmed that British Aerospace has offered the Harrier to the Indian Navy and hoped the vertical take-off aircraft would serve its needs adequately. He did not disclose details but it is understood that the Government has decided to buy 20 Harriers initially.

Mao's clay feet

Even the Little Red Book is a little less read

by Frederic A. Moritz

Mao Tse-tung, "father" of the Chinese communist revolution, has been lowered from his pedestal.

China's present leaders denounce as "superstitious" and "feudal" the leadership "cult" that held sway over the world's most populous nation just a few years ago.

Remember the "Little Red Book" of the late Chairman's sayings? China's millions are no longer encouraged to study that volume late into the night for clues on everything from how to cut grain more quickly to how to shoot a rifle.

Badges bearing an image of Mr. Mao's face have become a relic of the past. Newspaper mastheads no longer carry a daily quotation from the late leader.

All this is part of an ongoing reinterpretation of Chairman Mao's legacy. It began slowly months ago. In recent days it has escalated into a full-fledged attack on what outsiders have called the "cult of Mao."

"The proletarian leaders are great, but their greatness has a commonplace and not a supernatural origin. To describe them as some kind of demigod is to deliver a great insult," commented a recent article in the newspaper *People's Daily*.

"For a number of years such superstition circumscribed the minds of some people, and these people still need to have their minds

emancipated," the article explained.

Yet in criticizing the "Cult of Mao" China's present leaders inevitably raise a tricky question: Was it massive egotism that led the late Chairman to promote himself to demigod-like stature? The current line does not fully answer this question. Instead it blames Mao's later purged political heir Lin Biao for promoting the cult of an "all-knowing and all-wise leader."

Also blamed is the radical "gang of four" (including Madame Mao). These were promoted by Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution (1966) and purged by his successors after his passing in Autumn, 1976.

The re-examination of Chairman Mao thus walks a delicate balance. It aims to "wound" the late leader without "slaying" him.

For the post-Mao "pragmatic" leadership bases its program on a selective reading of Mao's record, to emphasize such things as orderly economic development, wage incentives for workers, a reaching out for overseas technology, and greater tolerance for cultural diversity. This means keeping the "early Mao" of the early 1950s while discarding the more radical "later Mao" of the "great leap forward" (1959) and the Cultural Revolution (1966).

Mao remains a revered leader, unlike Stalin, who

was sharply and openly criticized by his successor Khrushchev in the Soviet Union. For one thing, Mao's many achievements are still widely admired in China.

Many Chinese visitors openly weep when viewing his remains at a Peking mausoleum. For another, Chairman Hua Kuo-feng's authority rests on the claim that Mao personally selected him as successor with the words, "With you in charge, I am at ease."

The current regime thus regards Mao as a great but humanly fallible leader. To make this point it widely circulated in July a 1962 speech in which the late Chairman admitted "shortcomings and mistakes" and conceded "there are many problems in the work of economic construction which I still don't understand."

A *People's Daily* commentary earlier this month emphasized that Mao's writings should not always be taken literally and concluded, "It is impossible for every sentence to be the truth."

And on Oct. 9 the *People's Daily* reprinted a 1949 speech in which the widely respected late Premier Chou En-lai declared, "We must not take him (Mao Tse-tung) as a mystic leader from whom we cannot learn. We must not take him as a unique godhead."

— *The Christian Science Monitor*

Which way for the Left ?

(2) A. M. Jinadasa

A. M. Jinadasa began his political career in the Dry Zone among the peasantry. Elected to Parliament in 1970 he clashed with the SLFP leadership on issues that affected the peasantry. A day after Parliament was prorogued, he crossed over to the opposition with four other SLFP MPs to form the Peoples Democratic Party of which he is the President.

Q: What were the circumstances that led to your breaking away from the SLFP in 1977?

A: Our rebel group opposed the "right" tendencies within the United Front and fought on issues like the subsidy cuts in the seventy-two budget. In the Government we had also to oppose the Left party leaders who were more interested in protecting the coalition rather than radicalising it. We later became a much broader group popularly identified with the Janavagaya which challenged the corrupt bureaucracy in the SLFP and formed its own parallel trade union federation. We clashed openly with the SLFP leadership over the Government Press strike, the railway strike and the Weerasuriya shooting. It was we who dragged the CP out of the Front, dragged them out screaming, after they had done their best to rationalise their existence in the truncated coalition.

Q: Why did you leave the United Left Front which you were instrumental in forming?

A: As early as March seventy-seven we launched discussions in order to create a new United Left Front. But from the beginning we made it clear that the Front should not be merely an association of a few parties represented in Parliament.

Our anticipated cross-over led to the prorogation of Parliament and the lapsing of the Emergency. This led to the release of a number of political detainees who were prepared to work in a broad Left Front, we endeavoured to mobilise



A. M. Jinadasa

these youth. We succeeded to the extent that Mahinda Wijesekera's Mahajana Vimukthi Pakshaya and Dharmasekera's Prajathanthravadi Jathika Peramuna were included in the ULF's electoral campaign. But thereafter the LSSP and CP leadership sought to bar the new leftists. This climaxed prior to the May Day when our efforts to have a common May Day rally was thwarted with the result that we joined the new left parties at their rally.

Q: What is your present assessment of the United Left Front?

A: The ULF leaders have outlived their existence. They seem to be screaming their heads off as they are consigned to the dustbin of history. They are progressively isolating themselves from the youth, the workers and the other democratic elements. The leaders have made no attempt to carry out a deep, thorough Marxist analysis of their present predicament. One of their recent recruits, remarked that it only remained for them to have performed the *pansankula* (the

last rites). Their internal bulletins betray their superficial, subjective approach.

Q: How do you view the SLFP?

A: We took on the SLFP leadership even at a time when the reformist Left leaders were their stout defenders. The extent of their compromise is betrayed in the LSSP leaving behind three of its MPs in the SLFP and in the Tudawe-wing of the CP still bemoaning their break with the old UF. We characterise the SLFP as a party of the national bourgeoisie growing into a big bourgeois. Its comprador leanings surface when it is in power and the Seevali Ratwatte-Felix Dias group are in the ascendancy. When in opposition the radical elements like the Dinakara group gain influence. Nevertheless its hold over the peasantry is formidable.

The reformist left leaders analyse the SLFP in their characteristically subjective manner in terms of personalities; even now posing Maitripala Senanayake as an alternative leader. Maitripala as Minister of Industries in 1960-64 built up the power base of the new industrial bourgeoisie.

Q: What role do you see the JVP playing in today's politics?

A: Today's JVP is, so to say, only the Menshevik-faction of the old movement. And it is increasingly clear that they were released after some understanding with the UNP.

In introducing this series of interviews we referred to Mr. N. Sanmugathasan's party as 'an Albanian group'. It has been pointed out to us that his party is the Ceylon Communist Party which follows a broadly pro-Albanian line on major international issues.

Most of the young people in their party are sincere and genuine when they call themselves communists. But the leadership is so threatened it cannot even call a conference, and it is pursuing its own objectives. This leadership is constantly clashing with those at the receiving end of things, like the Thulhiriya workers. They press for direct action while the leaders are espousing a parliamentary path. In fact, a majority of the old JVP leadership has crossed over to the new left parties and this trend is continuing.

Q: What are the immediate tasks of the Left in Sri Lanka?

A: We need not merely a left front but a national front, which while led by the working class, must involve the peasantry, the revolutionary intelligentsia, the students and the youth. It must mobilise all democratic and patriotic segments of the population in a broad mass struggle against the comprador.

Q: How do you view the demands by the Tamils for a separate state?

A: Of course we accept the right of self determination for minorities. But we would make every endeavour to convince the Tamil people that secession cannot solve their problems, anymore than it did for the Bengalis in Bangladesh.

On the other hand if the demand came from progressive elements among the Tamils, say as in Eritrea, it would bring on a different complexion to the issue. But the TULF leadership is bourgeois, and has never shrunk from aligning itself with the UNP. It is this factor that has brought on the crisis within the TULF, with a confrontation between the youth and the leadership. We see positive signs in the youth front. We have no hesitation therefore in calling for the release of the TULF youth leaders who have been thrown into jail by the UNP.

Torture

The Filbinger Affair

The spectre of Nazism

by Jayantha Somasunderam

The watchdogs of human rights seem to keep a special eye on Germany. That's not surprising. The land of Hitler and Nazism, the ruins of Auschwitz and Belsen, Dachau and Buchenwald, and the memories of six million Jews who perished, seems to justify this. The attained economic prominence and the developing military capabilities of West Germany point to her early domination of the European Economic Community, and finally of Western Europe itself.

Anxiety has developed over the *Berufsverbote* — the ban on public employment for political reasons. The Third International Bertrand Russell Tribunal has issued a report on the *Berufsverbote*.

The intelligence service *Verfassungsschutz* operates on a huge scale to gather information about every kind of lawful political activity by German citizens; i. e. membership in legal groups and parties, signing letters and petitions, attending public meetings, distributing pamphlets, participating in demonstrations, making speeches and publishing.

Applicants for employment in the public service are informed that doubts exist as to their political loyalty on the basis of lawful activities, often only occasional or long-past, on the basis of reports by the *Verfassungsschutz*.

Legal political parties and groups, as well as individuals, who are critical of any Government policy, including *Berufsverbote*, can be considered 'hostile to the constitution' by the authorities. Not only membership in such organisations, but any kind of association with such parties, their members or sympathizers, may be enough to create doubts as to a person's

'loyalty'. As a result, *Berufsverbote* affects Communists, whose party is legally constituted in Germany, and in addition those who participate in virtually any left-of-centre political activity.

Usually the information that prompts a loyalty hearing is sent to the prospective employer by the data-gathering intelligence service. Sometimes the hearing is required because of an accusation by an informant, such as a neighbour or a co-worker. The hearing is behind closed doors, where persons who are summoned are subject to interrogations as to their political opinions.

The suspects are assumed to be guilty of being enemies of the constitution unless they can prove their 'innocence'. Their attempts to explain complex political matters are met with interruptions and demands to answer 'yes' or 'no'. Refusal to answer or attend the hearing is taken as an admission of guilt. What is required is a recantation of disapproved opinions, and an unequivocal profession of officially sanctioned views. Often, denials of radical views, even in the absence of contrary evidence, are disbelieved.

For the individuals affected, exclusion from the public service is likely to be devastating. Often there is no possibility of alternative employment; for even when the State is not the major employer the alleged 'disloyalty' will become known wherever one goes. Much more than material loss, there is the loss of a major source of self-fulfillment; the psychological damage from being made to feel outcast from society; the humiliation of the investigative interviews; and the long delays, uncertainties and anxieties which occur before a decision is reached.

Apart from the individuals affected, large sectors of the population are led to feel fearful or exercising their political rights. They have reason to fear that any action which those in authority may consider to be of subversive character, or show subversive associations, may one day be denounced and held against them should they wish to enter the public service. Either of two results is likely to follow. Many may censor their words, refrain from engaging in political debate, suppress their own creative possibilities and yield to the pressure to conform. Many others may turn to defiance and some to acts of private or public despair. Both these tendencies are profoundly damaging to society. No society can progress, particularly at a time when enormous economic and social problems have to be faced in the world without the participation and unrestricted flow of ideas from all sectors, especially its youth.

The *Berufsverbote* has sprung into prominence at a time when the presence of former Nazis in high positions of the Federal Republic has caused a scandal. A small stir was created early this year when Hans Filbinger, the Minister-president of Baden-Württemberg was identified as a court-martial officer in the Nazi Navy. He was exposed as one who handed down death sentences to dissident Naval officers. It is claimed that he was responsible for 120 executions. The London *Times* writes: "The case of Dr. Hans Filbinger is reaching the proportions of a scandal involving not only his person but also his party and his country."

The Filbinger-affair became scandalous when his Christian Democratic Party sprang to his defence. This led British T. V. commentator Tom Bower to characterise West Germany as the safest and most profitable place for Nazi criminals. Critics also point to the plethora of neo-Nazi organisations in West Germany.

After a "friendly reunion", lieutenants at the Bundeswehr College in Munich staged a "mock burning of Jews" on February 16,

1977. Quoting from eye-witness accounts, the daily *Frankfurter Rundschau* wrote.

"When the fire went out, someone shouted 'Put on some more wood'. And then someone else remarked, 'Why not burn Jews instead?' So pieces of paper and cardboard with the word 'Jew' smeared on them were thrown into the fire. There were shouts of 'Seig Heil' and the Nazi anthem 'Die Fahne hoch' was sung."

At the Bundeswehr College in Hamburg, Navy Sub-Lt. Sosam was called a "Jew" by his "comrades" who gave him the nickname Sholom Rosenbaum. On the door of his room they smeared these words: "Here lives the Jew Sholom. Don't buy anything from Jews." A slogan used in the '30s to terrorize Jewish shop-keepers.

Together with other neo-Nazis, former students of the Hamburg Bundeswehr College have set up an *SA-Sturm* (squad of storm troopers) in Hamburg, calling for the extermination of "Jews and Communists".

Neo-Nazi pamphlets have been distributed at a Bundeswehr barracks in Nuremberg. They brazenly dismiss as a "lie" the murder of millions of Jewish people in Nazi concentration camps.

The extent of Nazi influence in the West German Armed Forces is also betrayed by the naming of military institutions in honour of Hitler's generals.

The 'General Guderian Barracks' is in Goslar. Heinz Guderian is still being celebrated in the Bundeswehr as the "architect of the German panzer force"; after the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944 he was one of the most relentless last-ditch fanatics in his capacity as Army chief-of-staff.

The 'Ritter von Leeb Barracks' is in Landsberg. General Wilhelm von Leeb commanded the Army Group North in the invasion of the USSR; judged as a war criminal by an Allied military tribunal after the war, he was released from prison by the Adenauer Government before his term was up.

The 'Molders Barracks' are in Brunswick and Visselhovede.

Luftwaffe officer Werner Molders began his career in the Condor Legion, taking part in the wanton bombing of civilians during the Spanish Civil War. Decorated by the Nazis with the Knight's Cross, complete with Oak Leaves, Swords and diamonds, he is now being idolized by the air force of Dundeswehr together with "heroes" such as Colonel Hans-Ulrich Rudel, another ace of the Nazi Luftwaffe.

The Spectre of Nazism that seems to hang over West Germany is given greater credibility due to German involvement with the regime in Chile. The *Colonia Dignidad* concentration camp in Chile is run for the DINA — the Chilean secret service organisation — by the German Paul Schaffer.

A UN-Report on Human Rights has this to say: According to statements prisoners are exposed to different 'experiments' in *Dignidad* without being asked. Among them are experiments on the limit of burden carried through by various methods of torture (beating, electro-shocks, hanging, etc); drugs that mentally break the prisoners, long periods of isolation, and other inhuman conditions".

"As it seems in *Colonia Dignidad* exists a special centre of torture at a subterranean place with special equipment and small sound-proof, hermetically sealed prisoners' cells. The prisoners put on hoods of leather which are adhered to the face by chemical means. It is said that in these cells examinations are carried through with a radiophone set, while the prisoners are naked, tied to metal gratings, and are exposed to electro-shocks."

The organisation *Amnesty International* has substantiated the statement of the UN-report by investigations which took several months. The Lutheran bishop Helmut Franz deported from Chile, has explained to *Stern*: "In Chile as well as in some other European countries, we have met former political prisoners of the military regime who testify that they have been tortured in the German colony."

Meat without bones

What is vivid in my mind about Chou En-lai is his jet black hair. Now I know where it comes from—the pantothenic acid in the soyabean, a major item in the Chinese diet for centuries. But that's only by the way. If there has ever been a kind of culinary quest for a philosopher's stone in the kitchen, the Chinese seem to have reached it, as always, just a bit ahead of the rest of mankind.

These thoughts came into my mind while watching Mrs. Gai Kim, the wife of the UNDP representative in Sri Lanka, perform the magic of transforming liquid into solids in the kitchen of the Colombo Hotel School and creating in the process one of the exciting foods for mankind—a meat without bones.

She called it 'boncheese' because it was a kind of cheese, and 'bon', because in the language of French gourmets it means good. But also to remind, just in case you got the idea that this was some *damm* foreign dish, that it is a cheese made from a bean that the Sinhalese call 'boanchy'.

But let me return to the alchemy I was witness to along with members of the Sri Lanka Women's Conference, which had kindly arranged for Mrs. Kim to put on her marvellous transmutation act. She brought along with her a couple of aides, Mrs. Shu from the Modern Chinese Cafe and Banda her kitchen help.

But the centre of attraction that evening was the soyabean. You couldn't make it out, though, for, as she apologised, she had to mash the bean before she brought it in to cut the performing time down. Anyway, to mash beans, she said, just soak them for about four hours—one cup of beans to an appreciable amount of water

and grind them to a fine paste on a grinding stone.

Only a movie camera is competent to tell the rest of the story. What I have to report is that the paste Mrs. Kim brought was mixed with water, put to boil, then filtered through a cheesecloth and the milk that was filtered was put back on the fire and boiled again. It was after all this that the miracle began.

Mrs. Shu brought out a little bottle of specially made brine and added a few drops to the milk which was now removed from the fire. She kept on stirring the liquid, adding a few more drops of brine and moving the spatula up and down the sides of the pan to see whether the transmutation had begun.

When little yellow flecks appeared on the rapidly cooling milk Mrs. Shu announced that the solidification had begun. We were now in command of the philosopher's stone. The milk was poured into a little wooden box that had a cheesecloth to receive the magical contents. The cloth was folded over the liquid and pressed down with a wooden cover which had a weight on it.

Mrs. Kim now bent over the wooden box and like a stage magician pulling out the fabled rabbit opened the box and held out the removable bottom of the wooden box on which was now a square shaped, beige quivering pudding about an inch high. A great moment, indeed, the dress had been changed to gold, or rather into a high protein food now greatly in demand by the whole world.

When the bean curd was finally presented to those watching the spectacle the little cubes of 'bon cheese' that kept bobbing up and



Mrs. Kim shows how soya curd is pressed in box to produce a soft cake

down in the curry was very appetising since it looked deceptively like pieces of meat. As a companion to the 'boncheese' Mrs. Kim had chosen a Sri Lankan favourite—pollos, and the two complemented each other giving the tongue and palate a delightful sensation.

Mrs. Kim admitted that making a little bean curd at a time was not really worth the effort. What should be done, as is done in China, Korea and Japan, is to open little shops in town and villages where the bean curd could be produced still more cheaply to meet the needs of a larger community. We do that now, she pointed out, with hoppers and bread.

Until such time as these little shops come along you may call at the Modern Chinese Cafe at Havelock Road where bean curd is available. If you are really keen on making the bean curd at home you can also get the specially made brine from them.

— S. P.

The irrelevance of the Tower Hall tradition

The Tower Hall, built in 1909-11 is probably Sri Lanka's first permanent theatre and long identified with the *nurtiya* period of Sinhala drama, was re-opened as a theatre under state auspices on 15th September this year with a new production of John de Silva's play *Siri Sangabo*. After over thirty years of service as a theatre it had been turned into a cinema and its re-opening has been hailed as a historic occasion, both for the revival of a tradition that some nostalgically hark back to as the 'golden age' of Sinhala theatre, and for the promise it holds of significant state encouragement and patronage of the arts.

The speeches, articles and newspaper supplements that appeared on this occasion made two main points: namely that the Tower Hall was a continuing symbol of the resurgent nationalism of the Sinhala people and that its re-opening marked the revival of an important theatrical tradition.

It is rather significant that no one thought fit to mention the fact that there is today in Sri Lanka a live and vigorous theatrical movement dating back to the fifties and that in the light of its development the revival of the Tower Hall tradition is irrelevant.

In order to examine this situation further, it is necessary to go back to the history of theatre in Sri Lanka and note a few facts:

(a) There has been no secular theatrical or dramatic tradition in Sinhala until the 19th century; only a primitive kind of drama existed in what has been called 'the ritual theatre' in the *thovil*, *sokari* and *kolam* ceremonies.

(b) The first form of theatre proper in Sinhala, divorced from any ritual significance, was the *nadagama*; this form was Dravidian in origin as is attested from the fact that the first *nadagamas* were translations from the Tamil. It

was a drama completely in song with a central role for music which was in the Carnatic tradition. Though the thematic content of the *nadagama* was fictional or legendary unlike the ritual theatre which had been confined to certain specific exorcist themes, yet there were some common characteristics—the role of music and song, the absence of scenery and playhouse—and was therefore able to draw on and merge with prevailing traditions. It subsequently became very popular in the Western and Southern coastal areas, although it never penetrated into either the interior of the country or the cities.

(c) As stated earlier the dramatic form was not a part of the Sinhala literary tradition; indeed it seems to have been a despised form in spite of good Sanskrit antecedents. Whatever the religious, cultural or social basis for this situation, it determined the social basis of the art. In effect this meant that the theatre was confined to the rural setting, the relatively simple rural people and their folk culture. The *nadagama* too shared this quality—in the writing, the performances and the audience. Sinhala educated literati thus had no time or inclination to interest themselves in the theatre. This was the background in which Parsi theatrical troupes from Bombay began performing plays in Colombo in the last decades of the 19th century. These plays departed from tradition in a number of significant ways—they demanded an enclosed playhouse, a proscenium stage; elaborate and gorgeous settings and costumes, a florid style of acting and music based on the more melodic North Indian tradition. They captivated the urban audiences and soon, Sinhala plays written on similar themes, often translations, presented in the same mode and to the same music, took to the stage.

What were the origins of this 'nurti' theatre and what were its

determining characteristics? As Sarachchandra has noted, the Parsi theatre was not a logical development of the Indian theatrical tradition but the bastard offspring of a decadent Indian tradition and certain Western theatrical and operatic conventions, designed to cater to the debased taste of the Indian urban groups. The generally accepted tradition is that the form had its origin at the court of Wajid Ali Shah as a kind of court entertainment and was heavily influenced by the operatic recollections of some French ministers at his court. However, this theatrical form became very popular in Bombay and other Indian cities and was carried by touring theatrical troupes to Sri Lanka as well as other South-Asian countries. The Parsis, an Indian community that was quick off the mark in adapting to the cultural values and needs of the imperialist overlords, played a dominating role in this process.

In form, it was a crude copy of Western theatre; it was a mixture of high emotion, song, comic interludes, crude melodrama, somewhat like the formula Sinhala film of today. It relied for its attraction on music, songs, stage settings and magical effects, and drew its themes from Indian legend or from adaptations of Western plays or comic operas.

In Sri Lanka, this whole form was taken over, but the absence of a dramatic tradition in Sinhala cruelly affected its development. It remained crudely imitative in form, structure and music; in the absence of any developed drama-language, its dialogue and lyrics were an uneasy mixture of rhetoric and vulgar usage. And its social base—the Sinhala-educated urban petty bourgeoisie—determined and limited its themes and mode of presentation. According to Sarachchandra, the *nurti* form effectively killed the *nadagama* which, in terms of structure and language, was much superior to it and had

also more intrinsic roots in native tradition.

* * *

Is the revival of this tradition relevant in the present context and in relation to to-day's needs? This is the question that has to be answered in the light of the outpourings of nostalgia for the Tower Hall tradition that have assailed us in the past few weeks.

As far as the dramatic form is concerned, it does not have anything of value for playwrights or audiences of today. Henry Jayasena's production of *Siri Sangabo*, with which the renovated Tower Hall was opened exposed the limitations of the form. The production attempted to refine the florid settings and costumes, and to eliminate the more obvious stage effects and gimmicks; it also adopted a more naturalistic yet stylised form of acting. In this context, the play was revealed as lacking in any dramatic structure or in characterisation and character development. Its serious and comic elements did not fuse together and the attempt to inject some measure of refined visual spectacle (as in the *perahera* or court scenes) stood out as completely isolated from the drama. It was merely a stringing together of chronological sequences or tableaux without any sense of dramatic rhythm.

A reading of the plays of John de Silva, Charles Dias and other '*nurti*' dramatists reveals this weakness; the plays which they translated from Shakespeare, Harsha and other Western and Sanskrit sources and attempted to adopt to the '*nurti*' conventions are even more glaring in this respect. This new production of *Siri Sangabo*, however, confirmed this in no uncertain manner, as also did a slightly more effective production of Charles Dias'. '*Padmavati*' a few years ago.

The language of these plays — an uneasy mixture of bombast, grandiloquent rhetoric and colloquialism — is another disappointment. Sarachchandra in analysing the language compares it unfavourably with that of the *nadagamas* and calls it generally lacking in

dramatic or emotional quality. A rigorous analysis of even some of the famous lyrics will indicate this same weakness. Of course the absence of a dramatic convention in Sinhala and the fact that these writers were functioning at the end of a long period of decline in Sinhala literature meant that they had to fashion a language suited to the new form and their failure in this attempt should not be held against them. But what is of importance in discussing the Tower Hall tradition is that since then, Sinhala playwrights have succeeded in evolving an idiom that can range effectively from stylised to realistic drama.

If in terms of dramatic form, structure or language, the Tower Hall plays do not have any lesson for the contemporary playwright in Sri Lanka, we have these to consider whether there is anything to be gleaned from them in terms of theme and content.

The heyday of *nurti* theatre coincided with the periods of national resurgence and anti-imperialist activity in Sri Lanka. By the beginnings of this century, a petit bourgeoisie educated in English had emerged and were beginning to agitate for more power and affluence for themselves. These demands were politically reformist and in the cultural sphere took the form of opposition to Western culture values and a reaffirmation of traditional Sinhala and Buddhist virtues.

These agitations took place not only at the political level; Anagarika Dharmapala on the nationalist and religious level and Piyasena Sirisena in his newspaper articles and novels lent an added dimension to the political campaign. By this time, persons belonging to this class like John de Silva, who were commercially engaged in the theatre, had seen in popular drama another means of propagating its ideology.

What were the chief features of this ideology of nationalist revival that were propagated in the '*nurti*' plays? First was an insistence on language as the instrument of transmittal of cultural

and religious values. John de Silva in his original plays emphasised the importance of a knowledge of Sinhala. In the *Sinhala Parabhava Natakaya* he says; It is apparent that the chief reason for the decline of the Sinhala race is the ignorance of the native language. Sinhala people of today, in their selfish self-interest, trample on their mother tongue and learn alien languages and go astray because they do not know what their forefathers said and did".

Second was a condemnation of Western culture values. He soundly berated all these Sinhalese who slavishly accepted the social and cultural practices of the white man. In many of his plays with a contemporary setting, the villains who come to an evil end are those who turn their backs on Sinhala Buddhist culture and adopt Western ways of living.

Third was a fierce patriotism. In plays based on historical characters or themes, he attempted to rouse in his audiences a sense of their national heritage, a pride in belonging to the Sinhala race and to move them towards reasserting their failing sense of national identity. This, of course, touched more closely the political sphere; it even attracted the attention of the colonial police whose chief, Dowbiggin, in confidential report to the Governor on the spread of nationalist activities, referred to "the series of stirring Sinhalese plays produced by John de Silva with the object of creating a spirit of nationalism". A contemporary journal described the plays of John de Silva and Charles Dias as being intended "to rekindle the dying embers of patriotism". This spirit of nationalism was accompanied by a racial chauvinism. This was not peculiar to John de Silva but to all the leaders of the Sinhala Buddhist revival. The decline of race and religion are blamed not only on the British rulers, but also on other minority groups in the country. This attitude comes out strongly in John de Silva's plays indeed his actions were even more direct: he addressed his audiences before the performance of his plays and "expressed his gut feelings in an abusive speech

in which the Tamils, the Moors and those who aped the West were roundly castigated."

In all these attitudes, John de Silva, Charles Dias and others were expressing the prevailing ideology of their class. At that particular point of our history, a certain segment of the rising capitalist class in Sri Lanka sought to advance their economic and political interests and the Sinhala Buddhist revival was an important aspect of their struggle.

This was the kind of ideology present in the plays with historical or contemporary themes that were staged at the Tower Hall. One of the factors that would have to be examined, in judging their impact, is what proportion they constituted of the total output of "nurti" drama. Of John de Silva's fifty odd plays, it seems that less than half were concerned with contemporary or historical themes. Another factor would be the composition of the audience. We have some evidence that the rising Sinhala bourgeoisie lent their patronage to the Tower Hall and were present at its performances and that the audiences included the Sinhala educated petit bourgeoisie & sections of the urban working class.

However that may be, it is quite clear that the nurti dramatists, of the period did, while making of the theatre a commercial success, reflect in their plays the values and perspectives of their class—the Sinhala petty bourgeoisie—and did use drama as a means of obtaining for themselves increased economic and political power at the expense of the Sinhala Christianised upper classes who had served up to then as the middlemen between the imperial power and the masses.

While one must understand and appreciate the role that the nurti dramatists and John De Silva in particular played at a specific moment of our history in the dramatic, cultural and political fields, it serves no purpose to mythologise this role. It is very necessary to de-mythify this history

(Continued on page 18)

Music

A. J. Gunawardana

The 'relevance' of Rukmani Devi

"If she had been born in the West, Rukmani Devi would have turned out to be a world famous opera singer." This is how E.F.C. Ludowyk once commented on the glowing talent of Rukmani Devi, then in the peak of her film career. I suppose Professor Ludowyk knew whereof he spoke, but of course it has never been intellectually fashionable to discuss Rukmani Devi and her kind of art. She never claimed any 'relevance' on behalf of her music—a cardinal error in our times, for today intellectual interest and validation are available only to those artists who claim to possess this elusive substance. The more 'relevance' there is, the better the music, hang the quality of the music or the singer's rendering of it.

This narrowly-construed sense of relevance, currently so evident in critical writing as well as artists' self-propaganda, was totally alien to Rukmani Devi's domain. Quite simply, she was a good singer, the best female voice we have had. Her relevance, if that greatly abused term still has any meaning, was (and I insist, is) to a dimension of song that we have learnt to ignore, and even to disavow. The tragic termination of her career should be occasion to give some thought to it.

The great bulk of our popular music today is at best only subliterate. Whatever the provenance of the music—"beat-show", film or theatre—the performances are often so egregiously deficient in the basic skills that grave doubts are generated about our culture's sensitivity to music. The beat-show—itsself a disorienting label—naturally exhibits the least proficiency in music, but one would have expected theatre to be more attentive to the fundamentals of the art. Regrettably, such concern is the rare exception rather than the rule, even in plays that give primacy to musical expression.

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For the most part, what assails our ears at the beat show, in the theatre and the cinema are vocalisings that are stridently oblivious of the need to maintain pitch and time-scale, elements which are universally understood to be the minimum requirements of musical articulation.

This basic limitation, fatal to musical development is further compounded by the growing media orientation of our singers. They would be entirely lost without sound amplification for their voices are programmed for the microphone. In other words, the majority of our singers are crooners. One is sorry to note that some of the classical performers too are giving in to the microphone. Thus what we encounter today for the most part is not open-voiced, full-throated singing, but deliberately attenuated, synthetic sounds.

Throughout her career, Rukmani Devi offered a shining contrast to this, both on stage and screen. Despite years in the cinema, she never succumbed to the "mike"; the voice retained its unpretentious, open character. To be sure, the lyrics of her songs were woefully mired in the banalities of the Colombo school of poetry; the content was uniformly poor. Nonetheless on her lips, they acquired a life that transcended the commonplace sentiments embodied in them.

What Rukmani Devi unforgettably demonstrated for us was that it is the singer that finally makes the song, not the lyric, however meaningful, not the melody, however sweet. Her voice not only exposed the impoverished state of our popular music, but returned us to the authentic mainstream of song.

A sleight of hand

When on 24th June 1969 the Peruvian military government initiated one of the most ambitious agrarian reforms, not only in Latin America but also in the whole of the Third World, a wide range of expectations was raised concerning the nature of the changes that such a reform could lead to. Until then, there was in Peruvian society a direct relationship between land ownership and political power. The transformation undertaken raised the question of whether the relatively rapid, massive and radical transfer of agricultural ownership would give the peasant and the agricultural proletariat the same decisive economic and political influence enjoyed until then by the big agrarian middle class and the traditional landowners. Today, at eight years' distance, a few replies to this question can be tentatively put forward, enabling us to appreciate the crystallization of a new relationship in which land ownership is no longer the basis of power but where the disappearance of the formerly dominant class does not automatically mean access to power for the working classes.

To understand the importance of the reform, one must remember that until 1968 there existed in Peru a regime where tenancy and land ownership were very different things throughout an extensive historical period, based on the two extremes — hacienda (large estate) and indigenous community. The hacienda, although it accounted for only 3.9 percent of total farming units, possessed 10.6 percent of the 2 million hectares of

agricultural land and the 20 million hectares of natural pastureland in the country; while 96 percent of the remaining units, that is to say, those owned by small peasants — including communal property — occupied hardly 10.7 percent.

The hacienda in its three versions — modern, transitional and traditional — defined by the productive regimes prevailing in it, was the ruling institution of the rural world. Ten thousand of them monopolized most valuable resources, constituted a source of accumulation, and therefore built up the power of the capitalist agrarian and landowning elites at regional and national level. On the other hand, the indigenous community seemed to be the remains of a traditional productive system based on the principle of reciprocity, a system in which possession and individual work existed side by side with collective ownership of land. In a state of breakdown caused by various factors, almost 4,000 communities constituted a refuge for an immense mass of indigenous smallholding peasants.

Basically oriented toward export, agriculture was incapable of meeting the food needs of the 14 million inhabitants of the country, or of sustaining a national process of industrialization. Such a tendency was reflected in the increasingly critical situation of producers who did not export or were not integrated in agroindustry. Consequently, the million rural workers (smallholders, wage-earners and peasants in a state of serfdom or semiserfdom) found themselves in the lowest income groups, reaching extremes of poverty and having almost no participation in the political activities of the country.

Timid attempts

The existing social imbalance is easier to understand if one realizes that, in these conditions, land ownership provided the holders with

Where it is shown that land ownership and the disappearance of the landed class do not mean automatic access to power

such a degree of economic and political power that they were able to block the increasingly important attempts at change made by different sectors of society.

For this reason, the successive contemporary questioning of the traditional order, starting with the analyses by Jose Carlo Mariategui and Victor Raul Haya de la Torre in the 1920s, and given political shape by an emerging peasant movement in the 1950s and 1960s, never managed to succeed. Nor did the timid attempts at agrarian reform made in 1956, 1962 and 1965, giving small groups of the political left a pretext for capitalizing on the social unrest with an attempted guerrilla revolution.

Thus, at the end of the 1960s, the socially explosive situation of economic crisis originating in the country demanded a radical change as the only way of getting round the structural *impasse*. Agrarian reform thus became imperative. However, insofar as its realization was blocked by the characteristics of the power system, a prerequisite for success was the transformation of the latter.

Undoubtedly, this situation was one of the factors that led to the critical point when the armed forces took over the government, proclaiming a nationalistic and anti-oligarchic programme. After the nationalization of the Talara oil fields, owned by a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, the first significant internal measure was the promulgation of Decreto-Ley No. 17716, with which a new programme of agricultural changes was inaugurated, with the theme: "Land for the man who works it."

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The new law certainly proposed the most advanced reform programme ever tried in Latin America, with the exception of Cuba. Its terms were drastic and unappealable: it hit not only the traditional landowners, against whom there was a consensus defining them as "unproductive," "inefficient," "archaic," etc., but also the modern capitalist proprietors, "the sugar and cotton barons," who considered themselves endowed with all the qualities they denied to the landowning class.

To this end, the ideological principles, the administrative procedures and the institutional organization, as well as the functions and attributes of the state plan with regard to the agrarian sector, were reformulated and strengthened. Along with these reforms appeared bodies like the Agrarian Tribunal (*Tribunal Agrario*), intended to break down any barrier put up by the powerful landowners through their dominance over the judicial apparatus, and the National System of Support for the Social Movement (*Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilización Social* - SINAMOS), created to promote the organization and a participation of the working classes directly with the State. Thus a new type of modernizing, technobureaucratic authority began to take shape as part of a wider phenomenon that was also occurring in other sectors of the national society.

But if the scope and *modus operandi* of the reform seemed innovative, no less so was the fact that instead of the hacienda system, a new structure, made up of various types of cooperative organization, was created.

The idea was that each ex-hacienda should be converted into an Agrarian Production Cooperative (*Cooperativa Agraria de Producción*), a Social Interest Agricultural Society (*Sociedad Agrícola de Interés Social* - SAIS) or a Peasant Group (*Grupo Campesino*), or an Agrarian Services Cooperative (*Cooperativa Agraria de Servicios*). The first applied to highly developed units, where there was an organized administration, and almost absolute control of the land

was in the hands of the undertaking itself, a situation usually found in the coastal haciendas, whose permanent wage-earning workers became almost automatically members or communal owners, so as not to break up the unit of exploitation. The SAIS, on the other hand, had to adapt themselves to the characteristics of the more modern highland haciendas. These had almost always been formed as a result of the depredations of the adjoining peasant communities; therefore, to meet longstanding claims, ownership was not offered only to the workers of that particular hacienda — who were relatively few — but to the collective body made up of them and one or more communities with prior claims. The third version applied to those haciendas where there had been practically no managerial activity and those where the only concrete consequence of reform was to eliminate payment to the landowner and ratify the peasants in their *de facto* possession, encouraging the beneficiaries to market their products.

A rapid advance

The programme advanced still further, laying down the rule that in all cases a regional coordinating body should be created: the Central Cooperative, in which all the reformed units of an area or microregion should be grouped, so as to plan their activities, deal with development investment and provide social services for the whole region.

Private property, represented by a limited number of medium-sized units not otherwise allocated, and by the small individual holdings, was assigned a secondary role in relation to the economic and political weight accorded to the associated bodies.

It was hoped that the reformed sector, organized in this way, would in its first five years (1970-1975) achieve a rapid advance, affecting 24 000 estates and 9,678 091 hectares, and involving 342,000 families. Ambitious economic and social goals were set for this period: an annual productive growth rate of 4.2 percent, a drastic reduction of unemployment and under-em-

ployment through the creation of 307,800 new posts, and a substantial increase in rural income.

This reform programme was part of a general political concept whose aims were "the progressive transfer of economic and political power" to the working classes and the "building up of a social democracy in which everyone will participate." In other words, it offered the peasant not only land but also power.

It must be admitted that in the past eight years agrarian reform has made an impression. At present, Peru is unusual among Latin American societies, inasmuch as there are no longer any *gamonales* (local rulers), prototypes for a familiar character in Latin American literature, nor managers of agroindustrial plantations. Does this mean that the military government has achieved its aims? A summary evaluation indicates that this is not the case, since, although a good part of land ownership has been transferred, state power has been strengthened to the point of setting up a new plan of political relations opposed to the model of participation previously announced.

Still unfinished

At the beginning of 1977, 500 agrarian production cooperatives, 603 peasant groups, 274 peasant communities, 57 SAIS and 8 social ownership undertakings (a form of organization created in 1974) had received 7,035,659 ha, thus benefiting 280,370 heads of families; meanwhile, almost 500,000 ha were distributed to 35,219 peasants individually, raising to 7,528,191 ha and 315,589 heads of families, respectively, the total figures for land and peasants achieved by the reform. Despite this success, the original goals have not quite been reached. The transfer of land is still unfinished. The growth rate of annual productivity for 1970-1975 was no more than 2 percent, in fact the period ended with a recession. And the unemployment gap has widened instead of closing, obliging the Government to draw up a plan, at present being carried out, for creating jobs in rural areas.

The causes of this situation lie in the political rather than in the economic aspects, although these have certainly been a determining factor. A study of the recent process shows how, to the extent to which state control became established, the original radical positions were weakened until they could only be maintained in a precarious balance, to be later displaced by others of liberal style — a phenomenon that developed against a background of bitter political struggle in which the displaced coastal proprietors, and above all the highland landowners, opposed the reform, blocking its channels and sabotaging it openly or secretly, which, among other things, led to a dangerous decapitalization. At the same time, while the traditional social forces rejected the state action, the sectors representing the working class (trade unions, communities and federations) developed their own methods to carry out the reform. The peasant movement crushed by the antiguerrilla repression of 1965 reemerged, but this time as principal protagonist in the struggle for land.

In the face of such an eruption, which, with different motives but similar consequences, was happening in other sectors where the Government implemented reforms, the new state authority replied with a conciliatory formula. A corporate type of body was proposed: the National Agrarian Confederation (*Confederacion Nacional Agraria - CNA*), to include all the rural sectors, harmonizing their respective interests. The agrarian leagues and federations to be created, at local and regional level, as part of the Confederation, would act as a channel of communication between the State and the working classes, which would make the latter a subordinate link in the power chain.

Not the same meaning

But this formula did not prove viable either. Despite the fact that CNA has an important mediating function, its working class members do not accept their exclusion from the exercise of government, at least insofar as agrarian policy

is concerned, and question their marginalization in the municipalities and local government. Moreover, the narrowness of the officially instituted channel has led many of the peasantry to revitalize an autonomous entity: the Peasant Confederation of Peru (*Confederacion Campesina del Peru - CCP*), which won concessions far greater than those accorded to CNA. It can therefore be said that the peasantry, plunged in a process not initiated by its own efforts, has woken up, raising its demands from the economic to the political level, and now insisting not only on land but also on the participation originally offered.

Such a contradiction has led to the necessity of strengthening the state authority still further, reestablishing the limits of autonomy initially granted to the associate undertakings and setting up in the reformed sector control mechanisms of a type not only economic-administrative but also politico-ideological. This policy has been intensified, particularly in the present economic crisis, and it was only through this limitation of the possibilities of action for the working classes that the State has been ensured a redistribution of income, which is unfavourable to the rural sector.

From this it follows that although, formally and broadly speaking, it may be possible to consider the agrarian sector as under cooperative ownership, in practice relations between the new undertakings and the State indicate that ownership does not have the same meaning as before. For example, the new masters cannot plan, organize or dispose of production, since these functions are reserved to the State. Also, the producers are not allowed to fix wages.

In these conditions, the reaction of the cooperative beneficiaries and their lack of interest in production are understandable, and also the fact that they reproduce paternalistic or demanding behaviour, this time with respect to the State. A situation that, in conjunction with decapitalization

(Continued on page 18)

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NEW DEPRESSION (2)

Unemployment at centre stage

In an article entitled, "Can America solve its job problem?" featured in the Economics page of the London *'Times'*, Frank Vogl discusses the U. S. Labour Department's latest statistical projections and concludes: "Thus unemployment will almost certainly remain at centre stage in political controversies in coming years, and if the Labour Department's high forecast proves accurate, then serious jobless problems seem certain in the 1980's."

The OECD (which groups 24 of the world's most developed capitalist countries) released an analytical background to the recently held seven nation Bonn summit, sketching a pessimistic panorama. It says that while prices will rise by 10% in Britain within this year, unemployment in the U. K. and elsewhere in the world will also increase next year as the industrialized nations face the prospect of slow growth. The OECD report says that the economic growth of its member countries will on the average remain at around or even slightly below 3½% annually, which contrasts adversely with the average historical growth rate considered 'normal' i.e. 5%. This slow growth will lead to a further widening of the gap between potential and actual output in Western countries, thus causing OECD unemployment which is presently over 17 million to rise. The report states, that to hold unemployment steady at present levels a growth rate of 4% is needed, the achievement of which is highly unlikely. The background goes on to forecast that the U.S. in particular will see its growth rate trimmed to around 2½% unless drastic action is taken, the U. K. growth rate will be down to 1½% in 1979.

Commenting on the aspect of world trade the report speaks of "the stark dangers confronting the open international trading system if the prospect of a protectionist free-for-all materializes as a consequence of the Bonn recovery strategy proving a failure."

Meanwhile, the Western press is also filled with news and analysis concerning 'The Sick Dollar'. The London *'Times'* Editorializes: "The continuing weakness of the Dollar and the instability in international exchange markets that this has produced... is without question, placing an increasingly serious strain on the international economic system. Within the next 6 to 9 months, the U.S. is likely to slip into a recession and the effect of such a development on the rest of the industrial world in real terms will be serious."

Dr. Robert Lekachman, the Professor of Economics at New York's City University recently wrote an article for the *New York Times*, the caption of which is self-explanatory: "Prologue to the New Recession." In it he says that the U.S. economy is right now heading towards a severe recession which will hit the country around this time next year. Buttressing his argument using official U.S. Department of Commerce indices, Professor Lekachman predicts a significant retardation in the growth of the U.S. economy within the next year. While President Carter has acknowledged the high levels that prices have soared to by publicly labelling inflation as his domestic enemy number 1, unemployment will also rise above its present high levels and seriously affect the youth mainly among the non-white sections of U.S. society.

Professor Robert Heitbroner, the very well known liberal economist is less restrained than other Western commentators in his survey of current economic trends and prognosis for the near future. In a lengthy article in the *New York Magazine* which opens with the dramatic sentence "Another world wide crisis of capitalism is upon us." Dr. Heitbroner presents a picture of severe recession leading to economic 'crash'.

Even the conservative John Exter, former Governor of the Central Bank of this country said in Colombo, a few weeks back, that all signs pointed to a repetition of the Great Depression of 1929-32 and warned economic policy planners in the 'Third World' to brace themselves for the impact.

So the most likely scenario is that the beginning of the new decade will see the present recession 'slip-sliding' into a genuine Depression, and profound crisis will engulf the entire capitalist world economy. The present, ever deepening crisis is clearly not only cyclical, but also structural. Furthermore, it is not only a question of the relatively short business cycle of 'boom and bust' (the existence of which was discovered by Marx and denied by orthodox economists until fairly recently) but also of a long term down swing of the kind which affects world capitalism at intervals of around every 50 years and lasts almost as long. This phenomenon was analysed in 1920 by the Russian economist Kondratieff and his studies are being 'rediscovered' by radical political economists these days.

It would be vulgar economism however, to predict a total breakdown of world capitalism in the

coming decades, without taking cognisance of the political and other superstructural factors which can prove dominant, even though the economic factor inevitably asserts itself as the determinant one in the final analysis. The open fratricidal strife within the socialist camp and the strongly divisive influence this has on progressive forces the world over, works as a stabilizing factor in favour of the West in its hour of crisis.

Meanwhile, the joint strategy of the metropolitan and peripheral ruling elites which aims at further integration of the Third World economies with those of the West, enables the developed capitalist countries to transfer a greater part of the burden of the crisis on to the Third World, thereby solving partially and temporarily its problem of world wide surplus accumulation, staving off social upheaval (and political turmoil) in the West.

In the 'Third World' however, rapid economic growth along capitalist lines against the backdrop of this global crisis of accumulation, inevitably implies heightened dependency on the West; grave erosion of national sovereignty by transnationals; concentration of wealth in the hands of (and conspicuous consumption by) an elite. The severe underdevelopment of the 'Third World' countries and their peoples generated by this pattern of dependent capitalist growth leads to tremendous social and political pressures which are contained by the dominant social groups through massive repression.

As in the context of the Great Depression, only two mutually exclusive and contradictory historical paths emerge from the vortex of this present crisis i.e. fascist forms or socialist transformation. If, against all odds, the latter path proves victorious, then global capitalism will not pull decisively out of this long downswing and may not survive the century of the October Revolution. ●

A sleight . . .

(Continued from page 16)

and exogenous factors, accounts for the uncertain economic results achieved by the sector.

The relations thus established between state and peasantry constitute (as in the case of the Mexican revolution) a peculiar phase insofar as the power mechanisms, the demands of the working classes and the nature of the dominant groups are radically altered, while the original situation of the supposed beneficiaries has not improved in structural terms.

It is for this reason that rural development (in the sense of social efficiency and well-being, food self-sufficiency and elimination of exploitation in the distribution and production stages) is, in the contradictory situation of Peruvian agrarian reform today, struggling through one of its thorniest passages.

The irrelevance . . .

(Continued from page 13)

and not be swayed by easy emotional responses. It is in this context, when we are faced with quite a different set of tasks, when the necessity is to turn away from obscurantist backward-looking and chauvinistic values, that it is difficult to see much relevance to today's needs in the Tower Hall plays, either in specifically dramatic or in ideological terms.

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

UNESCO just before the vital resolution on 'the free flow of news' was passed at the Paris meeting.

But for all their known structural defects and prejudices as the instruments of western dominance over Third World elites, agencies like Reuters do not blatantly "doctor" news as did those who control front page news in the island's premier daily. The 'Sun' had a straight agency report on the UN vote on the latest vacancy in the International Court of Justice. But the 'Daily News' introduced into the Reuter message extraneous matter obviously prepared by the Information Department or the Foreign Ministry to show what a famous victory it was! Clumsy, clumsy.

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Press opinion

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A lesson from India

All the brickbats hurled at Indira Gandhi in the course of her struggle against local and foreign enemies lie around her feet today like floral tributes. The woman who was besmirched with the charges of destroying the party, of strengthening family bandysm, has emerged in the eyes of the Indian public as a formidable heroine who has earned a political rebirth. The decisions of strange Presidential Commissions, like the Shah Commission, written with mud have been wiped out by the Supreme Court of public opinion. She who was condemned by the Janata Government as being an emissary of Mara, the evil one, has been exonerated by the Indian people—the very makers of history in the short time of 19 months. "India today, Lanka tomorrow," was the cry raised by the political reactionaries of this country on Indira's defeat. No doubt there is a tendency for the JRs to catch cold when the Desais sneeze. If anybody, therefore, wishes to see a similarity again between the victory of

Indira and the politics of Sri Lanka that would not be unnatural.



The SLFP's Junta

How Mrs. Bandaranaike is planning to tread the same totalitarian path as Mr. J. R. Jayewardene can be seen from the constitution the SLFP expects to adopt tomorrow. The one aim of this constitution that can be seen on examining its clauses is the attempt to consolidate the power of the party, better than at present, in the hands of the Bandaranaike family headed by Mrs. Bandaranaike and the mudalalis affiliated to them. It also lays down the line of succession from mother to son or daughter and the inheritance of the party leadership as a legacy. Just as it is said that the people deserve the government they get, so every party gets the leadership it deserves. If the leadership the SLFP deserves is the Bandaranaike family-Mudalali combination one may, from that, infer the quality of that party.

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

a super boatman whose fare has only to be found before he sets Asia on fire? The last occasion that a yachtsman represented the country was during a Senanayake regime but then as someone dryly remarked that was during the bad old days. Now that the good ones are said to have dawned let's hope that the no-hopers are left behind or else we will have to proclaim to the world that our Olympic Council is enmeshed in a permanent midsummer.

I cannot end without recapitulating a story that never seems to lose its gloss. Our erstwhile

council sent a wrestler to the Rome Olympics and due to managerial bungling the exponent of free style was entered in the Graeco-Roman event. His first and as it turned out his only bout was with an East European who in a trice had him on the mat holding his left leg in a fierce grip. Our man in obvious pain yelled 'ammo ammo' which in the language of his opponent simply read "child's play". Incensed, the East European tightened his grip and our man returned home on crutches and in plaster.

Sidat Sri Nandalochana
Colombo 4.

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Cryptic Crossword No. 10

by Stripex

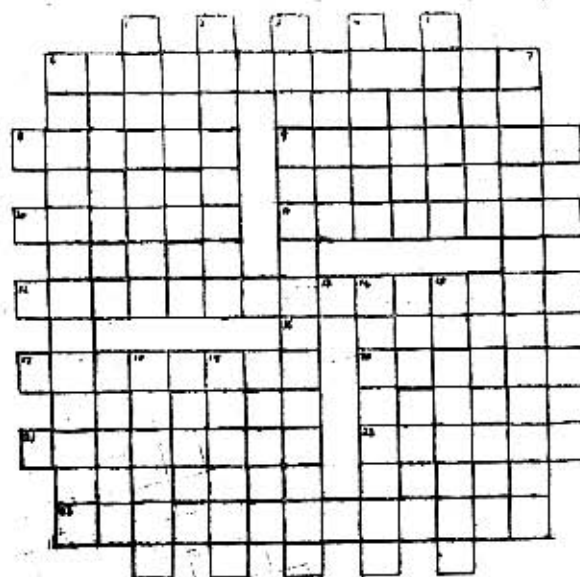
Across

CLUES

6. O, yes, do, bless me! but it's not mine (8,5)
8. Four out of a Roman five prefer ... (6)
9. ... the taste of Chianti e. g. (5,3) ..
10. Secluded apartments for IGP joining religious sect (6)
11. Remedy determining a species (8)
12. Separated from Hortense Vere did the grand (7)
13. Language for those who have standing in Iran (7)
17. Just as a joke the brat bit off uncle's ear (a part of it) (3,2,3)
20. ... be check'd for silence, / But never tax'd for — (All's well) (6)
21. Coda I hid from the old generals (8)
22. A. meeting place between trees (6)
23. The note Stalin falsified? Far from it! (3,2,3,5)

Down

1. Almost time to get rid of the good man as sacrifice (8)
2. Lessen sin at heart but stray from the correct path (9)
3. Burma Shave jingle perhaps is contrary (7)
4. Pay up and cease from wandering (6)
5. Soldier in task Aristotle Onassis set (6)
6. Cage to fill in one of those official forms but this belief gets the backing of the government (5,8)
7. Squatid report of CID round coast (6,7)
14. Six have us returning with friend in view (8)
15. With chopped—up leaks the chess grandmaster remains bony (no meat at all) (8)
16. Penetration within view (7)
18. Do tidy over the singular man (6)
19. Looking on a coating of different material (6)



Solution to Cryptic Crossword No. 9

ACROSS — 1. London Transport 7. Stockholder 9. Reade
10. Rides 11. Aster 14. Creeps 15. Exarch 16. Sonic 17.
Morose 18. Unspun 19. Secur 22. Actor 24. Amiss 25.
Riding boots 26. Settle the matter.

DOWN — 1. Livery companies 2. Ozone 3. Tokens 4. Arouse
5. Sider 6. Talks things over 7. Space writer 8. Rude
replies 11. Asses 12. Tango 13. Recur 20. Carnet 21. Unable
23. Rydal 24. Aroma.



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A special supplement

To mark the 61st Anniversary of
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THE FUTURE BELONGS TO SOCIALISM

by Prof. Nikolai Oporin

Certain press media in the U. S. A. and Western Europe have published stories alleging that the Soviet Union is facing economic difficulties. They claim that the Soviet Union is incapable, without Western aid, of not only developing industry, but of even extracting mineral resources.

The recently-released report of the US Central Intelligence Agency adds to this frightening picture by predicting that the difficulties of the Soviet economy may grow worse, since, according to the report, the pace of development will slow down in various branches of industry, construction and transport in the years to come.

It is hard to say what is more in these forecasts: The task of economic competence or deliberate distortions.

Citing concrete data on the stages of growth of the Soviet economy over the past sixty years, obviously, is irrelevant. So we shall limit ourselves to only one figure: by the start of the tenth five-year plan period the volume of industrial production had exceeded the prewar level by 17 times.

In other words over the years of postwar five-year plans there have been created on Soviet soil,

as it were, another sixteen such industrial states as our country was in 1940. By the beginning of 1976 the Soviet people were producing more industrial goods than the world amount put out on the eve of the Second World War.

The USSR is confidently advancing in the economic competition of the two systems with the rates of growth inconceivable for the capitalist world. Even before the ninth five-year plan the Soviet Union was producing more pig iron, iron, manganese and chrome ores, coal and coke, cement, potassium salts, phosphate raw materials, tractors, diesel and electric locomotives, cotton, flax and some other types of output than any other country. In the past five-year plan period it also became world's leader in the production of steel, oil and mineral fertilizers.

May be, the industrial production of the Soviet Union is being increased at the expense of output quality?

The answer to this question, in a laconic and expressive manner, came on November 23, 1976, from the French newspaper *Le Monde* in one of its headlines: "Everything is all right with Soviet technology." It would have been

difficult to say differently at that time when Soviet workers and engineers were installing the capitalist world's largest and most up-to-date hydraulic press in the French city of Issoire.

In the past years of the tenth five-year plan the USSR has achieved further economic progress and improvements in the living and cultural standards of its people. Its industrial output in the last two years has gone up by almost 11 per cent, i. e., was on the level of five-year-plan targets.

Maybe, finally, the capitalist economy demonstrates to the world examples of scientific and technological progress and of the enterprising art which the USSR and other socialist states, as well as the developing countries should follow?

Alas, the capitalist countries have nothing to boast of in this field. The entire building of modern capitalism has been shaken by its deep economic crisis. The course of world history increasingly emphasizes the contrast between the steadily growing economy of the socialist world and the crisis- and inflation- depressed capitalist system.

The future belongs to socialism. — (APN)

SOCIALIST REALISM AND FREEDOM OF CREATIVE WORK

by Gvarlil Petrosyan

Some people still think that these are mutually exclusive notions. True, each of them causes heated debate and even speculation. A short while ago such problems could interest only specialists, but now even people who are far from pure literary research, art criticism and philosophy take a great interest in these problems.

So, what is "socialist realism"? What is "freedom of creative work"? Let us discuss them one by one and try to give a brief answer to each question.

What is 'Socialist Realism'?

It is the fundamental method of Soviet literature and art. No one discovered it and no one

imposed it on the Soviet writers and artists. The art of socialist realism appeared before the October 1917 revolution and has its adherents all over the world.

Socialist realism is a realism impregnated by the ideals of socialism. It depicts life in its revolutionary development. Among the representatives of this art are Maxim Gorky, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Paul Eluard, Bertold Brecht, Mikhail Sholokhov, Jorge Amado, Andersen Nexø and Pablo Neruda.

It would be naive to think that Mikhail Sholokhov's novel "And Quiet Flows the Don" was written "by the order of the Party." No great works of art have ever been created by order. Prokofiev,

Shostakovich and Khachaturyan composed their music as it was dictated by their heart. The same applies to other Soviet composers, writers and artists who chose the method of socialist realism of their own free will.

Let us take a look at the past. Heinrich Heine and Alfred de Musset were romanticists but no one ever said that they wrote their verses by some order from above. It is as ludicrous to say this about the Soviet artists who prefer socialist realism to romanticism or sentimentalism.

I would like to emphasise once again that socialist realism is the fundamental method of Soviet literature and art. This does not

(Continued on page 24)

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SOCIALIST REALISM . . .

(Continued from page 22)

mean however that naturalism or modernism are suppressed in the Soviet Union. The numerous exhibitions of avant garde paintings held in Moscow alone bear this out.

Everyone has the right to write in the style he likes best, and this right should not be denied to those who prefer socialist realism.

What is "Freedom of Creative Work"?

The Soviet viewpoint on this problem is based on Lenin's famous remark that one cannot live in society and be free from it.

Before blindly praising the benefits of absolute freedom, one should first make it clear for whom and for what this freedom is.

Self-will, we know, is a very different thing from freedom.

Similarly, plausibility is a long way from truth.

There is no absolute freedom of creative work. But there is freedom of creative work for millions of people and freedom of creative work for an elite. The Soviet Union embraces the former and rejects the latter.

As for the material guarantees of freedom of creative work, there is no cause for argument. Even our ill-wishers have to admit that artists in the Soviet Union have more opportunities than their counterparts in the West. They need not have other abilities to reveal their talents. They can devote all their activities to creative work, without worrying about their material position and financial matters.

Now a few words about the compatibility of socialist realism and freedom of creative work.

Has socialist realism its laws? Yes, it has. Every school of art has its principles and laws which its adherents voluntarily abide by.

All art has its rules which cannot be broken.

Rules should exist in art and in life, otherwise there would be neither art nor life. Rules have never been a hindrance for true talent. Originality is possible within rules. It would be appropriate to recall here that Corneille and Moliere abided by the rules of classicism. Byron and Shelley abided by the rules of romanticism. Stendhal and Tolstoy were realists and did not want to be anything else.

Socialist realism is a method used by Soviet and thousands of foreign artists. To deprive them of freedom of the choice means to violate the laws of freedom of creative work. — (APN)

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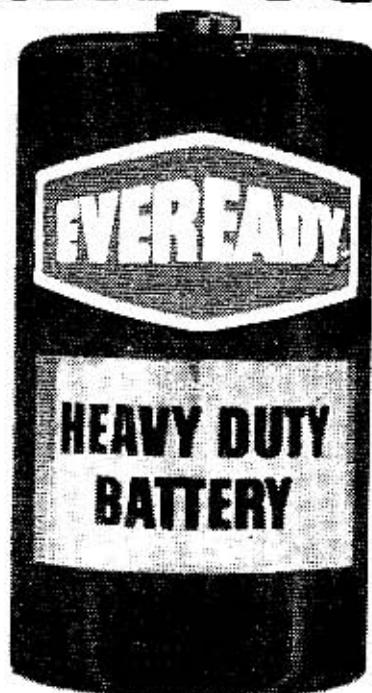
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