

GUARDIAN

Santa was here again!

Cyclone '78

'Sinhalese Awake!'

Iranian crisis

Mervyn de Silva

UN experts

S. N. de S. Seneviratne



Coins and the masses

Cuban anniversary

New light on Pasternak

Reggie Siriwardena

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Letters

JVP and the Tamils.

Both Messrs. J. Uyangoda and Bala Tampoe are correct to criticize the J. V. P's stance on the rights of the Tamil people though I think it is more accurate to use the term 'Social chauvinism' in place of 'Sinhala racism' which is how Mr. Tampoe describes the J. V. P. attitude. Like most of the other left groups and parties in the South, the J. V. P. conjures up a 'foreign devil' to justify its chauvinistic position. For Maoists, it is the spectre of so-called Soviet 'Social Imperialism' while for the J. V. P. it is U. S. imperialism. This is one point on which the JVP seems to agree with its hated enemy the L. S. S. P as can be seen by reading Mr. V. Karalasingham's recent book on the same topic.

For the benefit of your readers I present a translation of a revealing paragraph contained in Mr. Lionel Bopage's book 'A Marxist Analysis of the National Question'—which I believe is the most detailed presentation so far in print of the JVP's official position on this issue. On pages 49—50 he says;

"The Tamil United Liberation Front and the Tamil capitalist sections that it represents say that the best solution to the problems facing the Tamil speaking peoples today, is for the Tamil people to establish a separate state. The results of the General Elections clearly reveal that the majority of the Tamil speaking working class and other toiling sections in the country as a whole do not endorse this demand. Although it is true that all capitalist governments so far, be it the Senanayake's or Bandaranaike's, have ignored the language rights and other rights of the Tamil speaking peoples; that they have been discriminated against and that uptill now they have existed as an oppressed national minority but the national as well as economic problems facing them will not be solved merely by obtaining a separate Tamil state. A Tamil state established in the Northern and

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THE RETURN OF SANTA

Santa Claus, not Kilroy, was here this Christmas and the SLBC was absolutely right when it announced that this, was "the most prosperous —'Xmas in many many years". It was even more prosperous if the thousands milling Pettah and Fort were themselves prosperous. So much so that Sri Lankans doing their annual winter pilgrimage discovered the Oxford Street 'godies' they brought for their dear ones could be purchased (and more) in Pettah pavements if you had the money. Shoes were available from 99.90 to 699.90, as our picture shows. Apples and grapes, a sour joke of the past, did not have to become rare and priceless items in upper-middle class 'Xmas feasts. French wines, New Zealand lamb, German beer, Kraft cheese, Australian chocolates were available in plenty. So of course were all the electrical goods on which upper middle class housewives had built their Singaporean dreams for a decade and more. It was indeed a prosperous Christmas and New Year!

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Trends

Media Mess

Foreign Minister Hameed gamely joined his colleague, the Minister of State, in issuing a flat denial of the alleged 'CIA connections' of some local newspapermen. While the dust seems to have settled on that, other, more far-reaching troubles are plaguing Lake House.

Christmas saw Chief Editorial Executive Nalin Fernando say goodbye to the top post his distinguished father had held for over a decade. Fernando Jr. lasted only a few months but long enough to break the 'record' of another senior advisor who has since crossed over to the 'TIMES'.

Even more controversial is the sudden departure of Mr. Edmund Ranasingha from the Editor's room in the 'DINAMINA'. According to Lake House gossip, Ranasingha found security officers waiting at his home on returning from a trip to the U. S. They, bore unhappy tidings. He was despatched to the 'SILUMINA'

UNP loyalists were astounded. While many of those who prospered

under the previous regime appear to be safe and secure in top places, Ranasingha submitted his resignation on the day Lake House was taken over. He won the respect of all his colleagues — both UNP and non-UNP — by saying he could not conscientiously serve an SLFP-controlled paper.

Now UNP'ers are threatening to raise the issue at the Working Committee. If it comes up another loyalty test may be in the offing.

Ogo—Pogo versus Sai Baba?

'Ogo Pogo the Great' a 24 year old amateur magician of Sri Lanka who won newspaper acclaim in Canada, recently challenged the Indian 'supernaturalist' Satya Sri. Sai Baba and went on to disprove the 'divine' nature of one of the latter's main acts. At a magic show staged at the Buddhist Centre, Moratuwa, Ogo Pogo simply raised his empty hands into the air and brought down ashes, which he distributed among the audience.

The young magician told the admiring crowd that he salutes Sai B ba as a first class magician and nothing more. "Anyone who believes in or speaks of the existence of the supernatural is an enemy of science and nature" he said. Ogo Pogo, who states that his knowledge of magic tricks is self-taught, went on to inform the audience that he was a proletarian by occupation, like his father before him, and that his main motive in performing magic was not to become a professional conjurer, but rather to use his ability to expose as false every claim of supernatural or divine power. It's all a matter of tricks, he said.

So it seems that the challenge to India's 'Godman' from rational and scientifically minded Sri Lankans did not cease with the death of Dr. Abraham Kovoor.

Deadlier than the male.

The government has been tightening up discipline on the campuses. A lecturer who was caught putting up anti-government posters on February fourth is still under interdiction. Students have been suspended for anything from hooting to putting up posters to ragging. The students appeared to be cowed into inactivity. At Peradeniya meals have to be purchased thus obviating the possibility of outsiders having free meals.

When the authorities tried to remove the plug points in the rooms at Wijewardena Hall they came up against the protests of the female residents. The students use electricity to make tea and light meals in their rooms and insisted that disconnected plugs be put back. No nonsense with the girls.

Sex and (Free Trade) Zones.

As the young couple cuddled each other, whispering love blissfully on the back seat of a bus one evening last week, an elderly passenger next to them delivered an acerbic sermon on the morals of the younger generation. As the bus was passing Wellawatte another bearded, bespectacled passenger, pointing a finger to a lane near a cinema, countered with a tale about a club that catered in human flesh, exclusively to foreigners and a select tribe of politicians. So many husbands he said,

Letters . . .

Eastern provinces are devoid of the natural resources necessary for maintaining even the present living standards of the Tamil people. Accordingly, action to establish a separate state means paving the way for a further aggravation of the questions facing the Tamil people. Whatever differences may exist in form, so long as it remains within the capitalist framework, such a separate Tamil state will have to depend on the imperialist camp for its economic development. Therefore it will either have to continue to remain as a neocolony; or else it will have to become a complete colony of some imperialist country.

escorted their good looking spouses to that club in a bid to earn some extra cash. When hard times come through the door like wolves, morals fly out of the window like chicken, naturally.

And why slate the young? In the sixties, they were shy to ask a chemist for a packet of condoms. Now, so many condoms and other fancy contraceptives are there for the asking but a hotel room cannot be had for this side of sixty bucks. So they dominate the parks, the cinemas and even the public transport. And we have been advised to use these contraceptives as much as we can, without any fear or shame because we spawn much too much for our economy to bear! (Enoch Powell was never so right when he pronounced that the coloured-wench was many times more fertile than her white counterpart).

In Negomba, the speaker continued, some analysts had done a sociological survey and discovered that within a radius of a mile from the big tourist hotels, no less than fifty families, mothers and daughters included, were forced to live as call-girls for economic reasons. And when this Free Trade Zone gets into gear, the local ladies (unless imported under the liberalised scheme) will naturally be a vital part of its infrastructure, and could be real hard-money-spinners.

A weakening of capitalist development also occurs together with a reduction of territorial space. There is no doubt that at a time like this, when imperialism has been subject to harsh defeats in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and is trying to consolidate its power in Asia, it will focus intense attention on such a separate Tamil state. The imperialists, who rally local capitalist sections around themselves for the protection of their class interests, will easily be able to utilize the separate Tamil state in order to achieve these intentions. It was only the other day that it was reported that the leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front, Amirthalingam has stated that if it was not possible to achieve the separate state, peacefully, they would not hesitate to launch an armed struggle utilizing an army comprised of thousands of Tamil youths with the military aid of Britain and Commonwealth countries. Who can say that the TULF leadership, which has acted to betray the Tamil speaking sections in the interests of imperialism and its stooges the local capitalist class, will not come forward to implement the imperialists'— plans?"

This is the kind of tortuous argumentation which the JVP uses, to condemn "any action to establish a separate state" by the Tamil people, which is to say any action by the Tamil people to exercise their legitimate democratic right of national self determination. The JVP, it must be noted, boasts of its militant proletarian Internationalism in contrast to 'Stalinist national narrow mindedness' which they claim has engulfed the socialist camp from the death of Lenin until today. Part 4 of their party programme which deals with the field of foreign policy extends support to the struggles for national liberation in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Palestine, Spanish Sahara, East Timor, Puerto Rico etc. Many of these struggles aren't

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The new mood of communalism

Is the mood in the country increasingly communal? A mystery leaflet in Sinhala with the bold and blunt appeal "Sinhalese Awake" reached newspaper offices last week and is doubtless being circulated in more public places. The unsigned document took the form of posing several questions.

* Can a Sinhalese buy property in Jaffna?

* Can a Sinhalese rent a house or even a room there?

* Is a Sinhalese permitted to do business freely in those areas?

* Cannot a Tamil live, work and prosper anywhere in the island?

* Who monopolises Main Street in Colombo?

These and other questions with obvious racial overtones were addressed to the Sinhalese in an attempt to show that it is they who were the victims of racial prejudice and discrimination, and not the other way about.

These are not new questions. They are quite familiar questions which crop up from time to time. Its political significance is that such matters are raised whenever relations between the two main communities worsen and become tense. Sometime ago questions about the 'new affluence' of Moslems, especially the gem boys of Beruwela, surfaced just about the time of communal incidents in the Puttalam area, and down south. There was such an incident recently too in the Panadura district.

Of course the relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils (and also the relations between a government in Colombo and the Tamils) assume far greater political importance.

Some of these questions have been heard during parliamentary debates just after the August violence, and more recently in discussions on University admissions and violent incidents of varying sorts.

In fact, similar sentiments were expressed by the Minister of Industries in what was probably one of the most hard-hitting anti-TULF (or anti-Tamil) speeches made in recent months. So much so the TULF spokesmen, notably the TULF leader himself, commended Mr. Mathew for his brutal frankness, when the debate on 'standardisation' and the marking of Tamil scripts turned into an emotionally charged duel between Mr. Mathew and the TULF's top duo, Messrs Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam.

Mr. Mathew who exposed the 'scandal' in the first place stuck to his guns and maintained that "some Tamil examiners" were not "teachers but cheaters". Armed with affidavits Mr. Sivasithamparam argued that the charge had not been proved because no names were mentioned, no alleged culprits identified. Therefore it was a slur, he said, not only on the examiners but on the entire Tamil people. The TULF's request for an impartial inquiry he pointed out had not been granted.

Since education and university places have always been a highly sensitive issue (hence the whole controversy over standardisation introduced by the previous regime and the UNP's election promise to abolish it) this public debate has added fuel to fire.

Immediately after that came the Nallur bank robbery, the killing of two policemen and an "informant". The number of policemen killed in the past few years now

add up to 18 and there have been no convictions just as there has been none from the murder of Mayor Durayappah.

Mr. Amirthalingam wrote recently to the President about police excesses and harassment of civilians in various parts of the northern province including Jaffna. The President assured the Opposition leader of a prompt inquiry. And Mr. Cyril Herat, a D.I.G., is investigating another "mystery" letter — a circular distributed with the frank of a northern province police superintendent.

In this climate, hopes of some rapprochement between the government and the TULF have quickly receded. About the time of President Jayewardene's trip to India, these hopes ran high.

The gradual estrangement and the dilemma of both parties are best seen in an exchange between Minister Gamini Dissanayake and Mr. Amirthalingam. The Minister said that the TULF speaks with two voices, one conciliatory in Colombo, and another under the pressure of young militants in Jaffna. On his side, Mr. Amirthalingam found the government extending the hand of friendship and on other occasions spitting out what he called venom.

Meanwhile undercurrents of Sinhala sentiment can be seen not only in mystery leaflets but identified even more plainly in places like the St. John's Market where Sinhala fish mudalalis relying on supplies from different parts of the island reveal, consciously or unconsciously, the "economics" of communalism and the changing temper.

Students — in sorrow or anger?

There's trouble in them that hills. At any rate it's brewing. This time it's Polgolla, not Peradeniya. The recently established Dumbara Campus has been dubbed 'Dhuk-bara' campus by its luckless inhabitants, who have good cause to be 'heavy with sorrow'. The decision to establish this campus was a politically motivated one designed to isolate the Arts students and thereby de-politicize Peradeniya. This local variant of the doctrine of 'containment' was sharply criticized even by senior pro-government dons at Peradeniya. But the decision was implemented.

Now there are around 700 students up at Dumbara without basic facilities of study or residence. The lack of desks, chairs, tables and blackboards have severely impaired the process of teaching. Since there are no halls of residence, students are packed sometimes 6 to a room in the surrounding houses. The boarding fees charged by these private house owners is astronomical averaging Rs. 250/- per student for bed and board. The students haven't been granted their loans as yet either, while the salaries of some categories of lecturers have not been paid on schedule.

Things aren't made any easier by the conduct of the campus head who is said to behave as if the students were not undergraduates, but school children and the lecturers were Montessori teachers. His habit of popping into classrooms while lectures are in progress hasn't endeared him to the staff or students. Going by his record of conduct towards teachers and pupils during his previous stint as a school principal, many wonder whether this individual was not an eminently unsuitable candidate for the post of campus Head.

It is also interesting to note that nobody, not even a student from Peradeniya, is permitted to enter the hallowed precincts of Dumbara

Campus without the express permission of the Head of the latter institution. Such permission has not been forthcoming except for students from Peradeniya who belong to the Samawadi Students Union. Only these students are permitted to break the ban on political activity in the campus. Freedom of association guaranteed by the constitution!!

Much the same situation prevails at the Ruhuna Campus located in Matara. There is neither a library nor canteen nor laboratory. There's also a dearth of chairs in the lecture rooms as well as equipment needed for the Departments of Geography and Science. The lack of residential facilities has meant that students have to pay between Rs. 175/- to Rs. 200/- for rented rooms in the neighbourhood which they have to share with several others. Student loans however are in the region of Rs. 180/- only.

Unrest is also reported at Heywood, the Institute for Fine Arts and Aesthetic Studies at Horton Place Colombo. The students allege that like earlier this year they are being intimidated and harassed by thugs whom they say enjoy political patronage. So far 19 students have been suspended by the authorities, and the letters of suspension are reported to have been delivered by personnel of the Cinnamon Gardens Police. The students claim that they are being victimized and coerced by a coalition of forces ranging from thugs and police to the administrators security guards and student activists of one variety.

"So university autonomy is beginning to mean merely the 'autonomy' of the campus authorities to repress us" said one student while a senior don told the *Lanka Guardian* that the situation will have to be remedied fast by the government if it doesn't want another Weerasuriya or Vidyalan-kara incident on its hands.

International protest on TU rights

The International Union of Food and Allied Worker's Associations held their Regional Committee meeting for Asia and the Pacific in Colombo. They have forwarded a resolution to the President in which they comment on trade union rights in Sri Lanka states a press release.

"In Sri Lanka, the guarantee for economic development safeguarding the basic interests and the dignity of the people is the strength of the freely and democratically organised trade union movement, such as has existed since independence.

"For these reasons, our organisation is deeply disturbed about the spirit and the basic assumptions underlying actions taken by your government, particularly in the course of this year.

"(1) In January, your Minister of Labour submitted a White Paper on Employment Relations, drafted in terms of proposed legislation, which contains far-reaching attacks on security of employment, on the right to strike and on the ability of trade unions to engage in collective bargaining. The proposal to institute Employees' Councils with collective bargaining powers undermines the very existence of trade unions and represents a step towards the corporate State.

"The White Paper has been rightly opposed by all our affiliated unions in Sri Lanka, be they the Ceylon Mercantile Union, the unions affiliated to the Ceylon Federation of Labour or the Ceylon Workers' Congress. We share and support their opposition.

"Labour legislation based on the White Paper, in part or in whole, would contravene internationally accepted labour standards, in particular ILO conventions on freedom of association, collective bargaining and equal pay.

"(2) In September, your government threatened trade unions which had called a one-day token strike in support of (1) restoration of a benefit which had been taken away from the people, (2) restoration of democratic rights and civil liberties as well as cessation of political victimization and (3) the defense of workers' living standards, with wholesale dismissal of workers participating in this strike. In any democratic country, these are considered matters of legitimate concern to trade unions and legitimate subjects for industrial action.

"(3) In October, your government introduced a law on the Employment of Trainees (Private Sector), which was made retroactive and which has the effect of enabling employers to employ non-manual and manual labour at one-year periods at pay levels below current minima, established by law or collective agreement, and deprives such workers from trade union protection.

"Actions such as these strongly convey the impression that your government believes that it cannot achieve its objectives without weakening or destroying the trade union movement in Sri Lanka. We stand in total opposition to such policies.

"Our organisation is pledged to assist our affiliated unions, and the trade union movement as a whole in Sri Lanka, in their struggles to safeguard their freedom of action. Please be assured that, to honour this pledge, we will not hesitate to commit all resources at our disposal.

"We urge your government not to take any further steps in matters pertaining to industrial legislation without previous consultation, and in accord with, all representative trade union organisations in Sri Lanka.

"We further urge your government to cease any measures of discrimination, harassment and victimization against trade union members, to restore any democratic rights and civil liberties that have been suspended and to allow free collective bargaining to take place in the public and private sectors of the economy."

Coins and the masses

"Come in with change money" is an order made loudly and angrily by the bus-conductors these days. Of course, the passengers do not always tender a tenner or even a fiver when their fare happens to be eighty or forty cents but in most cases only a rupee coin. Yet they hardly get their change back. As arguments and counter-arguments are inevitable bus travel nowadays has more or less become a trip to the battle front.

Some passengers think that the conductors have hidden pockets on their uniforms where, mostly the old brass coins of ten and five cent denominations are surreptitiously stacked. For, if you have these coins now, you can either melt them yourself and make tiny screws and sell them for a higher price (the brass value of the ten cents coin is cts 33 while that of the five cents coin is cts 18) or if you have been perseverant enough to collect Rs. 300/- in old ten-cent coins you could exchange them for a brand new bicycle from a certain cycle shop in the city—a handsome, practical new year bargain for a working class family.

Anyway, the shortage of ten and five cent coins especially, has been going on for the past one and a half years and is very much aggravated now that the average citizen has become the loser. Some shop-keepers now give postage stamps to their customers in place of change up to 25cts (it's time that some enterprising importer got an agency for the very popular Greenshield Stamps) while some others offer you toffees and lozengers.

The Finance Minister himself once admitted to us the fact that brass coins were melted by certain inventive people to make screws around the time he announced his first budget and assured us that aluminium coins would be minted to overcome this bizarre trend. But the crunch is, why has the Central Bank which has the reputation of having the cream of academic talent (even now they say there are over 20 staff offi-

cers in just one department who have been given specialized post-graduate training overseas but just idle) failed to remedy the situation?

A few months ago, we heard that the Bank was forced to air-freight part of a consignment when the crisis took a turn for the worse. While the official view attributes the shortage to an unforeseen rise of brass prices in the world market and to a glut of minting orders at Bradbury and Wilkinsons, some other officers of the Bank speak of bad planning and not correctly assessing the basic economic laws of money supply and circulation. Although at the time of writing, a shipment has arrived with 2000 boxes of currency of all denominations, the quantities of five and ten cent coins therein may not suffice until the next arrival which is expected, after the Sinhala New Year. According to a Bank official, even the employees of the Central Bank are oppressed by the coin shortage and a Head of Department had confessed that he realized the gravity of the situation only recently.

While the Bank's weekly issue of coins to the SLTB amounts to Rs. 5000/- the bus conductors in turn receive a daily (at most depots weekly) float of a measly Rs 2/- Some conductors have told this journal that to get that float they had to report at least an hour before their normal working hours as they had to be in a long queue. Fret in vain they sighed, as the float wouldn't last even a single trip.

Meanwhile some bright bus conductors, at the end of a run, part with their small change at boutiques and to pavement hawker pals for coins of bigger denominations, and start their new journey without the fives and tens!

But the question that most people ask today is that if the Central Bank has been unable, for the past 1½ years to bridge the gap in the coin shortage before it got worse, they wonder how it can meaningfully advise the Government on how to run the economy!

Protect Vietnam resolution

“Our Association i. e. the Sri Lanka Indo-Chinese Friendship Association was formed when the flames of the battle in Vietnam and the entire Indo-China warmed the hearts and reached the receptive ears of the people of Sri Lanka, particularly those in the hill country.” states a release from Mr. G. B. de Silva, president of the Sri Lanka-Vietnam Friendship Association.

The statement goes on :

“Coming as it did, after over 40 years of protracted struggle under the brilliant leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the great victory of the Vietnamese people in the spring of 1975 was a decisive blow against U. S. Imperialism and world Capitalism as a whole. This victory resulted in the liberation of entire Indo-China from the yoke of U. S. Imperialism and helped change the correlation of forces on a world scale in favour of socialism.

“The dialectics of history are such that the defence of the Vietnamese revolution is once again an urgent task on our agenda and that of progressive forces the world over.

“It is against this backdrop that it has become necessary for us to clearly define our stand. As a consequence we have opted to change the name of our Association and re-constitute ourselves as the Sri Lanka-Vietnam Friendship Association.

“While we support the Vietnamese people in their task of protecting the revolution and building socialism, we also categorically denounce any attempt to interfere with or sabotage the efforts of the Vietnamese people. In the name of all Socialist and progressive forces of the world we appeal to the people and leaders of the People's Republic of China to allow the States of Indo-China to decide the destinies of their people

Cyclone '78

Chintaka

Natural disaster, social crisis

The dialectics of nature lay bare the structures of society. The burden of natural disasters, like that of economic crises fall heaviest on the frail shoulders of those who can least afford to bear it. Repeatedly borne out in many parts of the 'Third World' from the Sabel to Bangladesh, this was proven once again during and in the aftermath of the cyclone that ravaged Sri Lanka on Thursday the 23rd of November. Though an early warning was given by the Colombo Observatory on the 18th and again on the 20th, the message was not communicated to the masses with the necessary urgency by the Press and Radio — 'responsible' and 'development journalism' notwithstanding! No serious and sustained effort was made to mobilize and deploy the state apparatus, particularly the resources of the Armed Forces and Police and mount the kind of massive evacuation that was necessary from the time of the earliest warning. Of course the people in the expected target area were for the most part poor and of minority ethnic origin to boot. One can only speculate whether the mass media and the state apparatus would have been mobilized and deployed for the task of evacuation in a swifter and more efficient manner had the projected target area been the Western Province where the elite is concentrated.

So, the cyclone hit and caused the maximum damage. Informed sources say that the highest layers of the government's decision -

without undue pressure. It is our considered opinion that such interference will only assist the cause of reaction and weaken the socialist camp and will be a definite obstacle to all those who are still struggling for national liberation, freedom, democracy and socialism all over the world.”

making apparatus began to function fully only on Saturday the 25th. This was in sharp contrast to the quick official response following the recent air crash. (Does the explanation lie in the fact that quite a few of the victims of the air disaster belonged in one way or another to the military bureaucratic ruling elite of Indonesia, a social group responsible for the murder of over 1½ million people in the fascist coup of 1965) The victims of the cyclone belonged mainly to social strata which are marginalized from the existing power structure. No day of national mourning has yet been declared for the victims of this national disaster.

The cyclone lashed viciously against the backs of the poor. The dwellings of the poor are constructed out of building materials and are located in places which can afford little protection against the elemental forces of nature. They have no means of communication which can summon assistance, nor do they have private transportation to hasten them to places of safety. Thus, while the very conditions of material existence of the poor render them acutely vulnerable to the hostile forces of nature, the wealth of the rich itself generated by the poor) enable them to live on physical circumstances which afford them protection from the elements. As in war, in times of natural disaster too, it is the poor who bear the brunt of the suffering. Soot-blackened clay pots and pans bobbing in the waters, was one of the many poignant sights of Nov 24th morning.

Then came the relief operation. It is well-known that in 'Third World' countries the main obstacle to development is not so much a lack of surplus, but rather its outflow, wasteful consumption and internal maldistribution. This

maldistribution results from (and in turn buttresses) the highly skewed, hierarchical structures of our society. This general, structurally determined, feature of iniquitous distribution of existing resources is evidenced in the relief effort too. It has been not so much a question of the non-availability of relief materials, but rather their non-availability (in the required quantities) to the people who really need them. Foreign assistance and domestically mobilized 'aid' is funnelled into the pipeline but doesn't come out at the other end in the areas and among the people most affected by the cyclone. Maldistribution is along socio-economic and communal lines—which frequently intersect and overlap. Eyewitness reports and first hand observations confirm that supplies intended for Batticaloa have been and are being diverted to other areas which are less badly off. Even in Batticaloa itself it is being alleged that priority was given to the small colony of Jayanthipura. Then again, in all these areas the townsfolk have been given precedence over the worse affected peasants and fisher folk. Thus, both race and class have been dominant, and even determinant factors in the distribution of relief assistance, just as they are in the allocation of national wealth.

A few words on the bureaucracy and the police. Despite reports in the mainstream media, the relief 'bungle' is not due to a few recalcitrant or corrupt bureaucrats and police personnel. The problem is not one of individual behaviour, but rather of systems and structures. Indeed, we gather that the Colonel who is the co-ordinating officer, Batticaloa, as well as the G. A. there, Mr. Dickson Nilawecra, are carrying out their duties competently on a non-discriminatory basis. But as we said, the question is determined not by subjective intention or personal conduct, but by objective factors. The bureaucracy, police and armed forces are inherently anti-people institutions created and designed to safeguard, in the last instance, the material privileges and hege-

monic position of a numerically small social class which bases its parasitic existence on the surplus generated by the masses. Such is the role of these institutions in a socio-economic order such as ours. To expect such institutions to function on behalf of, and together with, the people, is hopelessly utopian. In exploitative societies the bureaucracy is an apparatus that stands apart from and above the people. Even in the context of a national disaster it cannot integrate itself organically with the masses. This is truer still of the police and armed forces, with their militaristic, elitist, anticivilian mentality. These latter institutions have been hermetically sealed off from the masses so as to prevent 'contamination' by the popular pressures and radical currents in society. Not even a cyclone can break down these barriers. 'Relief' and an anti-civilian mind are two disparate things. One cannot expect a Dobermann Pinscher trained expressly as watchdog-cum-hunter to metamorphose into a gentle St. Bernard's with a brandy cask around its neck! The misdeeds, however callous, of individuals during this crisis, only serve to exacerbate and sharply dramatize the essential nature of these institutions.

Things aren't the same the world over. In a society where the administrative apparatus is both representative and open to genuine popular participation things are different. In a society where the armed forces have their genesis in popular struggle, and their style of work is founded on the different ideas they function differently. Such armies are in every sense of the word, people's armies. They emphasize their popular traditions, while a high premium is placed on organic integration with the masses through intense political education and productive work alongside the people. There is no systematic inculcation of anti-civilian, elitist attitudes contemptuous of the masses. Societies based on collective forms of organization and collective styles of work, societies where mass initiative and dynamism from below is encouraged,

instead of reliance on bureaucratic paternalism, have the capacity to mobilize themselves in a manner which can and indeed have managed to minimize the damage inflicted through natural disasters. Socialist Vietnam's recent experience with floods is but a single case in point. Even the American press reported how the relief (including that from external sources) was being channelled swiftly and efficiently to those who most needed it, by means of the Vietnamese Peoples Army and a network of peoples committees. The foreign press also contrasted this with what goes on in similar circumstances in most other 'Third World' countries, Bangladesh being a grotesque example.

China's example

The contrast between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary China is another striking illustration of the point made here. Unlike in societies like ours, where as previously stated, the surplus generated by the working masses is drained away to the metropolitan centres, consumed wastefully by the local ruling elite and expended on the bureaucracy, armed forces and 'prestige' projects, this surplus is utilized for public purpose rather than private profit. In such countries resources are mobilized to expand the capacity of the productive forces to battle with nature. The struggle to curb and harness the forces of nature is therefore much more successful. This explains the massive effort made by China in successfully eliminating the menace of floods from her two great rivers, which had plagued her people for centuries. No such effort can really be made in our societies since our system cannot come up with the correct 'mix' of moral and material incentives which can generate the mass enthusiasm needed for such efforts. This is something that can and has been attained only by systems founded on collective and cooperative forms of social organization and mass mobilization.

The social behaviour in evidence in the cyclone-struck areas also

sheds a revealing light on other aspects of the system in which we live. The interplay of market forces work to the benefit of a minority and the detriment of the majority. This integral feature of market-dominated, profit-oriented economics is vastly heightened in times of natural disaster, when demand far outstrips supply. For example a loaf of bread was selling at Rs. 10/- (and later Rs. 3/-) on the East Coast at a time when people were starving and homeless. When the authorities had siphoned off their share of the relief aid, the major portion of the remaining 'loot' was turned over to dubious groups, (who are functionally linked with the police in most localities, even under normal circumstances). The destitute populace of the cyclone stricken areas continue to be at the tender mercies of these elements, who want to make a quick buck. What prevailed throughout the island in the immediate aftermath of the cyclone, and what still prevails in the East Coast, is free enterprise gone mad... an extreme manifestation of a 'free' and 'open' (but hardly 'just') economy.

The savage squabbling for items of food and clothing among the cyclone victims, the vulture-like

behaviour of corrupt officials and policemen not to mention the thugs and traders is inevitable in a society dominated by the cash nexus and a value system which revolve around competition and personal gain.

Our reaction to the cyclone of November 23rd must therefore not stop at expressions of sorrow at the human suffering that has been caused. Nor must it stop with a well meaning donation of money or clothes to this or that fund. Rather, the response of the thinking Ceylonese must include an understanding that the very organization of our society renders the mass of people acutely vulnerable to natural disasters just as to economic depressions, and that the process of successfully contending with nature, necessitates as a prerequisite, the radical restructuring of our society.

Meanwhile, as Colombo's elite snap up 350 rupee dance tickets and consume 750 rupee Christmas hampers, out in the waste lands of the East Coast are tens of thousands of hungry homeless people who are truly the wretched of the earth. For them, it will be a hard winter. ●

Cyclone '78:

Some posers

* **W**hen were the earliest warnings received? The Colombo Observatory issued a warning on the 20th of November. Was there a previous warning as early as the 18th? When were the reports of the weather satellites first received? Couldn't the loss of life have been minimized had the authorities taken the matter with the utmost seriousness and strained every nerve from the time of the first danger signals?

* Why didn't V.I.Ps visit the disaster area in the immediate aftermath? Was the Tenth Annual Conference of the Press Foundation of Asia (not to mention other

ceremonies) assigned a higher priority? Why didn't some senior M.Ps at least visit the stricken areas immediately?

* Was an adequate number of medical personnel rushed to the disaster zones in the shortest possible time? According to the *Lankadeepa* report there were only 30 doctors, 60 nurses and 35 other medical personnel in these areas even by the 28th. Where were the members of the GMOA not to mention the 'Doctors for Democracy'? Few of the flood victims could have afforded to pay 25/- as consultation fees of course, which must have been a distinct disincentive!

* Were Armed Forces personnel and vehicles deployed in adequate numbers in the affected areas? Several days after the disaster

struck, there were only 20 boats and 300 navy personnel engaged in the task of food distribution in Batticaloa.

* Why didn't and indeed, why hasn't the government taken measures to impose price controls and curb profiteering in the disaster stricken zones? At the time of writing a loaf of bread was selling at Rs. 3/- and a cup of plain tea at Rs. 1/50, while a pound of vegetables cost Rs. 3/- and a measure of rice Rs. 4/- in many of these areas. (Incidentally so much for the export of rice!)

* On what basis is the monetary compensation for damage incurred to be distributed? Is it, as a Government circular states, to be on the basis of the possession of ration books? In the best of times this would encompass less than half the populace of these areas, but in the wake of disaster of this magnitude it would be absurd to imagine that ration books would not have been lost together with other possessions. Therefore, under the present circumstances, over 90% of those affected may not be eligible for compensation if the ability to produce their ration books is taken as the sole criteria.

* In any case, will an adequate sum be granted as compensation? After the cyclone the price of 100 woven coconut palms to be used as cadjan roofing is around Rs. 200/- in the stricken areas.

* For the first time since 1947 the Public Security Act has been utilized for the purpose of public security. However, when will it be lifted in these areas and the now postponed local government elections be held? The Government should announce a fairly definite deadline since the public will be watchful after the experience of 1971-'77 where the Emergency was in force long after any real need ceased to exist and local government was throttled during this period.

Bridging the commitment gap

The Fifth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will open in Manila on May 7th. In preparation for the Conference, national seminars are being held in most developing countries in an effort to discuss the conference agenda, brief participants and create an awareness of the issues. The Sri Lanka seminar, sponsored by the Marga Institute last month, will be followed shortly by an Asian Seminar, also to be held in Colombo. Last month's seminar which was inaugurated by Lalith Athulathmudali, the Minister of Trade and Shipping, included a keynote address by Gamani Corea UNCTAD Secretary-General. Among the participants were H. N. S. Karunatilake, Bernard Soysa, Godfrey Gunatilleke, C. Chanmugam, A. S. Jayawardena, W. D. Soysa, T. M. R. B. Tennekoon, Douglas Jayasekera, Lal Jayawardena, V. Kanesalingam, P. B. Karandawela and Susantha de Alwis.

UNCTAD V is committed to mapping out necessary measures towards the setting up of a new international economic order. It also will seek to evolve a development strategy for the third UN Development Decade.

UNCTAD is recognised as the principle platform of the developing countries to campaign for a change in the current world order into one that will be in their favour. This aspiration has been contested by the developed nations who see it as colonialism-in-reverse.

A vital feature of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) will be Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC). In the last two decades progress has been made, at least at the regional level in ECDC. On a global scale, the Non Aligned Conference, particularly the Colombo Summit, mapped out a comprehensive pro-

gramme for ECDC. UNCTAD V becomes the logical forum at which to work out a global system while strengthening the existing regional groupings like the Asian Clearing Union and our bilateral agreements with countries like India.

ECDC is hampered above all by a retarded attitude which assumes development exclusively by remaining peripheral to the capitalist West. This model, the Singapore and Hong Kong experience, is much enamoured by Third World policy makers including Sri Lanka's. Yet what is lost sight of, is that the only eastern country to become an economic power, Japan, did not suffer a colonial period. Likewise China too has developed through self reliance.

Countries like ours still maintain a more vigorous trade with the West than with fellow developing countries. And though the case for ECDC has been well established by Third World specialists, the policy makers remain unmoved and the people unconvinced. Edu-

cation and the inculcation of new ideas and approaches is called for. The media in the Third World has got to see this as an essential feature of the New Information Order.

"ECDC should not be considered as a growth strategy that is hostile to developed countries" says P. B. Karandawela. "Basically it seeks to abolish the dependency relationship that subsists between developing and developed countries, while simultaneously assisting developing countries to achieve a higher rate of growth than could be possible if they were to depend primarily on the growth impulses generated by the developed countries. If through ECDC we are able to achieve a higher rate of growth, our trade exchanges with developed countries will also increase in absolute terms and in some cases, perhaps even in relative terms, since developing countries would be then possessing a richer and more elaborate industrial and technological capability, and also be capable of entering into economic relations with developed countries on an equal basis."

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 2)

led by Marxist-Leninist parties but bourgeois or petty bourgeois leaderships, and nobody can make astrological predictions as to the composition and policies of the governments that may be established eventually, not to mention the subsequent evolution of these struggles, just as such idle speculation and conjecture didn't prevent Marx and Lenin from supporting the independence struggles in Ireland, China, India etc. The JVP's much vaunted proletarian internationalism is only for export it seems, and not for domestic consumption. This incidentally is just like their views on armed struggle. They applaud

it everywhere else but renounce it at home. Of course in the company of leftists abroad (eg. at the Youth Conference in Havana, I am told) they are very r-r-r-revolutionary!

By the way, I wonder on what basis Dr. Kumar David (another Tamil convert to Sinhala chauvinism like Messrs Karalasingham and Sanmugathan?) leading member of the 'New' LSSP, predicts in their paper THE LEFTIST, that a future Tamil Eelam will be a 'black' 'fascist' state, rather than a red, pink or grey one.

Sir, your comment on pg 5 of Lanka Guardian No 11 (Oct 1st) was quite correct, when it stated that: "As far as the Tamil youth are concerned, all prominent sections of the Sinhala Left speak with a forked tongue".

Kandy.

'Bharathi'

Iran

How the power bloc fell apart

by Mervyn de Silva

Radio Teheran listeners were taken by surprise last week. Its main bulletin gave unusual prominence to a parliamentary onslaught on the brutality of the armed forces in their reaction to the protest marchers who had held for many days the capital and some key towns in the grip of an ever-swelling anti-Shah movement.

The parliamentary censure was nothing less than a frontal assault on the two months old government of General Azhari.

Although the Iranian press had suddenly come to life with the first outbreak of widespread violence, the flames of newly acquired independence were soon smothered. Both the Iranian assembly and the media had been notoriously impotent for many years and this spirited burst of self-confidence were the most revealing demonstrations of what had happened in Iran these past few months.

In a matter of months many things have happened simultaneously and with an amazing rapidity that has both confused and astounded most observers of the Iranian scene, whatever their self-interest, their political inclinations and perspective.

The sheer intensity of feeling against the Shah, the Pahlevi dynasty and the ruling coterie attached to or intimately associated with the Imperial Court has shattered the myth of a popular, all-powerful monarch driven by a divine destiny to make Iran a modern, major nation.

With it has crumbled the once impressive facade of stability.

The repressive apparatus which had assisted the Shah in silencing opponents and suppressing dissent, and therefore in maintaining this facade of a self-assured monarchy controlling affairs in conditions of evident stability, has been severely shaken.

The arrogant self-confidence of both SAVAK, (the dreaded secret police and one of the most infamous

in the world) and of the upper echelons of the army has been rudely jolted not only by the mounting tide of popular hostility but by the Shah's own cunning, selfish actions. In a classic exercise of finding sacrificial goats to appease mass anger, the Shah dismissed the prime minister, the head of SAVAK, several generals and boss of Iran Air, who later committed suicide. Though an individual act, his desperate deed, in the face of corruption charges, is a telling moment of illumination which gives the outside observer a vivid glimpse of the spreading sense of uncertainty that has seized the ruling groups in Iran.

For well over a decade, since the last troubles in the early sixties, the Shah had run the country on a working alliance or what Nicos Poulantzas calls a 'power bloc' which embodied a sort of partnership where he was the central and dominant personality. The power block consisted of the family, the court clique, the armed forces, some hand-picked civilian politicians, SAVAK, a new layer of big businessmen linked closely to foreign capital, and an emerging technocratic and American-educated administrative elite.

It is this somewhat contrived partnership or working alliance that has collapsed. Not only is each power-centre (starting with the Shah) under attack but the relationship of mutual interest and therefore mutual trust is under severe strain. What is more, the earlier trust, freely shared, has been replaced by mutual suspicion which greatly adds to the confusion and uncertainty.

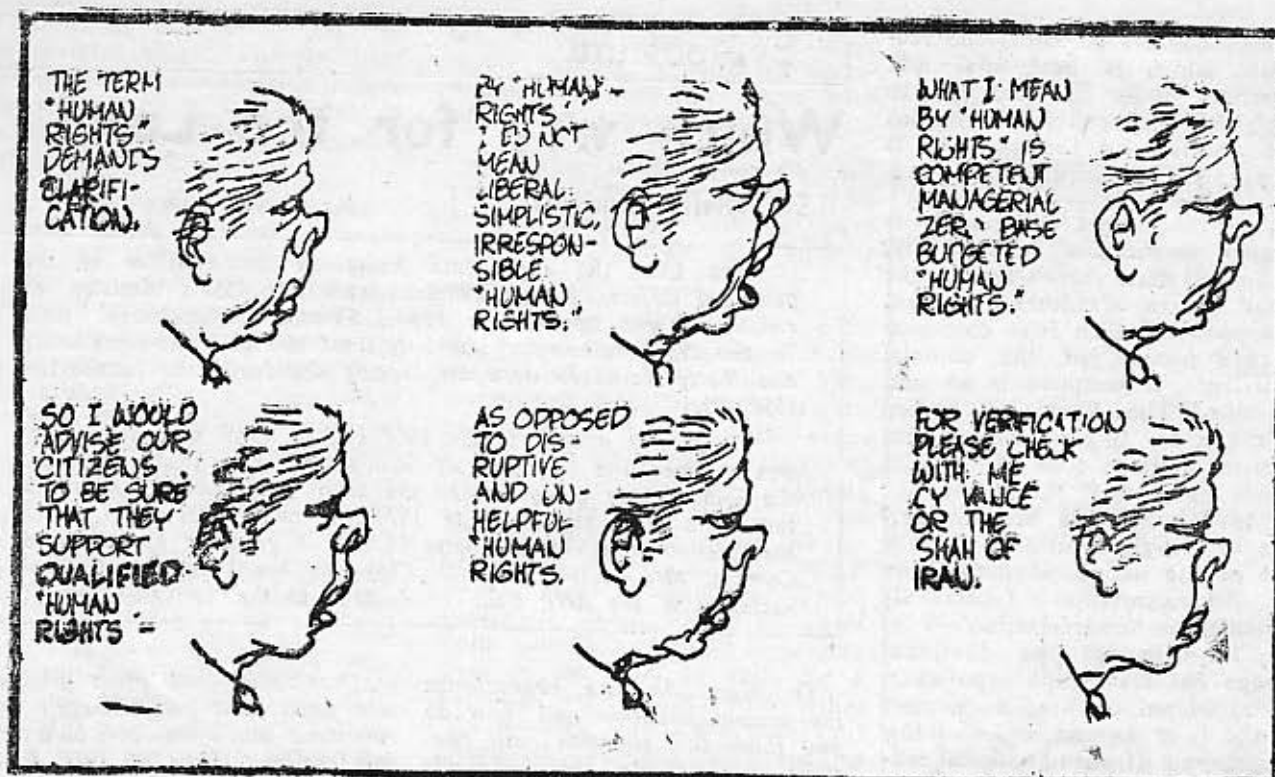
- The Public Prosecutor is ready to indict over 100 rich Iranians including several members of the Royal Family for large-scale corruption and illegal transfer abroad of colossal sums.
- US Marines used tear gas on students demonstrating before the US Embassy and shouting 'Death to the Shah' and 'Death to Carter'.
- Libya's Gaddafi has described the protest movement as part of a 'progressive Islamic revolution'.

Since the Shah shows no signs of abdication or discreet withdrawal (as he did when Mossadegh challenged him) and indeed displays every sign of holding onto power, the army does not know what deal he will make with some sections of the opposition or what manoeuvre he will attempt next. And if the move succeeds what price will he be ready to pay. The heads of a few more generals?

On the other hand, the personal fates of General Azhari and other top commanders now masterminding the cruel crack-down on the opposition at the behest of the Shah will be anybody's guess if the Shah quits, or a new monarchical council is set up answerable to the 18 year old Crown Prince, or if a civilian coalition takes over where National Front leader Karim Sanjabi plays the key role.

Besides these deep anxieties over the next act in the fast-moving unpredictable drama of socio-political change, the armed forces have inherent conflicts within. This embraces and reflects the wider conflicts of Iranian society and its structures.

Unlike other large armies in the Third World (and the Iranian is one of the biggest and best equipped) the Iranian army has been careful not to recruit to its



command structure young and able career officers drawn from the middle and lower-middle layers of Iranian society. Absolute loyalty to the 'King of Kings' has always been the main, if not sole, criterion. And loyalists have come from the wealthy upper classes.

Thus, the Ayatollah in Paris can make a direct appeal to the young officers and soldiers. He could even 'threaten' them with "ex-communication" for firing on fellow religionists. That is why there have been reports of officers ordering their men to shoot at the hated Praetorian Guard of the Shah, and widespread speculation of rumblings of discontent in middle echelon officers' clubs and barracks outside Teheran.

BIG BUSINESS

Such nervousness is even more deeply felt in the business and professional circles close to the Royal Family, and the big business community as a whole.

Thriving on political patronage and colossal corruption, this group is the local collaborator of western investors or mint even easier millions through huge tip-offs from contracts 'farmed out' to western companies. There is an open triangular linkage between big business, the Shah and western strategic and commercial interests.

This new, so-called modern business elite realises that the popular agitation is not only aimed at the Shah but at his foreign patron, which is its patron and partner, too.

The Shah's propagandist fear-guard action misled even unbiased observers of the Iranian events. Until the true, genuinely popular nature of the struggle became evident, and its scope and intensity plain enough, even well-informed foreign journalists and analysts went along, at least half way, with the Shah's description of the conflict. The official reading offered two basic explanations.

(a) When all his efforts to stem the tide faltered, the Shah granted somewhat grudgingly that there

were popular grievances (not of his making, of course) but that the protest movement was engineered by a small group of "Islamic Marxists". At a recent press conference, General Azhari plugged the same theory about "leftist saboteurs", "rabble-rousers" and "atheists" who could have "foreign support". (An obvious hint, at the Soviet Union as much as a special appeal for western sympathy).

(2) This was a contest between "Islamic fundamentalists" (i.e. backward; reactionary forces) and the "liberalising", "modernising" Pahlavi policies (i.e. progressive forces).

At best, the antithetical formulation of (2) is a crude oversimplification. What is more likely it is a deliberate distortion that seeks to conceal the wide-ranging character of a popular nationalist movement, erupting it is true in exceptional and even forced circumstances, in which the cultural and the economic factors are not merely inseparable but the economic is the more crucial or determinant element.

Clearly, it is neither in the interests of the Shah nor of his

foreign backers to stress the economic, which is both vital and sensitive. It is far cleverer to emphasise the cultural, religious and traditionalist factors, that is to say, the superstructural factors.

Yet the target unarguably is foreign domination. Admittedly, its impact has been felt in the broad sphere of culture. In Iran, this process which is so commonplace a feature of the colonial experience, is wrapped in an odd paradox. The Shah has basked in the glory of the magnificent Iranian heritage (one of his titles claims he is the 'Light of the Aryans') but it has been an exercise in self-glorification. For the rest of the nation, westernization or Americanisation (mistakenly presented as 'modernisation') of the life-style of the dominant groups has meant the spoliation of traditional culture, a neglect of the finer aspects of a noble heritage, an affront to national self-esteem.

But what is the basis of this hegemony? It is surely economic, the near - complete control of Iran's resources. Of these resources, oil is pre-eminent. Hence it is both an issue and a symbol in the nationalist resistance to foreign domination.

(NEXT: Complex Crisis)

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Symposium

Which way for the Left?

5. Tulsiri Andradi

The LSSP (R) came into being as an evolution of the polemical differences that climaxed with the LSSP's decision to collaborate with the SLFP in 1964. Edmund Samarakkody, Bala Tampoe, V. Karalasingham (who rejoined the LSSP two years later) and Merryl Fernando were the leading dissidents who formed the LSSP (R).

There was a split in the LSSP (R) in 1968 and the party was renamed The Revolutionary Samasamaja Party (RSP). However, the Samarakkody group loathed the term "samassamaja" so much that at a party conference in 1973 the name was changed to the Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP). A graduate of Peradeniya Campus, Mr. TULSIRI ANDRADI (34) who has been the General Secretary of the RWP since 1973, talks to the "Lanka Guardian".

Q: How do you characterize the present situation and how do you think this situation will continue to evolve in the foreseeable future?

A: Since July '77, the UNP has been striving to destroy the Workers Movement in a bid to establish a naked dictatorship of the capitalist class. The need and the hurry, on the part of the rulers to bring in a new Constitution and a bagful of other oppressive legislation is to weaken the strength of the organised working class that is rising against the onslaught on them and the masses, in the UNP's attempt to safeguard the profits of the capitalists. The method of attack used to destroy the token strike of last September 28 proves this well and the UNP will continue to act in this manner in the future as well. It will do anything criminal to this end without any scruples whatsoever. On the other hand, both leaders of Parties and Trade Unions are acting in a such a way that would obviate a large-scale confrontation by the workers against this trend. So, in the future, the evolution of this situation will decide on this contradiction. We believe in unified and concerted General Strikes and mustering the masses towards them.

Q: Unlike most other groups on the Left, your party doesn't seem to place much emphasis on a threat of fascism. How do you explain this?

A: We do not accept the view of a "fascist onslaught" of the UNP. Because, it is a reactionary movement that has evolved out of decadent elements of the bourgeoisie, we see the dictatorship of the UNP as Bonapartist.

Q: Given this situation and prospects, what do you think are the most pressing tasks of the Left?

A: The Left in Sri Lanka is a spurious phenomenon. The main responsibility of the masses is to denounce and sever all relations with them in order to build up a genuine Revolutionary Party on Leninist principles. As a part of this process the RWP is prepared, to fight unitedly on a specific programme of action against the UNP onslaught.

Q: Once again, in contradistinction to most other groups, you don't seem to place much stress on the slogan of 'Left Unity' or a United Front. Why?

A: What has so far happened and is happening in the name of Left Unity is to perpetuate a capitalist parliamentary government.

We consider this a betrayal of the working class. The so-called UF was a Parliamentary Front. We rejected it. We believe in Lenin's dictum "March separately strike together".

Q: Your party paper 'Panthe Satana' (Class Struggle) is for the most part filled with polemical attacks on other Left-wing organisations. While you participated briefly in the United Committee of ten Maoist-Stalinist-Trotskyist 'New' Left groups, after a short while you quit this conglomeration, and have rejected repeated invitations to rejoin it. Isn't this kind of divisive tactic unhelpful to the Left?

A: We joined in to fight the UNP on specific action. But their aim seemed to be to reinforce themselves by holding spurious anti-UNP rallies and meetings and use their influence to join the ULF and later, to join the SLFP with the ULF. This was obvious at the discussions and also by virtue of the fact that after their May Day Rally they held an anti-Constitution propaganda rally with the SLFP. In fact, they really objected to having the slogan of the United Rally (May Day) as "For an anti-UNP General Strike". We proposed it. They rejected it.

Q: How do you characterize the JVP? And why has your party accused them of objectively helping the UNP?

A: The JVP is no proletarian party but an opportunist, petit-bourgeois organisation whose policies have been vacillating. Though they claimed to have rejected Stalinist and Maoist methods, they have not been able to grasp the dialectic. That is why they attack both the SLFP and the Left but do not actively define the anti-UNP struggle. We, however, reject Dharmasekara's conviction of the JVP being a CIA agent or a pro-UNP group.

Q: Do you see any significant difference between the UNP and the SLFP? Does either party have any 'progressive potential'?

A: Not at all. Both are essential elements of a single entity.

the capitalist class. Their struggle is for building a capitalist dictatorship and they are vying with each other towards that end.

Q: Your position on the 'National Question' is distinct from many other groups and is fairly controversial. Could you state it briefly?

A: Every nation is entitled to the Right of Self-determination. The Tamils here are entitled to that right but we do not advocate the theory that separation is the answer. However, if they so decide that a separate state is the only way out, we will support that cause wholeheartedly. We reject the TULF leadership as a band of Tamil capitalists whose aim is to pawn both Sinhala and Tamil oppressed peoples in order to build up a capitalist state jointly with other reactionaries. The task of the Tamil people is to break all relations with the TULF leaders and work to build up a Revolutionary Party.

Q: Very briefly, what is your position on the current situation in the 'socialist bloc' and the 'world communist movement'?

A: We reject the term 'socialist bloc'. There is no bloc that is independent of the Capitalist World Economy. Both the so-called 'socialist bloc' and the 'world communist movement' spring from the same politics—Stalinism. And the internal contradictions between the USSR and China or among Albania, China and Yugoslavia did not evolve from Internationalist principles but from petty-bureaucratic national interests. We reject the concept of "Social Imperialism" also. It is a theory that serves American and other reactionaries, like China is doing today. We do not approve of the USSR cutting aid to China or 'Detente'. There is no such thing as a world communist movement. The term '—The World Stalinist Movement' would be more fitting. And, Eurocommunism is not breaking away from Stalinism but a rejection of the past in order to collaborate with the capitalists in each country. It is a facade.

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UN methods need re-appraisal

by S. N. de S. Seneviratne

UN Agencies wield tremendous influence and power. Their potential for both good and evil is great. However, their positive contributions which are many, can be annulled if their operational patterns also allow, and even encourage, counter-development trends. In this context, it is timely to draw attention to some disturbing features, principally to the development of the new breed of international *sahibs* - the experts and their kin associated with UN Agencies - and the concept of aid.

It is an achievement for numerous individuals of no extraordinary attainments or abilities to enter into the company of "experts" in assignments in LDCs. It is the aspiration of many local personnel who collaborate with these experts to get into that international circuit, often with the help of these influential individuals. In the process a subtle system develops which violates the national interests of LDCs. The expert exploits his position of privilege and influence, aware of the bargaining power of the benefits he can bestow on his collaborators. The latter in their eagerness to secure these benefits—foreign trips, foreign contacts, foreign assignments, foreign exchange—submit to that ultimate violence, the violence of humiliation as they barter their own self respect and that of their country for the advantages the expert can secure for them—if they don't rock the boat.

The effect on the indigenous people of the life-styles and the privileges enjoyed by experts in LDCs is another aspect that merits serious attention. One is tempted to ask whether these experts, the agents attempting to improve conditions in developing countries, can effect significant changes for the betterment of these countries in the long term unless they are willing to "enter

into the life" of these developing countries, get alongside their people, share in their problems and aspirations, and become receptive to the socio-economic factors operative in local situations.

It is doubtful whether the "foreign expert", installed on arrival in a developing country in an air-conditioned cubicle and provided with all the trappings of affluent societies, besides much else, characterised by a life-style hopelessly out of touch with the harsh realities of the Third World, can make the changes in the developing countries which are of real value in the long term. Too often, the expert is a symbol of affluence, a reminder to the poor world that this affluence was largely generated and is still sustained by the human manure of developing countries. He evokes in the natives feelings that cannot be conveniently programmed on computers.

At the Central Agricultural Research Institute, Peradeniya, for instance, the monthly salary bill of 32 Research Officers (17 with post-graduate qualifications including 7 Ph. D.s) works out to approximately Rs. 40,000. A single expert received a princely salary in the region of US\$ 2500 - 4000 per month, Rs. 38,750 - 62,000! Obscenity is a strong word. But it is a single word that sums up a situation which is hardly consistent with the lofty ideals of the UN Charter. And the temptation to refer to the distinction between "men" and "natives" made by Jean-Paul Sartre in his preface to Frantz Fanon's *"The Wretched of the Earth"* is irresistible.

"Not so very long ago, the earth numbered two thousand million inhabitants: five hundred million men, and one thousand five hundred million natives. The former had the Word; the others had the use of it."

The United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development will be held in Vienna in August 1979. These extracts are from a draft of a paper in agriculture written by Dr. Seneviratne, Plant Pathologist, Central Agricultural Research Institute, for the National Paper. Nissanka Seneviratne was educated at St. Thoma's College, Mt. Lavinia, the University of Ceylon and the University of London from which he obtained his PhD in Plant Virology.

Chinese experience

The concept of the expert in LDCs needs to be reexamined in the light of the damning effects produced in local situations. In this context, one of the eight principles of economic and technical assistance of China's foreign policy is exemplary:

"The experts dispatched by the Chinese government to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities."

In sharp contrast, the system as it operates now suggests that when aid is given, a large proportion of it is recycled back to base *via* expensive experts and consultants.

Aid. It is now recognised, though rarely publicly admitted, that aid is not "a form of disinterested munificence." Colin Morris, a Britisher who has boiled in the cauldron of African independence struggles has this to say: "Aid is often a three-letter word meaning fraud. A loan is not aid if the poor nation has to sink deeper into debt paying it off. Money which must be spent in the donor country on goods

the giver stipulates is not aid but a roundabout way of subsidizing the rich country's industries." Aid as a method of maintaining "a position of influence and control around the world" and as "one of the instruments of foreign policy" are views expressed by important personalities, President Kennedy and Professor H. B. Chenery, a former senior economist of the US Agency for International Development. There is no dearth of examples where expression has been given to such views!

Aid has been a means of stunting and distorting development in the Third World through exploitation. The international funding agencies are not exactly dispensers of charity. Most of the loans from the World Bank, for instance, are at commercial rates of interest. Even in the field of international research cooperation it has been recognised that there are risks. "Sometimes, international and regional projects are used to preserve colonial influence, to establish neo-colonial dependence and to circumvent national priorities and country programmes. They may have the effect of delaying the build-up of national capacity, contributing to the emigration of researchers and distorting national investment."

It is therefore, abundantly clear, that the subject of aid, within the framework of the UN operation, is one which urgently needs reappraisal. After all, the UN Charter embodies principles concerning human dignity and life in larger freedom. It is a forum in which a discussion of the subject need not be shunned as it well might be in the capital markets and capitalist corporations of the affluent world.

Punchirala and Siyathu and Kira

dry zone. If they are lucky they will have enough to keep their families fed till the next season. Up in the hills it is dawn. Thangakani and Saraswathie and Letchimi are barely visible in the mist as their nimble fingers pick the tender leaves from a thousand tea bushes. Their labour can be made more rewarding, their lives must surely be entitled to better standards in larger freedom. **And science and technology can achieve those possibilities.**

Punchirala and Siyathu and Kira need not toil for a miserable return of 20 bushels of paddy per acre, using varieties prone to attack by pests and diseases, fearfully dependent on the vagaries of weather to provide the precious water. Science and technology can provide for them varieties which might give them three, four or five times that yield. Science and technology can divert rivers and provide an assured supply of water.

Thangakani and Saraswathie and Letchimi need not return to their hovels, those lines, after a hard day's work, to feed on the crusts of bread turned out from imported flour and to breed another generation, uncertain as to what the morrow holds for them. They too can be decently fed and housed, like the *Periya Dorai* who lives on the top of the mountain and the *Sinna Dorai* who lives further down, cycling them, human manure, in ensuring fatter dividends for the affluent overlords. Science and technology can provide better housing for them and occupations for their children consistent with the dignity and worth of the human person.

The Charter of the United Nations, springing from the human desire for a world delivered from untold sorrow to mankind was

conceived at the end of the Second World War. In April 1918, when the end of the First World War was not yet in sight, that sage who radiated humanity in all its richness and splendour, Bertrand Russel, completed his work "Roads to Freedom". He sought to examine proposed roads for a better ordering of human society than the destructive and cruel chaos in which mankind had hitherto existed. He had a vision of the world that we must seek.

"The World that we must seek is a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope, based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. It must be a world in which affection has free play, in which love is purged of the instinct for domination, in which cruelty and envy have been dispelled by happiness and the unfettered development of all the instincts that build up life and fill it with mental delights. Such a world is possible; it waits only for men to wish to create it."

The men assembled at the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development might affirm man's wish to create such a world. The proof of that affirmation must be in action programmes consistent with the ideals of the UN Charter—fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person. In the creation of such a world science and technology are indispensable commodities.

Global Supermarket (2)

One country, one crop

Most Americans learned about single-crop agriculture in high school geography classes: everyone can remember the brightly coloured maps of the world with a banana superimposed on Ecuador, a coffee tree on Brazil, and so on. Indeed, there seems something so logical about all this, the "natural advantage" idea. Why shouldn't every country grow what it can grow best and then trade for what it can't? Why not grow pineapples in the Philippines or Kenya, get strawberries from Mexico or fly carnations in from Colombia, if these countries can grow them more cheaply?

But our learning now must begin with unlearning: there is nothing "natural" and no "advantage" about just growing luxury agricultural exports. Applied to most underdeveloped countries today, the idea of natural advantage is inherently deceptive. It hides what really happens, namely that those who benefit from the foreign exchange earned by the agricultural exports are not the people whose labour produces the exported crops.

Even when a Third World country uses part of its foreign earnings to import food, the imports generally are not staples but Western-style or semi-luxury food for the better-off, urban classes. In Senegal, peasants are forced by taxation to dedicate their better land to growing peanuts for export to Europe. The government uses a good portion of the foreign exchange this earns to import wheat for foreign-owned mills that turn out flour for French-style white bread for city dwellers. On a recent research trip to Niger we discovered that foreign exchange even goes to import ice cream straight from a shop on the Champs Elysses!

The whole process debunks a myth much in the news these days: that higher prices for the Third World's agricultural exports will help the hungry. The very success of export agriculture often pushes the rural population further into poverty. This happens because of the land speculation we talked about earlier: when commodity prices go up, land farmed by tenants and self-provisioning farmers gets taken over by big landholders who can now make a larger profit. In addition, plantation workers' wages can actually decline. For instance, when the world price of sugar more than doubled in 1974, the real wage of a cane cutter in the Dominican Republic actually fell to less than it was ten years earlier. A nominal increase in cane cutters' wages did not compensate for the inflation set off by the sugar boom.

Moreover, governments pushing agricultural exports are governments that suppress land reform. Minimum wage laws for farmworkers are killed because they might make the country's exports "uncompetitive." Land growing food for export gets exempted from land reform; and growers shift faster from local foods to export crops to avoid having to sell their land. Thus, in the Philippines in 1974-75, 232,000 more acres were planted in sugar (and therefore exempted from land reform) than just three years earlier.

Finally, large-scale Global Farming demands chemical fertilizers and pesticides, to maximize yields as well as to meet the foreign market's "beauty standard" and processing specifications (the Unbruisable Tomato Syndrome). Basing an agricultural system on imported technologies helps ensure that whatever is produced will be exported to pay the import bill—a vicious circle of dependency.

Bringing It All Back Home

It's temptingly easy to believe our food problems are different from those of the poor countries—that their problem is scarcity and ours is oversupply. In reality, however, we and the world's hungry face a common threat: the tightening of control over the most basic human need—food—both within our own country and on a global scale. The same increasing concentration of control over land and marketing that directly causes hunger in undeveloped countries is going on right here at home:

* Only 5.5 per cent of all agricultural corporations in the United States now operate over one-half of all land in farms. The result is landlessness, joblessness and sometimes even hunger in rural America.

* Almost 90 per cent of vegetable production in the United States is controlled, through contracts or directly by major processing corporations. Many farmers already have no choice but to sign with Del Monte, or whoever, or go out of business.

* Fewer than 0.2 per cent of all U. S. food manufacturers control about 50 percent of all the industry's assets. The top four firms in any given line control, on average, more than half of the market. In 1972, the Federal Trade Commission staff calculated that such oligopolies in 13 food lines were responsible for \$2.1 billion in over charges. For the one out of ten Americans who must spend an average of 69 per cent of all income on food, such inflated prices mean malnutrition.

It is many of these same oligopolistic corporations, helped by governments and international agencies, that are now penetrating the Third World. Farmers, farmworkers, meat packers and cannery workers lose their jobs as agribusiness roams abroad. The United States already is importing roughly \$14 billion worth of food annually—

more than half of which competes directly with what U. S. farms grow.

The Global Farm and Global Supermarket do *not* bring American consumers cheaper food. Do Ralston Purina's and Green Giant's mushrooms grown in Korea and Taiwan sell to Americans for less than those produced in the United States? Not one cent, according to a U. S. government study. Del Monte's and Dole's Philippine pineapples actually cost American consumers more than those produced by a small company in Hawaii. On top of it all, flying food from Global Farm to Global Supermarket makes little sense in a fuel scarce world.

Glorifying it as "food interdependence," multinational agribusiness corporations right now are creating a single world agricultural system in which they will control all stages of food production, from the soil in Afghanistan to the grocery shelf in Des Moines. Eventually, they will be able to effectively manipulate supply and prices for the first time on a worldwide basis. The process is well under way; we are already seeing the effects in the rising food prices we face today.

The opposite of such fake interdependence is not isolationism, just as the opposite of the narrow

production focus is not stagnation. We have to redefine the world hunger problem as a *social* one, not a *technical* one. People freed from exploitation by landlords, elitist governments and corporate power — people who know that together they are working for themselves — have shown that not only will they make the land produce, but they can make it ever more productive.

Once people use their own land to feed themselves first, trade can become an organic outgrowth of development — no longer the fragile hinge on which basic survival hangs. No country can hope to "win" in international trade as long as its very survival depends on selling only one or two products every year. A country simply cannot hold out for just prices for its exports if it is desperate for foreign exchange with which to import food. Once the basic needs are met, however, trade can become a healthy extension of *domestic need* rather than being determined strictly by foreign demand. Cuba and China have shown that food trade does not have to be at the cost of a decently fed population.

In contrast, the Global Farm and the Global Supermarket are the type of interdependence no one needs. They are a smoke-screen for the usurpation of land and labour by a few for a few.

CORPORATE FLOWERS

One fast-expanding crop on the Global Farm is what the Department of Agriculture calls ornamental crop — cut flowers and foliage. Certain worldwide firms, such as Sears, Green Giant, Ralston Purina ("Green Thumb Division"), Pillsbury and United Brands are getting into this business, along with the big grocery chains. All of them have their eyes on the profits to be made by mass-producing flowers in underdeveloped countries at low costs, then air-freighting them to the Global Supermarket's divisions in North America and Europe (where, on the average, consumers spend 3 per cent of their food budget on fresh flowers).

The agribusiness corporations will thus begin gaining control of the flower business from seed to customer. Historically, the flower business in countries like the United States has consisted of large number of independent enterprises: small nurseries, growers, larger grower-shippers and tens of thousands of retail shops. But now a few corporations hope to change all that. They plan to brand-name flowers, as United Brands did with bananas in the 1960s ("Chiquita"), and market them through the supermarket chains and franchised outlets. Flowers from the Global Farm might well mean neighborhood florist shops will go the way of tens of thousands of other mom and pop stores — out of business.

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Asian Peasants (2)

Peasants need their own organisations for their protection

The land problem in Thailand with some local peculiarities notwithstanding, is typical of the problem as it exists in large parts of Asia. Landlessness and tenancy are on the increase in the north, north-east and the Central Plains. Rents exceed 50% of total production; credit is usually available only at usurious rates which keep the farmers always in debt and marketing is in the hands of merchants who manage to buy up the harvest at cheap prices.

It should be fairly clear from Thailand's experience that in spite of the ILO's high-sounding Convention on Rural Workers Organisations, the government does not have much interest in it—except to the extent of using U. N. aid, and indeed the ILO Convention itself, to prop up its own organisations to support the exponents of landlord-based capitalist farming.

The many dilemmas that confront genuine peasant organisations are not restricted to opposition only from internal sources in a country. Often there is collusion between commercial-industrial and external political interests with similar forces within a country, whose common interest is to either keep peasants in a state of bondage or to incorporate them under exploitative conditions into schemes of urban cum foreign-oriented export agriculture. In such schemes land under food crops is diverted to cash crops, production being carried out in a plantation style economy. The cash crops are then destined to be sold in privately operated stores in towns and cities or exported overseas as raw material or food for western industry and consumers.

The Philippines historical experience

The Philippine historical experience provides a classic example of how external and internal vested interests come together to range themselves against peasants, and is also illustrative of similar situations in other South-East Asian countries with the exception of Viet Nam.

Indeed, Philippine history is full of peasant uprisings and peasant organisations being formed to resist the deteriorating conditions of peasants, first under Spanish colonialism and then American and local capitalism, which came to be super-imposed on it.

Under the Spaniards, according to one of the Philippine's leading historians, Renato Constantino, "in the countryside, perhaps more than in the city, economic progress had depressed the living standards of the masses, both absolutely and relatively. The successful development of cash crops for export intensified exploitation and suffering... Land rentals were increased ..., tenants forced by landowners to concentrate on cash crops were no longer sure of their food supply. But above all, the export-crop economy increased the value of land and the desirability of owning as many hectares as possible. The religious orders and other Spanish landowners, the native principales, the rising class of Chinese meztigos all took advantage of the various land laws... to dispossess ignorant and poor peasants off their small plots." **Superimposition of American capitalism**

Later, the Americans imposed a layer of capitalism on the existing feudal system in Philippine society. The American-influenced

process of development ensured peasant demands would go unheeded and a new crop of haciendas would emerge under the control of export-oriented business corporations.

As a result of sustained anti-peasant policies, the averaged tenancy rates rose from 38 to 60 percent between 1903-1946 (Agrarian Unrest and Peasant Organisations in the Philippines by Gerrit Huizer, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague). The conditions of peasants deteriorated particularly in Central Luzon, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga.

However, as in earlier Spanish times, all the Filipino people did not allow American colonialism and its collaborators a free hand to usurp their land, labour and culture. While the American-educated leadership acquired the know-how to use colonial education, economics and politics to further its own interests, "the instinctive wisdom of the masses—a product of their own experience—gave rise to a growing social awareness." Peasants began to feel the need to regain their security and also to realize the need for united action.

Socialism and Communism

In the 1920s and 1930s organised sharecroppers' and agricultural labourers' unions began to be organised. Inevitably these organisations came to be influenced by Socialism and Communism. That was only to be expected for it was Marxism that first spearheaded an articulate intellectual and political attack against colonialism, imperialism and fascism. The mix of Marxist ideology with local peasant perceptions of injustice and inequality, was not entirely successful in uniting va-

rious peasant groups; atleast not in the beginning. But gradually the need for unity began to be felt and in 1938 the Socialist and Communist parties decided on a merger.

The great Depression further aggravated the peasants' living standards.

Huk peasants and the Great War

The effects of foreign involvement in anti-peasant movement measures became evident in the course of events during and following the Great War.

It was in Luzon, where the conditions of peasants were at their worst that a strong anti-Japanese guerrilla movement came into being. The nucleus of this movement was provided by the Huks. But there were also other anti-Japanese American supported guerrilla bands. For the Huks the importance of the resistance was not only to fight the Japanese, but to combine the anti-Japanese movement with a broader socio-economic programme of agrarian change for the benefit of the peasant masses.

The Commonwealth Government and the Americans did not trust the Huks for precisely this reason. They were only interested in anti-Japanese resistance and not in any programme of structural agrarian change.

With the defeat of Japan, an interesting change occurred in the American attitude towards the Huks and those who had collaborated with the Japanese. They (the Americans) wanted to ensure that an independent Philippine government would in no way jeopardise their economic interests. It was in the American interest to see that Free Trade was not interfered with. But, having become an open market for American goods, there was little room left for Filipino industrial enterprise to develop. Moreover, the lucrative trade in export crops led to increasing agrarian tension and demobilization of the peasantry.

The Huks representing the land-hungry peasantry had good reason not to trust the new agreements being thrashed out between the Filipino elite classes and the Americans. According to the Philippine (Bell) Trade Act, Philippine-American trade relations after independence would be allowed to continue on the basis of free trade; the Philippine government would not restrict the flow of dollars from the Philippine to the U. S. and Americans and American Corporations would be treated on parity with Filipines for investment rights over natural resources and public utilities.

Democratic and nationalist elements in the Philippines could not possibly accept such a free-wheeling erosion of economic sovereignty on the eve of independence.

American interference

However, the Americans were equally determined to interfere in the course of Philippine politics. They supported with money and tactical advice their 'own candidates' in Philippine elections so that the Huk peasants and other democratic elements could be contained. After ensuring the victory of their nominee, Roxas, in the 1946 elections, the Americans concluded a Military Bases Agreement to safeguard their economic interests and those of the Filipino ilustrado classes, a situation that persists until now. Any peasant movement, communist, or socialist, in the Philippines today has to thus find a way of coping with repression from a domestic government whose defence and intelligence apparatus is propped up by an external government out to protect its own political and economic interests.

A particular dilemma for peasant organisations in South-East

Asia (and to lesser extent in South Asia) has been the influence of a McCarthyist anti-Communist phobia, which has been imported into the region from the U. S. A. The late forties and early fifties were the decades when under Trueman and McCarthy the U. S. began to suffer from a chronic fear of Communism. To nurse such a fear and capitalise on it was better for American business than to try to understand Communism as a political philosophy or its relevance to peasant-based Asian societies. The latter course would have involved making concessions to nationalist economic interests.

In reacting with characteristic paranoia to the 'dangers' of Communism, the Americans denied themselves the opportunity to appreciate the significance of the great victory of Chinese peasants over the Kuomintang regime. Instead, they went on to refine a policy of disguised 'intervention' to contain the emergence of peasant movements that sought to transform the existing social and economic relations in society. According to this policy overt military measures against peasant organisations would be combined with certain welfare projects as part of a wider counter-insurgency programme. Indeed, such a policy was supposed to have been followed at its best when Ramon Magsaysay became president in 1953.

However, in the end, peasants, particularly landless labourers and sharecroppers, can hardly be said to have been helped to redeem their miserable living conditions. All they have been given is a few crumbs and plenty of bombs. In the circumstances, more than ever they need their own organisations to protect themselves.

New light on Pasternak

by Reggie Siriwardena

I suppose to most people the name 'Lara' calls up the image of Julie Christie's face and the strains of that nostalgic melody that accounted for most of the popularity of David Lean's film. The real-life Lara was, however, Boris Pasternak's long-standing mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, whose memoirs have now been translated and published in English as *A CAPTIVE OF TIME: MY YEARS WITH PASTERNAK* (Collins). The effect, as a TLS reviewer puts it, is rather as if Béatrice had done an expose of Dante.

Mme. Ivinskaya shows Pasternak up as vain, lacking in moral courage and anxious to preserve his social position and his personal comforts. When he was around sixty, he underwent an operation for facial surgery in order to preserve his good looks. Moreover, when Mme. Ivinskaya was about to be discharged from a forced labour camp (a fate Pasternak never shared because he was too careful), he sent her a message saying that he couldn't retain her as his mistress if she had lost her beauty during her years of imprisonment!

There has been a long-standing story that Pasternak 'let down' his fellow-poet Osip Mandel'shtam when the latter was arrested, in 1934, for writing and circulating privately a satirical poem about Stalin (Mandel'shtam is believed to have died in Siberia in 1938). In her remarkable memoir of her husband's last years (translated into English as *HOPE AGAINST HOPE*), Mme. Mandel'shtam exculpated Pasternak of this charge. Mme. Ivinskaya now gives us her own version of the story.

According to her, a fortnight or so before his arrest, Mandel'shtam ran into Pasternak on the street and recited to him the 'Stalin' poem. Pasternak reacted with panic: 'I didn't hear this. You didn't recite to me... Let us

make out that I heard nothing. 'When Mandel'shtam was arrested and Bukharin interceded on his behalf, Stalin 'phoned Pasternak to consult him on Mandel'shtam's literary standing. According to Mme. Ivinskaya, Pasternak's reaction was such that Stalin put down the phone, saying, 'I see, you just aren't able to stick up for a comrade.'

All in all, the West a couple of decades ago made a bad choice when it picked Pasternak as an anti-Soviet hero (Solzhenitsyn later had the greater courage of his convictions, however obscure—some of them were). Mme. Ivinskaya holds it against Pasternak that in the 'Zhivago' affair, he acted 'spinelessly' in recanting, though she admits that she and others helped to prevail on him to do so. She is convinced that he acted as he did in order to preserve his literary contracts which he needed to maintain the comfortable life-style to which he was addicted.

I think, however, that DR ZHIVAGO was, in any case, not worth being martyred for. Twenty years ago, at the height of the Nobel Prize furor, I read the novel in order to find out what all the fuss was about. I rather congratulate myself on my endurance and tenacity in having stuck through it to the end, because DR. ZHIVAGO seems to me one of the world's most unreadable novels. It is one of the twentieth-century Russian novels unfortunately inspired by the ambition to produce an epic on the WAR AND PEACE scale which the writer has neither the social experience nor the sense of novel-structure to sustain.

In a recent critical study entitled *PASTERNAK* (Cambridge University Press) Professor Henry Gifford admits the imperfections of DR ZHIVAGO as a novel, but makes larger claims for

Pasternak as a poet. To me these claims too appear largely unfounded. Pasternak seems to me a good minor lyric poet, but nothing he wrote has the breadth, the penetration into the central experiences of his society, that characterise Blok's *THE TWELVE* or Anna Akhmatova's *REQUIEM*—the two peaks, for me, of twentieth-century Russian poetry. Nor does Pasternak's work have the personal heroic strength of the last poems of Mandel'shtam, because Pasternak simply did not have that kind of courage and resilience. He could not have written, as Mandel'shtam did, this poem to Stalin, with death staring him in the face (I quote Clarence Brown's translation):

You took away all the oceans
and all the room.

You gave me my shoe-space in
earth, with bars round it.

Where did it get you? Nowhere.

You left me my lips and they
shape words, even in silence.

Where I do agree with Professor Gifford is that Pasternak was a great translator of poetry. As with Ezra Pound, his technical gifts and his feeling for language showed themselves to best advantage in acting as the transmitting medium for a content already given by a greater poet. Pasternak's versions of six of Shakespeare's tragedies will probably survive among the world's great translations (his *HAMLET* and *LEAR* were used by Grigory Kozintsev in the two finest Shakespeare films made anywhere). I must confess that I sometimes find myself even preferring some of Pasternak's lines, in their Pushkin-like brevity and pregnant simplicity, to the Shakespearean originals. As when he renders Cleopatra's words on the verge of death:

I am fire and air; my other
elements

I give to baser life --
as (I translate literally back
from the Russian):

I am air and fire, All else
I leave to dust.

20th anniversary of Cuban revolution

January 1st 1979 marks the 20th anniversary of Revolutionary Cuba, the Free Territory of the Americas and the first socialist state in the Western Hemisphere. It was on the last day of December 1958 that the dictator Batista flew out to Miami, Florida and on the next day, Fidel Castro led the victorious rebel Army into Havana.

The Cuban experience is of tremendous relevance to the peoples of the Tricontinental countries. The history of Cuba is the history of Latin America, Africa and Asia. Indeed that history of imperialist domination, economic underdevelopment and political repression is the present reality of most 'Third World' countries. It is this fact that brings into sharper focus the outstanding

achievements of the Cuban Revolution in the social, political economic and cultural spheres

For the past twenty years, the government and people of Cuba have successfully defended themselves against countless attempts at 'destabilization on the part of the world's mightiest imperialist power. Despite its geographic location only 90 miles away from the USA, and its relatively small population (around 10 million), Cuba has not only defended itself successfully and embarked upon socialist construction but it has also consistently fulfilled its internationalist duty in respect of the peoples of Latin America, Africa and Asia who are struggling for genuine national independence, democracy and socialism.

(Continued on page 22)

"We do not have the slightest doubt. There will be victories, there will be reverses, there will be advances there will be retreats; but the arrival of a new era, the victory of the peoples in the face of injustice, in the face of exploitation, in the face of oligarchy, in the face of imperialism, whatever the mistakes that man makes, whatever the mistaken ideas that may be obstacles on the road: it is inevitable.

"We have spoken to you with complete and absolute frankness; we know that the true revolutionaries will always be in 'solidarity' with Cuba; we know that no true revolutionary, that no communist on this continent, nor among our people, will ever let himself be induced to take those positions which would lead him to an alliance with imperialism; which would make him go hand in hand with the imperialist masters against the Cuban Revolution and against the Latin American Revolution.

(To page 22)

I HAVE

When I look at and touch myself,
I, John-only-yesterday-with-Nothing,
and John-with-Everything-today,
with everything today,
I glance around, I look and see
and touch myself and wonder
how it could have happened.

I have, let's see:
I have the pleasure of walking my country,
the owner of all there is in it,
examining at very close range what
I could not and did not have before.

I can say cane,
I can say mountain.

I can say city,
I can say army,
army say,
now mine forever and yours, ours,
and the vast splendor of
the sunbeam, the star, the flower.

I have, let's see:
I have the pleasure of going,
me, a peasant, a worker, a simple man,
I have the pleasure of going
(just an example)
to a bank and speaking to the manager,
not in English,
not in "Sir,"
but in companero as we say in Spanish.

I have let's see:
that being Black

I can be stopped by no one at
the door of a dancing hall or bar.
Or even at the desk of a hotel
have someone yell at me there are no rooms;
a small room and not one that's immense,
a tiny room where I might rest.

I have, let's see:
that there are no rural police
to seize me and lock me in a precinct jail,
or tear me from my land and cast me
in the middle of the highway.

I have that having the land I have the sea,
no country clubs
no high life,
no tennis and no yachts,
but, from beach to beach and wave on wave,
gigantic blue open democratic:
in short, the sea.

I have, let's see:
that I have learned to read,
to count.
I have that I have learned to write,
and to think
and to laugh.

I have that now I have
a place to work
and earn
what I have to eat.
I have, let's see:
I have what was coming to me.

NICOLAS GUILLEN

Press opinion

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Evils of the capitalist system

The failure of the Government to take action against those supporters of the UNP who resorted to terrorist action against their political opponents soon after the victory of the UNP at the last elections has resulted in a loss of respect and fear of the law that law breakers earlier had. This can be seen from the fearful crimes taking place today. In the North the loss to human life and property caused by certain organised groups, in defiance of even the security forces, is now considerable. The Government has failed to arrest a single person connected with these activities, nor has it been able to unearth the background to these events and apply a remedy. On the contrary, far from seeking solutions, responsible members of this Dharmishta government have succeeded in spreading racial enmity. The

(Continued from page 21)

Thus, Cuba has enormous international prestige and tremendous impact on the contemporary world scene. It is no exaggeration to say that Cuba, once a satellite of the USA and a playground for its millionaires and mobsters, is now a factor that has to be taken into account in every capital city of the world. Despite the propaganda offensive launched by the USA, its satellites in the 'Third World', and the present leadership of China, the peoples of the Tricontinental countries know full well that "Cuba's is the sling of David" (Jose Marti). Fittingly enough therefore, the 6th Summit conference of the Non Aligned Movement takes place this year, in Havana.

We reproduce here an excerpt from Fidel Castro's closing speech at the founding session of the OLAS, which we think best sums up the spirit of the Cuban revolution. We also publish a poem by Nicholas Guillen, the country's poet laureate, which imaginatively contrasts life in pre—and post-

only result of this would be to breed more crimes throughout the island

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What happened to the boast?

The manner in which the price of petrol was increased two days ago reveals how this government acts. From Rs. 13-30 petrol has been increased to Rs. 20 a gallon—an increase of over 50 per cent. The decision of the oil producing countries that form OPEC was to increase prices by 15 per cent and that too in three stages, 5 per cent at a time. Accordingly, the first increase was due on January 1. The Finance Minister's taunt to opposition critics at budget time that this government had not increased the price of oil has now faded even before the 5 per cent OPEC increase has come into effect. So much for the Finance Minister's brave words.

revolutionary Cuba, from the viewpoint of the average Cuban citizen.

(Continued From page 21)

"We do not condemn anyone a priori, we do not close the doors to anyone en masse in a block; we express our ideas, we defend our ideas, we debate these ideas. And we have absolute confidence in the revolutionaries in the true revolutionaries, in the true communists.

• Those will not fail the revolution, the same as our Revolution will never fail the revolutionary movement of Latin America.

"We do not know what awaits us, what vicissitudes, what dangers, what struggles. But we are prepared, and every day we try to prepare ourselves, and every day we will be better and better prepared.

'But one thing we can say: we are calm, we feel safe, this little island will always be a revolutionary wall of granite and against it all conspiracies, all intrigues, and all aggressions will be smashed. And high upon this wall there will fly forever a banner with the legend: Patria o Muerte! Venceremos!"

— FIDEL CASTRO

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Appreciation

Mr E. H. de Alwis

Some weeks have already passed since the death of Mr. E. H. de Alwis. His death was sudden, specially for those of us who read his latest contribution on the pages of the *Lanka Guardian*, on the 1st. of November. Many I am sure were bracing themselves for another series of discussions on education, similar to the one which Mr. de Alwis stimulated through his earlier writings. Being a broad social thinker he also could link these changes to the wider socio-economic developments of our society. We have lost in him not only a provocative commentator who could bring us out of our apathy, but also an able observer on education and a spokes-

man for progressive educational changes.

The period when Mr. de Alwis functioned as the Director of Education was a significant one in the educational history of our country. He was fortunate to direct the Department when the national languages were winning not the final but the hardest battles in getting established as the medium of instruction in our schools and universities. He understood the significance of these changes, not merely as a substitution of one language by another, but as an important factor in democratization of education by spreading its benefits to a greater part of our population. Many of

his writings bear this to us clearly. Even his final contributions about the contemporary educational scene on the pages of *Lanka Guardian* indicate the importance that was given by him to question of medium of instruction in schools.

While he performed his duties as the Director of Education at a crucial time, his departure from us also took place at a time when our society needs more of his calibre, ideas and vision. Thus his absence will be felt greatly. It will be a gap that is hard to fill not only because of his knowledge as an educationist of a liberal tradition, but also as one who could put forward his ideas with a literary skill of a highest standard.

- Sunil Bastian

Cryptic Crossword No. 12

Big Daddy Idi Amin special

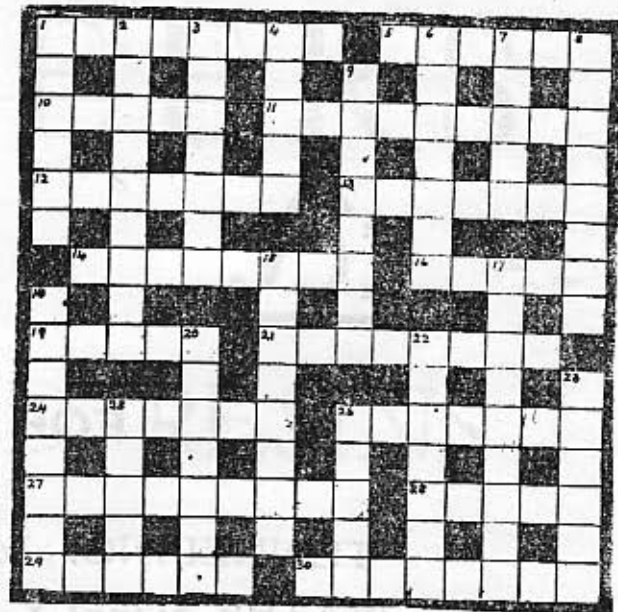
By Stripex

Across CLUES

1. S. L. pact with Idi Amin dimin-I-shed and amended; could be about official seats (8)
5. Amin arrangement I keep out of to let back ornamental shelf (6)
10. Wanderer Amin drops in to get Temporary Residence Permit (5)
11. The skill needed by the right-hand man of such a one as Big Daddy? (9)
12. Amin, spoonerised, fed to give life (7)
13. Amin mixing with family appears a small man! (7)
14. Idi Amin, initially, turns a European (8)
16. Gun-love of one at the receiving end of speech by dictator, not necessarily Big Daddy (5)
19. Big Daddy, initially, takes in female bird to rear (5)
21. Transfer of property is a great deal to Amin, perhaps (8)
24. (Not just President for life) let Amin, er, be everlasting, I'm off (7)
26. Release from Amin; tum upset (7)
27. Amin, despot, puts out ad. to get the beginning of learning; becomes gullible person (9)
28. Name the bird the Spanish back, one of several owned by Big Daddy (5)
29. Aid-givers who began Dada on alternatives (6)
30. went back on the President (not Big Daddy) returning with the journalist (8)

Down

1. I'm out of Amin Pact to get forty winks (6)
2. Quiet! Entebbe's is zero, that's a commonplace (9)
3. Pst! Amin to be sail-bearer when in is out (7)
4. Put up log to the East, the heart of Idi is in it (5)
6. Rev. Amin dropping the third note to us can be hell (7)
7. A round of cards? Big Daddy is full of them! (5)



8. Providing Amin only with US thousand for Roman thousand (6,2)
9. Inspector, formerly, when Amin and British queen met (8)
15. Amin Motel loses direction as sacrifice (8)
17. Get Amin in charge all over? That's puzzling! (9)
18. Preoccupied. Bess does as Big Daddy is with 28's (8)
20. Many in peril (in Dada country?): that sounds like a cliff-hanger. No, just a hanger (7)
22. Amin, or to put it differently, not a top student (7)
23. Wait for somewhat tender mercies of Big Daddy (6)
25. With GI out of the way, Amin Ego could make him out as Irish statesman, familiarly (5)
26. Amin perhaps goes to the East for slockels (5)

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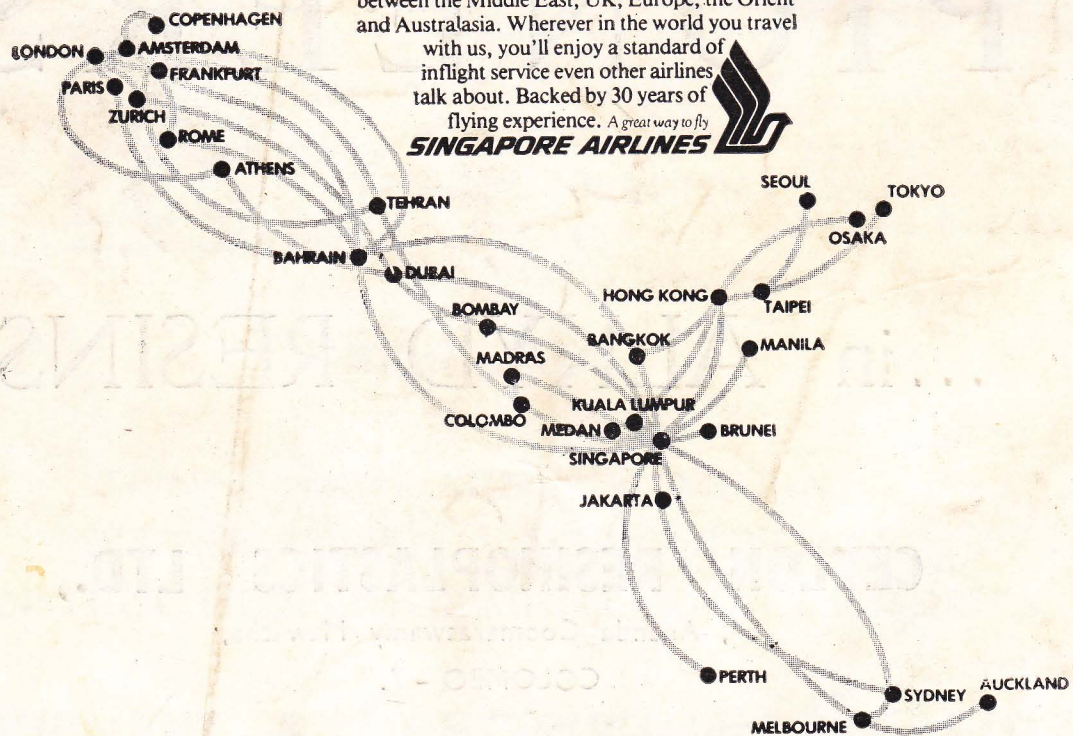
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