

*K. S. Sivakumaran*

# GUARDIAN



## Lake House vs the Church

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Reggie Siriwardena

Pathiraja's Ponmani

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Battle for 'new' Iran

Mervyn de Silva

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GARADS

## Tougher Law

The TULF leadership, its critics say, has caught the tiger's tail! But the tiger, like the pink panther, is leaving behind a messy trail of trouble.

According to the 'Sun' the government is drafting a wider and much tougher law to replace the so-called 'Tiger' law which lapses in mid-May.

When the bill was debated in the NSA the Opposition argued that it contained the harshest regulations introduced under the Emergency (1971-77). In two widely circulated analytical essays, Mr. S. Nadesan, QC and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva sought to establish the point that the much condemned emergency regulations had now become normal law.

The government's topflight spokesmen met this criticism with two main arguments: (a) the law will be restricted, in practice, to combatting terrorism in the north and (b) it would be operative for just one year, unlike the prolonged emergency.

The 'Sun' report says that the proposed law will cover any activity

which the police judge as 'terrorist' and any individual can be kept in detention for one year by the police who need not take the matter before a court of law.

## Gamini vs Gamini

Irrigation Minister Gamini Disnayake who successfully negotiated the Mahaveli Bill through parliament has been aiming some arrows at his name-sake Gamini Iriyagolle, author of the controversial book 'The Truth about the Mahaveli' excerpts from which were first published in this journal. Gamini D. has not named names but everybody knows that 'self-appointed pundits' is a code-word for Gamini I.

The lesser Gamini was warmly cheered when he addressed a seminar organised by the University's Engineering Faculty. There he threw a challenge at a senior engineer: "If there had been no political pressure would you as a technician have staked your reputation on a claim that this could be done in 5-6 years?"

The hesitant answer came: "Well, we got a policy directive and we have to work within that policy framework...."

## Polls preparation

The Sri Kotha brains-trust has been almost lacerating its collective cerebrum on how to meet opposition propaganda at the forthcoming polls. The think-tank, formed before the elections, consists chiefly of ex-CCS men, businessmen and assorted professionals. Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe chairs the meetings whenever he is in the country.

The T-T has been studying opinion trends, scanning the opposition press and examining the speeches of Opposition leaders to identify the principal propaganda points that the opposition is likely to use. Then it will think out counter-arguments to feed the party press, campaign managers and platform speakers.

## Iran's lessons

Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis has a pleasing (dangerous?) habit of making

## No issue on April 15

On account of the long Easter/New Year holidays, production problems will make it impossible for the L. G. to publish the April 15th issue while planning its special edition of May 1st, the journal's first anniversary. The May 1st number will have several extra pages.

We regret therefore that there will be no issue of this paper on April 15.

Regular readers with paid-up subs will incur no loss by the non-publication of Vol. I No. 24.

outspoken, and sometimes outrageous, statements in public.

His latest: "The SLBC only sings...." The venue was a YMCA-Marga sponsored seminar on the media. Those who listened to his remarks closely predict that another radio station (public broadcasting?) may be on the cards. But there's tough resistance.

The two eminent journalists who addressed the meeting (Messrs Reggie Siriwardena and Reggie Michael) agreed on one point. Using the term popularised by the Lanka Guardian they said that the 'mainstream media' had lost all credibility. Public opinion trends were far better reflected, said they, by the "mini-press" which is an opinion-maker, although its sphere of influence is limited to the intelligentsia.

The most interesting remark however was about Iran. The Shah's downfall was traced to a communication gap between the government and the people, a gap widened by a press that had renounced its basic duties.

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### Profits and exploitation

My article entitled 'Cyclone '78: Natural Disaster Social Crisis', sought to underline the essential connection between the consequences of natural phenomena and social structures. In a brief and patronizing comment Costain de Vos advised me on literary style, challenged me on exploitative and non-exploitative societies and also on surplus and profits. He ended his letter with references to "gulags" etc. Having spurned his advise on style, I raised a pointed question on exploitation and challenged him to make concrete criticisms of the Marxian concept of surplus. For his other meanderings I called him an intellectual vagrant.

Mr. de Vos now chides me for name calling, meaningless gibes, and unfunny things. Out of diffidence, discretion or plain ignorance all he can come up with is "As for surplus not being co-terminous with profits, I wish Chintaka would tell Karl Marx this the next time he runs into him." And this, after enjoining me not to resort to unfunny and meaningless gibes!

Anyway I must repeat: surplus is not co-terminous with profits as far as Marxian political economy is concerned. In support of my contention, I offer Mr. de Vos the following—the three volumes of Capital, the 3 supplementary volumes on the Theories of Surplus Value, and 'GRUNDRISSE'. Quite a wide choice really, but if that's too heavy going how about Lenin's statement in the opening pages of his essay on Karl Marx (in the volume Marx-Engels-Marxism) that: "Surplus value is the source of profits"? Or perhaps a line or two from Engels' brief letter to Schmidt (1895): "the total profit and the total surplus value can only approximately coincide.... any coincidence between the rate of profit and the sum of surplus value.... appears a sheer impossibility."

For his part, Mr. de Vos, did not venture to make the 'concrete

criticisms' of the Marxist theory of surplus that I invited him to come up with. I for one am fully prepared to debate this central tenet of Marxian political economy, but not with someone who quite plainly doesn't know much about that concept.....such as the distinction between surplus value and profits. Debate is one thing, but I'm afraid I simply don't have time to tutor Mr. de Vos on this question. Let me answer Mr. de Vos' posers:—

1) By exploitative societies I mean societies where a minority which owns the means of production expropriate the surplus value generated by the working masses, the majority. Opposed to this are non-exploitative societies which would mean the USSR, China, Cuba, Albania, GDR, Vietnam, N. Korea, Laos, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland, etc.

Many of these countries do have a limited degree of private enterprise in certain peripheral sectors of the economy, but in the main, these economies, and therefore societies, are non-exploitative. In passing I must caution Mr. de Vos not to confuse material privilege with exploitation, as I fear he is apt to do.

2) In exploitative societies (capitalism we both agree fits into this category) the administration is a component of a state apparatus which is structured to serve that central purpose (exploitation), and to protect the interests of the exploitative class while oppressing the majority. Its function in other words, is to maintain the class domination of an exploitative minority. Mr. de Vos agrees that a socialist system unlike capitalism, is non-exploitative. Logically, the structure and function of the administrative apparatus of a socialist society is contrary to that in a capitalist society. Concrete examples would obviously be the same list as in (1) Once again I would like to caution Mr. de Vos that this in no way implies a lack of an authoritarian character

to the administrative apparatus of socialist societies. Engels made the distinction long ago.

P. S. I did run into Marx after all (studying the rate of profit at the Jatika Pola) and found him in extremely good cheer. Now that Costain de Vos himself has agreed that capitalism is inherently exploitative and socialism is not, world revolution was on the agenda. Funny old fellow, very relevant.

Chintaka.

### Price of a Palestinian

It has been reported in our papers that the treaty between the Egyptians and Israelis will cost the US four billion dollars as aid to both. Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Since there are 3 million Palestinians, what is the price of a Palestinian for Mr. Sadat and Mr. Begin?

Matala

M. L. M. Zarook

### Scientific question

Gamini Dissanaiké's claim that racing, blue films, junkies and exclusive key clubs are capitalist symptoms is interesting and possibly true.

The scientific question then arises: What are the symptoms behind the rampant alcoholism in the Soviet Union?

Colombo 3

Mohan

### Deutschland uber alles?

Columnist 'Aryadeva' must be congratulated by all those who value national independence, for his expose of the 'Cultural Colonialism' practised by West German agencies. Taken together with Jayantha Somasundaram's two earlier articles on the nature of the West German state and its through going complicity in the repression in Chile, the danger of this 'penetration' must be obvious to all readers. If any criticism has to be made it is that Arya-

(Continued on Page 19)

## Can the 'Centre' hold ?

Was the government firing a shot over the bows of the Roman Church? The question intrigued well-informed political observers who are aware that influential Christians are now trying to persuade the government to amend the rules which now prevent private schools from levying fees. On prize-day platforms UNP leaders have dropped some hopeful hints about a change of policy that would free these schools from 'depending on charity'. Was the UNP using the state-run 'Daily News' to tell the Church to curb the activities of its radical clerics?

If it was not a standard pressure tactic with the subtle suggestion of a *quid pro quo*, was the sensational CDN 'lead' the journalistic fall-out from ideological in-fighting in the Church itself? Like any vast organisation founded on a doctrine that is open to interpretation and is often interpreted with varying emphases, the Church, from the Vatican to its peripheral units, has its own conservatives and its radicals, its hardline 'hawks' and its 'doves'. Was this then Church/State politics or Church politics?

The simplest explanation was that it was a straight journalistic job.

With this story-of-the-month, the newly appointed editor of the CDN certainly started his innings with an aggressive bang to the boundary. To underline its importance, the lead story bore the editor's imprimatur, a practice traditionally reserved for very special occasions.

The story referred to a 'subtle campaign by a certain group of priests' (unidentified) to 'discredit' the UNP. The 'group' has crept into the trade zone, and is also 'studying' the problems of city dwellers (housing, transport, prices) probably in an effort to whip up

Concern among Catholics over Leftist-leaning section  
**Is a religious group in active politics?**

anti-UNP opinion before the local elections in May. This 'gang of self-styled shepherds' should be 'bluntly told to go to hell'. For its part, the CDN advised them (in bold capitals): "GO-UNFROCK YOURSELVES", leaving both the 'gang' and the reader in some doubt as to whether these "spiritual bravado experts" should descend into limbo or retreat into a towering inferno in full battle dress or bare-bodied.

### Style

Thus, it was not merely the story and its political implications but its tone that made it a newspaper sensation. Since the CDN reader from the days of the Wijewardenas is more accustomed to the measured tone than the machine-gun manner, the story's style shocked the reading public and surprised the journalist.

Chairman Bodinagoda, a true embodiment of *dharma* virtues, has sought to create a 'Buddhist ethos' in this institution, which has dismayed some Christians who hold top editorial and executive posts and several UNP loyalists who find favourites of the Premadasa (SLFP) regime sneaking back into the management's confidence by an artful device known to *Dinamina* newsmen as "bodhipooja"! The theory trotted out by Lake House journalists that Editor Fernando, a devoted Catholic, was trying to prove that his loyalties to State and Party were as good as his allegiance to the Church is too facile altogether. A news editor *par excellence*, Fernando is a

no-nonsense, straight-from-the-shoulder, give-the-story-the-full-treatment journalist. The style is the man.

A reference in the CDN 'lead' to a 'journalist fellow-traveller' who was formerly closely associated with the SLFP prompted another theory that this was incidentally an anti-Esmond move. Esmond Wickremesinghe is boss of the Sri Kotha propaganda machine.

The first CDN editor appointed by the new government was an 'Esmond' nominee who was packed off in three months. Another Sri Kotha man who became editor of the *Dinamina* was recently demoted to the *Silumina*. An ex-Esmond man, Nalin Fernando, lasted just over a hundred days as Editorial consultant.

The journalist in the story is an 'Esmond' protegee now reduced to a somewhat precarious existence in a new media set-up in which the newspaper chieftans hold the purse strings.

### Opposition view

While journalists saw the affair through the magnifying glass of professional 'politics' (and intrigue), the opposition press chooses to see media happenings in the light of real or imagined factional feuds and personal conflicts in the UNP. The newspapers of the SLFP, CP etc made much of the fact that the new CDN editor is the brother-in-law of State Minister, Mr. Anandacissa de Alwis, apparently the current favourite. These journals argued that the

appointment would strengthen the State Minister's position vis-a-vis Prime Minister, Mr. P. Premadasa, who has the media smartly tuned to his publicity wave-length,

Poker-faced the **Aththa** said that a large wedding photo (the marriage of the PM's brother-in-law to the daughter of Mr. Sirisoma Ranasinghe) published in the **CDN** and **Dinamina** was an attempt to embarrass the PM. A UNP stalwart and a FTZ entrepreneur, Mr. Ranasinghe, now the **TIMES** boss, was regarded as a Mathewite. The Industries Minister, Mr. Mathew is the third in the UNP's top bracket of reigning favourites. In the middle, and younger, bracket are Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, Irrigation Minister Gamini Dissanayake and Employment Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

In a government which is pre-occupied with "image-making" via the media, the wedding, according to the Opposition papers means something. A point to Mr. Premadasa, a couple of points down for Mr. Mathew in the race of the front-runners, the report said.

### The Centre

A few days after the **CDN** story, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Director of the Centre for Society and Religion, paid a call on the acting Chairman of Lake House, Mr. Lanka de Silva. The secret was out; the cap was not only of the right fit but its owner wore it self-assuredly.

The **CDN** attack was directed at the Centre and a group of radical Catholic priests who are taking active intellectual and practical interest in social affairs. Like the "concerned scholar" and the "committed artist", this group represents a powerful trend within the Church, and places 'social conscience' high up in their ecclesiastical outlook and day-to-day work. In Latin America, they play a leading role in all popular movements, including liberation struggles. In Asian countries where the Church is strong, they have won world renown as brave champions of human rights. This is certainly true of

the Philippines and South Korea. In India, they constitute a very influential group.

### Third Worldist

In part, this tendency is a manifestation of the basic attempt of the Church to adapt to the conditions of contemporary society, to free itself from its Euro-centred past and identify itself with the aspirations and struggles of Third World peoples who of course represent an untapped, potentially large resource for conversion.

The Centre, located in an ill-lit complex of tight cubicles in a small building near the Fatima Church, Maradana, sponsors seminars, publishes booklets, and employs a few research workers.

During the SLFP regime, it held seminars on Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike's Investment Guarantee Law (Draft) and saw Mr. Ronnie de Mel, MP tear the Bill to pieces. It had a well-attended symposium on the Tea Industry. Its seminar on the multi-nationals brought the bosses of the Tobacco Co. and Lever Bros to its humble doorstep to defend the MNC's. Its post-election seminar had leading representatives from every political party. Among these who have led discussions are several Cabinet Ministers, chairmen of corporations, top businessmen, academics, editors, and lawyers.

### Quixotic Rasputins

Twenty four hours after the Vatican's "mullahs" so to say went into action from pulpits perhaps as powerful as the editorial offices of Lake House. The Sunday sermons made direct and oblique counter-attacks on the **CDN** for its attempt to 'punish' the Church and 'teach it a lesson'. A few days later the Bishops' Conference issued a reply which was published in the **CDN** on page 12 with an Editor's note and an editorial entitled "**Rasputins**". The leading article, obviously penned by a practised hand at editorialising scoffed at the self-same Rasputins for behaving like Don Quixotes tilting at 'mutinational windmills'.

The Church, which is probably the most successful multi-national in history, has never been short of dialectical skill. The **Catholic Messenger** presented its case in a succinct second editorial:

"Do Catholics have equal rights, along with other citizens, to engage in the political life of the country, or are they second-class citizens? Is this a democratic state in which freedom of action and expression are guaranteed by the Constitution and repeatedly assured by the President and Prime Minister?"

"Is this the beginning of another BJB style witch hunt against Catholics?"

"As far as the Church is concerned, it feels obliged to take an active interest in people, for that is its mission and ministry, and in all areas of human activity, including political, for the ultimate destiny of the human race cannot be considered by excluding any part of their activity. This has been conceded by many Papal pronouncements. Of course, the Church is obliged to stay politically neutral and commanded to respect all legally constituted authority. It is like-wise opposed to atheistic materialistic systems of government and to unfair exploitation of man and to violations of human rights anywhere."

In superpower style, the '**Catholic Messenger**' also produced some impressive (ideological) air-cover. From Mexico came its report that Archbishop Ahumada had asked the government to grant "priests the same rights as other citizens.....and for legislation granting them a political voice in national affairs".

From New York it reported a speech of Senator Patrick Moynihan (former U. S. Ambassador to the UN) lashing out at "anti-Catholic bigotry" in America..

On the front page it reported that a conference of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

will be held in Colombo March 25-27. The hosts will be the the Bishops Conference of Sri Lanka.

Is the Press vs Church a short skirmish or will it be protracted war? "How many divisions has the Pope?" asked Stalln. Can the Lake House afford the sceptical disdain of the Generalissimo?

## Petition on peasants' cause

The Janatha Viaparaya held a well-attended Public Rally at De Mel Park, Colombo on the 22nd evening. The Janatha Viaparaya was founded two years ago during the United Front regime and organized a series of seminars and public meetings throughout the country—together with the signing of a mammoth petition—to agitate for the release of political prisoners, the repeal of repressive legislation and safeguarding of democratic and human rights. Recently the organisation was revived after the Cyclone to espouse the cause of the Cyclone victims. They have been active in the Cyclone relief work, especially in the Polonnaruwa district, and concerned themselves with the problems of the people in the area. Various progressive political groups, trade unions and public organisations have combined under the Jantha Viaparaya banner. A petition of 10,000 signatures high-lighting the problems and demands of the Cyclone victims was taken in procession on the 22nd morning from the Fort Railway Station to the Ministry of Defence and was officially presented to the Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr. T. B. Werapitiya, who accepted it on behalf of the President. Among the delegates who presented the petition were the Ven. Ahangama Dharmarama Thero, Bishop Leo Nanayakkara, Ariyawansa Gunasekera—President, Samstha Lanka Govi Sammelanaya, and 4 peasants from Polonnaruwa.

In the evening, the Public Rally was held to publicise these problems and demands.

# Look, TV's here !

For the island's affluent one percent April will not be the cruellest month, as the poet would have it. At the auspicious hour of three in the after-noon of April 14th when over 13 million Sinhalese and Tamils are participating in traditional New Year festivities, about 3000 TV sets will come alive. A UNESCO survey has estimated that there would be about 10,000 TV sets by 1980 and about 50,000 by 1984, the year of the first presidential election.

Alive to the importance of TV and its immense potential as a mass communication medium, the government has generously reduced the import duty on TV sets from 50% to 12%. Colour TV sets are being sold, according to the size of the screen, at prices ranging from 10,000/- to 30,000/-. Almost all the sets are of Japanese make and Colombo firms say that about 20 sets are being sold daily, some on Hire Purchase terms.

If Singapore is the technicoloured visionary 'model' of development and progress for Sri Lanka's cosmopolitan upper crust, the magic box has been an elusive status symbol. Now the 'Singapore Girl' (one of the cleverest advertising gimmicks of recent times) the girl of his dreams of the Good life, will walk softly into Colombo's drawing rooms. "Come home and see the Tom Jones Show" will become the standard invitation of proud C7 matrons (no more pot luck and the Old Stuff) and the owner of the colour TV set will be an object of awe and envy in the neighbourhood. Sri Lanka enters the TV age and social historians of the future will probably name it a landmark in the evolution of life-styles and patterns of culture.

Once again private enterprise has bested the State in bringing the country to the threshold of the TV era. Despite a grant of 18 million US dollars by the Japanese government and the finest technical assistance, State Tele-

vision will be a reality only in 1981.

ITVN which becomes operational on April 14th is owned by a private firm whose joint managing directors are heirs to a great family tradition in the field of mass media. Mr. Anil Wijewardena is the grandson of Mr. D. R. Wijewardena, founder of Lake House. His co-managing director is Mr. Shantilal Wickremesinghe, son of Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe, former Managing Director of Lake House and a son-in-law of 'D. R.' The UNP government's top media expert, Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe, is Sri Lanka's chief delegate to all international conferences which discuss the on-going issue of Third World independence and 'information imperialism'. He was the first Asian chairman of the I. P. I. and is on the governing board of the Press Foundation of Asia, Manila.

The ITVN's foreign collaborator is Pacific Telecommunications Inc., the subsidiary of Consolidated Amusements of Hawaii.

Meanwhile the State Radio also takes a step forward in April. It opens the first of six relay stations on April 12th at Anuradhapura. The others will be located in Matara, Batticaloa, Ratnapura, Amparai and Senkadagala. This could be the first step in breaking the 50 years old State monopoly over the sound broadcasting medium. (See Trends).

The National Broadcasting Authority gave two licences to private firms interested in TV. The other, Maurice Roche, have either laid by the project or abandoned it.

There is also 'radio silence' on yet another Wijewardena venture in media.....a new daily paper by Upali Wijewardena, Sri Lanka's No. 1 industrialist and boss of the Trade Zone.

The Information Ministry denied a story published in a SLFP paper, the Nation, about a private US firm opening a 24 hour commercial radio station here.

Jaffna

## The streets are quiet

by Jayantha Somasundaram

There is a conspiracy afoot. A conspiracy to paint life in the North in melodramatic colours. To make out that anarchy rules the peninsula, that terror is looming overhead. This conspiracy is effected through a vicious campaign of false rumours and impressions, the origins of which are not easy to unearth. Last week a team of thirty journalists, representing the local and international print and electronic media set out for the North. While they were there Colombo was buzzing with rumours of a curfew in Jaffna—the conspiracy was in action.

In reality the security situation in Jaffna is impeccable where civilians, both Sinhalese and Tamils are concerned. Jaffna SP Mr. Egodapitiya told the press that Jaffna has a lower crime rate than Colombo. The incumbent of the Naga Deepa Vihare assured the journalists of the sense of security that prevails in the North. However manipulated panic has kept Sinhalese students from returning to the University of Jaffna after the August 77 disturbances, and has also kept Sinhalese visitors out of the peninsula.

The Police on the other hand lost another constable, a Tamil one, last week. He is the twelfth policeman to be assassinated. The policemen could be the targets of criminals or political extremists. But the police have no way of knowing which, since they receive little public cooperation in their investigations. This appears to be due to the fear and suspicion that people have of the Police and Armed Forces in the North.

Police often react with wild abandon in the aftermath of the assassi-

*(The Lanka Guardian's Jayantha Somasundaram was in the team of journalists invited to tour the North by the Government Agent Jaffna. The trip was sponsored by the Ministry of Information).*

nation of policemen. Last week the Assistant Government Agent of Vellana, Mr. Thambimuttu, was among those who were pulled out of a vehicle and assaulted by uniformed men.

### TULF TENDENCIES

The political situation is complex. There appear to be three strands of opinion prevalent in the TULF. The party leadership is committed unequivocally to a separate state, one that is secured by non-violence. However, V. Navaratnam, MP for Chavacachcheri, expresses a moderate opinion. He says that if the Tamil Nation is recognised as such and self-determination is guaranteed, it is possible to live in one country.

The Tamil Illangar Peruvai, the Youth organisation of the TULF professes to be Marxist-Leninist, and politically they may not be far from extremist groups that call for revolution through armed struggle, as the last resort.

### Ronnie on IMF subsidies

Mr. Ronnie de Mel, the Finance Minister, has welcomed the IMF decision to make its criteria for lending more flexible. The Financial Times Asia Editor who met Mr. de Mel in London reported:

"Protests, mainly by developing countries, at the stringent conditions attached to loans have resulted in the IMF's issue of a new set of guidelines to take account of political and social difficulties. Sri Lanka had objected to the pace at which the IMF tried to force the Government in Colombo to cut back subsidies so as to switch expenditure to development.

"Turkey, Peru, Egypt and Zaire have objected even more strongly to conditions set by the IMF.

"Mr. de Mel said the Government felt 'rather strongly that the IMF

did not take fully into account the social and political realities of Sri Lanka.'

"The Government is believed to have been under pressure from the IMF which is said to have argued that because the removal of a rice subsidy did not result in riots and disorder, there was scope to phase out other subsidies at a faster pace.

"A compromise has now been reached under which subsidies will be phased out over three-four years depending on the creation of new jobs."

### The Bookies at it again

The local Bookies, on the eve of the coveted Flat Season '79 with the 200th Derby in its calendar, have given another shattering blow to their clients. On the final day of the recent Cheltenham Festival, the Bookmakers who publish the race-cards announced ex cathedra that the payment of place dividend of 1/3rd would be reduced to 1/5th and that the BTT would not be charged on the punter with immediate effect.

The informed punters are of the opinion that the brief minor concession of enhanced place dividend has boomeranged on the Bookies and a Big Bookie had to pay out over 50 million on place money in the past few weeks.

"See how dirty their tactics are!" said one punter to this journal last week. "When they win they diddle you with promises of concessions they never keep. For, when the BTT issue was not there they were paying us 1/4th on the place. The funny thing is that while the Bookies themselves were divided on the manner of levying the BTT they seem to have agreed unanimously on the payment of below normal place dividend! Thank God, however, that at least one journal cared to write about us." G. D.



## The battle for the 'new' Iran

by Mervyn de Silva

When Prime Minister Mossadegh nationalised the oil industry on a resolution carried by an overwhelming majority of the Majlis, the Iranian parliament, Dr. Mehdi Barzagan was placed in charge of the National Iranian Oil Company.

Allen Dulles engineered the coup against Mossadegh. The chief plotters were high level officers in the Iranian army and the secret police, later the dreaded Savak. The Shah returned in triumph, the 'vital interests' of the West saved and the Majlis became the Emperor's rubber stamp. Thus the will of the people was thwarted and the Mossadeghist 'revolution' strangled at birth.

Today Dr. Barzagan is Iran's Prime Minister. Once again in exile the Shah fears that his assets, estimated at about 5 times Sri Lanka's national revenue last year, may be frozen by the Swiss authorities if they yield to Iranian pressure. Some of the prominent anti-Mossadegh plotters were rewarded by the Shah and held high and powerful positions in Iran. After the explosive events of October, many of them fled the country when the going was still good. Some were tried and executed in the past few weeks by 'Islamic Revolutionary Committees'. Others are in hiding.

The Iranian oil industry is once more in Iranian hands. The U. S. which masterminded the overthrow of Mossadegh has suffered what a Republican party critique of Mr. Carter's foreign policy described last month as a 'bigger blow than Vietnam'. Often history takes its own time to savour better perhaps the sweetness of revenge.

Three years after the Iranian coup (1953) Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, and the Anglo-French-Israeli "police action" nea-



Ayatollah Khomeini

rly brought the world to the brink of war. Elsewhere in the Arab world and beyond the Sahara into 'black' Africa, (Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Congo, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique etc) new leaders and regimes emerged with the same broad objective. Dressed in uniform, some were 'bonapartist' colonels, while others were simple, ordinary civilians like Patrice Lumumba. Of varying ideological persuasion, these leaders have been pure nationalists and anti-imperialists, or well-intentioned reformers, radicals or revolutionaries. In the first instance, the only common feature is their response to the basic aspiration of a gradually awakened people to take command of their national resources, to control their own destinies.

On March 30, the Iranians were asked to vote 'yes, or 'no' to the question: "Do you wish to replace the former regime with an Islamic republic?"

But challenge and response, as Toynbee would have it, is the logic of history. Attack and counter-attack. The nationalist attack on foreign interests has prompted a counter-thrust, an aggressive reaction which takes different forms, overt and covert—the coup, the assassination, the military intervention, the economic squeeze, the planned subversion.

So, defeats and reverses have of course punctuated successes.

What would have happened, what kind of Iran would have taken shape if the Mossadeghist 'revolution' had run its natural course? The question may seem academic. It is not a matter for idle speculation. Prime Minister Barzagan is the legitimate heir to the Mossadeghist legacies. He stands for a republican, secular, democratic and in his terms a 'modern' Iran; an Iran which would be genuinely independent economically, and non-aligned in foreign affairs. Iran has already left CENTO and applied for non-aligned membership, this is a point of crucial importance right now because the Mossadeghist tradition is only one element in that powerfully explosive yet strange combination that produced the new revolution. Some of the socio-economic causes which led to this situation have been examined in the earlier articles in this series—the accumulated grievances of the poor, the ever-widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, foreign exploitation and corruption, the migration to the cities, the visibly extravagant expenditure on the armed forces and "prestige" projects, the 'culture shock' of the westernisation of Iran's ruling clique (what Professor Ajami called 'the official culture'). Repression sealed the pact between all anti-

Shah forces and in the end his own fate.

But how long would this coalition of disparate groups retain a unity that was in effect an alliance-in-action rather than a partnership of forces committed to a clearly conceived design for a new Iran? The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, for example, has his own fervently cherished ideas about 'an Islamic republic'.

Governments take decisions which automatically become national policy. But who is Iran's decision-maker? The Ayatollah has moved to the holy city of Qom from where he continues to issue 'edicts' in the name of the 'Komiteh,' the Revolutionary Council that speaks for the 'Revolution'. Premier Barzagan's provisional government and him ministers meet in Tehran the country's capital and make policy pronouncements on a wide range of questions. This physical separation offers a convenient symbol of the basic problem that now bedevils Iran—two centres of authority, one embodying as it were the 'spirit' of the revolution and the other entrusted with the day-to-day administration.

Several events in the past few weeks, some quite trivial, underline the significance of this yet unresolved issue of power. The Ayatollah places a ban on frozen meat. (A body-blow incidentally to the New Zealand economy). His 'Komiteh' which consists of several Iranians who have returned from exile after a dozen years or more approve an order by the 'mullahs' on the black chador or veil for women, and promptly women's rights organisations take to the street to protest against the command. A counter-demonstration gheraos the state Radio and TV station's director-general. In a more serious dispute over summary executions, Dr. Barzagan makes a symbolic journey to Qom to plead with the Ayatollah. Executions are suspended. The trial of ex-premier Hoveida will now be a public trial with defence counsel, and foreign observers. An influential group of 'Ayatollahs' want the

Koranic law to prevail in all financial matters, including bank credit, and Iran's modern banking system which was nearly wrecked by strikes in November, faces a new crisis.

Meanwhile, the Iranian radical and leftwing groups, comparatively small in number but well-organised, have demanded that the big foreign banks be nationalised. Their vision of Iran is a secular democracy, more socialist in economic policy. But Dr. Barzagan's economic advisers are trying to restore "foreign confidence" and are inviting the foreign banks and enterprises to return.

At the height of the anti-Shah struggle, the opposition used the oil weapon in a new way. Average daily production tumbled down from over 5 million barrels to less than the 800,000 needed for domestic use.

But power flows not only from a barrel of crude oil but the barrel of a gun. The Iranian army is still the single most powerful institution in the country. As the anti-Shah movement proved itself a spontaneous, intense, popular agitation, the army command, frightened about possible consequences, retreated into a discreet 'neutrality'. Will they remain neutral, especially if the disparate groups that led the mass movement start to squabble?

There are other groups which are also armed, notably the militiamen, loyal to the Ayatollah, the zealously Islamic Mujahideen-e-Khalq, and the left-minded Fedayeen-e-Khalq.

Once the lid of repression was forcibly removed other forces, long dormant, have burst into life. The essentially ideological and political struggle over the 'new' Iran has been confounded by the intrusion of contending ideas, principally the separatist ideas of ethnic groups like the Kurds. The death of Mustapha Barzani a few weeks ago adds an ironic touch to the most recent clashes in the north. The leader of the Kurdish secessionist movement in neighbouring Iraq, Barzani and his men were given sanctuary and open military assistance

## Mid-East Vacancies

President Carter has advised President Sadat not to seek the role of 'regional policeman.' According to agency reports, Sadat said that since the downfall of the Shah, it was necessary to safeguard US interests and protect western oil routes. Egypt was ready to do so and defend Arab states like Saudi Arabia and 'punish' other Arab states like Libya, Iraq, etc.

### POST OF POLICEMAN

(regional)

APPLICANT'S NAME:

Anwar L. Sadat

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

Cairo, Egypt.

OTHER ADDRESSES:

Camp David, US.  
Jerusalem, Israel.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Named No. 1. Traitor  
at Baghdad.

Named No. 1 Enemy of  
Palestinian people,

AWARDS:

Nobel Peace Prize (half)

REFERENCES:

Shah of Iran  
Mobutu  
Menahem Begin.

Memo to Secretary of State:

Cy,

Doubt candidate's suitability. Reported to be having serious domestic problems. Can we send him for a crash course to Professor Deng Xiaoping, Regional Police hqrs, East Asia?

Jimmy C.

by the Shah in his effort to weaken the radical Baathist regime in Baghdad. It was part of his duties as a regional policeman seeking to impose his hegemony in the area.

The continuing confusion in Iran is the outcome of an interconnected struggle which has I think three main features:

(a) A clash and a contest of ideas, not always clearly conceived by its advocates, about the 'new' Iran. While there is a wide area of agreement on the need for a complete break with the past, the institutions, practices and personnel of the hated Shah regime,

there is a serious conflict over how radical the transformation should be.

(b) Each group within the wide embrace of the anti-Shah movement is seeking to assert its ascendancy and claim at least a share of effective power as the reward for active participation.

(c) Each group, not totally trusting the others, is retaining its autonomy (and its firepower) while watching the basic direction in which Iran is moving.

In such circumstances Iran is still in the throes of installing a new policy-cum-decision making command structure and the adminis-

## Thailand

# Towards non - alignment

Thailand, the home of SEATO, may soon join the waiting list of applicants for non-aligned membership. Having quit CENTO, Iran has already asked for full and formal membership. Pakistan has always been keen on some 'status' in the movement but India has correctly objected to any concessions on the grounds of CENTO membership. Pakistan has now left CENTO.

On a 9-day visit to Bangkok, my fourth in three years, I found a remarkable change in official Thai thinking. The ordinary Thai is usually talkative but when you climb up the heirarchical ladder, Thais in important posts tend to give you a nod, a friendly smile and little else. Yet every Thai takes a quiet pride in the fact the his country in its long history as a nation has maintained a secure neutrality. SEATO, US bases, the Vietnam war and US troops in Thailand changed all that and Thailand found herself on the losing side of the liberation war in Indo-China.

The US bases were gradually dismantled and US forces withdrawn. Now, SEATO is defunct. While the Thai leaders realise that the Thai-US connection has adversely affected Thailand's external polices and her relations with her neighbours, new develop-

ments have made them worry about the country's independence and security, and peace in the region.

The first is the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. Even more than the action itself it was the arrogant announcement that China would teach a lesson to a small neighbour that changed the public mood here, a Thai editor explained to me. The second reason is the revolution in Iran, US reactions and US policy over Taiwan. Resisting US pressures, the Thai leaders are not impressed by US pledges any more.

This is the significance of Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan's visit to Moscow. It is an attempt to counter US-China pressures by closer relations with the USSR and the socialist bloc. "The Thais like the term positive neutrality but they are gravitating towards non-alignment and it is an encouraging sign" a senior Indian diplomat said. At ECAFE, officials also note that Thailand and other ASEAN countries are expanding economic relations with COMECON, and the socialist bloc is responding positively to this policy.

Non-aligned embassies in Bangkok are watching these developments in Thai policy with keen interest.

trative apparatus necessary for the restoration of normal conditions and stability.

As I wrote in my introductory article no new equilibrium will be reached until these issues are resolved and a settled balance of forces gains popular acceptance. Until this happens the Iranian political scene will remain confused and army intervention cannot be ruled out.

"Islam may have been the uniting force of the resolution but the motive was to obtain freedom" wrote Fariborz Atapour, a prominent Iranian journalist. "The revolution is Islamic" replies Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi, a top Khomeini aide" and anyone who thinks otherwise will be in serious error". If indeed the Islamic movement is the most formidable force and Khomeini is its unchallenged symbol, what sort of 'Islamic' republic will it be and how will it affect Iran's regional role? While the future alone can furnish the answer, the fall of the Shah has already cast a long shadow over the whole area.

Iran was one of the principal props of a new US sub-system, itself the by-product of the Nixon-Kissinger doctrine. More than any of his compatriots and contemporaries, Kissinger had a firm conceptual grasp of global power and in a changing world environment understood what the US, in its own interests, could and could not do.

The 'lessons of Vietnam' is a simplistic way of saying it, but a convenient way nonetheless. The lessons of Vietnam (what happened in the battlefield, its impact on world opinion, on the US economy, and the US political system) were marked well and inwardly digested. The limits of US power were identified. More importantly, it was realised that this power, still enormous, could not be deployed as freely, as indiscriminately or as insouciantly as Washington had been accustomed to think in an age which was once described with excessive self-confidence as an American century.

N. R.

(Continued on Page 19)

## Peaceful co-existence and internationalism

by Amara Senanayake

The charge that Vietnam flouted the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which forms the basis of Non-Alignment, is worth closer examination here. When it is levelled by the U. S. and its ASEAN allies this charge can and must be dismissed with contempt. The US which actively indulged in intervention, aggression and wanton destruction in Indo-China until it was forcibly ejected by the armed peoples of these countries has no right to voice "moral" opinions on this issue. The same applies to the ASEAN countries who supported the US war effort in military and political terms. However, when voices in the progressive ranks and even within the socialist camp echo this charge and point an accusing finger at Vietnam, it is clearly a sign of confused thinking which also throws light on the revisionist deviations within the World Communist movement.

According to the Leninist-Stalinist conception, peaceful co-existence was that aspect of foreign policy to be pursued in the state-to-state diplomatic relations between countries with different social systems. It was never meant to be the main international policy line of the socialist states and their ruling communist parties. This latter was meant to be none other than **proletarian internationalism**. One of the main facets of modern revisionism was in fact the substitution of the 5 principles of Peaceful Coexistence in place of proletarian internationalism as the general line of the foreign policy of socialist countries and Communist parties. Initiated by Khrushchev in 1956, this revisionistic deviation was subscribed to in varying degrees by almost all the Communist and Workers parties through their acceptance of the 1957 and 1960 Declarations.

Non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect

for territorial integrity and national sovereignty etc are cornerstones of peaceful coexistence, it is true, but how do they square with proletarian internationalism? This is a basic question that must be tackled by all Marxist-Leninists. Proletarian internationalism stipulates that "the needs and interests of the proletarian struggle in a single country should be subordinated to the needs and interests of this struggle on an international scale" and that "a people who has overthrown capitalism should be ready and willing, if they are so able, to make the greatest sacrifices in order to overthrow world capitalism". Quoting Lenin's dictums, Stalin identifies two basic principles of rendering 'rapid, thorough and effective' internationalist assistance by socialist countries to the struggling proletariat of all other countries. In 'The October Revolution and Tactics of Russian Communists' (1924) Stalin says:—

How should this aid be expressed? Firstly, in the victorious country "carrying out the maximum realizable in one country for the development, support, awakening of revolution in all countries" and secondly in that "the victorious proletariat of one country.... after organizing its socialist production, should stand up.... against the remaining, capitalist world, attracting to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their governments.."

Then again, around 1919, Lenin stated that a fundamental principle of proletarian internationalism was to do the utmost in rendering resolute moral and material assistance to the revolutionary, and only the genuinely revolutionary line in all countries.

These are the principles which informed the foreign policy of the

Soviet Socialist state and its leading force, the CPSU, in the days of Lenin and Stalin. At the time, this constituted the general line of the international policy of the world communist movement, until it was replaced by the line of 'Peaceful Coexistence' under Khrushchev. Some points need to be made here. Firstly, **that dictates of proletarian internationalism can, on occasion, run counter to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and if and when such a contradiction does arise then it is the former that should be considered the primary aspect of this contradiction.**

It is clear that in its purest expression, proletarian internationalism takes the form of armed assistance which transcends national boundaries. (This has been the policy of the Cuban Revolution and was best personified by Che Guevara). Such transnational armed solidarity may well run counter to 'non-intervention in internal affairs of other countries' and 'respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty etc'. The next point to be made is that proletarian internationalism is operative not only in respect of capitalist countries but also in the case of socialist countries. If a victorious proletariat of a given country is faced with the threat of internal counter-revolution or external intervention, then it is the duty of other socialist countries to render internationalist assistance. Furthermore if a revolutionary leadership deviates from the path of Marxism-Leninism, such assistance is necessary on the part of fraternal parties. Though this is mainly in the form of ideological polemics and political debate, can it take the form of armed clashes? it may well be asked. The contradiction between the proletariat and nonproletarian classes in a country where the old exploiting classes have been overthrown, sometimes does take a violent turn.

As Stalin correctly pointed out a communist or Workers party in power may succumb to opportunistic deviations and in such an event, the government of that country (being dominated by the party) will also fall prey to revisionism. The government however must be distinguished from the state.

This is true not only of capitalist countries but also of socialist ones. In a socialist country the state is the organization of the proletariat as state power. Its tasks are to crush the resistance of the exploiters, to organize the socialist economy, to gradually eliminate social classes etc. The government on the other hand is the upper section, the leadership, of the state organisation. Its tasks comprise policy-making and implementation on a day-to-day basis. When the ruling communist party, leadership and therefore, the government adopts a revisionist policy the contradiction between the government and the state is exacerbated, since the governmental policy comes into conflict with the fundamental interests of the proletariat as crystallized in the proletarian state (ie. the dictatorship of the proletariat). This was Stalin's view, as expressed in 1926-27.

At its most intense level this contradiction reaches the stage of

a violent contestation culminating in the overthrow of the leadership ie., the government. In such an event it is the internationalist duty of the other socialist states (ie. of other proletarian dictatorships) to intervene actively and come to the assistance of the genuinely revolutionary line which, in opposition to revisionism, represents the scientific expression of the interests of the proletariat in that given country. This is what took place in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. This is also what took place in Kampuchea recently. Proletarian internationalism, as we said, should take precedence over the principles of peaceful-coexistence and non-alignment. Furthermore, when the dictates of the former come into conflict with one of the principles of the latter, such as that of National Sovereignty, then, Marxist-Leninists recognize that such Sovereignty is in a sense, limited, being subordinated to the demands and duties of proletarian internationalism. It is in this light that Marxist-Leninist should view the problems in Indo-China, solidarize with and support the actions of the Vietnamese Communists in respect of the Pol Pot regime.



*'I dont' know what got into me ... I went to America ... I ate hamburgers and Coca-Cola ... I wore a 10 - gallon hat, and then I invaded Vietnam ...'*

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### Profiles of Sri Lankan poverty (2)

# Caste and poverty

The conditions relating to health reflect the benefit of the free health services that have been fairly well distributed throughout the island. Health conditions appear to be worse in the estate sector where the poorest households contain a number of cases of serious disability and illness. In the other rural situations of the study, the poorest households appear to have satisfactory access to the government medical facilities as well as to the ayurvedic medical system. All the studies report that conditions relating to morbidity are fairly satisfactory. In many cases even the poorest households have had access to immunisation facilities. None of the studies has discovered any endemic condition of ill health or high rates of mortality, particularly infant mortality, which are specific to the condition of absolute poverty. The studies of Walgampaya and Henegama however report evidence of physical underdevelopment and malnutrition. In many of the situations studied, environmental sanitation seems to be poor. This is true of Parana-gama, Henegama and Walgampaya. Few of the households in the poverty group have no latrine and several households have to share a common well. Some of the wells used for drinking water have no protecting wall and other safeguards against pollution. Poor environmental sanitation is one common characteristic of these pockets of acute poverty. It is however not entirely a result of a lack of resources in these households. The conditions reflect a level of sanitation to which households appear to have been traditionally accustomed. Greater cleanliness in individual households and better collection action for improving conditions pertaining to environmental sanitation for the

whole poor community is possible regardless of their present poverty.

It was pointed out that the possession of skills in literacy and numeracy was also another determinant of the level of living. Lack of these skills create a condition of absolute dependence in regard to all relationships which the households need to have with the outside environment. In a rural sector which is getting rapidly monetised and where state activity plays a dominant role, communication with the outside world for various matters in daily living requires a minimum level of education. The micro-

education. The pattern of poverty in the estate sector is therefore one in which poverty in housing and poverty in education are the two dominant characteristics. These aspects of poverty in the estate sector are an integral part of plantation agriculture based on Indian resident labour. The stateless condition of the estate labour the lack of mobility and eligibility for employment in other sectors of the economy have locked the resident labour into a situation in which the large majority of the households can lock forward only to work in the plantations. Within such a framework of expectations, higher levels of education and advancement through education have little meaning.

The studies do not reveal major non-economic factors such as caste playing any significant role

### 'Caste is not a significant factor in the composition of the poverty group'

studies reveal that the educational level in most households in the poverty group did not vary very significantly from the average in the village. While none of them reported participation at the tertiary level, the years of schooling of the inmates in the poorest households and school attendance seemed to show only marginal differences in comparison to the more well-to-do part of the village. It would however be correct to conclude that in these groups children would seldom complete their secondary schooling. The situation in the estate sector we saw earlier is a contrast to the rest of the country. In the plantation community educational levels are significantly lower. In the poverty group only two children appear to have been able to go beyond the 5th grade. The plantation community while living in more favourable conditions as regards income and nutritional level, is seriously deficient in regard to two basic needs—housing and

in either pushing groups into conditions of poverty or preventing them from overcoming these conditions. In most communities caste is not a significant factor in the composition of the poverty group. The poverty group comes from various castes including the so-called high caste.

In Walgampaya the multicaste village, the castes which are traditionally lower in the hierarchy have succeeded in breaking into important socio-economic and political positions in the village, and in that way have modified the traditional power structure. These castes have found it to their advantage to organise themselves politically and establish links with political groups which sought their electoral support. At the same time they have taken to trades and other economic activity which the Govigama elite had avoided. The poverty group in Walgampaya contains both the so-called Govigama high caste households

and the traditionally inferior castes. The two exceptions where caste has distinctly contributed to the marginalisation of households are Mirissa and the estate community. In Mirissa the small group which had undertaken non-fishing activities in this community and which belongs to the Durawa group was not able to participate in the changes that took place in the village with the introduction of the new technology as they were traditionally not in the fishing occupation. But although this is true of a few Durawa households, other households in the community which did not belong to the main fishing social group—the Karawa caste—were able to take part in various other activities such as trade and improve their position. And again while the poverty group contains a few Durawa households, they contain households from the main fishing community as well. In the estate community a large number of the impoverished households belong to the castes which are traditionally among the lowest in the hierarchy. Caste relationships appear to play some part in the network through which various fringe benefits such as weeding contracts and other non-wage employment is given. It may also affect regularity of work. While there is evidence that such networks would continue to operate, affecting the social and economic position of certain castes, it is nevertheless true that the growth of the trade union movement has brought about significant changes in the structure of power in the estate communities and provided better means of access to the working population as a whole.

The micro-studies also reveal that poverty is in many instances closely related to the large size of the household and the high ratio of dependants to income earners. This appears to be particularly true of Walgampaya and the plantation community. The analysis in Part I, we saw, showed how a large number of families in the income slabs below Rs. 200 and Rs. 200-400 are kept below the absolute poverty line

on account of the large number of dependants and persons in the economically inactive ago groups. Large families in the poverty group might be both the cause of persistent poverty as well as its effect.

It is important to distinguish between the pattern of poverty in the rural sector and the estate sector. The insecurity and low income in the wage earning sector in the estates is of a very different kind from that of the rural sector. In the propertyless wage earning sector in the estate dependency in old age appears to have more acute characteristics of deprivation and poverty than in the rural sector where property and assets, however small, provide the old a means of controlling their environment. But at the same time during the working life, income even at a low level is assured to the estate worker with some degree of regularity. Households can obtain their basic requirements on credit from the management. The estate management is therefore "responsible" for the resident estate worker in a more comprehensive form than the employer in a normal contractual relationship. But the quality of this form of security should not be overrated. It has overtones of the relationships in which the worker is a capital asset like the slave and has to be maintained at a minimum level of physical well-being to supply the needed labour.

Rural poverty is very different in character and arises out of a different set of circumstances. It is related to the ownership of income-earning assets and the access to income-earning opportunities in a labour market within and outside the village. The income-earning opportunities for labour are not organised in the manner in which the formal urban sector or the plantation sector with resident labour have organised them. Seasonality, the casual character of the work, and the unorganised nature of the demand for labour imparts a pervasive insecurity to the livelihoods of the rural poor. Indebtedness, illness, death of an income-earner, crop failure may

have dire irreversible consequence for a rural household. The insecurity which afflicts the rural poor in these circumstances is very different from the type of insecurity of the wage-earner in the estate sectors.

The contrast in the patterns of poverty between the estate sector profile and the rural profile points to certain conclusions which deserve to be investigated further. Whereas food insufficiency is the main characteristic of poverty in the rural situation, the social components of poverty—elements such as "poverty in education", lack of access to health care, "poverty in housing" and so on—do not manifest themselves in an acute form. The social welfare programme appears to have succeeded in ameliorating some aspects of poverty, but in the process has sustained a significant share of the population (20% of households in Henegama, 30% in Walgampaya) in an undernourished and physically underdeveloped condition. The modern health care systems, well distributed to reach the poor, appear to have a capacity of reducing mortality and enabling people to have a longer span of life at lower levels of physical well-being. Indicators such as life expectancy in the context of poverty as is to be found in the rural sector in Sri Lanka should therefore be examined more carefully before they are accepted as definite indicators of an improvement in the quality of living. On the other hand, if we examine the living conditions in the estate sector, we have a situation which is more or less the opposite. If food sufficiency is the criterion of households having reached a level of living above conditions of absolute poverty, the estate households have fared satisfactorily. At the same time, along with food sufficiency they suffer from serious inadequacies in other components which are needed to ensure a minimum quality of life—health, education and housing.

*(Excerpts from the final chapter of the 90 - page study of poverty in this country, by the Marga Institute.)*

## Fuel

# More power more distilleries?

by Eugene M. de Silva

**D**uring the next few months Sri Lanka, like many other countries, will be starved for petrol. The dwindling stocks and what comes into the country as crude oil, will not be sufficient to run the numerous cars and other motor vehicles that normally crowd our roads. The obvious solution to this crisis will be to ration petrol and perhaps dole it out on an equitable basis, or issue it in keeping with the national utility value of the work done by the vehicles.

To meet this serious situation we should turn to another source of power viz: Ethanol or Ethyl alcohol from our distilleries. If we open up more sugar cane plantations more and more unemployed men or women, specially from the rural sector, could be given jobs, and instead of poisoning the nation with raw, un-matured alcoholic drinks, the ethyl alcohol obtained could be gainfully diverted to our petrol stations to ease the shortage of petrol. This would be an admirable instance of "appropriate technology" helping the country towards development and progress. This would also help in the conservation of our country's valuable foreign exchange.

The use of ethanol (ethyl alcohol) as a fuel is nothing new. It powers rockets and even racing cars. It can provide feed stocks for the envisaged variety of chemical industries that would be a necessary adjunct to the development of our country.

One of the greatest advantages of ethanol over petrol is its

"cleanness" and one would even say that modern Man should discard petrol and use ethanol, as unlike petrol it does not pollute the environment.

Ethanol is cheaper than petrol. It will be an ideal fuel if the Petroleum Corporation mixes it with petrol and sells the mixture—Gasohol or Petrohol—at a much reduced price, thus helping in bringing down the soaring cost of living.

In India in 1941 during the war time petrol rationing a mixture of gasoline-alcohol was used in motor cars. Motorists were required by law to use only gasohol and the Nizam Sugar Factory in Hyderabad was the first distillery that set up the power alcohol plant.

Cars, scooters and motor cycles can use gasohol containing 25% petrol and 75% alcohol with ease. The table below shows the advantages gained when gasohol was used by Fiat and Ambassador cars in test runs in India.

If automobile engines are to run on pure alcohol they will have to be modified. This would cost about Rs. 2000/- (Sri Lankan) per engine. This figure has been arrived at by a Professor in the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi—where research is being conducted to further increase the power output by 15% when using pure alcohol. Ethanol can also be mixed 50-50 with diesel oil.

Some readers might argue that it is not possible to grow too much of sugar cane in a small island

(Continued on Page 24)

Saving in fuel	5%
Increase in power output	8%
Decrease in exhaust hydro-carbon	35%
Reduction in carbon dioxide emission	60%

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## Sexual politics in Pathiraja's Ponmani

by Laleen Jayamanne

*(Graduate of both University of Ceylon and New York University is currently working on a Ph. D. thesis on the 'Images of women in the Sri Lankan cinema' at the University of New South Wales, Australia.)*

One of the major theoretical and practical achievements of the women's movement has been the analysis of that area in bourgeois discourse and ideology as 'private life' (family, marriage, domestic labour, sexuality etc.) in order to uncover the political basis of these institutions and experiences. The film, **Ponmani**, directed by Dharmasena Pathiraja, examines the socio/political basis of marriage in a particular milieu. Therefore it is within this framework that I would like to analyse some aspects of Pathiraja's Tamil language film. The version I saw a few weeks ago is a reedited one of the film which was released 'unsuccessfully' (ie. in financial terms) about two years ago.

The film itself deals with the unsuccessful attempt of a young girl and boy to establish a personal relationship based on mutual attraction and affection within a society that is stratified into class, caste, and creed. The plot is a cliché in the Sinhala cinema, Pathiraja, and his script writer M. B. Rajadore show a mature, complex understanding of the sexual politics of our stratified society and are able to deal with it in a manner which is a striking departure from the average Sinhala 'genre' film.

Within this context it may be useful to mention some aspects of the most recent work done in Marxist film theory both in Britain and France which has tried to uncover the reactionary ideological implications of certain narrative structures and formal elements. A plot structure which starts at an equilibrium, then

complicates the situation and resolves the contradictions within the narrative has been shown as a structure which manipulates the audience's emotions. The effect of such a plot structure is to finally make us have a catharsis (ie. crying or whatever our internal release mechanisms are). Brecht was one of the earliest Marxist artists to realise the ideological effects of this narrative structure. Thus, Brecht's **Good woman of Setchwan** ends without the plot being resolved and Brecht adds that the resolution of the conflicts articulated in the theatre had to occur outside the theatre, he refused us the satisfaction we so yearn, for an ending where everything is nicely resolved. The formal elements which can also work in ways detrimental to the awakening of full rational awareness are, cinematic devices such as, invisible editing, smooth unobstrusive camera movements, rules of continuity etc. as used in the Classical Hollywood Narrative cinema. These devices play an important part in sucking the viewer into the world of the film. The medium itself, the conditions of viewing certainly make it closer to a dream state, a subconscious process, so much so that in the 20th century the film has superseded religion in being the 'opiate of the people'. The technology dominates and creates its own conditions of consumption.

However, radical film-makers have come up with their radical slogans and counter practice. The power of the medium as an ideological weapon has been cogently expressed by Slogans and Getino (Argentina) when they speak of 'the camera as a gun that shoots 24 frames per second' into the consciousness of the viewer.

Recent radical film practice and theory (the work of Clauba Rocha (Brazil), Miguel Littin (Chile), Godard (France), Straub (Germany), have been greatly influenced by the Brechtian theatrical theory. One of the most useful concepts has been 'alienation' or 'distanciation'. This points to the need to activate the mind in a medium that seems so conducive to the creation of reactionary feelings at the expense of the activation of the totality of response we are capable of as human beings.

The complexity of Pathiraja's understanding of the problems of marriage in a semi-feudal capitalist society is to be seen in the complex visual and auditory structures of the film. It is that rare phenomenon in the Sri Lankan cinema where a significant experience is handled in a way that articulate the issues cinematically.

The narrative begins with Ponmani's elopement with Ananda, where they seek refuge in the house of a liberal middle class couple, intercut with Ponmani's family, her father, mother, unmarried sister Saroj, and brother. The brother supports the family and is still paying off his married sister's dowry in instalments.

The film intercuts scenes between these two houses. This simple alternation is made more complex by flash backs and imaginary sequences seen from Ponmani's point of view, along with several other scenes, such as Ponmani's father's visit to the married daughter's house where the son-in-law ignores him because he has not paid the full dowry as promised. These narrative sequences all flow from the central action of Ponmani's elopement. They show the precarious nature of the position of women in a society where her only hope of survival is marriage and that

too under the most degrading of circumstances. She has no value in her self. Marriage thus becomes a form of legalised prostitution. The film depicts these oppressive conventions and the attempt to break away from them.

Within these narrative episodes connected with the central action, is inserted a sequence of the unmarried sister, Saroj, singing at a studio for women. This sequence does not further the narrative, instead the songs comment on one of the main experiences of the film, of marriage as a desperate means of survival for women who have no other economic means of maintaining their lives and thus their autonomy. The gist of the song, which has mythical overtones, is that there are many Radha's in the street, not because they are in love with Krishna, as the myth would have us believe, but because he provides them with a means of survival. There is a formal rigour in the way the scene is filmed in a medium close up lateral tracking shot along the line of seated musicians, vocalists, one of whom is Saroj. There is here a perfect visual and aural expression of the central problem of the position of woman in a traditional semi-feudal and semi-capitalist society like ours.

The power the omnipresence as it were of the feudal patriarchal rule, backed up by religion that cripples wholesome generous feelings is brilliantly expressed in what is perhaps, the most daring and innovative shot in the Sri Lankan cinema. This occurs near a church on an island to which the young lovers flee, seeking refuge. The sacristan of the church greets Ananda whom he knew as a child but refused to give them sanctuary when he hears that they are eloping and that Ponmani is of a higher caste. There is a close up shot of Ponmani after which there is a 360 pan, (ie. the camera revolves on its own axis) of the island including the land, trees, water and sky. Accompanying this image is the voice of the old man (who is absent from the image) articulating conservative senti-

ments such as, 'this is a holy place, God will be angry with us'. Feelings prompted by fear with no understanding of new possibilities. The effect of the 360 pan and voice over is that of hearing the disembodied, omnipresent, all powerful voice of God (male) patriarch, law and tradition all combined. The sound emanates with ominous force as the camera takes in all that it can. The shot is reminiscent of a similar one in Godard's film of bourgeois decadence, *Week-end*, but its function is quite different there. This is an example of what I mean by 'cinematic'. It is also a kind of shot that draws attention to itself and makes us ask why the director does this and what effect it has on us. All our faculties, both cognitive and emotional are brought into play as we 'read' the shot. In Brechtian terms the shot distances us in a dialectical manner, it includes both emotion and thought.

Soon after Ponmani and Ananda marry in church, a killer hired by the man to whom Ponmani was originally promised draws up in a taxi and shoots her. The shooting of Ponmani as she walks out with her husband and kin group is also done in such a way as to distance the emotions which such an act evokes. She is shot and as she falls the frame is frozen (freezing of time suggests death) and zoomed out into a long shot (literally distanced). Here Pathiraja makes meaningful use of this hackneyed device in the Sinhala cinema.

It is not enough to cry and say 'Anne apoi', it is of crucial importance to see and understand. Pathiraja makes it possible for the audience to do just this through the formal techniques he uses.

Saroj's words after Ponmani's death are spot on, "Ponmani died yesterday, I died a longtime ago." There is no room for sentimentality, for crying and weeping.

An art work, to be radical has to be so both in the material that it chooses and also in

(Continued on Page 19)

## To Non-Political Critics

(The Lanka Guardian's reviewers, especially its film critics, have been attacked for being 'political' and 'polemical'. When Philip French film critic of the 'OBSERVER', London, wrote recently that "The Deer Hunter is not a political or a polemical film", Roger Woddis addressed these verses to a non-political film critic)

Permit me, Philip, to observe.

I cannot but admire your nerve.

It's not political, you say?

What picture were you watching, pray?

The images that filled the screen.

Would have made Dr. Goebbels green:

The goodies were Caucasian guys,

The baddies all had slanted eyes.

Do you forget who raped Vietnam,

Or must I draw a diagram  
Gunships, napalm, towns  
bombed flat—

Perhaps you may have heard of that?

Or do you think though millions died,

There is a case for genocide?

A snowjob—oh, but I forgot:

The wedding—scene was finely shot.

To brutalise the human heart,

Tell the Big Lie and call it Art.

You'd fail, if you were in a camp,

To see the purpose of the ramp,

And, having such a simple mind,

You'd call the ovens well-designed.

## Woolf and the jungle village

by Reggie Siriwardena

When Leonard Woolf died ten years ago, the *New Statesman* (with which he had a long and intimate association) published an obituary article on him by Professor W. Robson which paid generous tribute to his varied achievements, listing even his minor accomplishments in gardening and cookery, but didn't so much as mention *The Village in the Jungle*. I wrote a letter to the *New Statesman* at the time, remarking that the neglect of Woolf's novel by English readers had always surprised me; that many of us in Sri Lanka thought much more highly of the book; and I claimed that it was a novel unique in the English literature of the colonial era, since Woolf had succeeded in doing what none of his contemporaries, not even Kipling or Conrad or Forster, had attempted—to get inside the skins of Asian peasants.

The *New Statesman* published my letter, and I wonder whether it made even a single English reader turn to Woolf's novel. But I didn't know then that my claim for *The Village in the Jungle* had already been made by Alec Waugh in a personal letter to Woolf that has only recently been published. I discovered it a few weeks ago in the biographical account of the Leonard-Virginia Woolf marriage by George Spater and Ian Parsons, *A Marriage of True Minds* (1977). Waugh had never read Woolf's novel until in 1964 he happened to be talking to a young Malay student in Singapore and remarked, 'No Western novelist—not even Forster—has really got inside the Asian mind. Kipling and Forster described the effect of the Far East on the Westerner.' The

Mr. Lester James Peiris has decided to make a film of Woolf's 'Village in the Jungle', which is a text for this year's "A" Level.



Leonard Woolf and his wife Virginia at about the time he wrote *Village in the Jungle*.

Malay student said: 'There is one novel that has. *The Village in the Jungle*.' Having read the novel, Waugh found this was true, and wrote to Woolf to say: 'You have done what I did not think it was possible for a Westerner to do—got inside the mind and heart of the Far East. It is a unique achievement.'

Alec Waugh's name can now be added to that small group of English critics and readers (they include Arnold Toynbee and Kingsley Martin) who have recognised the novelistic achievement of *The Village in the Jungle*. Why hasn't the novel been more widely acclaimed? There are, I think, several possible reasons for this. Literary reputations aren't always dependent solely on literary merit. Woolf's single good novel could easily have been overlooked as a diversion in a lifetime of sociological and political writing, and he had the misfortune to be overshadowed by the more sustained novelistic activity of his wife (though I would rather re-read *The Village in the Jungle* any day than *The Waves*). Nor did a novel about the Sri Lankan jungle village have the topical

and adventitious interest that Forster's *A Passage to India* had for English readers in the 'twenties and' thirties when India was a major political problem.

But the most important reason for Woolf's failure to interest the general run of English readers was that there was no parallel for what he was doing in any previous English fiction. To find something comparable in context and material we have to go to the literature of those European countries where peasant life survived into the age of the modern novel and became a subject for fiction. But even here the parallel isn't exact because Russian and Italian novelists, say, of peasant life were writing about their own countrymen, while Woolf brought off the extraordinary feat of creating a novel about a community of people different from him in race, in language, and in modes of living, thinking and feeling. Nevertheless the parallel may help to suggest why English readers brought up on Fielding and Jane Austen should have responded as little to Woolf as they have to Verga or Gorky.

It is still more saddening to me, however, to find that some Sri Lankan critics and readers err about the kind of novel that **The Village in the Jungle** is. It seems to me solidly a novel of social realism, set in a specific place and time (which doesn't mean that it has outlived its interest). In critical writing about the novel and in classroom teaching (since it is now much studied as a prescribed text) far too much attention is concentrated on the theme of 'man vs. a hostile nature'. Not that that isn't there, but the point is that this struggle takes place in a particular social environment which determines its outcome—in a context of exploitation and oppression, and of an alien system of administration and justice. It is part of the strength of **The Village in the Jungle** that while it shows the novelist's feeling for character-creation, his eye for natural description, and his ear for peasant speech, it is also anchored in an understanding of social and economic relationships such as a sociologist might command.

It troubles me, too, that some readers and teachers seem determined to take Woolf's jungle as a 'symbol of evil'. Behind this bent of mind there is, no doubt, the heritage of a certain critical tradition which has propagated the belief that the more symbols you can find in a novel, the better. According to this way of reading fiction, novels are not about people, places and things but about abstractions like good and evil, and characters and their environment are only shadowy reflections of the ultimate realities which are the real stuff of novels. There may be some justification for approaching the novels of Henry James or Conrad or even Forster in this way: the jungle in Conrad's **Heart of Darkness** is, no doubt, a symbol of metaphysical evil, just as the Marabar caves in Forster's **A Passage to India** are a symbol of metaphysical nothingness. But these are precisely the weakest aspects of the two novels. **Heart of Darkness** is strong as long as Conrad confines himself to the moral corruption of Kurts by his

imperialist mission, but what ruins the novel is the obfuscating cloud of suggestion of some mysterious and ineffable evil. In **A Passage to India** what comes off successfully is the Anglo-Indian social comedy, where Forster is dealing with a world he is familiar with and which is manageable in terms of his kind of satire and irony. But the echo in the Marabar caves is a tiresome piece of literary contrivance designed to inflate the novel with a portentous hint of profundities that Forster hasn't really experienced.

However, a Brooks-and-Warren training in the critical game of 'hunt the symbol' is a bad preparation for reading **The Village in the Jungle**, because it isn't that kind of novel at all. And no Sri Lankan reader has an excuse for failing to realise that the dry zone jungle is a tangible, physical reality—in Woolf's book as it is in life. So against all the critical patter about symbols, I want to insist that the jungle is the jungle is the jungle. It is true, of course, that the peasants see the jungle as evil, but they don't regard it as a 'symbol of evil' either, but as a place of real hunger and thirst and danger and a habitation of devils. And Woolf makes quite explicit in the novel the way in which the peasants' beliefs are shaped by the unequal struggle between themselves and the natural and social environment.

**The Village in the Jungle** is, I suggest, not only the finest novel about Sri Lankan life but a remarkable novel by any standards, though it remains Woolf's only achievement in fiction. He was not a novelist by natural vocation, but the contact with the dry zone jungle and village of Sri Lanka released the springs of his creative imagination to produce this single masterpiece. (Like Lampedusa, who exists as a writer by virtue of one major novel, producing it in old age where Woolf finished his in youth.) It required extraordinary gifts of both mind and heart to achieve the understanding that went into the book. The Cambridge circle from which Woolf came, the

Bloomsbury group to which he returned after his years in the Ceylon Civil Service, had—for all their distinguished intellectual and artistic talents—a kind of cultivated narrowness. This narrowness is to be found even in the exquisite art of Leonard Woolf's wife, Virginia, who was to achieve much greater fame as a novelist than himself. Incidentally, to read Virginia Woolf's comments, in her recently published diaries, about D. B. Jayatilaka and E. W. Perera, whom she met in London, is to be shocked into realising how even an intelligent and cultured Englishwoman in those days could share the most blatantly racist feelings.

One must admire, therefore, all the more Woolf's ability to project himself into a culture and an experience very different from that of the world from which he came, and to identify himself sympathetically with a people of an alien race. Perhaps the fact that Woolf himself was as a Jew, a partial outsider in English society may have helped; but this alone would not have sufficed without his singular intellectual courage, honesty, humane understanding and imaginative sympathy. By comparison, his friend and fellow-member of Bloomsbury, Forster, for all his liberal sympathy with India and Indians touched only the fringes of Indian life. The anonymous masses of India remain quite outside Forster's experience and comprehension. The enigmatic figure of the punkahpuller in the trial scene, the 'beautiful naked god' who confronts Miss Quested as the representative of the India she has never known, stands for the India that Forster didn't know either. The use in Woolf's novel of Buddhism and the forms its beliefs takes in the peasant consciousness is very different from Forster's use of Hinduism in **A Passage to India**. Forster is manipulating the symbols of Hindu belief as a literary device to express a despair and meaninglessness fashionable among English intellectuals of the 'twenties: Woolf communicates the view of life and the beliefs of a real

(Continued on page 24)

## Letters . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

deva's contribution was not given the prominence it deserved.

Meanwhile may I suggest that either of these two columnists investigate:

(a) West German influence in the mass media here especially in respect of SLBC programmes.

(b) West German penetration in the economy, especially in the agrarian sector (under the guise of 'Rural Development'.)

(c) The role of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute vis-a-vis the Trade Union movement in this country; the seminars it has sponsored and publications it has produced; the degree to which it has inspired the odious 'One Trade Union' proposal.

(d) The high pressure salesmanship of these German agencies in pushing the neo-Malthusian Family Planning (Birth Control) Programme.

Colombo 10

Ranjit Perera

### Infelicitous

What are we to make of Elmer de Haan's "Battle of the Blues presented to us as satire? Since you say that Haan is "fiercely partisan and proud of Royal College, we may take it that he is not satirising the Royalists. Is he satirising the Thomians and/or the Royal/Thomian cricket match as an institution? Hardly the latter as there is nothing about the match itself in the piece. Then it is the Thomians he is satirising. But Thomians do not figure "live" in the story at all, they are only spoken of slightly by the Royalists in the story as "rustics" who are apt to wear tan shoes with black trousers and come from the less affluent village homes. Hardly the stuff of satire. The Royalists themselves come out as a bunch of snotty snobs of the most lamentable "black-Englishmen" type. Is it them Haan is satirising after all? This is satire? There is not a single Wijesinghe or Gunasekera

or Arulampalam or Kandiah among the Royalist dramatis personae. There are Van Geuzels and Bevens, and among the non-DBU Royalists, a Silva, a Corea and a Roberts—unquestionably European names though belonging to Sri Lankans. Apparently indigenous Sri Lankan names are owned only by the despised Thomians. Mr. Walker "waxed wrathful". The idiom is "waxed wroth,"

Dehiwala

Felicity Gonsal.

### Fowler replies

I seem unwittingly to have raised the ire of Dr. Walbeoff Janz, and of Mr. Amaradasa Fernando who accuses me of "crude vituperation" when, in fact, I wrote in the most restrained language. Dr. Janz writes "This fellow has the effrontery etc.", "the foul one", "an odious fool" etc. (expressions which betray a remarkable affinity with the prose style of Mr. Haan himself). I have nothing to say to a man who thinks polemics is an ex-

### Sexual politics . . .

(Continued from Page 16)

the way it articulates the material. It is vital to both art and politics that our artists, critics, and viewers realise this. Within this context I would like to say that Reggie Siriwardena's article 'Sinhala cinema, Class and Personal relations' is one that makes a necessary departure from the 'vulgar' Marxist tradition and inaugurates a kind of analysis that is of crucial importance at the present juncture in Sri Lanka.

The last sequence of the film intercuts Ponmani's funeral procession with the same song that was heard earlier, sung by Saroj and the group of women musicians. This parallel cutting also distances this potentially highly charged scene. The exact repetition adds a greater resonance to the words, the context makes it tragic. The film fades out on a close up of Saroj lamenting the lot of women. There need be no tragedy nor any need for lamentation if we can begin to see these problems clearly in all their

change of abuse. If I were to call Dr. Janz similarly insulting names what would it be to the purpose? I said something similar to Mr Amaradasa Fernando (who, mind you, had called me an illiterate and a lickspittle) and, to my surprise, he turns round and accuses me of vituperation!

As for Mr. Fernando, I think "the cream of the joke" lies in his translation of *Ne sutor ultra crepidam* as "Let not the cobbler go beyond the last"! Apelles's retort to the cobbler who went on from criticising the sandal in a picture to finding fault with the leg gave rise to the Latin proverb *Sutor ne supra crepidam judicaret*—Let not the cobbler criticise (a work of art) above the sandal. It was, I submit, not the most appropriate text to illustrate the District Engineer's unspoken responses to Haan's invitation to him to look at the inside of the house in need of repairs.

Colombo-10.

H. W. Fowler

complexity. That would be the beginning of the possibility of change. Pathiraja's film is a significant intervention in this process.

### The battle . . .

(Continued from Page 9)

To use a tired phrase, Mr. Sadat (see box P8) offered to fill the vacuum created by the Shah's sudden exit. The new urgency that was injected into the M-E peace mission, with Mr. Carter himself staking his political reputation and future, was part of Washington's response. So is the Egyptian-Israeli treaty.

The US fleet movement, US arms to North Yemen after the outbreak of hostilities with the pro-Soviet, left-oriented South Yemen, the alarm signals in the Gulf, the nervousness of Saudi Arabia, the dismantling of US surveillance systems in Iran monitoring the USSR's central Asian nuclear installations are all indications of the immense geo-strategic importance of the Iranian revolution. I hope to deal with some of these matters in another article.

# The malady lingers on

*Every few minutes the familiar choruses come back.... R-O-Y-A-L... the fulblooded cry that turned the SSC ground into an unforgettable three-day opera of Wagnerian proportions that only such an occasion can generate.*

*The scenes in the centre of the amphitheatre where the great drama was unfolding was not second to some drama being played out at the foot of Olympus moving from comedy to tragedy and comedy again.*

*The crown of glory that had sat so lightly on his head only that morning illumining his brow with the golden glow of victory had turned to a crown of thorns, his cup of sparkling wine to a bowl of bitter gall.*

*Like King Arthur he looked on helplessly as Camelot crumbled around him.*

## MADUGALLE'S-CROWN OF THORNS

by Karel Roberts

“Welcome home, Outsider... glad you made it in time for the big match” said Norton de Souza, the wellknown sports commentator, spotting me at the London Pub.

“Wouldn't have missed it for anything though it nearly broke my heart to skip the Budapest Symphony Orchestra at the Festival Hall... the Mozart C Minor Piano Concerto, my favourite, mind you, and with Andras Schiff as Soloist, too... But then I had already disappointed Imran and Zaer Abbas by not joining them for the First Test in Melbourne. Just managed to get a seat for *Waiting for Godot*” at the new Jean Vilar Theatre at Louvain on my way from London, though. Small mercies, but you can't have everything can you?”

“Trust you heard us in the press box yelling ‘R-O-Y-A-L’...?” remarked Norton, pressing in.

“I am happy you pisanos can still spell the bloody name...” I snorted.

“Snooty, snooty” twitted Norton as the snob in every Royalist reared his regal head...

“Seriously, outsider” Norton went on “as an old clansman, you'll be delighted to hear that we sports writers have kept the flag flying, triumphantly exploding the myth that Imagination, vivacity and style have vanished from local journalism... you did see, didn't you, that superb word-play in the *Daily News* headline announcing a “TAMELESS DRAW”..

“Vaguely Joycean...” I murmured.

“And I expect you noted the opening bar of the *Daily News* commentary?—a centenary match comes only once in a century..”

“As a logician, the man's flawless”, I conceded promptly.

“But that's really peanut prose.. any damn Anandian or Peterite could have written it.... what you must know, and I want you to be the first to know.... we have produced a TV panel discussion for private screening of course, on the big match.. it's a bit experimental, I admit, and there are a few rough patches.. but please try to grasp the chief aim, the rationale so to say.. we are trying to do several things.... firstly, that TV is not something for semi-literates, some

money making monster of the multis.... ah, I see, you noted my alliterative insistence on the ‘m's.... a Freudian slip...okay I admit I did some PR work for Mitsui, Matsushita and Marubeni but that has nothing to do with all this.... the motive, I assure you, is strictly cultural and educational.... next, we want to demolish this propaganda about sports as some occupation for brawny, brainless louts.... we want to show that sports, any sport, is just another aspect of culture or philosophy.... To be absolutely fair, the inspiration did come from that brilliant piece of writing in the *Observer*.... Madugalle's Crown of Thorns by Karel Roberts.... frankly, what did you think of it....?”

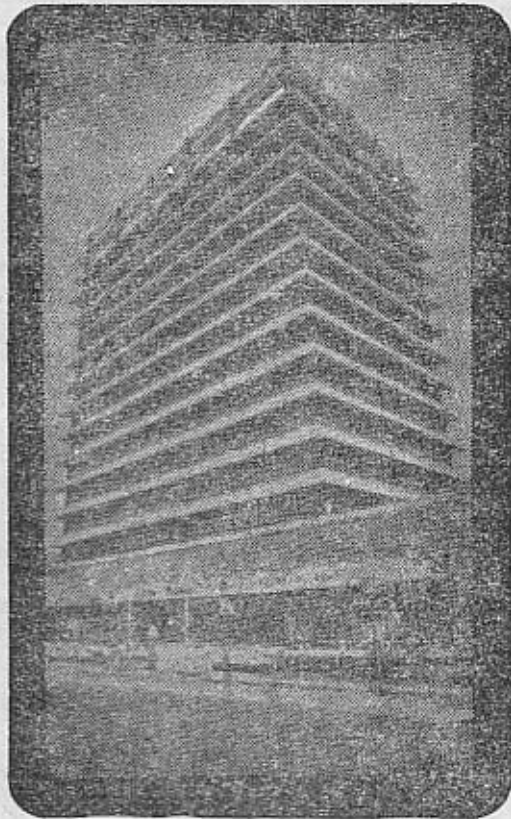
“A miraculous marriage of the athletic, the aesthetic, and one might even say the ethereal....” I suggested.

“Excellent....” observed Norton, “well, we got this panel together....”

\* \* \*

The panel was indeed impressive. There was Prof. Nimal Kankendiri, author of the recent book (in collaboration with Prof. Sherard Piffle of Texas Univ) “Counter-Insurgency and Cacophony: Music as an Instrument of Torture” (SAVAK Press).

From the East-West Centre, Honolulu, came Dr. Jaganath Ayurdeva, a specialist in Comparative Drama, Social Anthropology and Calisthenics. Next to him sat Ms. Shanthi Handapana, wellknown women's liberationist. Also in the panel was Boru epa, the neo-Trotskyist maverick poet and wall-poster painter. Adding more lustre to this distinguished band was the 89 year old Emeritus Professor of History, Dr. Malvana Puranasekera, released for



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# PEOPLE'S BANK

## IN THE FOREFRONT WITH THE NATION

HEAD OFFICE COLOMBO 2.

a few hours by the Museum authorities.

**Norton:** Well, gentlemen, we've all seen the film of the match.... now what our reviewers would like to have are your candid, and expert comments from different angles.... shall we start with the lady.... Ms. Handapana....?"

**Handapana:** (protesting) Why begin with me....? Why this discrimination?

**Norton:** It was just a courtesy....

**Handapana:** Damn male hypocrisy.... getting me to talk first.... trying to throw me to the wolves.... you don't think I can hold my own....eh?

**Norton:** Shanthi, you can hold your own.... although I can't see how you can do it at that angle.... but please do start the ball rolling....

**Handapana:** Balls and bats.... sexual symbols, phallic symbols.... bowling and batting and catching... simple sex orgy.... the bloody male chauvinist pigs....

**Norton:** Okay, okay.... if you insist.... Dr. Ayurdeva?

**Ayurdeva:** In my mind's eye.... Oh, I see Mt. Olympus.... the amphitheatre.... the spectators.... the milling crowd.... the tension mounts.... the waiting, the sheer waiting.... ah the actors, they come.... yes, yes, I spot him now.... It's Sophocles.... no, no it's Aeschylus.... yes, there's been a last minute change.... it's Aeschylus who is going to open here at the oval.... the players are coming out, now.... my god, the tension is unbearable....

**Norton:** Please, please, doctor.... I know it's all incredibly exciting but the play, I mean the game is over, and we are here to analyse, critically of course. the way the match was played....

**Ayurdeva:** (calmly now) I am perfectly aware of all that.... but unless those hundreds of thousands of unfortunate people who didn't see this game don't feel the drama of it, its inten-

sity and sweep, the moments of tragedy and comedy.... what the hell do you think this is, anyway, a bloody cricket match....?

**Kankendiri:** (tentatively) if I may make a point here....?

**Norton:** By all means....

**Kankendiri:** I agree with my friend Jaganath.... I mean about the great dramatic quality of it all.... where I don't agree is his particular analogy.... if one takes this match in its totality, in both, that is, its thematic thrust and structural design, and most of all in its ultimate moral message, then I think it cannot be compared to a Greek tragedy... after all the whole Hellenic vision of man, the human condition, was so alien to the spirit of cricket, which let's not forget, is played according to MCC rules.... no the parallel I suggest is Elizabethan.... Shakespearean, to be more precise....

"and the state of man

Like to a little kingdom,  
suffers then

The nature of an insurrection...."

**Boru Epa:** (aggressively) And what is wrong with insurrection as long as it is part and parcel of the permanent revolution.... Comrade Trotsky has explicitly stated that....

**Kankendiri:** I refuse to be put off by the illiterate interruptions of pseudo-proletarian poets.... I repeat.... the centenary match had all the grand qualities of great drama but it was essentially Elizabethan or Shakespearean rather than Greek in theme and style.... It is when the conflict-situation reaches its climactic passion and human nature, the inner man, is riven apart.... as in an insurrection that the sheer music of this match (and I use the word in the way Wilson Knight employs it in his fine essay on the Othello music) reaches what Karel Roberts has ably described as Wagnerian proportions....

**Boru Epa:** Wagner Wagner, you crypto-fascist....

**Norton:** One or two specific matters.... what about Pasqual's nice knock....?

**Handapana:** Knock, knock, knock.... that's all you men can think of....

**Boru Epa:** (brightly) Pasqual was perchance Pascalian....?

**Ayurdeva:** (helpfully) And why not? Pascalian, if you compare his innings to Guy de Alwis' which was so horrible Hobbesian....

**Norton:** (puzzled) Jack.... or....?

**Ayurdeva:** No, this is Hobbes with an 'e', the nasty, brutish and short chap who played for England in an earlier series....

**Norton:** Just two more questions. Did Madugalle have to amass such a huge total? Supposing he had declared earlier without accumulating over three hundred runs....?

**Boru Epa:** Capitalist accumulation is....

**Norton:** And what about his chance at cover point....?

**Kankendiri:** Counterpoint is a way of grappling with polyphonic experience....

**Norton:** Please professor.... I am referring to cover point.... a particular fieldman's place....

**Kankendiri:** (bemused) Field, what field....?

**Norton:** The cricket field of course....

**Kankendiri:** Who the devil is talking about cricket....? I thought this was a discussion about music, drama, philosophy, religion and history....?

**Norton:** Now that you mentioned history.... I didn't ask Professor Puranasekera, a single question.... I really didn't want to disturb his sleep.... professor, professor.... PROFESSOR.... what did you think of Madugalle's basic strategy....?

**Puranasekera:** In the third volume of my book I have clearly examined how Madugalle led the 1818 rebellion and shown....

(Continued on page 24)





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RATMALANA.

## No recognition for JVP

The following is from a statement issued by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) regarding local government elections:

The Department of the Commissioner of Elections has refused to accept the P. L. F. (J. V. P.) as a party that qualifies to contest the local government elections scheduled to be held shortly. We consider it most unjust that the P. L. F. (J. V. P.), which has a continuous existence of over twelve years, should not be accepted for local government elections on the basis that the continuity of its existence is not valid due to the period during which it was proscribed by the capitalist SLFP-LSSP-CP government.

The P. L. F. (J. V. P.) will thus be compelled to raise millions of rupees as deposits for its candidates if it is to participate in the local

government elections on an island-wide basis.

Under these circumstances, and in the face of grave problems, the P. L. F. (J. V. P.) has tentatively decided to put forward candidates for the Colombo Municipal Council alone.

## Woolf . . .

(Continued from Page 18)

community — the Sinhala jungle peasants.

Yet, for all the neglect of his novel by English readers and critics, Woolf achieved something which is perhaps a surer mark of literary distinction than the fame of his wife or of his friend Forster. In translation **The Village in the Jungle** has become virtually a classic of contemporary Sinhala literature; and to have transcended the boundaries of language and culture in this way, to have reached the heirs of Silindu and Punchi Menika, is a mark of the book's unique quality that sets it apart from the rest of the English fiction of its time.

## The malady . . .

(Continued from Page 22)

**Norton:** Prof. . . . we are talking about young Ranjan Madugalle..

**Puranasekera:** Without a correct historical perspective . . .

**Norton:** Nice point, professor . . . but our time's up except for the usual message from our sponsor, the Yamaha Corporation. YAMAHA IS GOOD FOR YOU . . . And so, till next week, when we bring you another show in our popular TV series on Art, Sport and Civilisation. CAN SRI LANKA BECOME ANOTHER SINGAPORE OR IS THAT A UTOPIAN DREAM?

\* \* \*

Well Karel, darling, that's it and see you at the Prudential Cup (nothing symbolic there, Shanthi dear) . . . How will we recognise each other? Why, you silly thing, you carry your Stradivarius and I'll carry my copy of OEDIPUS SEX . . .

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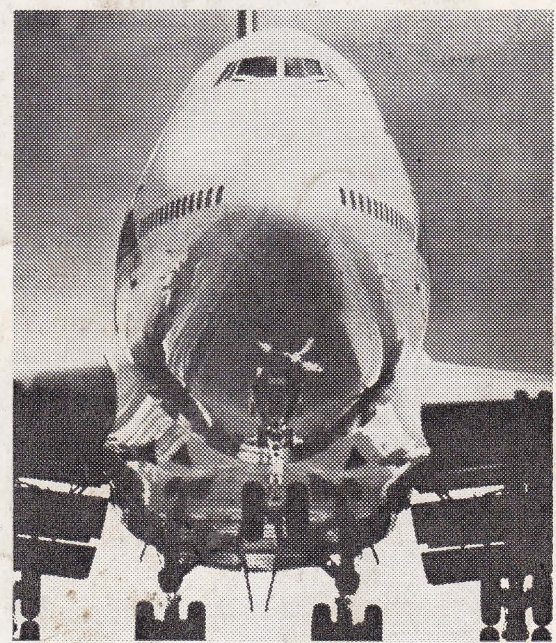
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