

LANKA

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

GUARDIAN

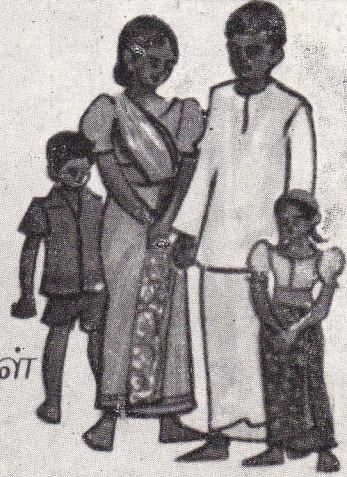
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நாங்கள் தமிழர்.
நாங்கள் முஸ்லிம்கள்.
நாங்கள் சிங்களவர்.
எங்கள் நாடு இலங்கை
எல்லாரும் இந்த நாட்டு மக்கள்
நாங்கள் நண்பர்கள்.



கொழும்பு தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்

Happy Families (See Page 5)

Communalism

Jaffna spectrum

Jayantha Somasunderam

'Sarungale' : Race in film

Reggie Siriwardena
J. Uyangoda

நூலகம்

Priests and politics

Yohan Devananda

Sadat's sellout

Mervyn de Silva

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GARADS

THE FIRST YEAR

As the "Lanka Guardian" completes its first year, it strikes us that we have many apologies to offer but much cause for satisfaction too. However, modest in scale, a journal of Sri Lankan opinion on a wide spectrum of subjects, ranging from national politics and foreign affairs to economics, education, culture and science is an unusual enterprise. In the mid-fifties, Lake House, a redoubtable publishing company, tried its much practiced hand at a venture of that kind. Despite extensive patronage, boundless material resources and a galaxy of professional talent, JANA sank slowly into oblivion, unsung and unwept.

Our own over-ambitious horizons extended to an English weekly and a Sinhala fortnightly or monthly as its companion. Measured by such aims, we have failed. Though we attempted to draw in the Sinhala-educated intelligentsia into what we regard as a continuing colloquy, it has been at best only a fitful beginning. This remains our saddest regret.

The 'Lanka Guardian' has been besieged by all those problems that often overwhelm the amateur in a world better made for established business houses. Since we have far from mastered the difficulties of distribution, the magazine has rarely reached the reader or agent on time. Happy will be the week that brings no mail from impatient or exasperated subscribers.

Some good though comes with the bad. For instance, the Sri Lankan 'expert' in Bangkok who dashes off an airletter whenever his copy is too long delayed leaves us with the encouraging thought that he is a devoted reader not so overburdened by the dissemination of his expertise to some trusting Thais. Slightly intriguing too but entirely flattering was the communication from Jaipur University that a few of its research scholars needed four backnumbers 'urgently'.

The printer's devil, that irrepressible mischief-maker, may have earned the ire of many a contributor but he did produce a few collector's items for those with a taste for the verbal pyrotechnics of a James Joyce or Lewis Carroll. As an ex-Lake House colleague who had drifted from journalism into an allied trade, our printer found a natural place in the small team of friends and colleagues who help to bring out the 'Lanka Guardian', which stamps the whole endeavour with the sort of fellowship that is sadly absent in the cold, cynical and perilous corridors of big-time journalism.

Of course we were quite lucky too. Soon after its birth, the L. G. was twice blessed at baptismal ceremonies that are most to our liking. When the Opposition Leader quoted this journal in the NSA his remarks sparked off an interesting exchange, thanks to the eager participation of such public figures as Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne, the Education Minister, Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe, the Deputy Foreign Minister and Mr. Anura Bandaranaike. The extensive 'Daily News' report advertised our coming with a generosity that we did not deserve. Very agreeable also was the analysis of the Lanka Guardian's contents which ran into several columns of 'Tribune', the durable and doughty veteran of the island's mini-press, celebrating today its 25th anniversary.

On another anniversary, the commemoration of the April 1971 insurrection, the JVP leader Mr. Rohana Wijeweera called for a copy of the Lanka Guardian in order to give the capacity crowd at the Sugathadasa Stadium his answer to a criticism levelled at him by one of our contributors. A vogue phrase of latter-day economic pundits comes to mind: 'The multiplier'.

For all this, much thanks; for our shortcomings, our formal apologies.

One important point remains to be cleared. It has been said that in our presentation of views, in our basic perspective, we are not "balanced". It is the same argument that the transnational news agencies which control 90% of the international newsflow use against fledgling Third World agencies. Be balanced, be neutral. On questions of social emancipation, neutrality itself could be a crime.

As for our own effort, we do not work in a vacuum. We must relate our work to the national information system, the reading public and to society at large. The communications system is heavily weighted in favour of established and Establishment opinion. However miniscule, ours is a corrective, the corrective of a countervailing force.

AS OTHERS SEE US

Oscar Wilde once said that in the old days men had the rack, now they have the press. It might also have been a politician's lament.

Frivolity apart, the press has a vital role to play in the Third World context as a parliament in perpetual session.

The L. G. in its one year existence has played a useful role as a window to world affairs. It is my fond hope that under the able Editorship of Mervyn de Silva it will make an enlightened contribution to the dissemination of information especially in an era where events in the international scene have their echoes elsewhere.

I have great pleasure in greeting the "Lanka Guardian" on this happy anniversary.

A. C. S. Hameed M. P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs

* *

When the sponsors of the "Lanka Guardian" undertook its publication they rightly judged that the reading public of Sri Lanka would welcome a journal of its character and scope. What has been published since has by and large given me great satisfaction, and I do not regret my decision to support it from its inception. My continued support is also assured.

Major-General Anton Mutukumaru

* *

I congratulate the "Lanka Guardian" on its First Anniversary. It is sometimes good to see ourselves as others see us. The freedom to publish and the freedom to disagree is a sacred right and this Government safeguards this right.

Ronnie de Mel. M. P.
Minister of Finance & Planning.

* *

I have been following the progress of your magazine with keen interest. It is particularly refreshing to find a journal in English give so much prominence to Sinhala film, and Sinhala cultural activity in general, and publish such stimulating articles on these subjects.

Dr. Hema Goonetilleke

* *

I am glad to send you this message of congratulations and good wishes on the first anniversary of what you say is a "modest publishing venture launched by a small band of journalists" in Sri Lanka.

To my mind a publication of this nature necessarily reflects the journalistic perspectives of its Editors and the

"Lanka Guardian" from its inception, as far as I can remember, has been conspicuous by its exposition of a type of politics and socio-economic thinking which has come to stay in Sri Lanka. This strand of left of centre thinking — may I call it slightly left of centre — has been forcefully, lively and sometimes naughtily been carried in the "Lanka Guardian". I have enjoyed reading it. I wish it continued success and hope that it would show us where we are wrong either in our actions or in our thinking. Mr. Mervyn de Silva's undoubted talents in the world of letters and foreign affairs have enriched this publication and may this connection continue in the years to come — years which will be of tremendous importance to Sri Lanka.

Gamini Dissanayake. M. P.
Minister of Lands and
Mahaveli Development.

* *

In the Sri Lankan jungle of journalistic intrigue the survival of any periodical for even one year is quite an achievement. The "Guardian" has not only survived but given ample evidence of blossoming into full flower in time. Congratulations, Mervyn, and more strength to your pen.

R. L. Michael
Editor, "Independent"

* *

The "Lanka Guardian" has broken new ground in the field of Journalism in Sri Lanka. The fearless and independent line it has taken during the one year of its publication augurs well for the future of the freedom of the press in this country.

My hearty congratulations to Mr. Mervyn de Silva on the successful completion of one year of publication of this excellent magazine and my best wishes for its continued success.

A. Amirthalingam. M. P.
Gen. Sec, Tamil United Liberation Front;
Leader of the Opposition, N. S. A.

* *

I am happy to say that the "Lanka Guardian" is helping to keep alive the best traditions of serious journalism in an atmosphere where truth tends to be overlooked in the interests of expediency. Its contribution to the creation of an informed public opinion on controversial social and political problems in highly commendable.

Dr. K. H. Jayasinghe.
Dept. of Political Science.
University of Peradeniya.

I am a regular reader of your journal. Although I do not agree with some of the views expressed by your writers I have found many very interesting articles written by knowledgeable contributors. It is indeed a pleasure to see that a group of our own journalists could publish a magazine of such high standard.

Maitripala Senanayake M. P.
Dy. Leader SLFP

* *

In the current state of a pre-cooked national press dripping with distorted leads, oozing paper dreams of a seductive new materialist world and blowing bubbles of a false paradise, the L. G. fulfills a custodial role in preserving a sense of academic balance and supplying a critical voice. In a culture dominated by the verbalist and the windbag it speaks with a distinctive voice and a welcome virtuosity.

H. A. I. Goonetilleke,
Librarian, University, Peradeniya

* *

In the conditions of today in Sri Lanka to have succeeded in maintaining a journal in the English language outside the management of the big newspaper houses is a considerable achievement. It is not necessary to agree fully with all its contents to wish the journal continued success.

Bernard Soysa.

* *

To present "other news" and "another opinion" was the *raison d'être* of the "Lanka Guardian". If it did not come into existence by the fortuitous concurrence of circumstances it would have been necessary to create it. Not simply because the major media in this country have been kept by the Establishment more openly than surreptitiously for nearly a decade now. But mainly because it is now widely realised that reality is a many-splendoured thing and our glimpses of it are necessarily "theory-laden" and not "theory-neutral" as Science once claimed. Accordingly intellectual relativism is not a preventable malady. Hence the case for "other news" and yet "another opinion" is epistemologically unanswerable.

As a journalist Mervyn de Silva has been articulate, rational, sensible, realistic and skilled to the point of being ambidextrous. The "Lanka Guardian" has been a remarkable close reflection of its creator's attributes. It is a good journal. It could grow into a great one.

Dr. Carlo Fonseka.

(Continued on Page 24)

Moslem Politics

While Islamic politics is now in the forefront of world affairs, it is interesting to note that this contemporary phenomenon has had little impact on the Moslems here. We have no 'political' mullahs, red, green or blue. The post 1973 oil price hike brought the Arab states not only enormous wealth but a new sense of power. As the sheik and newly affluent Arabs went on a self-intoxicating spending spree in the West, "the ugly Arab" replaced the old "ugly American" and the "ugly Japanese".

Here, in Sri Lanka, the social behaviour of the new rich Moslem (gems rather than oil) produced a Sinhalese backlash with the Beruwela boys enjoying too high a visibility. In the last years of the SLFP regime, there were ominous signs that long inherited Sinhala-Tamil antipathies will give way to anti-Moslem sentiments as incidents in Puttalam, Balangoda, Galle, Panadura etc indicated. But this wave of anti-Moslem feeling, especially among the Sinhala middle class and business groups, appears to have receded.

Moslem Mayors

The SLFP has for the first time nominated a Moslem, Mr. A. H. Macan Markar, as its Mayoral candidate for Colombo.

The UNP has not matched the SLFP's squarely. It has brought back a veteran city politician from his post in Malaysia. But it has thought it wise to name a Moslem as Deputy Mayor.

How will the Moslems vote? In spite of the boastful claims of the Badl-ud-din—Alif group (whatever happened to the Islamic Socialist Front?) the Moslem vote is solidly pro-UNP. Arab and Palestinian politics have radicalised only a marginal group of young educated Moslems.

PR and Polls

Fast unto death. The phrase is common enough in this country. Maybe the thought too. But never the act itself.

Self-immolation is better known in other places ever since the monks of the Buddhist city of Hue protested against the puppet regime of the Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem.

A staunch SLFP loyalist, a poor dedicated supporter who was paraded naked by greenshirts in Matale after the July polls, is now going about town in a highly incendiary mood. He is all burnt up over the appointment of Mr. Kobbekaduwe as the SLFP's chief organiser.

PR is already influencing internal politics in the major parties. There is a real scramble to get on the list and right up on top. This has also brought feuds and feudal fights into the open in both the UNP and SLFP.

In Kandy both parties had trouble with their lists with key local bosses locked in combat over their near-and-dear. In the UNP it was about a VIP's wife; in the SLFP over a member of the ruling family.

In Matale, ex-Minister T. B. Tennekoon, representing the "humble folk" prepared a counter-list to challenge Messrs Kobbekaduwe and Monty Gopallawa.

Heroes and Heroines

Prime Minister Premadasa does it in style. Newspapers which received publicity material in connection with Premawathie Manamperi commemoration ceremonies may have been excused if they thought, at a first glance, that the tastefully produced material, art work and all, had come from the Vietnamese or Cuban embassies. The publicists of those two countries have a distinctive style too.

There was a beautiful line drawing of the girl who died so tragically in April 1971 and an artist's impression of an helmeted soldier.

Yesterday's rebel or tragic victim is today's hero. The change often mirrors the vicissitudes of politics. Jaffna put up a statue to the 18 year old Sivakumaran but, as our staff writer in his special report, records in this issue, the statue has been pulled down by those who think it too defiant a symbol. In Peradeniya, last year, they built a

memorial to the student Weerasooriya whose death started the chain of events that finally led to the collapse of the last regime.

Maoist Move

'Shan' is in Albania. Is he coming out of the cold? Ever since he severed links with Peking, Shan has been the lonely veteran of the Left. He found solace only in Tirana which continued to criticise both Peking and Moscow. Ideological affinities grew stronger when Enver Hoxha not only denounced Peking's new foreign policy and its rapprochement with the US which Hoxha regards 'the main enemy' but attacked China's 'Three Worlds theory'. Hoxha has recently adjusted his position once more and criticised Mao Tse-tung thought. Here, Shan's dream is coming true. Those who style themselves Maoists or are Maoist-inclined are holding talks to form a single party. If these 5 groups (Shan, PDP, Mahinda Wijesekera, Nava Lanka and the Janatha Sangamaya, a JVP breakaway) agree, Shan will probably be general secretary and A. M. Jinadasa chairman.

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Letters

Fowler vs. Haan

Now it can be revealed that the text of the original "Fowler" letter that caused all this to-do was not by a "local Fowler" at all. My first letter following the publication of Mr Haan's *chef-d'oeuvre* raised the point that "the incongruity between simple things to be said and out-of-the-way words to say them in has a perennial charm" only for the reader who "never outgrows hobbledehoyhood". Almost the entire text of my letter, including the words just quoted, was from "A Dictionary of Modern English Usage"; and I signed the latter "H W Fowler" lest anyone should cry "plagiarist".

Mr. Amaradasa Fernando imagining that the views expressed were other than Fowler's own rushed into print calling the name of Fowler "revered" and "hallowed" but characterising Fowler's use of the word "hobbledehoyhood" as a sign of illiteracy. Not content with this *faux pas*, in a second letter he proceeded to give a fanciful and quite absurd translation of one of the Latin tags used by Mr Haan which he fatuously claimed I had misunderstood! He even called this "the cream of the joke". (Mr Fernando is, of course, an intellectual feather-weight who should not be permitted to get into fights outside his weight and class.)

In the meantime, Mr. Haan himself enters the scene wearing false whiskers and a rubber nose, calling himself Dr Wallbeoff Jansz. He proceeds modestly to speak of his own "classic letter" as if it were on a par with Dr Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield. His disguise, however, is easily seen through partly because he has used it before and partly because his unmistakable prose-style is a deed give-away e. g. the sophisticated pun Fowler/Fouler. (Get it?) This is a typical example of what Mr Fernando calls Mr Haan's "caustic wit and mordant humour".

As for correct English usage Dr Wallbeoff Haan is in no position to point the finger at others. I give just a few examples of his impeccable diction: (1) "The repairs still continue to be unrepaired". (The repairs needed repairs?. Is this more mordant humour?) (2) "Whenever a fire is lit in the kitchen the smoke.. insinuates itself.. into my bed and dining rooms. I request that it be demolished forthwith". (What is it he wants demolished? The fire? The kitchen? The smoke? The bedroom? The dining room? No, the kitchen chimney if you please, which is not even mentioned anywhere in the preceding sentence.) (3) "Ferreous ephemerality" (Caustic wit?) (4) "Each and sundry" (5) And just one example from that blackass-cockney snobs' charter: "The Battle of the Blues". Silva is made to say: "I shall do as you ask of me and summon the Sixth to meet next evening". (The meaning Mr Haan wanted to convey is clear but what he should have written was "tomorrow evening".)

Colombo 10. "H. W. Fowler"
Lakith St. C Pieris

Rejoinder to 'Fowler'

We have not only called a fool a fool; we have also held up to public view the fool's folly.

FOULER has obstinately refused to admit that he has not spoken the King's English when he said: 'It was not polysyllables that I took objection to'. In the Pocket Oxford Dictionary originally compiled by H. W. Fowler (the genuine one) and his worthy brother F. G. these two alternative expressions can be found — (1) 'take exception', and (2) 'raise objection'. But our bogus H. W. Fowler has thought it fit to use instead an expression of his own — 'take objection'. He has no answer to our previous criticism of this. Instead of using the English language like H. W. Fowler, he had the effrontery to use his name.

It view of the fact that FOULER has tried hard to get the better of his betters, Mr. Elmer de Haan and Mr. Amaradasa Fernando — and failed — are we not justified in calling a fool by that name? Then why must the fool protest that he has been treated with the contempt he deserves?

His crowning folly was of course trying to teach Mr. Fernando what he imagined was the 'correct' scriptural quotation. Mr. Fernando did not say that he was citing scripture when he told FOULER, 'Doctor heal thyself'. Mr. Fernando, when he said this, was speaking the King's English — something that FOULER had not done in his subsequent reply.

We told FOULER that he was not at all justified in contending that 'physician heal thyself' is the correct text of St. Luke 4, 23. We stated our reasons at length in the Lanka Guardian of March 15th. FOULER has no answer to this.

Having proved to readers of the Lanka Guardian — and to his own discomfiture — that the 'critic' badly needs to correct himself before he tries to find fault with his betters, Mr. Haan and Mr. Fernando, we then called him well-deserved names he did not like to hear. All he has to offer in reply is that he has nothing to say to us because we were caustic in reference to him.

Let FOULER conduct his polemics by meeting logical arguments with counter-arguments, if he can. It is because he has no valid answers to our criticism, that he seeks refuge in complaining that we used strong language — 'abuse' was the term he used — which was not inappropriate in describing him.

Finally we may ask why is the masterly polemicist reluctant to reveal his true identity when we requested him to do so? Because he dare not. It would be too painful for him to face the public after his ridiculous performance.

Colombo 4. Wallbeoff Jansz

(Continued on Page 25)

Concern over communal trends

The strong undercurrent of racial feeling is causing widespread concern. Public organisations, both political and non-political, are actively discussing practical ways of meeting this danger. The Committee for National Harmony recently entrusted a 'working group' with the job of recommending such measures. The Committee which was formed after the August '77 riots consists of well known personalities drawn from all ethnic and religious groups.

While the emphasis on effective counter-measures, discussions have also tried to identify immediate causes which tend to exacerbate prevailing tensions.

Left unity, disunity

A United May Day rally still eludes the disunited Left. But there have been some signs of change since last year. Despite frantic efforts to the very end by 'honest brokers', a feeler last year by the 'New' Left for a common demonstration and rally with the LSSP-PDP came to nought. The PDP dropped out, and the troika became a twosome.

The same initiative came this time with greater force because it came 'from below'.... from the trade unions. They wanted to restore and re-activate the broad TU unity of December 28. Discussions were held within the JCTUAC (the Action Committee) with the proposal re-introduced by militant trade unions outside the LSSP-CP. The idea moved forward partly because the CP had instructed its trade union boss, L.W. Panditha to support it. The CP itself had arrived at this decision after much debate.

All political parties dissociate themselves from communalism and freely condemn the activities of others. The national press preaches righteous sermons on national harmony. But the representatives of 20 organisations have addressed an appeal to the Press Council on "racialist propaganda" in the press. (See 'Press and Racialism').

The new 'quota' system for places in the university (quotas based on districts population ratios) has been denounced as 'discriminatory' by the 10 parties that belong to the "New Left" united front. They have called it an "injustice perpetrated on all intelligent students."

The LSSP said 'nothing' doing' and stood firm despite the risk of creating friction in the LSSP-CP alliance. The main reason was that Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakara insists on parading as the LSSP (new leadership). The LSSP high command also maintained that these 'New' Left groups will shout 'adventurist' slogans. The CP kept the alliance intact and withdrew but the CP paper 'Forward' did say it was "a pity"

Meanwhile the 'new' Left groups have their political rally in the morning but all of them will march together in a single demonstration and hold a united May Day meeting with their ranks being strengthened by several wellknown trade unions like the CMU, Bank Employees, the MEP unions etc. A move to bring the TULF unions was blocked mainly by the Maoist groups. As usual, Mr. Rohana Wijeweera, the undisputed super-star of Left-inclined youth does his own thing.

Happy families (in Tamil only)

"We are Tamils.

We are Musllms.

We are Sinhalese.

Our country is Sri Lanka.

We are all people of this country.

We are friends."

These benevolent sentiments come from page 30 of a first reader in Tamil for schoolchildren, published by the Educational Publications Department. On the same page, surrounding the text, are pictures of a Tamil family (father, mother and two children) and of similar Muslim and Sinhala families. Below is another picture, of the three fathers with arms round each other's shoulders, and the mothers and children in similar attitudes of mutual cordiality. (see cover)

Very good. But there is a parallel reader in Sinhala, also published by the Educational Publications Department, which has been designed on the same general pattern as the Tamil reader. Both readers introduce children to their first steps in reading through the daily activities of a boy and girl, nursery rhymes and a simple story—the Hare and the Tortoise—and the story is illustrated with the same pictures in the same colours in both Sinhala and Tamil readers. It is clear on looking through both readers that they have been conceived on similar lines.

But with one important exception. The message that all of us—Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim—are one happy family, the figures holding hands and clasping shoulders—these are absent in the Sinhala book. On the corresponding page 30 in the Sinhala book appears instead a map of Sri Lanka with a patriotic rhyme which runs:

"Lanka my land
my beloved land
the land of my birth
this is my land."

Who is the "me" to whom this land belongs? As far as the Educational Publications Department's first reader is concerned, there is nothing to suggest to the Sinhala child that it is anybody other than members of his own race or linguistic group. And certainly it is clear from a comparison of the two readers that the Department thinks it important to preach inter-racial and inter-communal amity to Tamil and Muslim children from their first year of school, but inappropriate (or dangerous or demoralising?) to bring the same message to the Sinhala child. 'Give me a child for the first few years of his life, and you can have him thereafter,' was the thought once attributed to a Jesuit. Are there racists running our educational programme who think the same way?

The Tamil first reader bears the date 1977; the Sinhala reader the publication date 1978. with a note of acknowledgment by the Commissioner dated December 1977. This means that both the last regime and the present one must have been involved in the production of the books, since planning and preparation must have taken a considerable time before publication; and this in any case is probably a matter in which educational policy has been (to use the customary American expression) 'bi-partisan'.

Many years ago, a widely used set of Sinhala school readers, H. D. Sugathapala's *Nava Maga*, brought the idea of inter-racial and inter-communal sympathies to Sinhala children, not by preaching it in the abstract, but by presenting it in a fashion that would be meaningful and interesting to young children — through stories of the involvement of two Sinhala children in the festivals of their neighbours of other races and religions.

The Press and racialism

Representatives of over twenty organisations, including trade unions, worker and peasant organisations, as well as religious, human rights and women's groups, meeting under the auspices of the Co-ordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas, have submitted the following letter to the Press Council; signed by Paul Casperz S. J. and Reggie Siriwardena.

"We wish to draw the attention of your Council, as the body statutorily charged with the regulation of the Press in Sri Lanka, to the alarming and dangerous situation which is being created by racist propaganda in the Press, and by tendentious news reporting of a character that will inflame racist sentiments and accentuate conflicts between the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people of this country.

"A number of news-sheets and smaller papers specially devoted to racist propaganda has recently come into existence both in Sinhala and in Tamil. However, the greatest threat to peaceful relations between the Sinhala and Tamil speaking people arises from the fact that the three big newspaper groups in the country have in the last few months, adopted the more insidious but even more dangerous policy of highlighting racially inflammatory stories in their news columns, through their mode of reporting, display and choice of headlines. We cannot believe that these practices are accidental or unconscious, since we have often observed that the same news story is given varying communal slant in newspapers in different languages published by the same group.

"We fear that with the approach of the forthcoming local government elections, this kind of communally mischievous and inflammatory reporting and propaganda in the Press is likely to increase in volume and intensity. This may have especially serious consequences in the plantation areas and other parts of the country, where Sinhala and Tamil speaking people live in close proximity to each other. Unless these tendencies are checked, the Press may be the principal, immediate cause of another outbreak of racial conflict.

"We urge you to use whatever influence and authority you possess to exercise restraints on the Press in respect of matter which is likely to inflame racial feeling. We wish to observe that a special responsibility exists in the case of the two newspaper groups which are controlled by the State

"We request that you grant us an interview at which we can produce before you documentary evidence from the Press to substantiate what we have said in this letter."

Democratic Workers Congress
Human Rights Organization
United Federation of Labour,
Christian Workers Fellowship,
Lanka General Services Union,
Hatton Social Action Centre,
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna,
National Union of Workers,
Socio-Economic Training Institute,
Kandy, All-Lanka Peasants Congress,
Christian Workers Fellowship,
Plantation Service Committee,
Janatha Viyaparaya (Peoples Movement),
Service Civil International,
L. S. S. P. Leadership,
Malayaha Makkal Iyakam (Plantation People's Movement),
Ceylon Plantation Workers Union,
Hill Country Youth Assembly,
Coordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas,
Satyodaya, Samajavadi Bhikku Peramuna.

(Continued on page 25)

The Northern scene

A separate state is evolving in the North—this is state within the state. On the one hand in the North we see the civil administration, working in conjunction with the elected representatives of the people and the citizens of the peninsula. A parallel and hostile force has also emerged—this is the police-military machine, given a protective legitimacy by some communal-minded Sinhalese, including members of the clergy.

The drift towards a separate state began in 1961 when the Army was moved into the north. A uniformed force hostile to the people and opposed to their leaders grew with time. With the Vaddukoddai Declaration of 1972, and the TULF asking for the recognition of a Tamil nation, the situation began to deteriorate. The police was regarded as a "force of occupation" and became the target of the political extremists in the north.

Mr. Egodapitiya, SP Jaffna, admits the crime rate in Jaffna is low. Further Mr. Leo Perera, SP Kankasanthurai, is of opinion that not more than a hundred extremists are at large. Some sections of the Police doubt that they belong to a cohesive organisation. Mr. Egodapitiya is of opinion that the title 'Tigers' has been loosely taken on by youth who are imitating a similar movement that existed in Tamil Nadu. SP Leo Perera on the other hand is of opinion that there is an organised terrorist movement.

The North is used as a 'punishment station' by the police. Unruly elements are posted there. Most of them do not speak the language. Not inconceivable a large gulf exists between the population and police. Twelve policemen, the majority Tamil-speaking officers investigating the actions of extremists, have been assassinated. The police are helpless

because a sullen and uncooperative public will not assist them.

More troops

The attempt to solve political problems in the north by resorting to more police and military force has failed. As one crosses into the Northern Province, the first sight that greets a visitor is the Army Camp at Iratperiya-kulam. Then as one enters the peninsula one sees troops searching vehicles at Elephant Pass—almost as if they are a force of occupation.

Ironically the advocates of the separate state call for more troops and more power to the police. Everytime a Policeman is hurt or killed by lawless elements, the Police descend on innocent people.

The Police and Army don't always need an excuse for these tough tactics. Sometimes they flex their muscles for no known reason.

Some members of the Buddhist clergy also ask for the introduction of thousand of troops into the North. They are so much in sympathy with the anti-social police, that recently when a delinquent policeman was disciplined by his superiors, hundreds of policemen went in procession to the nearest temple.

Not all Buddhist monks in the North are communal. Far from it some members of the venerated Naga Deepa Vihara would be the last to call for troops to settle outstanding political problems.

Political observers are not slow to establish a link between prominent politicians in Colombo and racist propagandists in the north.

This kind of "dual power" could mean good-bye to any hopes of winning the support of the minorities or eradicating violence in the North. — J. S.

'Our Lion - el'



Vithanage (left) with
GA Fernando

The people of Jaffna have had an unblushing love affair with their Government Agent, **Lionel Fernando**. He has won such popularity by his genuine concern for the interests of the people of the northern peninsula. When there are clashes between the police and the people he is there within moments, sometimes even in his sarong, in order to restore peace.

GA **Vernon Abeysekera** in the sixties was also immensely popular among the Jaffna people—so much so that many openly wept when he finished his tour of duty and emplaned at Palaly. But a senior Parliamentarian in the North told *The Lanka Guardian* that GA Lionel is even more popular than Vernon Abeysekera was—and that's saying something.

Dr. Rasiah, Secretary of the Siddha Ayurvedhic Physicians of the North, remarked that the GA is called "Our Lion, because he keeps us safe from the tigers!"

Recently, when Lionel Fernando lost his mother, all of Jaffna town closed shutters in mourning. Representatives of all religious bodies in the north came and offered prayers for the soul of the lady.

Lionel Fernando joined the Ceylon Civil Service in 1960. Prior to his appointment in Jaffna he

served as Chairman of the Distilleries Corporation, later he was in the Home Ministry.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

There are two other Sinhalese-speaking public servants in Jaffna who have become very much citizens of the north. The more senior of the two is **S. M. J. Senaratne** who is the Assistant Collector of Customs. He has served in the North for 15 years.

Younger in years, but by no means limited in vision, is **Chandrasoma Vithanage**, the Cultural Officer attached to the Jaffna Secretariat. He has been in the forefront of a campaign to maintain a cultural exchange between the north and south. Along with the Jaffna District Cultural Council, he has held film festivals in the northern province, bringing the best of Sinhala cinema to the Tamil-speaking areas. Once again in August there will be a mammoth film festival.

During the recent visit to Jaffna of a party of journalists, the Cultural Council arranged two recitals. One was an evening of devotional Tamil songs. The other was the performance of the State Dance Ensemble under Mr. Makuloluwa. The latter was well received by the people of Jaffna.

"It is our sincere hope that the programme undertaken by us," says the Cultural Council, "will contribute towards greater understanding among all peoples in Sri Lanka. It is our unshakable belief that cultural bonds are one way through which national unity can be forged."

Chandrasoma Vithanage was formerly in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Tamil grievances

The Tamil Illangar Peravai is the youth league of the Tamil United Liberation Front. **T. Santhathiyar**, member of the Organising Committee dealt at length with the problems that

Tamil people face. He was addressing the press in Jaffna.

He listed state-aided colonisation of the traditional Tamil areas by Sinhala settlers as one crucial issue. Correspondence with the Government, standardisation

An alternative to TULF

Yogendra Duraisamy, son of the late Sir Waitilingam Duraisamy, concluded a distinguished career in the Sri Lanka Overseas Service. Retiring prematurely he has taken to politics. He is the leader of a group called the Progressive Tamil Movement which says it offers an alternative to the TULF.

"**W**e believe in a united Sri Lanka," explained Mr. Duraisamy, "but we must appreciate the historical and geographical realities in this country. Therefore we believe in regional autonomy. We want human rights not only mentioned in the constitution, but in practice there must be no discrimination in higher education and employment. It is only then that we can build a united Sri Lanka."

"The present human rights position is an improvement on the First Republican Constitution.

"Any Sinhalese person can walk in and buy land in any part of the country including the north, but there must not be state aided colonisation of traditional Tamil areas."

Dealing with youth unrest in the north, Mr. Duraisamy explained that so many acts of the earlier government, things like standardisation, went to alienate the youth. With the present system of university admission how can one expect the youth not to revolt?

"We concede that there are backward areas that must be helped as far as University admissions are concerned. But the present

of admissions to the university and discrimination in employment for Tamils were the other issues.

As far as repression of the Tamils are concerned Santhathiyar said that this government is worse than the previous one.

district quota system of the Government is unsatisfactory.

"The present constitution almost gives parity of status to Sinhala and Tamil, and its provisions regarding the minorities are satisfactory. But these provisions must be implemented. For example, recruitment to the public service is still discriminatory.

"It is the frustration of the youth that leads to violence against the Police. We have written to the President asking that law and order be maintained and that those who transgress the law, whom ever they may be, must be punished.

Violence and counter violence

A statue was put up for Sivakumaran a 26 year old youth who committed suicide in police custody by swallowing cyanide.

This commemorative statue was erected in Urumpirai. Such is the antagonism towards the law enforcement agencies, that one who dies in police custody is automatically made a hero. In August 1977 statues of respected public figures like Tamil poets and statesmen were damaged. Sivakumaran's statue was also mutilated. Violence and counter violence—the tragedy that stalks the north.

Socio - economic realities

Jaffna's traditional industry has been the Sri Lanka public service. But the introduction of Sinhala only, the competitive nature of public service entry and the increasing number of educated coming up for employment in the north, has altered employment patterns. A high proportion of those from affluent families, those with relatives abroad, set their sights on education and employment overseas, in Africa, U. K., Canada, etc. A number of skilled Tamils have also set out for West Asia, where remunerations are high even if employment is not so secure. The inflow of 'Gulf money' has led to an influx of new cars and the escalation of land prices, aggravating the housing problem throughout the peninsula.

Many educated Northerners are taking to agriculture, many of them went in for lucrative cash crops like chillies and onions. During the last regime many of them did well financially and their mud huts became houses with tiles and bricks.

In the last two years incomes in the agricultural sector have fallen steeply and the viability of growing cash crops is being called into question. This is primarily due to the importation of dry chillies, which has served to depress the market.

The recent shut down of rural banks in the agricultural centres has also affected the farmers who find it difficult to commute to the nearest town to transact their business.

Throughout the peninsula farmers are asking for a guaranteed price for their cash crops—they complain bitterly that the government is not interested in helping them nor solving their problems.

Tamil politics — 2 views

Co-existence, not confrontation

by S. Kathiravelupillai, MP (Kopay)

Sri Lanka is the island home of two nations — the Sinhalese and the Tamils. They differ from each other by history, territory language, religion, culture and traditions. This is the undisputable fact of over two thousand five hundred years of history. The Cleghorn minute of 1797 records: "Two different nations, from a very ancient period have divided between them the possession of the Island. First the Sinhalese inhabiting the interior country in the Southern and Western parts from the river Wallouwe to that of Chilaw, and secondly the Malabars (Tamils) who possess the Northern and Eastern districts."

From these earliest times the Sinhalese and Tamils have maintained their separate identities and territories. Particularly the Sinhalese have always excluded the Tamils from their body politic in their struggle for existence and identity. Dutu Gemunu (200 B. C) the national hero of the Sinhalese could not sleep in peace with the Tamils ruling all around him. Even as late as the 16th and 17th centuries when the Portuguese came to Ceylon and conquered the Tamil Kingdom, the Sinhalese did not think that "Ceylon" was being invaded by a foreign power nor did they even go to the help of the Tamils as a neighbour might have, having their own security and that of the whole island in mind. Rather they appear to have had a secret satisfaction at the conquest of the Tamil Kingdom.

A Sinhalese historian of today Dr. G. C. Mendis writes "The Tamil Kingdom in the North grew in power until it extracted tribute from the South. Further, fifteenth century Tamil influence over the Sinhalese court was considerable and Ceylon may have come under the rule of Madura

or Tanjore but for the timely arrival of the Portuguese".

British Crown

To the Sinhalese, the Tamil presence is a larger restriction on their freedom and sovereignty than was the link with the British Crown imposed by the Soulbury Constitution, now overthrown. Nevertheless, the Sinhalese by legislative and administrative acts explicated the new philosophy of one state, one nation, one language, one religion. A permanent and irremovable Sinhalese majority ruled in the name of democracy so that the effect of all decisions enured to the benefit of the Sinhalese majority and to the detriment of the Tamil minority and not equally to both majority and minority. Thus the following may be listed as some of the major effects and results of Sinhalese rule:

(1) One million Tamils were excluded from citizenship and rendered stateless by the Citizenship Act 18 of 1948.

(2) These one million Tamils were by Act 48 of 1949 denied the right to vote which right they enjoyed before independence.

(3) Tamil territory was colonised with Sinhala colonists by the State with State funds, and illegal squatting on Tamil territory by Sinhalese was encouraged and finally regularised while Tamil squatters on such Tamil territory were driven out by force and emergency regulations were framed for punishing them. Land is not given to registered Tamil citizens in the colonisation schemes.

(4) Tamils were excluded from the public service in large numbers to which they had access

earlier on the basis of merit and also dismissed or not confirmed for lack of proficiency in Sinhala.

(5) The use of force on the Tamils as a political weapon to obtain subservience.

Army of occupation

(6) The stationing of an army of occupation in the Tamil territory.

(7) Sinhala alone was made the official language of the whole island including the Tamil territory.

(8) Buddhism alone was given State patronage under the new constitution.

(9) Tamil students qualified on the basis of merit were excluded from admission to the university by racial discrimination and manipulation of marks.

(10) Deliberate neglect and refusal to develop the Tamil territory.

(11) The neglect of Tamil education particularly of the students in the estate areas and the closing down of Tamil streams and schools in the Sinhalese territory.

(12) The imposition of the Sinhala Language as the medium of instruction for Tamil students even in the Tamil territory together with unconscionable conversion of Tamil Hindus into Buddhists in return for education and schooling.

(13) The neglect of the Tamil workers in the estates to the point of starvation and death.

(14) An agreement with India to repatriate Tamils from the estates in the Sinhalese territory to India which agreement was unilaterally interpreted as providing for compulsory repatriation even against the will of the Tamil worker.

(15) The Tamils have no share in the government of the country.

Against all this is now emerging a new militancy among the Tamil

youth who say that the programme of their elders has not brought the desired results

These youth believe in confrontation which inevitably become an international problem in the future.

Restoration

A wise Sinhalese leadership should understand the problem in its full magnitude. The Sinhalese, would not really desire to rule over and run an empire over the unwilling Tamils and be guilty of neocolonialism and aggression. The restoration of the Tamil State by mutual agreement will be a triumph for both people and for human values. On the other hand a confrontation between the two nations can defeat the very security and therefore the existence and identity of the Sinhalese nation, particularly as foreign intervention in such confrontation will become inevitable.

A restored and reconstituted Sinhala State which excludes the Tamil presence is the best guarantee of the existence, identity and security of the Sinhala Nation. So also of the Tamil Nation. The Sinhalese will cease to have problems of illicit immigration, citizenship, language, religions, competition in employment, trade, industry, higher education etc. In short, the Sinhala ideal of one nation, one language etc. can only be realized in a restored and reconstituted Sinhala State. So also, by the restoration and reconstitution of the Tamil State alone will the Tamil Nation survive and preserve its identity and the Tamils, secure the "right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" and be masters of their own destiny. Pancha Sila or Co-existence is thus the only solution to the problem of the two nations in Ceylon. It recognises not merely the facts of two thousand five hundred years of Sinhalese and Tamil history; but also the fundamental right of the Tamil people to self determination; of Tamil Eelam to separate Statehood. It unshackles the two nations and sets them both free.

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The only identity that matters

by Jayantha Somasunderam

The process by which the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front has arrived at a call for a separate state, merits examination. It is a demand that has sprung up largely from the Tamil-speaking middle classes who have always dominated the politics of the Ilangai Tamil Arasu Kadchi and the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress. This class was in the competition with its Sinhalese and Burgher counterparts for the limited number of openings in Government Service and the professions. When the supply in this area began to outstrip the demand, friction developed.

The Burghers opted out of the race by migrating to Australia. But the mobility of the Tamils was restricted. They had thus to negotiate with the Governments in power in order to obtain some measure of security for their middle class members. The Bandaranaike—Chelvanayakam Pact and the UNP—FP administration of 1965-68, are examples of this.

The economic crisis had long since strangled the possibilities of a negotiated settlement. The fiasco that is called, standardisation, stands witness to this. It was becoming impossible to deal even - handedly with all sections of a competing population.

Acute nature

The TULF is conservative to the extent that it refuses to consider scrapping the existing game in an effort to solve the problems of all communities. Rather, they seek to change merely the rules of the game, and thus the name of the game.

Today the TULF argues for a separate state on the basis of a separate national identity. But how come the Tamil-speaking people discovered their unique identity only in 1972? Is it not because it was only then that they came alive to the acute nature of the economic crisis, the inability to provide jobs and decent standards of living?

To thousands of Tamil-speaking people who accept the Eelam demand, it was not a sudden realisation of their national status that prompted the demand, but harsh economic realities.

This national identity that the TULF talks about was one that was maintained by despotic monarchies in centuries gone by. Nobody thought to ask the ordinary citizens for their views on the matter. To build an ideology on such a reality which has been comatose for four centuries is to build on quicksand. It is to ignore the reality of other present-day identities: namely, those of region—Jaffna, Wannai, Batticaloa—those of religion, caste and class. It is to ignore the prosperous cosmopolitan strata in the urban areas who subscribe to a different culture altogether.

To give every petty kingdom and every little despot who laid claim to one, a new nation, would be to make a caricature of history and an impossibility of geography.

We are heirs to a communication revolution that is hurtling

us towards one language, one culture, one identity. An identity that will enable us to call ourselves humans which is the only distinction that matters after all.

Religious identity

A modern nation cannot be built on the basis of an identity that is dated by four hundred years. A country like Israel was built on a fanatically exclusive religious identity that survived the diaspora. So was Pakistan.

Language, even cultural, dissimilarities have not prevented countries as large as the USSR and India from maintaining their integrity. On the contrary they have developed as a result of such progressive national integration.

The USA and the USSR are good examples of multi-racial, multilingual nations that have prospered via economic and political integration. The EEC countries also aim at an European identity in succession to national identities. ASEAN the most prosperous group of countries in the region are forging strong economic and political links.

Racial identities can and will exist in modern nations, look at Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. To imagine that devolution automatically solves economic problems is to ignore economic history. Close at hand are the striking examples of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The way out of this impasse is to push forward social revolution that will break through the economic crisis and ensure rights and living conditions for all people, regardless of superficial differences.

The cry for Eelam is not a solution to our problems—merely a symptom of them.

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Iran's shadow over West Asia

by Mervyn de Silva

Hit by earthquakes with sad and frightening frequency, Iran has produced another kind of violent upheaval that has quickly caused tremors throughout the region. This instant regional impact was in a way inevitable because of Iran's strategic location, its standing as the world's second biggest oil exporter which also 'guards' the vital supply lines to Western Europe and Japan, and the nature of the politics it pursued in the area. These policies were pursued both as a pivotal partner in the American alliance and in Iran's own right as a regional power increasingly conscious of its economic-military strength and impelled by the Shah's vainglorious visions of "world power status" by the turn of this century. Iran was also the only Islamic country which dared to be openly sympathetic to Israel.

For good reasons, these nervous tremors were felt most of all in the neighbouring oil states though Pakistan's simultaneous withdrawal from CENTO is a reminder that the Iranian 'revolution' also had a ripple-effect on a non-oil producing eastern neighbour too.

While this momentous event had a general impact on the whole of West Asia it certainly influenced the Egyptian-Israeli dialogue, new alignments and shifts of policy within the Arab camp, the consolidation of the Palestinian position and big-power diplomatic moves. Its strongest impact was on the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian crisis suddenly exposed the essential fragility of these oil monarchies and produced what one might call a new league of petrified sheikhs and sultans. Their vulnerability, always recognisable but never so transparent, is based on the internal

structure of these societies and the character of the regimes.

In essence, these are thinly populated countries, with colossal wealth (perhaps too much) and little or no social development.

In the absence of a native intelligentsia they must rely on foreign experts and imported skills—a presence which soon proves abrasive as even Iran, with its large population, showed. Modern education is a pre-condition for the healthy, normal growth of an indigenous intelligentsia but such an elite could easily become the carriers of radical ideas and the agents of socio-political change. **But the mere thought of change scares the feudal sheikhs and the small ruling coteries who see such a process as inherently hostile to their vested interests. Any progress must be at their expense, at the expense of their entrenched power and privilege.**

So the much-vaunted "modernisation" of these countries (hotels, banks, airports, highways, television etc) is a thoroughly lopsided development, artificially created by foreign contractors, technicians and technology.

Furthermore the single source of wealth, by its very nature, has a built-in danger: oil fields, refineries, pipe-lines. These can be immobilized as the Iranian oil workers demonstrated, or easily destroyed. Though an exaggeration, the observation that a few hundred dedicated, well-equipped guerrillas can do irreparable damage or even oust one of these regimes is not without substance. Strategically speaking, these are 'countries' with no defence-in-depth. In more senses than one, these are societies of obvious explosive potential.

To safeguard their tremendous wealth and perpetuate this narrow

wly based power structure in the face of such evident and perceived threats to 'stability', the rulers relied on external support of various kinds. Under US patronage, Iran played a crucially important role, its self-elected role of 'regional policemen'.

The significance of the Iranian upheaval is therefore two-dimensional: (a) as a major US ally, an aspect of America's global strategy, and consequently, an object of serious concern in superpower contention and (b) as the powerful protector of beleaguered or internally weak local regimes.

Oman

Oman is the best example. The young, Sandhurst-trained Sultan Qaboos who replaced his old-fashioned father in a move inspired by the British and carried through with characteristically unfussy British efficiency, inherited a Dhofari rebellion. Dhofar the southern province of oil-rich Oman has a land area larger than Sri Lanka but a population less than Matara. Its tropical, mountainous terrain stretches to both South Yemen (now, the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen with the key port of Aden) and Saudi Arabia. With a pre-Christian history the Dhofaris regard themselves as a nation which was forcibly annexed in the 19th century by the Sultan of Muscat with the active help of the British who were then in almost total command of the Arabian peninsula.

The Dhofari rebellion became a low-intensity insurgency fought on guerrilla tactics by the mid-sixties. But in the second phase it assumed a far more serious character chiefly because weapons were coming in from southern Yemen where the British were under armed attack from Yemeni revolutionaries. By 1967-68, the British pulled out of Aden, and the Dho-

fari uprising underwent a highly significant change in both ideological and military terms. The **DLF (the Dhofari Liberation Front)** became a well-knit guerrilla organisation while changing its name to **PFLOAG, the Peoples Front for the Liberation for the Occupied Arab Gulf, a movement now committed to "socialism"**.

British, Jordanian and Pakistan officers and a mixed band of mercenaries (all paid by the Sultan) bore the main burden of counter-insurgency by forming a new unit called S. A. S.

Anxious about public and Parliamentary criticism the UK government kept this operation 'under wraps' and denied any official connection. Pakistan denied complicity too. In his well documented book "**Arabia without Sultans**", Fred Halliday the British writer who spent several months in the area produced convincing evidence of British participation (the officers had been 'seconded') and the British press published both names, and pictures.

By 1970-1, the 'foreign' unit was on the defensive and the British newspapers were quoting Foreign Office spokesmen about "Chinese officers" helping the PFLOAG, and 'authoritative' reports were published on how China was threatening the vital oil interests of the West.

But our main interest here is the Iranian role as US ally and local gendarme. By 1971, Iranian troops occupied three islands, administered earlier by the Sultanates and next year stationed a squadron of helicopters in Dhofar. By 1973 Iranian troops were already leading the counter offensive against the PFLOAG.

A statement of the Shah in a **NEWSWEEK** interview makes extremely interesting reading today:

Stability

"Take the Dhofar rebellion. If it ever succeeded, just try to imagine what we would be faced with in Muscat, the capital, right in front of the Strait of

Hormuz. At first a few rifles. And then naval guns and missiles. It's a familiar pattern. I cannot tolerate subversive activities...."

Only five months ago (Dec 7, 1978) President Carter was asked at a press conference how he reconciled his crusade for human rights with the well known record of brutal repression in Iran. The questioner said he had served as an American diplomat in Tehran for 2 years and knew the cruelty of the regime. Carter said he had no apology to offer on 'the difference in human rights values' in the US and Iran, but his support for the Shah was founded on other reasons.

"Iran has been a stabilising factor around the Persian Gulf. This stability is valuable to the region. It is valuable in the surrounding territory, certainly as far as Israel and the Mediterranean, and it is important for world peace".

Carter also noted that Iran had been "very helpful to us in economic matters concerning OPEC....."

'Stability' and 'security', 'stabilising factor' 'subversive activities'..... the words and phrases are so familiar that their meaning is too often taken for granted. But whose stability? Whose interests are imperilled? Whose security have we in mind? Surely the answer is the stability of the Shah, the sultans and the sheikhs, and ruling cliques which sustain them? Surely the 'interests' implicit in the argument is the economic interests of these hated, corrupt, and oppressive regimes, and these interests are inextricably linked to foreign vested interests. Mutual interest makes the alliance a natural one. **The irony is that repression is not only one means of protecting these interests from popular pressures and demands for changes in the social-economic order but the only option finally left to the rulers in their increasing alienation from their own people.** Then human rights become the first casualty. You cannot be the oppressor's ally and patron and at the same time

plead the just cause of the oppressed and exploited.

While this underlines the central dilemma in Carter's Iran policy one of the immediate consequences of the Shah's downfall was fear and trembling in Oman. The Dhofari insurgency had been effectively contained, if not crushed, with the Shah's help. What now?

Iraq

Less than a fortnight after the Shah left his country Major General Awad al Khalidi, head of the Jordanian Military Mission to Oman left for Britain in the interesting company of Mr. Ali Asali, Oman's Ambassador to Iran. (**Afro-Asian affairs, London N. 73**). The two men placed what this intelligence digest called 'documentary evidence' of new preparations by the Dhofaris before the UK authorities. They predicted a renewal of the insurgency. The two men then left for Washington.

On some occasions too outspoken perhaps for a diplomat, Kissinger once defined one of the basic objectives of US policy in both the Middle East and Africa—to strengthen the moderate regimes and isolate (he didn't say de-stabilise) the radical regimes. From Washington's viewpoint (and of course the Shah's) Iraq fits into the last named category on both counts of internal policy (Baathist socialism) and foreign policy (the most 'steadfast' of the Front of Steadfastness against Israel). Baghdad has not only refused to support UN resolution 242 but it has always called for total war against the 'Zionist entity'. Also it has had very close ties with Moscow, though the western press is currently reporting new strains in this relationship on account of friction between the ruling Baathists and their much smaller Communist partners.

For many years the US openly supported the Kurdish rebels in the north of Iraq. The Kurdish people, a substantial number exceeding ten million, are spread out through Iraq, Iran and Turkey, and the USSR. By the 70's, the Shah

took over the task of creating trouble for the Iraqi government by actively helping the rebels. Since Iraq and Iran have a common border and the Kurds lived and operated in the northern mountains, it was easy for Iran to send all kinds of supplies, including heavy artillery to the Kurds. In fact the headquarters of the Kurdish leader Mustapha Barzani (he died in March) was moved to Iran.

But the Iraqis were more than a match for the Iranians militarily and in many border clashes hurt the Shah's much advertised army severely. Baghdad also won over the Kurdish people through a judicious mixture of conciliatory policies, both economic and cultural, and by declaring an autonomous region in the north. Finally, the Shah dumped Barzani and made a deal with Iraq after talks with Iraqi Vice President Saddam Hussein. And today it is the Kurds in Iran (numerically stronger than the Kurds in Iraq) who are demanding autonomy!

Saudi Arabia

Nowhere did the Shah's downfall and the course taken by the Iranian revolution produce such disquieting fears as in Saudi Arabia, world's biggest oil exporter. Israel and Iran were the two pillars of the US policy in the area. Israel, still the strongest military power in the eastern Mediterranean region, was always a de facto member of the western alliance, a western outpost with a very special American relationship, fortified to a great extent by the all-powerful Jewish lobby in the US. Iran was gradually built up as the guardian of the Gulf, at the western entrance to the Indian ocean, overseeing the oil life-line to the European and Japanese industrial machines, and protecting the 'new wealth' which is a critical factor in the west-dominated world monetary system.

Whereas Israel and Iran were friendly, the Arab-Israeli issue was a permanent cause of friction even between the pro-western, conservative Arab regimes and Israel. After Washington's rude post-73 awakening to the importance of American interests in the

Arab world, this made the construction of a new US Middle-east policy quite an exacting exercise. Into the new US design, Egypt, the major Arab political-military power, and Saudi Arabia the strongest financial centre, had to be included. The Egyptian-Israeli treaty is both an American success in achieving this goal as well as a nervously urgent response to the turn-about in Iran. (The significance of the Treaty and its regional implications will be examined in another series of articles which start in this issue).

Specially under Faisal, Saudi Arabia took a zealously 'Islamic' and fiercely uncompromising stand on Israel, particularly its annexation of East Jerusalem and the holy places. Despite a manifest mutuality of interest, Saudi Arabia could not allow either its pro-Americanism nor its anti-communism (anti-Soviet in foreign policy) to influence its anti-Israeli position. In its own interests, it remained within the broad Arab camp helping the moderates financially, and using its money as a restraining (corrupting?) influence on both Arab radicals and the Palestinians.

But Carter's success in one direction has proved counter-productive in another. The Arabs have closed ranks and totally isolated Egypt. At Baghdad, the Saudis went along with the other Arabs in supporting sanctions against Egypt but withstood pressure for anti-US sanctions. Objectively speaking Saudi Arabia has been pushed, willy-nilly, into a less ambivalent position on the US Israel alliance. And this trend has been reinforced by three other factors:

(a) The Iranian uprising had a strong Islamic character, the Shiites assuming the leading role in mobilising the broad masses against the Shah. An oil monarchy, Saudi Arabia identifies itself with the Shah's Iran. The Saudi Royal family belongs to the Wahabite sect. In December, the ecclesiastical leader of the Sunni issued a *fatwah* in which he not only challenged the Wahabite inter-

pretation of Islam but argued that the Saudi kings had "extracted power by force". If the rulers did not respond to the just demands of the Sunni Moslems, the people must "have recourse to the Sword as did the Caliphs following the death of Mohammed."

(b) The sudden outbreak of hostilities between North and South Yemen (Saudi Arabia's neighbours) sent alarm signals in Riyadh because the Leftist pro-Soviet regime in the South was confronting a government which is a Saudi protegee. As the tide of war began to favour the South, the US sent arms to the North, and strengthened its Indian Ocean fleet. With speculation over a new US fleet in-the-making, the manoeuvres also brought angry warning from New Delhi. But the 'war' had come too close to Saudi borders for the comfort of the royal family.

(c) The Palestinians were partly responsible for the guns that went into Iran. In the wake of the Iranian revolution and the Egypt-Israel pact, the Palestinians are in a strong position. They are an important force in Kuwait, and have a fairly strong presence in the Gulf. Whatever steps the Saudis may take to insulate themselves from the explosive forces sweeping the area (See **Saudi Secret Deal**) a single Palestinian 'operation' can be the light that turns the oilfields of the Arabian desert into towering infernos.

With a demonstrative show of their loyalty to the Arab (anti-Israeli) cause and some discreet adjustments in foreign policy (a few friendly gestures to Moscow) the Saudis are now trying hard to accommodate themselves to a new situation full of lurking dangers.

The Shah's downfall has been an immeasurable loss to the US and, as a corollary, a major gain for the Soviet Union, is the gain principally a negative one? Much would depend on how stable the new Islamic republic will be and what its professed non-alignment will turn out to be in

practice. Of course, if there is a coup by the remnants of the ancient-regime we could have a Chile on a grander scale. Already US policy-makers are looking for ways to minimise the damage and recover some of the lost ground. The US State Department has set up a new unit to study 'Islamic nationalism', a thoughtful step although some may say a belated one. In the next phase will the religious and traditionalist impulse turn aggressively into a new ideological confrontation with 'socialism' or 'communism'?

Already western scholars (and trailing behind them, western strategists) are prophesying an Islamic spillover to the Soviet republic of Central Asia, where the population is predominantly Moslem. In December, *Hsinhua*, the Chinese news agency put out an item about a Moslem revolt in Dushanbe the capital of Tadjikistan—an event that **TASS** laughed off. But in a recent book *L'empire eclate*) the French scholar Helene Carriere D'Encausas speaks of a Sufi brotherhood based in the Caucasus and of 'mullahs' seeking to establish a counter-organisation to the CP. Soviet commentators regard all this as wishful thinking convinced as they are that the 'national question' was tackled correctly and to a great extent solved from Lenin, onwards.

An obvious Soviet gain is the Ayotollah's early decision not to permit either US or Soviet monitoring sites on Iranian soil. Under the Shah, the US had several such sites which maintained round-the-clock surveillance of Soviet nuclear installations, testing grounds etc. The location was ideal because many of the American sites had what is known as a 'direct electronic line of sight' to key Central Asian satellite launching and missile sites in the USSR. Dr. Brezinski's deputy, Mr. David Aaron however has assured the US Congress that the dismantling of these sites will not reduce American capability vis-a-vis SALT I and SALT 2 and the intelligence network necessary to monitor these.

(Concluded)

Egypt — Israel (I)

Peace, or piece - by - piece

A day after the Camp David Summit (Sept. 17) Prime Minister Menahem Begin spoke in Washington to editors of the Hebrew language press. The influential **JEWISH WEEK** began its report of the meeting with this passage:

'The peace agreement which Israel is to negotiate with Egypt within three months looks like a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace, feels like a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace, and smells like a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace, but is not a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace. At least this is what Prime Minister Begin does not want the Israeli press to call it because it would 'weaken and embarrass President Sadat' ''.

Mr. Begin is not known as a man overburdened with altruism. If he is keen on not weakening or embarrassing Mr. Sadat in the eyes of the Egyptian people or the

Arab nations it is for the soundest of reasons. In the midst of the Camp David discussions, Sadat's own foreign minister quit in disgust. He belongs a long line of distinguished Egyptians who have gradually dissociated themselves from Sadat's policies or left the country to denounce Sadat from abroad. These critical voices include General Shazly, the hero of the October 73 war who actually attended a Baghdad 'trial' which condemned Mr. Sadat as a traitor. One of the best known intellectuals of the Arab world, Mr. Hassanein Heykal, the Nasser confidante who made the **AL AHRAM** a world famous newspaper lives in Cairo today, as a British correspondent wrote recently, on the fringes of official tolerance.

And what most importantly, of the Egyptian people? Will those hundreds of thousands who paraded the streets of Alexandria



Sadat prays but will Allah forgive him...?

and Ismailia cheering Sadat, Carter etc, see their now bouyant expectations fulfilled or will the dream of prosperity through peace turn out to be a more mirage? Egypt's desperate economic need is as much an imperative in the final Egyptian-Israeli reconciliation as Israeli calculation, US strategy in the area, and Mr. Carter's hopeful manoeuvres to bolster his sagging 'image' and improve his chances of re-election next year.

A 'deparate treaty' simply means a sell-out. In fact, "Sadat's sell-out" was the title of an article by this writer soon after the Camp David agreements were signed. (Lanka Guardian Oct. 1). That brief commentary pointed out that 'Sadat's isolation in the Arab world has begun...Mr. Sadat has paid a heavy price — Egypt's political leadership of the Arab world, Arab unity and his own prestige."

The pathetic irony of an Egypt which was the inspiring founder of the Arab League (long before the UN) clinging on now to the League's headquarters when 19 out of 22 members have decided to move it to Tunis is such telling confirmation of how an easily predictable course has not defied the logic of events. Equally dramatic, if in a more personal way, was the resignation of the League's Secretary-General, Mr. Riad, an Egyptian and some-time ago, his country's foreign minister.

If Mr. Sadat had told the world and the Arab peoples "To hell with the Palestinians, damn the other Arab states whose lands are still occupied.... I think the Egyptians are sick of war and tired of bearing the brunt of 30 years of confrontation with Israel, and I have decided to put the Egyptian interest, as I see it first and last", he would have taken a more honest, perhaps an even more honourable, a path of action.

Instead this "deal" is being advertised by Egypt and other apologists as "first step to a

comprehensive settlement" of the Arab-Israeli issue based on UN Resolution 242.

An artful dodge really, this exercise depends largely on legalistic legerdemain, some studied ambiguity and the more familiar gimmicks of salesmanship. Primarily, it is based on one word 'linkage' i. e. the implementation of the treaty is integrally linked to the fulfilment of accords on the West Bank and the Gaza in relation to a so-called 'self-governing authority', and that this 'linkage' itself covers both agreed conditions and an agreed time-table. In other words, Egypt argues that far from a deal which will only help her to recover her lost land, the Sinai (occupied in 1967) this is an agreement which will not only achieve this but will place the Palestinians on the road to self-rule, autonomy and (who knows?) sovereignty.

First, a cautionary word. Lawyers, diplomats and scholars can argue over words and phrases till hell freezes over and politicians will interpret even a solemn document like an international treaty to suit their purposes and the changing mood of their audience, domestic mainly but international too.

Resolution 242 itself is the subject of furious debate right up to this day because of the absence of the word "the" in the original English text and its presence in "the occupied territories" in the French version'

So the student of politics would be far better placed if he heeds the conventional wisdom of "While listening to what he says, watch his hands" or "it is not what is said that is important but what is in fact done". Political realities will extract the true meaning of this treaty and events alone will show which interpretation was closer to the truth. The Treaty itself with its annexures, minutes etc has to be examined in relation to the 'Camp David Framework for Peace in the Middle East' (Sept. 1978) and UN Resolution 242 (1967).

(To be continued) M de S

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FOR RESERVATIONS

SAUDI SECRET DEAL

Will Saudi Arabia take the Iranian road? While the parallel has been pointed out in the past, a joint investigation by the West German magazine **STERN** and the UK weekly **New Statesman** directs our attention to new similarities.

SAVAK was the barbarous arm of the Shah's repressive regime. Established under US patronage and with American expertise, it had direct links with US, western and Israeli intelligence Establishments. The Shah fled leaving behind his intimate aides and advisers. Over 150 of them have paid the supreme penalty. Over 1,300, most of them top officers of security services await trial by Islamic Revolutionary Committees.

Repression in the name of 'internal security' was not the only odious feature of the Shah's rule. High level corruption and bribery was another. The oil firms, the multinationals and western business enjoyed colossal rip-offs from doubtful contracts. As the **Financial Times** said it was the biggest bonanza of modern times.

The **STERN/New Statesman** investigation shows that British Petroleum, the key member of the western consortium that controlled Iran's oil, has sold a 24 million pounds computer system (SCICON) to the Saudi Secret Service, the GID (General Intelligence Dept.) Incidentally BP spent 5 million pounds in bribes

to top Saudi officials to put this deal through.

It all began, reports the two journals, when Prince Fahd, the effective ruler of his country, visited Washington in 1977. The first item on the agenda was 'security'—for the Royal Family, to start with, and the close-knit coterie ruling Saudi Arabia. Direct links were established between the G. I. D. and the US military/civilian security services. The G. I. D. is headed by Prince Turki bin Ismail, nephew of the late King Faisal. His name does not appear in the semi-official "Who's Who in Saudi Arabia".

SCICON will put into operation by 1980 two computer systems, in Riyadh and Jeddah, and 27 computer-linked branch offices of GID will be opened in 1981. The object of SCICON is not merely to place under total surveillance about a million Saudi citizens and foreigners but to take appropriate "executive action"—i. e. surveillance, arrest, interrogation, harassment etc. Foreign targets include immigrant workers (especially from Yemen), foreign visitors and about 750,000 Haj pilgrims. As the computer's video screens come alive each day, the GID men will be greeted by the message "In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent—Welcome".

The report concludes: "GID has not achieved the worldwide notoriety—nor yet it seems

its wholesale barbarity—of its sister service SAVAK. But it is undoubtedly treading SAVAK's road, with perhaps the same eventual consequences for the Saudi aristocracy....."

Chuchche and ping-pong

Chuchche is the code-word for North Korea's policy of independence in politics, self-reliance in economy. 'Chuchche' and ping-pong is a curious combination. However an international seminar sponsored here (April 14-16) by the North Koreans will interest all those who are studying current developments in the Korean peninsula and in Indo-China.

While foreign delegates were hearing lectures on independence and "dominationism" from the North Koreans, Pyongyang is preparing to host the ping-pong championships. Borrowing an idea from the Chinese, the North Koreans, who are having serious economic troubles and desperate repayment problems, is trying to open the door to western 'aid' and loans. Unfortunately for the North Koreans, their propaganda effort met with unexpected resistance in the form of basic questions that the North Koreans could not answer without great embarrassment to themselves.

In the first place, it is no secret that North Korea received assistance from China during the Korean war, and from the USSR and the socialist countries in hard years after the war. Has this situation of reliance on socialist support changed? And is Pyongyang now taking the cue from China which is depending on western aid for its 'four modernizations'? Secondly, chuchche means independence. But independence from whom? From Japan and US whom Pyongyang will court warily through ping-pong diplomacy?

"Dominationism" also struck a sour note because the North Koreans had to swallow the fact that they supported the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. — N. R.



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Priests and politics

by Yohan Devananda

There was a time when religion and politics were regarded as two separate fields which should be kept strictly apart. But it is now widely recognised that these fields are closely connected. Together with this recognition has come the understanding that the great religious founders, including the Buddha and the Christ, were very much concerned with the development, justice and liberation of the common people, and that they were essentially revolutionary characters who had a revolutionary impact on the people and society around them. This original impetus was often obscured during the course of history when the powers that be domesticated and manipulated religion for their own ends. So religion became the servant of privilege and the status quo, and "religious" people became inactive in the face of injustice and oppression. But movements for revival and reform have arisen again and again from time to time, particularly at periods of decisive change in history.

Christian action — Reflection.

The taking of a progressive or radical stand in politics by certain Christian groups, both clergy and lay, in Sri Lanka should be viewed in the context of such thought and action in Churches through the world. It is certainly not a case of immature and irresponsible bravado or adventurism on the part of a few isolated and misguided eccentrics. It is part of a movement of action-reflection in Churches in many countries, which is in turn part of a deep movement of development—justice—liberation throughout the world.

World Council of Churches.

Robert Owen, Stewart Headlam, Conrad Noel, Kier Hardie, Hewlett Johnson, Michael Scott, Alan Paton, Trevor Huddleston, Joost de Blanc, Mervyn Stockwood, and John Collins are outstanding examples of a long line of clergy who in modern times, have taken a radical stand in politics in the face of fierce opposition and ultimately commanded world-wide attention and respect. They are now legendary figures. They paved the way for positive social action by the Churches so that now even at the highest Councils of the Church radical action is possible.

The World Council of Churches consists of Christians of many different denominations and different political points of view. It is not committed to any particular brand of politics. But it has proved itself capable of radical action. For instance, its massive financial support for liberation movements in their struggle to combat racism created a veritable furore in Conservative church circles. But it has refused to withdraw its support and this stand was confirmed at its recent World Conference at Nairobi (1977).

Vatican Council 2

The inspired leadership of Pope John XXIII and the thinking of the second Vatican Council (1962), which he summoned, was a great turning point. It opened the Church more fully to a dialogue both with Marxist and Secular ideologies of the modern world as well as with the higher religions of the ancient world, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and the Muslim religion.

A host of distinguished radical theologians such as Karl Rahner, Hans Kung, Yves Congar, Edward Schillebeeck, Johannes Metz and many others led the way in re-interpreting the Christian Faith to meet the challenges of the modern world and their work received the serious attention of Churches through the world.

Latin American Bishops.

The most radical application of these new insights was seen in Latin America, where the poverty, injustice, exploitation and oppression of the capitalist system are seen at their worst.

The meeting of Latin American Bishops at Medellin in 1968 issued a famous statement that expressed salvation in terms of liberation. It showed a sensitive awareness of the conditions of the people and of the urgent task of the Church to respond to their need. It gave its blessing to a movement that was already under way for the active participation of Christian, both clergy and lay, in radical politics.

Liberation Theology

Many countries of Latin America have produced theologians of the front rank whose works have been influential not only in their own continent but throughout the world—Gustavo Gutierrez (Peru), Juan Segundo S. J. (Uruguay), Camilo Torres (Columbia), Joseph Comblin, Rubem A. Alves, Jose Miguez Bonino, Hugo Assmann (Brazil), Segundo Galilea, Gonzalo Arroyo S. J. (Chile). They forcibly demonstrated that being a follower of Christ meant commitment to the struggle for liberation and that this involved acceptance of Marxist analysis and participation in the class

struggle, Camilo Torres and Nestor Paz Zamora witnessed to their convictions by joining the guerilla movement and becoming martyrs. They have become cult figures and symbols of hope. Others have followed them. Finally, the most well-known patron of this movement of liberation theology has been Archbishop Dom Helder Camara who has defended it with great understanding, courage and eloquence.

Christians for Socialism.

Liberation theology was embodied in a practical political form in the movement called "Christians for Socialism". It originated at a Conference (with international participation) held at Santiago in Chile in 1972 (at the same time as UNCTAD 3). There were 400 present of whom two-thirds were priests and they issued a famous Manifesto called "Christians for Socialism". While drawing on the resources of the

Christian faith they at the same time used Marxist analysis and accepted the need for the transformation of society through revolution:

("Christ taught us to live what he proclaimed. He preached human brotherhood and a love which should penetrate all the structures of society, but above all he lived out his message of liberation to the uttermost. He was condemned to death. The men of power of his time understood that his message of liberation and the effective love he showed would seriously threaten their economic, social, political and religious interests. The Spirit of the Risen Christ is today more active than ever: he provides the dynamism of history, and finds expression in all those who give themselves in solidarity in the struggle for liberty and show an authentic love of their oppressed brothers.")

This movement of Christians for Socialism spread to other countries and led to similar Con-

ferences and Manifestos in Spain (Barcelona 1963), Italy (Bologna 1973), and France (Lyons 1973).

In fact, the rumblings of this movement have echoed in different degrees — some independently, some parallel — in almost every country of the world. It would take too long to enumerate all this.

Opposition.

Of course, liberation theology has not, by any means, become the official doctrine of the Church. It has received bitter denunciation and condemnation from many conservative authorities in the Church. But it has stood its ground and is a strong and growing movement based on solid scholarly thinking, with firm biblical roots, matched with imaginative and courageous action.

NEXT: Liberation Theology

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RATMALANA.

The JVP and self - determination

by Lionel Bopage

The abolishing of national oppression cannot be achieved in capitalist society unless under a permanent and democratic federal system and state administration which ensures complete equality among races and languages. Marx and Engels have said that if one nation oppresses another, it can never be considered to be 'free'. In the same vein, a proletariat that tolerates its own race's oppression of another race cannot be a socialist proletariat. Marxist-Leninists of the 'oppressor' race should clearly acknowledge the right of the 'oppressed' race to self-determination, that is, their right to choose either a separate political existence or a joint existence in accordance with their wishes; such Marxist-Leninists should fight for this cause. Any socialist who belongs to an 'oppressor' race and does not come forward to champion this right, falls into the category of a racist.

While talking about the right of nations to self-determination, federation and independence, Lenin has also stressed the need to develop a large and centralised state. When presenting his programme regarding the national question, Lenin said: 'We must always and unreservedly work for the very closest unity of the proletariat of all nationalities, and it is only in isolated and exceptional cases that we can advance and actively support demands conducive to the establishment of a new class state or to the substitution of a looser federal unity etc. for the complete, political unity of a state.' (Lenin: Collected Works: Vol. 6 Page 454).

Nations have come into being as a result of a long cycle of the historical development of society. The tribal organisation of a primitive society gradually gave way to a new civic formation which encompassed the creation of nationalities, along with the creation of the social division of labour and the appearance of un-

equal property relations. What is meant by a nationality that bases itself on class relations of production is a group of persons who live on a certain area of land and who are bound together by a common language, mentality, cultural characteristics and a way of life proclaimed through customs, traditions and ethical codes of conduct. Since a nationality is more advanced than a tribal grouping, it engages in developing production throughout a large area inhabited by tens of thousands of people and develops the exchange of production experiences and cultural triumphs. As bourgeois commodity relations develop, the era of economic isolation of varied economic zones comes to an end, the bonds between people of different nationalities are strengthened; and acquiring a common language and common cultural characteristics, they are brought together as the more permanent civic formation of 'a nation'.

Yet the path of social development from nationality to nation does not follow a simple and straight line. Due to a variety of reasons, a centralised state can be formed before all nationalities living in a specific area have been absorbed into one national entity. At such a point, multi-nation states come into being. Within this stage, either one, or several, nations assume a privileged position. That nation, then becomes the motive force in the birth of a centralised state.

Taken in this context, a nation is a civic formation which reflects the capitalist mode of production. This civic formation, which aids the development of the forces of production in the society concerned, also plays an important role in abolishing political isolation. The growth of nations and national movements did away with the feudal system and helped to establish capitalism. In the same way as the capitalist system grows and develops, it reaches a stage where the framework of a 'nation'

is no longer sufficient for its needs. While it confirms the nation as an economic entity, capitalism establishes economic ties between all nations, and ultimately transforms itself into an universal economic system.

The Northern kingdom of Ceylon commenced in the 12th century; when the Portuguese captured it in 1591, the feudal forces of production had not been developed to the point where they came into conflict with the feudal relations of production. At this time, there were other kingdoms in the rest of the island—Kotte, Seethawaka and Raigama. When the British captured the Northern Kingdom and the maritime provinces in 1796, only the Central kingdom remained as a feudal regime; in 1815, the entire country was unified under British colonial rule.

Under the feudal system, the Tamil nationality had a self-sufficient economy, a common territory and a common language; the sense of belonging to one community was there; one could also discern certain specific psychological characteristics, as well as special features regarding traditions, lifestyles, culture and the struggle for liberation. The Sinhala nationality was also in a similar position at this stage. With the superimposition of the capitalist system, a national market that encompassed the entire island came into being. A centralised state structure was imposed on Ceylon before the nationalities living together within her territorial boundaries in the North, in Seethawaka, in Kotte and the Hill Country could be brought together as one bourgeois 'nation'. In keeping with these specific circumstances, the national barriers between the Seethawaka and Kotte kingdoms, and the national barriers between up-country and low-country are being systematically broken down. The national barriers between the Northern kingdom and the rest of the country are even slower in dissolving.

At present neither the Sinhala-speaking people nor the Tamil-speaking people have a fixed economic existence, independent of each other. Yet, they are distinguishable from one another by language and by territory; each considers itself to constitute a specific community and have special characteristics of psychology, tradition, lifestyle, culture and mode of struggle for liberation. What this makes clear is that neither the Sinhala-speaking people nor the Tamil-speaking people have reached the status of a 'nation', commensurate with capitalist development; in short, these two groups constitute a people who are in a phase of transition from nationality to one Sri Lanka nation.

Thus, the existing state in Sri Lanka today is a multi-nation state, made up of people who speak Sinhala and Tamil and are transforming themselves from nationality to nation. The decision as to whether they are to live together with the Sinhala-speaking people, or separately from them, namely, whether they are to form one state, or two, is entirely in the hands of the Tamil-speaking of this country. This is what the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna means when it says that it accepts the right of the Tamil-speaking people to self-determination. Every step that is taken to keep the Tamil-speaking people within a single state by force, by the use of repressive action and without any deference to their wishes is nothing more than a rejection of their right to self determination.

In adopting a correct Marxist-Leninist position on this question, we should not confuse the right of nations to secede, freely, with the advisability of a specific state seceding at a specific point in time. As in all other questions, our belief is that the revolutionary party of the proletariat should resolve this question independently, and in accordance with each specific situation, taking into consideration the interests of the proletarian struggle for socialism and social development in general.

While we accept the right of the Tamil-speaking people to self-determination, while we oppose the use of repressive tactics against them, the JVP reserves its right to consider whether the decisions taken by the Tamil-speaking people are right or wrong in accordance with a Marxist-Leninist analysis of society, and to voice its opinion in this regard. Even though the JVP will not use any compulsion against the Tamil-speaking people due to a decision that the JVP considers to be a wrong one and though it will, in fact, oppose anyone who attempts to use force in such a situation, we nevertheless also reserve the right to express our difference of opinion on such a decision at a theoretical level.

Looking at the situation that prevails today, we see that any decision taken by the Tamil-speaking people to separate themselves from the Sinhala-speaking people could lead to such separation taking place under the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front, which is a capitalist political party. We do not dispute the right of the Tamil-speaking people to secede, even under such a leadership of the capitalist class. Yet, as proletarian revolutionaries, our objective is to find a scientific, honest, permanent and correct solution to the national question, as to all other socio-economic questions. As Marxist-Leninist, we know that such a solution can only be brought about under a dictatorship of the proletariat, which will be established as a result of the proletarian socialist revolution. We give priority to the revolutionary interests and needs of the proletariat. This is the need of this era. We cannot, and should not permit the capitalist class to fulfill its own needs and interests without issuing a challenge to the capitalists of the 'master' race as well as to those of the minority race and all their agents and allies in general. It is with this objective that the JVP pledges itself to bring about a correct awareness of the national problem both among the master race and the minority race and engage in political agitation to this end.

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As others . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

The educated reader has always felt the need for a magazine that was intelligent, serious and lively without being just academic and heavy. Within twelve months, the L. G. has begun to fill this need.

Sarath Muttetuwegama.

* *

We would like to congratulate the "Lanka Guardian" on its first anniversary. At a time when the 'mainstream media' has allowed no place for oppositional viewpoints the Guardian has provided a forum, especially for the new leadership which is emerging within the Left movement. We wish the magazine well and expect it to fulfill the hopes it has aroused among the English-speaking liberal layers

Vasudeva Nanayakkara

President, Lanka Sama Samaja Party
(New Leadership)

* *

Mr. Editor, when you launched your magazine I gave you 180 days. When I returned to old pastures you gave me 90 days. I was wrong; you were right. Congratulations from an old colleague, and more power to the elbow of a mischievous bloody anarchist with a fine sense of humour.

Nalin Fernando

* *

In its first year of publication, the "Lanka Guardian" has proved the most readable periodical of its kind in our country. Special mention should be made of its excellent coverage of the emerging Left.

A. M. Jinadasa,

Chairman Peoples Democratic
Party (PDP)

* *

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your first anniversary. It is no easy task to sustain a newspaper or journal sans the patronage of the State.

While it is common knowledge that press freedom today is limited to mere words and that the state controlled media are being used for Government propaganda, it is very refreshing to note that your journal has been following a democratic path.

In the field of International news you have been striving to arrive at an independent and radical position without being influenced by the distortions of the dominant Western media.

We wish your journal the strength to expose the callous exploitation of poor nations by the metropolitan centres and their multinationals, that is being done increasingly today.

H. N. Fernando

President, Ceylon Teachers Union.

The biggest achievement of the "Lanka Guardian" to my mind, is that it has won for itself within so short a period a distinguished place in the field of local journalism as a journal that respects the intelligence of its readers and their right to be informed and, as a journal that commands respect.

Unlike the newspapers of the Establishment the Guardian does not take its readers for granted. It treats them with respect.

It is intelligent in its criticism, intelligible in its writing and penetrating in its analysis.

It has character. And although it may sound frivolous to say this — it has, in contrast to many of the English newspapers of the Establishment an editor who can write English! I am not going into the elegance of his inimitable style.

At a time when the watchdogs of the nation have all become 'lap-dogs' of those in the seats of power, the "Lanka Guardian" can take pride in the fact that it has in its own small way and true to its name come to be the Guardian of the freedom of the press, in the best traditions of journalism and of the true journalist.

B. A. Siriwardana,
Editor — 'Aththa'

* *

It is encouraging to see the "Lanka Guardian" addressing itself to many social issues, including the role of women and women's rights. I wish it all success in its path-breaking venture.

Dr. Marina Wikremanayake Fernando

* *

The "Lanka Guardian" is celebrating its first anniversary in a context where the so-called national media is increasingly displaying signs of deterioration. Glancing through the major newspapers today it's quite clear that they are biased towards the interests of the dominant social, political and economic groups. The "Lanka Guardian" on the other hand has demonstrated what it means to be a genuine forum. It is indeed a 'forum' for the hitherto unheard voices and not-so popular and 'accepted' views.

Nimalka Fernando,
Gen. Sec. Students' Christian Movement.

* *

In a country that is quite full of dailies, weeklies and fortnightlies, it is creditable for the "Lanka Guardian" to have made such an impact within one year.

We readers wish its makers well to enable them to continue this prestigious journal for many more years to come.

V. K. Wijeratna
Panadura.

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TV with some tears

TV sets without antennae...? As Sri Lanka gatecrashes into the television era, this headline will surely make a footnote to mass communications folklore. Along with many other anecdotes, we suspect.

The ecstatic 'oohs' and 'aahs' of proud Colombo 7 matrons as the colour TV set was delivered at their doorstep turned to puzzlement, petulance and feline frenzy when the auspicious hour arrived on Saturday and no 'Oscar' show from Los Angeles. "It may be snowing in Hollywood, no?" was one inspired, if not-so-intelligent explanation when white shaky lines danced on the TV screens. "Are you getting anything, men?" The inner city phones were jammed with desperate inquiries to other members of the new High Society Club of TV owners.

An unusually cooperative press (the CDN is kind enough to give free space to each day's TV programme) did not publish the pictures its cameramen brought back from Maharagama, where the hurriedly constructed transmission tower was still only fifty odd feet high and had at least another fifty feet to climb. Last-minute problems had compelled the Tower to 'retreat' from Kollupitiya to a less congenial spot at Maharagama, close to, some say, an abandoned motor spares factory while others maintain it was a 'noodles joint! With the Sri Lankan genius for the sort of organised chaos which traditionally accompanies a village wedding or a middle class 'At Home', everybody was getting into the act, including a band of wide-eyed kids and their open-mouthed elders, who were jumping over puwak trees felled for some ill-defined but easily guessable purpose. Meanwhile time was ticking away and the monks on hand to bestow the blessings of the Enlightened One had to busy themselves with meditations

on matters less transient than the audio-visual.

The SLBC which may be concealing an understandable envy over the success of a trail-blazing private firm had no breathless on-the-spot commentator. If only he had been there, the *mise-en-scene* would have reminded him of Houston Texas, with another US satellite about to blast-off. Such was the excitement which attended Sri Lanka's entry into the TV age.

And so, Sri Lanka's top One Percent, by the grace of the IMF and Sanyo, will soon sit back to absorb a new culture embellished by the adventures of the Los Angeles Police Department and the escapades of the Bionic Woman. An indignant Trade Minister who made the frontpages with an "I'll get them" threat aimed at the private trade had asked the Chairman of the State Trading Corporation to get cheaper Japanese sets. In 1942, as a correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* noted, the Japanese fleet did not reach Colombo or Trinco. But Hitachi and Mitsui, Sanyo and Datsun, Matsushita and Toyota are dealing with that unfinished business in their own fashion.

To complete the far from vicious circle of irony we had the characteristically brusque answer of a party leader before the 1956 deluge. A wealthy patron of several organisations, this retired laird was asked to gift a TV set to a neighbourhood welfare society.

"You buggers think I am a capitalist?" was the blunt reply, proclaiming that both milk-and-water capitalism and free milk-and-bun socialism, like the 'old' UNP, was dead.

We may be poor but at least our rich know how to live with the Tom Jones!

May Day Circus Elephants and (Bengal) tigers

The UNP cannot take us on the merry-go-round the way it is doing with voters", a top SLFP trade union organiser told the L.G. "We are not kids" he added.

This comment followed a blunt rejection by Mrs. Bandaranaike, the SLFP leader, of a last-minute offer of the Children's Park at Havelock Town as the venue for the SLFP's May Day rally. Its usual venue, the Pedris Park, near by is being used by the visiting Indian Apollo Circus.

Then the UNP did a somersault. It said that The Apollo Circus will be closed down and Pedris Park given to the SLFP. "We are not acrobats" snorted an ex-Minister: The SLFP then decided to hold its meeting on May 7th. "Mrs Bandaranaike has only one question to ask...is this the so-called democracy of the UNP?" The UNP did another turn. An informal offer of Independence Square (never released for May Day rallies in recent times) was made. The SLFP still said 'no'.

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 4)

Piffle

Miss. Felicity Gonsal's lengthy letter (issue of April 1) could easily be reduced to one single word—PIFFLE—without losing a tittle of its value.

Of that acknowledged master of Balderdash and Twaddle—the anonymous Fowler, it will be an untold kindness to him to ignore, even excuse, his many vagaries and misconceptions. "QUEM JUPITER VULT PERDERE, PRIUS DEMENTAT".

A Porcine mind within a Hir-cine Frame, he continues to wallow in a mire of his own making, a process he appears to find strangely exhilarating.

Elmer de Haan

Profiles of Sri Lankan Poverty (3)

Poverty groups and economic setting

At this stage of the analysis, it would be useful to place the poverty groups in their economic setting and examine how the distribution of sources and the socio-economic structures in their communities are related to the persistent poverty of these groups. We saw that Mirissa and Horape illustrate patterns of poverty somewhat different from the rest. In Horape the process of urbanisation has brought diversified income-earning opportunities to the rural community which lived there. Land began to acquire value for residential purposes in this process. Village communities which are caught up in the expansion of the urban sector would invariably benefit. Even small plots of highland which had yielded little income in the past are converted into assets of high value. It is only a very small group in the village who would have no land at all or whose ownership is in such fragmented holdings that it is of little value who are likely to get marginalised in the process of urban expansion. But even here the growth of urban activity provides a diversified labour market for such persons and enables them to earn reasonable livelihoods. This is by and large the process which we have witnessed in Horape. It would indicate that villagers in the urban fringe would generally improve their living conditions. Their situation would be very different from the propertyless urban poor within the city who are uprooted from their village links, have no assets of their own and are cast into the urban labour market in which the level of unemployment is rising. Therefore it is to be expected that the poverty that we observe in Horape is more of an accidental nature than of a structural kind. It is derived from sudden loss of employment, from situations which

have led to migration to Horaph from another village, a high dependency ratio and similar circumstances. It is invariably a situation which afflicts those who own no land of economic size.

Fishing

In Mirissa the situation is somewhat different. Here the poverty group consists largely of households who have been marginalised as a result of the introduction of a new fishing technology. The government programme which introduced mechanised boats for deep sea fishing led to an alteration of the pattern of ownership of resources, the structure of power and the distribution of incomes in the village community. It bypassed the traditional fishing elite who owned the equipment required for the traditional modes of fishing which relied heavily on deep sea fishing.

The government programme reached out to those directly engaged in fishing—the fishing crews which worked for these elites—and provided them with mechanised boats under a hire purchase programme which gave them access to new resources, freeing them from their dependence on the traditional power holders in the village. While the introduction of the new technology did to some extent overturn the old power structure in the village, in the process it displaced some of the village crafts and economic activities which were organised round the traditional fishing technology. The import of nylon nets reduced the use of local nets and other coir-made items. Coir spinning ceased to be lucrative. In this situation however most of the coir workers could not find alternative types of coir craft or other income-earning opportunities. A combination of

coir spinning and manual labour did not provide enough income especially when the number of dependent members in the household was considerable. A few of the coir workers were of the **Durawa** caste and in the local situation they could not readily have access to fishing operations which were controlled by the **Karawa** caste. They continued in coir work and other tasks that were less lucrative.

While the new technology led to a reorganisation of the groups engaged in different types of fishing, a few of the fishermen engaged in subline fishing using small boats were disadvantaged. It is also possible that the new technology together with changes in the coastal area had adverse effect on the fishing operations close to the shore and reduced the catch. Not all the crewmen were able to find adequate and continuous employment in the new activity and in the new distribution of functions in the fishing operations. The poorest segment of the Mirissa community which has been discussed in the micro-study were mainly those who were adversely affected or bypassed by the new technology.

Walgampaya, Henegama and Paranagama present three interesting examples of poverty arising out of village economies which are mainly agricultural but which are organised on a very limited resource base. They illustrate the problems of village economies where on the one hand income-earning opportunities in the village have not expanded to keep pace with the increasing workforce, and on the other the labour markets outside the village had not generated sufficient demand for village labour.

All three villages exist alongside the plantation sector. Wal-

gampaya is adjacent to the mid country tea plantations, Paranagama which is located in the coconut area with coconut plantations surrounding it and Henegama is in the environs of the low country tea plantations. The land resources within the village as a whole are quite small. For Paranagama with 170 households, the total extent of paddy land was approximately 30 acres and the highland (exclusive of coconut estates) available to the village was approximately 200 acres. In Walgampaya there were 271 households. The total land resource consisted of 254 acres, 193 of which was highland and 61 was paddy. In Henegama the total number of households was 176, The village had 97 acres of paddy and 347 acres of highland. In terms of land resources in proportion to the population, it would be seen that Walgampaya is the poorest. As pointed out earlier, it has only a limited land extent for cultivation of the staple food and the output of this extent of paddy is far below the requirements of rice for the village population. The situation is a little better in Henegama both in respect of paddyland and highland. The overall land resources available to the village would however indicate that agricultural activity particularly at its present low level of technology and output would be able to support only a very small part of the population in the village. As is to be expected, the distribution of land in the villages is skewed, but the structure of land ownership is not such that few families own substantial extents of land.

On the whole, land holdings are small, the largest seldom exceeding a range between 5-10 acres. While this structure of land ownership does not reflect gross disparities, the limited resource base not permitting such disparities, the inegalitarian distribution of land as we have it, inevitably results in a large number of households being deprived of any reasonable access to land. As might be expected, it is these households which are

pushed to the margin of absolute poverty.

But landlessness itself would not have been a cause of absolute poverty if the village economy was viable enough to create a market for labour. This the village economy could not do to any appreciable extent except to provide opportunities for casual labour and for seasonal employment as well as for domestic services in the more well-to-do households.

In all this the poorest segments of the village have been confronted with a relatively stagnant village economy or at least a village economy which was not expanding fast enough to absorb the growing workforce and at the same time a loosening of the patron-client ties which had supported them in the past.

Labour market

The main market for village labour was therefore outside the village itself and this was available in the commercial plantation sector. But if we examine the situations in Walgampaya, Paranagama and Henegama, we find that with the exception of Henegama, the commercial plantation sector could do very little to expand the labour market for village labour. In the case of Walgampaya, the tea plantations were more or less adequately supplied with resident Indian labour and the demand for village labour was marginal. The demand would be residual and therefore provide only a very casual and irregular source of income. In the case of Paranagama, of all the perennial crops, the coconut plantations made the least demand on labour. One labourer was adequate for 10-15 acres. The entire coconut plantation of over a million acres supports a workforce which does not exceed 100,000. The coconut plantations could have provided a labour market for the village only if it could have introduced new and more intensive agricultural systems in the coconut plantations through interplanting, pasture, dairying and so on. But under

the previous ownership, proprietors of the coconut plantations were reluctant to undertake an enterprise of this nature and to integrate the village economy with the plantation economy. Prospects however now exist for such an integration after the land reform.

In Henegama the plantation economy depended largely on the supply of village labour and therefore the propertyless households had a ready market for their casual labour in the adjoining estates.

It has to be pointed out however that in the case of Walgampaya the village is in fairly close proximity to urban centres and is not typical of some of the Kandyan villages which are far removed from access to urban labour markets. Caught between this limited resource base and the stagnant village economy on the one side and a plantation economy which fails to integrate itself effectively with the village economy and offer an expanding market of income-earning opportunities on the other side, the propertyless households or the households with uneconomic landholdings in the village have been pushed to conditions of acute poverty.

Highland Agriculture

There is however another aspect which ought not to be neglected in analysing the use of resources and the manifestation of poverty at the village level. The village agricultural systems of the areas we have been examining have been traditionally geared to subsistence agriculture and within this subsistence system the efficient management of agriculture was found largely in the lowland rice cultivation system. The highland agriculture was generally of a migrant type and seldom demanded the intensive management and the cultural practices of a settled system. As a result it might be argued that the agriculturist in the peasant economy seldom looked on a small highland holding as a valuable agricultural resource.

Race in cinema — a note on Sinhala responses

by Reggie Siriwardena

The most valuable piece of writing that could be done about *Sarungale* would be, not a film review, but a survey of responses to it by the Sinhala mass audience. Since I don't have the resources to attempt this, I have done the next best thing: I have tried to gauge from published criticism and from the reactions of Sinhala friends and acquaintances some indication of the range of responses that the film has elicited. Neither the critics nor those with whom I have personally discussed the film are, of course, representative of the Sinhala mass audience, but that makes some of the reactions I encountered all the more revealing and significant. Not all responses were adverse by any means, but I shall deal with those that were, and offer my own comments on them.

One of the depreciating remarks about the film that I came across (particularly among critics 'of a 'progressive' persuasion) was that it didn't probe the socio-economic causes of racialism. This is, of course, true as a simple statement of fact. The nearest *Sarungale* gets to a comment on the general problem of racial conflict is in Nadarajah's remark that people are good, and it is only 'third-class politics' that has corrupted them. This is the character talking, not the director or script-writer, but it seems to be consistent with the film's own presentation of racial politics as an alien intrusion into the otherwise harmonious relations between Nadarajah and his Sinhala neighbours.

To think of people as good and politics as bad is, of course, naive (where did the bad people who created the bad politics come from, and how did they corrupt the good?). But should one reject *Sarungale* because it

doesn't offer a penetrating political study of racialism? I, for one, am glad that Sunil Ariyaratne and Gamini Fonseka (it seems safe to assume that the latter had more to do with the film than even the credits suggest) didn't even attempt to treat racialism in its economic or political dimensions. Not only because a film which did this with real understanding couldn't have got past the censors, but also because I don't think Sunil and Gamini could have brought such an endeavour off anyway.

That doesn't mean that I underestimate the significance and importance of what they have done. Any honest discussion of *Sarungale* has to start from the recognition that it is a humane and courageous film, and that in daring to tackle the hitherto tabooed subject of racial relations its makers have set an example that should be both a reproach and a stimulus to other artists of the cinema.

But more disturbing than the devaluing of *Sarungale* on political grounds is the fact that some people—among them, even some middle-class intellectuals—thought that the film was 'unbalanced' in its treatment of racial conflict. Where was this unbalance to be found? In the fact that we saw Sinhala racialists on the screen but no Tamil ones. On the level of film criticism, this argument may be met by saying that it is based on the application to a feature film of criteria that are really relevant to a documentary.

If Sunil Ariyaratne had been making a political documentary about racialism in Sri Lanka, he should, of course, have juxtaposed Sinhala and Tamil racialists, and his film would have been unbalanced and partial without this.

But in a film whose central character is a Tamil clerk who becomes a victim of Sinhala racialism, and whose action in present time is all in Colombo (I shall come to the Jaffna flashbacks in a moment) it would have ruined the unity and narrative structure of the film to cut away from the Colombo scenes of communal tension to racialists on the rampage in Jaffna (which is presumably what the objectors wanted). Does one demand of a feature film about Nazi persecution of Jews that it should also depict reactionary Zionists to be 'balanced'?

I said this was the answer I would give in terms of film criticism, but it seems to me that something more important than aesthetics is involved here. I suspect that the criticism of *Sarungale* as 'unbalanced' conceals a real if unconscious sense of wounded chauvinism, and shows how deep these feelings can run, even among middle-class intellectuals. For what else can explain the fact that these critics failed to see the real and admirable balance the film maintained between the Colombo scenes in present time and the Jaffna scenes in flash-back—the balance between the racial violence that Nadarajah suffers and the caste violence that he has already inflicted on his sister and her lover?

This juxtaposition not only prevents the film from turning into a black-and-white study (without it Nadarajah would have been the saint or god the kasippu-dealer and his wife see him as). It also sets one kind of inhumanity of man to man against another, and greatly broadens the scope and social awareness of the film. Against the view of those who chauvinistically

reacted against **Sarungale** as 'pro-Tamil', I should like to point out that the strongest moral reaction the film evokes is against the behaviour of a man, gentle and peace-loving by nature, believing in racial amity, who not only defends caste discrimination on religious grounds, but beats his sister's lover brutally and drives her to suicide. In fact, the film's portrayal of this situation is neither pro-Tamil nor anti-Tamil; it is a revelation, full of insight, into the complexities of human behaviour under the distortions of social conditioning.

I find equally admirable in its perceptiveness the portrait of the kasippu-dealer's wife, full of goodwill towards Nadarajah in normal times but at the crisis only concerned that her [husband should keep out of trouble, as well as of Nadarajah's friend and fellow-clerk who shamefacedly avoids him so as not to run any personal risk. These characterisations are disturbingly real in their depiction of the way in which simple 'good' people can and do behave in times of racial conflict.

I don't maintain that **Sarungale** is free of artistic faults (to mention only the most serious, Nadarajah's meeting with his former love in the cafe at the time of the riots, is a contrived coincidence, rendered even more unconvincing by its stagey dialogue). But any criticism of **Sarungale** seems to me niggling if it doesn't recognise that the film's failings are greatly outweighed both by the intrinsic significance of its subject and its measure of actual cinematic achievement.

Its greatest asset is, of course, Gamini Fonseka's splendid performance, whose virtuosity is much more than a matter of speaking Sinhala with a Tamil accent and Tamil (I am told) fluently and accurately. He has transformed his whole personality and bearing for the part, and he creates with marvellous consistency and reality the slow speech and movements of an ageing and lonely man whom life has passed by. But here again, it is not

(Continued on page 40)

Sarungale — a brave attempt

by J. Uyangoda

Reviewing a recent Sinhala film, a couple of months ago, I had stated, among other things, that the task of creating a serious Sinhala Cinema has fallen on the shoulders of the young artists of the present generation. At the time I had only Dharma-sena Pathiraja in mind, as the only Sinhala Cinema artist who had a commendable creative ability coupled with a sense of social responsibility. Now, another new and young artist has made his presence felt in the sphere of creative Sinhala cinema. He is Sunil Ariyaratne, whose second film "**Sarungale**" (The Kite) is now being screened.

Sunil is a relative new-comer to the Sinhala Cinema. It is a pity that he first entered the arena with a film which failed to make any impact or those movie-goers who long for serious cinema. But with his second attempt, Sunil seems to have compensated for his initial failure. "**Sarungale**", with its virginal theme and undeniable relevance (Yes, relevance, though it has become controversial concept) to the contemporary Lankan Society signifies an important development in the zigzag course of Sinhala Cinema. I think, in the entire existence of Sinhala Cinema, "**Sarungale**" is the second film which deals with a really explosive phenomenon of present-day society. The first was Pathiraja's "**Ahas Gauwwa**". Pathiraja, despite certain short-comings and difficulties, made an exemplary attempt to focus on the problem of educated, unemployed, neglected and alienated youth. Pathiraja was the first Sinhala film-maker who not only believed but also demonstrated that Cinema, being an art too, has a historically determined and inescapable responsibility to society. (By the way, is Pathiraja having doubts about this concept of "Social responsibility?" This is the immediate question that comes to one's mind as far as "**Bambaru Avith**" is concerned). I think it is not too early to perceive, in

this context that Sunil Ariyaratne too is an artist who displays a rare sensibility, as awareness of the actual issues of the contemporary Lankan Society. He, like Pathiraja, refuses to indulge in crude vulgarity and pseudo-aesthetic romanticism.

"**Sarungale**" is the story of a Tamil clerk—Nadarajah. He is a Jaffna Tamil working at a government office in Colombo. He is one of those "enlightened" or "peace-loving" Tamils who opposes and condemns Sinhala-Tamil communalism. Nevertheless, he strongly believes in the traditional caste system which prevails in Jaffna. This dualism in his beliefs is the main conflict in his character. This dualism and its tragic implications are shown in two directions. Nadarajah's younger sister Thangamani falls in love with a young man who belongs to an oppressed Tamil caste. With his strong caste-consciousness, he vehemently opposes this, threatens the lovers and finally assaults the young man. The girl caught between her unfortunate lover and aggressive, uncompromising brother, ultimately, commits suicide by jumping into the "Andia" well. Meanwhile, Nadarajah is confronted with another tragic defeat in his personal life. He falls in love with a Sinhala girl—Susila daughter of one of his friends residing in Jaffna. But Nadarajah is prevented from fulfilling his romantic dreams, because of Susila's mother's objections which are based on racial grounds. Now, having lost both his sister and his love, Nadarajah is left alone with his vanished hopes.

After these two tragic events, Nadarajah lives a lonely and somewhat ascetic life. He works in the office and comes back to his hermitage-like boarding house, always in a pensive mood, probably contemplating and regretting the past. Living in a state of nostalgia and constantly retreating into solitude, he finds a friend in a small girl about ten years old

the daughter of a nearby boutique keeper. Both Nadarajah and the little girl have a peculiar likeliness to each other which reminds us of some characters in Dostoevsky's novels. It is through the innocent relationship of these two that the whole story of Nadarajah unfolds. The little girl wants Nadarajah to make kites for her and sometime asks some childish questions that take Nadarajah's mind back to the past which is nothing but an agonising journey. To the little girl, the kite is a fulfillment of her own dreams. But for Nadarajah it symbolizes his vanished hopes and personal tragedies. What a real and dramatic juxtaposition!

Meanwhile, communal riots break out. Tamils are assaulted and their shops looted. Nadarajah has a self avowed faith in Sinhala-Tamil racial harmony. Moreover, he believes in the original goodness of human beings. Though the Tamil people are subjected to various kinds of harassment, Nadarajah does not believe that he is in danger, merely because of this idealistic belief in the natural goodness of man. He refuses to take into account the warnings of Simon—the boutique-keeper friend—and Simon's wife. Though Simon again and again pleads with him not to take risks his convictions on man's good virtues are so strong that he leaves home only to come back one night brutally assaulted by Sinhala thugs. Nadarajah dies on the lap of Simon, having fulfilled his last promise to the little girl bringing a new kite.

This is a simple, but original story. The fundamental significance of this film is that it is based on one of the most explosive issues of our society—Sinhala-Tamil communalism and communal violence. The story written by **Gamini Fonseka** is not something the existence of which can be visualized only in the imaginary world. It is a story about a living phenomenon, although the treatment given to that phenomenon can be questioned. I think "Sarungale" can be included in a genre of Sinhala films which is distinct from that of Lester Peiris. Lester,

that lonely artist, as someone called him in a different context, never attempted to make a film dealing with the living actualities of our society. Even his major work **Gamperaliya**, viewed retrospectively, was not more than a romanticized simplification of Martin Wickramasinghe's best novel. Sunil Ariyaratne's achievement here is that he has shown, albeit vaguely and perhaps unconsciously, a way forward from where Lester has left or has been leaving. Lester has categorically proved, particularly in his "**Ahasin polovata**", that as a film maker his historical role, if he ever had one, is over. It is still questionable whether Sunil has realized the need of facing a new direction, very different from that of Lester Peiris. Nevertheless, with his expedition to fresh and fertile grounds in search of a theme, Sunil questions the very legitimacy of many a false attitude of the Sinhala Cinema.

Undeniably, both Gamini Fonseka who wrote the story and Sunil Ariyaratne who directed the film do display a basic weakness, i.e. the lack of full understanding of the main issue involved—Sinhala-Tamil communalism. This is a liberal bourgeois and humane kind of outlook which results in an inevitable failure to grasp the true nature of the phenomenon.

Even Nadarajah, as a Tamil, does not realize the essential truth that the Sinhala-Tamil enmity is the inevitable result of national oppression. He believes in equality and friendship of Sinhala and Tamil peoples but is blind to the racial 'disharmony'. Both Gamini and Sunil must have wanted to create the character of Nadarajah as a Tamil Bodisathva. Nadarajah is a kind-hearted, soft-spoken, well-disciplined good Tamil who opposes communalism and refuses to be identified with his communal minded Tamil brethren. To Nadarajah communalism, whether it is Sinhala or Tamil, is an evil thing which is brought about by "dirty politics." Men, irrespective of their racial origins, are by nature, good- If not for "dirty politics" peoples of different communities can co-exist in an

atmosphere of mutual trust. People misled by politicians, kill each other. In actual fact, this personal philosophy of Nadarajah is basically erroneous and nowhere in the film is this philosophy questioned. It is a truism that "dirty" politics, to a certain extent, is responsible for the Sinhala-Tamil enmity and the outbreak of communal violence. But it is not the root cause of present day communal disharmony. This is explained only in terms of national oppression i.e.—politics. Both Gamini and Sunil, together with Nadarajah, have failed to grasp this fundamental. There is a humane disgust of politics which has its inevitable, naive implications. Nigger is a good nigger so long as he remains unconscious of white oppression! So are the good Tamils like Nadarajah!! Ye Tamils, be martyrs of thy "noble" convictions!!!

I stated above that the main contradiction in the character of Nadarajah is the dualism in his beliefs. While Nadarajah condemns communalism, he believes in traditional caste systems.

While the main force of Nadarajah's character should have been his reactions to the national oppression, an over-emphasis is given to the caste factor at the expense of the national factor.

This lack of understanding of the issues involved and wrong perspective does not reduce the significance of Sunil's courageous attempt. The most welcome feature of the "Sarungale" is that it flies not in the heaven, but closer to the earth. Distortion and suppression of social reality has been the crime of the Sinhala cinema throughout its entire existence, with a few exceptions, of course.

A word must be said, finally, about the superb performances of Farina Lye. She has proved beyond any doubt that she is one of the few talented actresses we have today. What the film industrialists so far have done is to abuse her talents to suit their own purposes.

In memory of . . .



Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Inserted by
LAKLOOMS
*of 72 Chatham Street,
Colombo 1.*

Which way for the Left?

⟨9⟩ Marxist Youth Front

Mr. D. S. Mallawarachchi was one of the "group of 14 CC members" in the Central Committee of the LSSP that challenged the leadership in 1963-64, first on the question of the United Left Front and then on the question of coalition with the SLFP. A founder member of the LSSP (R) now RMP, he was one of those who led the 1968 split in the LSSP (R). He later broke away from the Samarakkody Group (RWP) and formed the "Marxwadi Tharuna Peramuna" (Marxist Youth Front) of which he is the Secretary. The interview is by Gamini Dissanaiké.

Q: Why do you call your organisation the Marxist Youth Front? Doesn't this implicitly attribute the vanguard role to the youth rather than the working class?

A: We believe the youth of this country is one of the formidable forces of the Proletarian Socialist Revolution. For this reason we think it is necessary to have an organisation to train the youth in revolutionary theory and practice. The MTP came into being to fulfil this revolutionary task. While the youth is being organised we intend publishing a programme for the Revolutionary Party. We shall invite revolutionaries of other organisations who are searching for a correct programme to join in a discussion. Following such a discussion we believe a programme can be prepared on the basis of which revolutionaries can form the proletarian Revolutionary Party of Sri Lanka. In no way does this attribute the vanguard role of the revolution to the youth.

Q: On what issues did you break away from Edmund Samarakkody's Party?

A: As a result of working together with that group we were more than convinced that that leadership was not dedicated to the task of building a Revolutionary Party. Unless the top leadership is completely dedicated it is absurd to talk about building such a party.

Also we had differences on questions such as Trade Union work and United Front activities. Since

we separated, this group appeared on the same platform with the SLFP.

Q: A few years back you attempted to initiate discussions which would lead to a reunification of the Trotskyist Sections in Sri Lanka. What happened? What are the main obstacles to such a re-unification?

A: We made attempts to bring all the groups claiming to be Trotskyists for joint action. We failed. Later we attempted to bring all the groups who accept the politics of class-struggle. We included the JVP in this. We failed again. The principal obstacle is the absence of struggles. When the class struggle is developing these groups will either have to shed their sectarianism or disappear from the scene.

Q: As a Trotskyist, what made you join the United Front of several "New Left" groups when most brother Trotskyist organisations have refused to join this or any other such united front?

A: We think the working class should be mobilised today in order to debate the anti-working class and anti-democratic campaign conducted by the UNP. We also think the working class cannot be mobilised by any single party today. Therefore, the only way to oppose the offensive of the UNP against the working masses is to form a United Front of all those parties who are prepared to oppose the UNP and the SLFP.

We do not demand ideological unity. We say despite the differences among these parties we can get

together on agreed issues for joint action against the government's offensive.

We joined nine other parties to hold a United May Day Rally in 1978. Some of these parties wanted to bring the SLFP also into this. We vehemently opposed this move and succeeded in keeping the SLFP out. But some of these parties held a joint meeting with the SLFP subsequent to the May Day on some other issue. Also very recently some of these parties have joined various other individuals and organisations to attend to Cyclone victims.

We have decided to work together with the ten parties as long as they engage in activities which will help to form a United Front which can mobilise the working masses against the government.

Q: You addressed the mass rally held at Hyde Park on December 28th 1978 under the auspices of the expanded JCTUO. What is the present situation on the Trade Union front?

A: The UNP government by a massive devaluation of the rupee cut the wages of the working class and simultaneously by removing the subsidy on rice, sugar etc. increased the prices of essential food items. The government also published a draft bill aimed at crippling the Trade Unions.

Such blows impelled the workers everywhere to demand united action against the government and leaders were compelled by the rank-and-file to bring the Unions together. In this situation the JCTUO convened a conference of Trade Union representatives which decided to hold a Public Rally on December 28th.

Although there was no decision at that time, the chairman announced at the commencement of the Rally that the unions participating

had decided to launch a strike. That was the mood of the workers. They would not have been satisfied with anything less.

The representatives of the unions met a few days after an utterly vague strike decision was taken without fixing a date. When the important question of electing a committee to decide on a plan of action came up, Bala Tampoe, the CMU leader insisted that the Eksath Kamkaru Samithiya (Trade Union) of which I am the general Secretary should be kept out of the committee while Batty Weerakoon the LSSP Trade Union leader insisted that Vasudeva Nanayakkara should be out. As there was no unanimity it ended up without electing a committee. Later Bala Tampoe and Batty Weerakoon have agreed to keep both Vasu and myself out, and a committee had been appointed without a meeting!

This committee known as the 'action committee' was in no hurry for any action. They wanted to mark time and kill the enthusiasm of the workers. Although they deliberated from January only in early September did they decide to call a one day's strike on September 28th.

Later it was revealed that not a single union in the 'action committee' had given notice of the token strike to the employers. The CMU, the biggest single union in the private sector, among the unions represented in the action committee normally the first to give notice of any strike to the employers, had forgotten to do so on this occasion. Only the Eksath Kamkaru Samithiya which is not in the action committee gave notice of that strike. So the present situation is that the trade union bureaucrats, just like they did under the coalition government, are holding back the organised working classes.

Q: What do you think of the postponement of the proposed one day General Strike by the JCTUO action committee.

A: What the events proved was that, in fact, there was no postponement of the Token General

Strike. If the action committee wanted to call the strike it would have countered the government propaganda which was aimed to confuse and intimidate the workers. Joint meetings at workplaces during lunch intervals issuing leaflets, posters etc. and mass rallies in Colombo and provinces would have been there. None of these took place!

What is your view of the role and potential of the SLFP?

A: The myth spread by the Communist Party of Sri Lanka from its very birth and all those others who claim to be Marxist - Leninist that a section of the capitalist class of our country is anti-Imperialist and therefore they are progressives was exploded by the role played by the SLFP.

The role played by the SLFP also demonstrated that the so-called progressive section of the capitalist class, just as any other sections can survive only as lackeys of the imperialists, by helping them continue to exploit the masses of our country.

By the inhuman massacre of the cream of our young people in 1971 the SLFP proved that in order to protect this socialist system it is prepared to resort to most barbaric methods.

The role played by the SLFP thus proved that the capitalist class has no progressive role to play in Ceylon.

We think it will continue to function as the alternative capitalist party minus the popular support it had in the past.

Q: What is your party's stand on the national question and concretely the slogan for a separate state in the North? What is your view of the TULF?

A: Marxwadi Tharuna Peramuna recognises the right of the Tamil people to determine whether they are prepared to continue to live with the rest of the people or whether they should live separately under a separate state. This is a fundamental democratic right. Those Marxist - Leninists who are deny-

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ing this fundamental right not only demonstrate that they are rejecting Lenin's teachings on this very important question but also supporting the ruling class of our country to suppress the Tamils by force, of arms.

We do not accept "Eelam" as the solution for the problems of the Tamils. Dethroning of the capitalist class, the principal enemy of the working masses including the Tamils from political power, and the smashing of the state, which oppresses all the working people including the Tamils, is the only solution.

We are the enemies of the enemy of the Tamil people and it is imperative that we join hands and conduct one battle against the common enemy.

Let the TULF arrange public discussions, seminars etc., so that the Tamils will be aware of the different paths from which they should choose, before they choose their path.

Q: Some allege that the JVP's new theoretical platform is basically Trotskyist. What is your view of the current theory and also the practice of the JVP?

A: The programme of the JVP shows that its leadership has not grasped the problem of wresting power from the ruling class.

The JVP programme contains a very long list of tasks to be fulfilled after the seizure of power.

Such a programme will also provide for organisations such as factory committee, Soviets, (or Worker's Councils) etc. which will organise the revolutionary messes.

If I am not mistaken Rohana Wijeweera has stated that they rejected Stalinism, Maoism, and Trotskyism. **But he has not explained why he rejected Trotskyism.** We think he will realise that it is his duty to explain what he rejected and why he did so.

The question is, has he rejected Marxism taught by Lenin too! Let us remember that the Communist International during Lenin's time insisted that the programme of its

National Section should provide for transitional demands that reflect the concrete needs of the masses.

Judging from the present activities of the JVP now we have doubts as to whether Wijeweera is aspiring to take the place of Pieter Keuneman vis-a-vis the Soviet Leaders.

It is apparent that the JVP considers that the anti-govt. struggles are not possible today. This is what the leaders of the LSSP and CP, who are known reformists, also say. Now the question is how to differentiate the reformist leaders of the LSSP and CP from the revolutionary leaders of the JVP on the basis of their current activities...

Q: How do you characterise the evolving situation in the country, and what are the tasks of the left in this context?

A: The economy of our country is being maintained as a part of the World Capitalist Economy, and therefore no section of the ruling class of our country can maintain the Ceylonese economy in contradiction with imperialists. Because the imperialist control of the World Economy the ruling class or the section which is in power at a given period can function only in collaboration with the imperialist masters.

The principal aim of the imperialists is to take away more and more and more of the social surplus of our country. In order to increase their share they compel the masses to reduce consumption drastically.

On the other hand more foreign capital is being brought in and more loans being obtained.

The result of all these measures will be that the imperialist grip on our economy will be tightened with every passing day.

With the coming recessions of the World Economy the working masses of our country will be more ruthlessly exploited.

The task is to launch a campaign to mobilise the working class, the youth, the students, the poor peasants, the Tamil speaking people and all other oppressed sections.

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APPEAL BY GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

"With no other qualifications than that of writer and with the sole merit of being a man of peace, I would like to issue an urgent call to all our friends in the world: help us so everyone will keep hands off Vietnam.

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1970

Ah Rosemary! — or Red under the bed

“You know my views very well. Outsider and I admit the criticism in certain quarters that I lean far too much to the liberal standpoint in matters of free expression and the arts may have some substance” confided Prof. Nimal Kankendiri, the wellknown critic, teacher, and man of theatre. We met casually at the seminar on **“Towards a definition of an indigenous Culture”** sponsored by the Algernon Charles Swinburne Society in commemoration of the writer’s 70th death anniversary. At the coffee-break and biscuits (Huntley and Palmer, of course) our conversation drifted to the urgent issues of culture, society and politics today, and the Professor, an intellectual to the very fibre of his being, began with a declaration of his fundamental position.

“What I do object to, and I am quite uncompromising on this, is the attempt to brand me a pinko fellow-traveller and a secret commie who has infiltrated into the ranks of this august organisation merely because I said that Franco’s attitude to Garcia Lorca was counterproductive, and that Hitler should have merely banned Mann’s books, not burnt them.....”

“Dr.....I really thought we might discuss some questions of more direct relevance to the cultural and political situation here....after all, you have just returned to the country after an absence of some years and I a fresh, unprejudiced opinion.... I don’t want to miss this great opportunity to hear you on....”

“Of course, of course I understand” he said understandingly. Professor Kankendiri has just had his second doctoral dissertation **“IMAGERY AND INSURGEN-**

CY”, the death motif in the 16th century folk verse of the Matara school and the 1971 uprising” published by the North Dakota University. It has been described by Prof. Jerome C. Hogwash (in **“Waikiki”**, the Journal of Aesthetics, East-West Center, Hawaii) as an “outstanding contribution to an integrative approach to the Third World cultural matrix as the ultimate ideological bulwark against the pressures of population explosion, subversion and the agitation for a new International Economic Order.”

(Incidentally Professor Hogwash, who has lectured extensively in Haiti, Chile and Chad will be the chief speaker at a symposium in Colombo next month on **“Omar Khayyam or How we lost Iran”**, sponsored by the Mass Communications Society, the Colombo Jaycees and the Martin Bormann Stiftung).

“Proff, can I invite your attention to some specific issues of current interest here in Sri Lanka.....?”

“Certainly, but not before I state my position very clearly.... I don’t want to be misreported, and I don’t wish to be misunderstood....I am aware, you see, that there are some new critics here who say that the camera should be a gun....I suppose they’ll be saying next that power grows out of the barrel of a pun....ha, ha....”

“The point being.....?”

“The point is that I detest dogmatism and didacticism.... which does not mean, that I want criticism to be an elitist exercise....no....the poet, the dramatist, the writer in general, is addressing his fellow men,

and most of them are ordinary mortals, not academics, aesthetes or intellectuals like you and I.... and when we come to assess any writing, we must bear in mind, its effect on the ordinary readers....the common responsehow would an average man react....?”

“And the politician....?” I inquired with the right touch of humility.

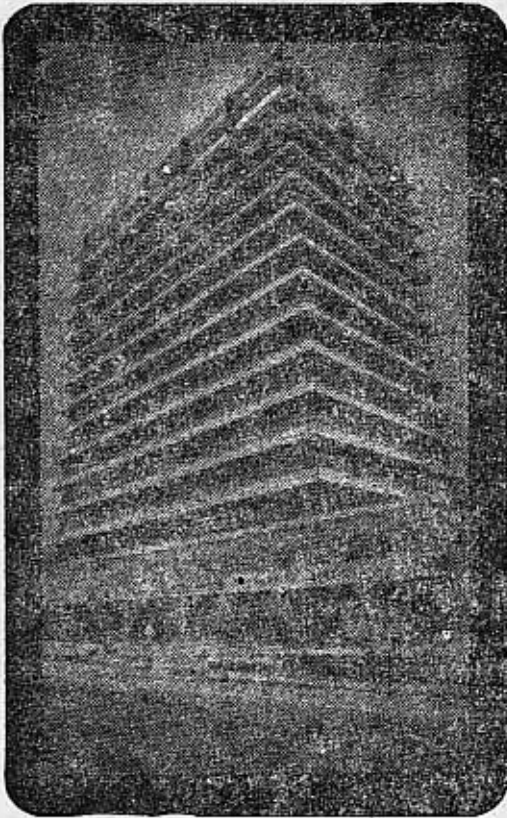
“Who could be more common than him,..? In any event, he has the right to consider the average reader’s reaction, the effect on the popular audience.... it might even be his first consideration....”

“Then it is goodbye to Leavis, and Ludowyk and the close examination of the words on the page and the author’s artistic intention....farwell. in short, to everything we learnt at Thurstan Road and Peradeniya.....?”

“At the feet of Doric and Passe.....?”

“Well, not quite feet but.... ah, Thurstan Road,” murmured the Professor suddenly borne away by a wave of nostalgic recollection....“ah, those passionate moments under the spreading mara trees, those quiet meditations on Spenser and Shelley in the seclusion of the Library, those young hopes of Parnassus, the transient joys of a secretive glance at those lissome lassiesah, Rosemary where art thou.....?”

“Prof, if, you mean Rosemary Rogers nee Jansz, she’s in Manhattan making a million bucks off her books....”



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"In English?" cries the Professor aghast "why Doric used to give her a C minus for her tutes....."

"Anyway she has unzipped her creative soul and her private life to the Washington Post, re-published recently in a bright new Colombo weekly.....I am afraid Prof, you are not even mentioned....evidently you were a non-starter and she was swept away by the fastest man in Asia, to wit Summa Navaratnam...."

"True, true....in the race for Rosemary, Summa tape the breast, first....I mean breasted the tape first I get so excited that the mere vision of that face wrecks my idiomatic structure...."

"In Summa's case his pace was his fortune, not his prose...."

"Never mind....let's get back to your questions....what seems to be bothering you.....?"

"Prof, in the past few weeks, two literary journals have brought grave troubles to their editors and contributors.....I refer of course to the Royal College Tamil Literary Association annual and the Jaffna University magazine.... teachers have been punished, students reprimanded....are we on the way to producing our own dissident writers....? Is there any yet unrecognised Solzhenitsyn in our midst.....?"

"I haven't seen the texts in question and shall refrain from any definitive statement....but as I warned you before we have to be careful.....politics and poetry, that's a very sensitive area.....and I am strengthened in my conviction on reading a new journal called **NAVASILU**....."

"NAVA what.....?"

"NAVASILU, Outsider, NAVASILU, the publication of the English Association of Sri Lanka, and the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies Sri Lanka, edited by Ashley Halpe, Professor of English, no less....."

"Yes.....?" asked I, a bit puzzled.....

"Well, you know, what NAVASILU means.....the new spark.....the flame motif on the cover is based on the traditional Sinhalese *gini-dalu* and the Siamese *kanaka* flame ornaments".

"So.....?"

"Well, ISKRA (spark) was the name of Lenin's paper and wasn't it Mao who said that a single spark can start a prairie fire, an incendiary idea not unfamiliar to Guevara and the *foco* theorists....."

"Dear God, you mean reds under the bed....?"

"Well, let's say under the literary buds....there are some suspiciously pink flowers blooming in this garden, as I shall show you....."

"Such as.....?"

"Take this poem for instance from an expatriate named Michael Ondaatje...."

"Why the scornful.....?"

"No, no Outsider....perish the thought.....you know I am no racist.....some of the best Burghers are my friends....ah, Rosemary....."

"Fair enough....."

"I am trying to impress on you the need to keep in mind the context, the wider context, the political and international context.....you know that there is a concerted and insidious campaign being conducted abroad by expatriates, especially those of the minority communities, to tarnish the image of Sri Lanka, and to belittle our present task of building a new society, a *dharmista* society.....now listen to these passages about his divorced parents. Now regard well the poet's attitude to his father (presented as an incurable alcoholic) and his mother's motoring habits while remembering that respect for parents, eradication of alcoholism, and the

curse of careless drivers, are some of the pillars of our new society....the Education Minister, Mr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne, has actually drafted a code for the new generation of students, and both the Foreign and Information Ministries are now planning a counter-attack on the anti-Lanka propaganda abroad.....I shall read the relevant passages.....

"and once, gaining instant fame, managed to stop a Perahara in Ceylon

—the whole procession of elephants, dancers
local dignitaries—by falling dead, drunk onto the street.

As a semi-official and semi-white at that

the act was seen as a crucial turning point in the Home Rule Movement

and led to Ceylon's independence in 1948.

(My mother had done her share too

her driving so bad
she was stoned by villagers
whenever her car was recognised)

"Well outsider, what do you think.....?"

"I rather like the sound of that 'dead drunk onto the street!'"

"Yes, the alliterative attempt is interesting.....but what's the effect of 'dead drunk', those three D's?"

"Three — Dimensional?"

"Hmmm....What I am asking you is for its impact.....?"

"The impact of a body dropping on macadam with a thunderous thud....?"

"Outsider, don't be so damn literal....we are discussing the poetic imagination and reader response....think of the associative suggestiveness of dead drunk, those two 'd's.....what would

(Continued on Page 40)

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Ah Rosemary . . .

(Continued from Page 38)

be the instant associations in the average reader's mind.....?"

"Double-distilled.....?"

"Brilliant....so you did pick up something from Doric's classes, after all....."

"We both drank at the same Pierean spring....."

"Now, Outsider, what is the author's real intention.....? let me help you....? surely this emphatic insistence on alcoholic images and associations is a deadly attack directed at the very foundations of the dharmista society?"

"And consider his thoroughly haughty attitude to [the rustics... ..'stoned by the villagers,...."

"Is he suggesting that the villagers were stoned, too....I mean sozzled.....?"

"No the attitude to the villagers has to be contrasted with

that subtly infiltrated phrase 'semi-white'....there you see the sinister subtlety of the argumentative attack....one of the causes that led to the attainment of our independence was this burgher bugger's alcoholic demonstration but that was possible only because he was 'semi-white,the natives D. S., Sir Oliver, Sir John had nothing to do with the struggle for freedom....and who pray, are these local dignitaries.....? Surely, Outsider, the reference is clear enough..... who is the dignitary that always parades himself at the perahera.....?"

"The Diyawadana Nilame....."

"And who is he.....?"

"Oh my God.....Nissanka W.....!"

"Precisely.....and the real clincher in what in my view is a blatantly subversive poem is the allusion to elephants. Why not buffalos.....or tigers.....? Why elephants when the whole

world knows that it is the symbol of the Grand Old Party.....?"

"Prof.....may I say with all humility, you have done a great service not only to the progress of poesy and literary criticism but to our common endeavour to build socialism in one country, minus of course the 200 square miles of the FTZ....."

Race in cinema . . .

(Continued from Page 29)

only of artistic achievement that I would speak, but also of the healthy shock for the Sinhala mass audience of seeing their most popular screen male idol playing the part of a Tamil. When the time comes to draw up a balance-sheet of Mr. Gamini Fonseka's career, his role in this film as well as his part in conceiving its story and theme will have to be set strongly on the credit side against all the bad films in which he has played and his right-wing politics.

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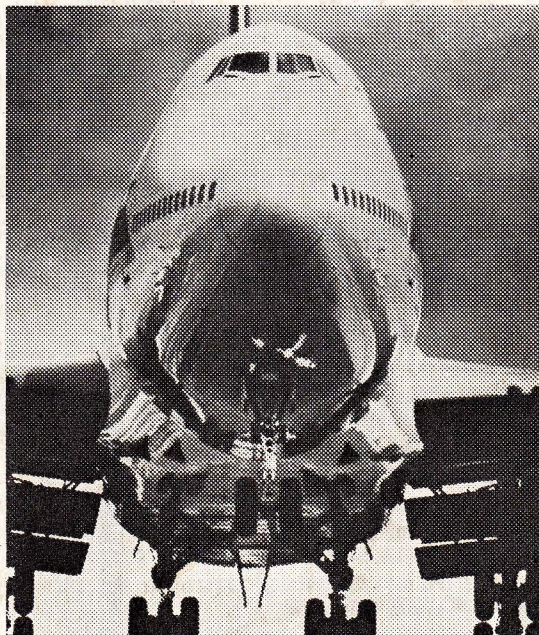
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