

GUARDIAN

MERCEDES IS SYMBOL AT U.N. TRADE TALKS

But U.S. Declines the Limousine's
Use, Feeling It Inappropriate.

at Forum on Aiding Poor

17/

W 5 75

By JAMES P. STERBA

Special to The New York Times

MANILA, May 14 — "Car for Chad to
the main entrance."

"Attention. Car for Sri Lanka up
front."

"Car for Botswana. Car for Botswana
to the Convention Center."

with the days and far into



Monks in revolt

— Kumari Jayewardena

Lalith's Benz and
world press

Colombo: A Western defeat

Knox and the missing pronoun

— Reggie Siriwardena

Vaithianathan / Dias eras

— Wiswa Warnapala

Palangetiyo

— J. Uyangoda

Jaffna: a deceptive lull

— Gamini Dissanaikie

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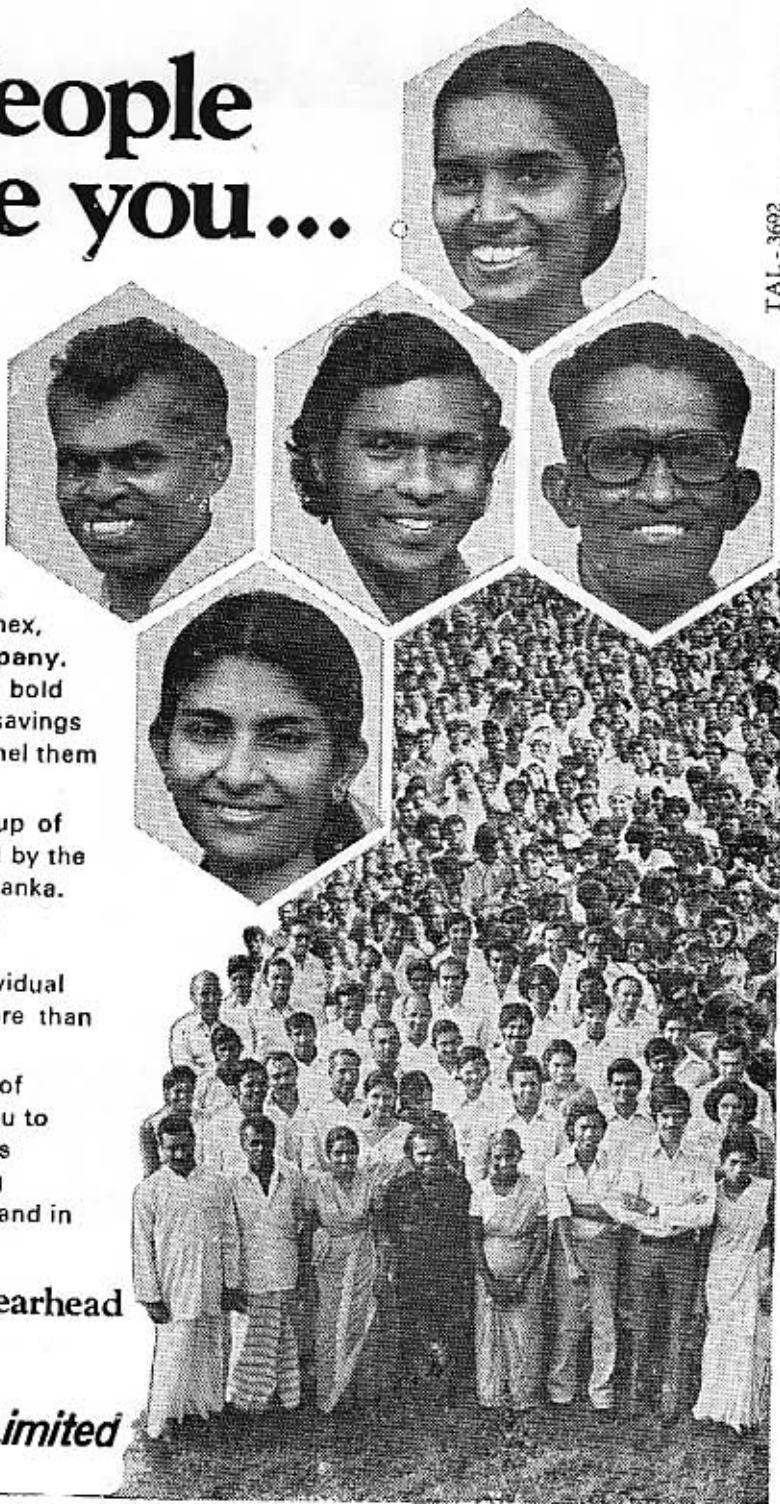
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Whose voice?

'It was a fine week for Sri Lanka' said a Philippine Cabinet minister after UNCTAD Secretary General Gamanl Corea's measured analysis of the world economic situation was followed by Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmudali's equally eloquent address. But while these able Sri Lankans were advancing the case for a New International Economic Order and chastising the western world for its Intransigence, the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, (surely a Third World voice) was broadcasting commentaries on the Manila meeting from the "Voice of America"! In the SLBC evidently the old order prevaleth. Shouldn't Chairman Kariyakarawana, Director-General Guruge and other top editorial executives educate their program producers on the elementary fact that Sri Lanka is a Third World non-aligned country?

Camp David

The non-aligned nations, Sri Lanka presiding, have condemned the Camp David Accords and declared that the Egyptian-Israeli treaty etc are null and void. They have also said these agreements are a violation of UN resolutions and the decisions of the Non-aligned conference.

The SLFP organ, the "Nation" states that once the summit is over, the UNP government will forget about non-alignment. The state-owned Lake House and TIMES, on the other hand, claim that the Colombo parley was the best vindication of the government's genuine non-alignment. But it is by their fruits we shall judge them.

The government cannot be expected to make foreign policy pronouncements every week. But the press managed by the Government must necessarily reflect the basic commitments of the country and the Government.

Will Chairman Bodinagoda and the Lake House editors now take their line

on Camp David on the basis of the Colombo decisions? In the past, the editorials, commentaries and news columns were heavily weighted on the side of the Treaty, with special place for the "Egyptian" point of view.

Ambassador Ernest Corea, a former CDN editor, was the unjust target of a bellicose headline in the 'Aththa' when he was misreported by the CDN. This week Lake House journalists will listen to a lecture on 'What Is News'. The lecturer—Ambassador Corea!

All the Shah's men

With the new government in Iran flushing out the Shah's supporters for miscellaneous crimes, there is an attempt by expatriate Shah admirers to find foreign jobs for fellow Shah sympathisers still in Iran. The pro-Shah men are using 'foreign connections' to make good their escape.

Will the Tourist Board permit foreign personnel to be brought here as "specialists" to take the posts already held by competent Sri Lankans?

Experienced Sri Lankans are doing extremely well in the hotel business, particularly in 4 and 5 star hotels in the Gulf. Will this process be reversed?

Eye — balls

Your readers were all waiting to see the conceited and arrogant Costain de Vos smash the 'surplus theory' and the cock-sure Chintaka. But he surrendered on the question of 'exploitative societies' and now seems to have run away from the "surplus theory" debate. Now he is talking of eye-ball confrontations of Russia and China. In the eye-ball confrontation with Chintaka, Costain blinked and sneaked away. Your esteemed journal should start serious discussions like that and avoid rude and crude personal fights and fisticuffs.

Trincomalee M. C. Bartlett.

Stop this

Why should the "Letters" column in "Lanka Guardian" be made a forum for petty polemics by a few self-centred contributors who seem to be engaged in a protracted campaign of abusing, calling names and mud-slinging? I am of opinion that this nonsense should stop forthwith.

Premasiri Mahingoda,
University, Colombo

(Continued on Page 6)

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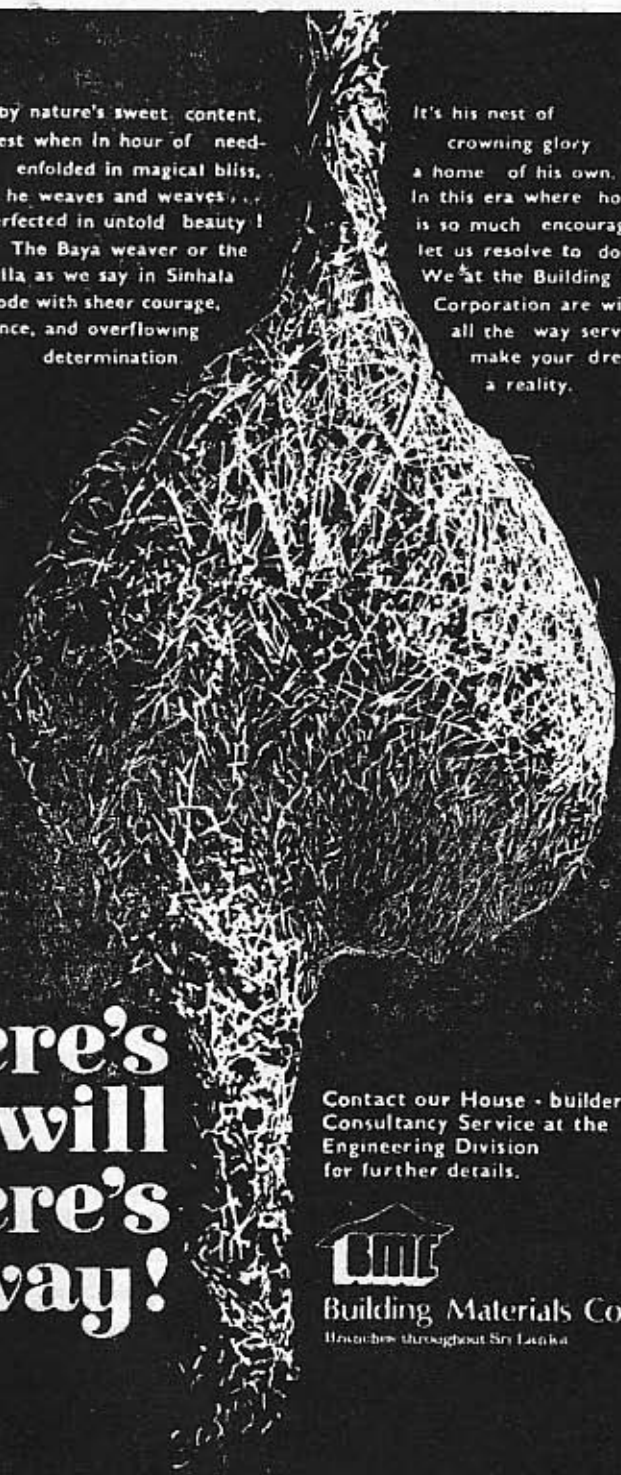
CONTENTS

Cover pic: Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera (See Page 13)

3 - 8 News background	18 Cinema
9 - 12 International news	19 Book review
13 - 14 Religion	20 - 21 Language
15 Nationhood	22 Culture
16 - 17 Diplomacy	23 As I like it

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Colombo: a defeat for the West

At the Mania meeting of UNCTAD, the Third World's trade union federation, the West successfully defended its hard line and got away with minimal concessions to the poor on their major, common demands. There was some division in their ranks but the Big Three, the US, West Germany and Japan, presented a solid phalanx.

In Colombo at the bureau meeting of the Non-Aligned, the political forum of the developing countries, the West, though a non-member, strove hard to protect its global interests, but its covert and not-so covert efforts ended in conspicuous failure.

Never concealing its contempt for the non-aligned movement in the 1960's, the West had to come to terms with what grew into a significant force in contemporary politics. Despite its manifest heterogeneity, the movement's main agitational thrust has remained anti-western. For this reason, the western nations have been increasingly apprehensive of the movement's expansion in numbers and by its basic solidarity. These anxieties turned into obvious alarm with the approach of the 6th summit in Havana.

Before the Belgrade conference last year, a handful of non-aligned countries became party to a western manoeuvre to sabotage the Havana summit. Because of her own pronounced pro-western policies in recent years and her declared antipathy to Cuba and Cuba's friendship with the Soviet Union, China joined this campaign.

Before and after Belgrade, the western and Chinese media launched a sustained propaganda offensive against Cuba in her capacity as host. Cuba's credentials were challenged, and an attempt was made to have the meeting postponed or the venue changed. Support was extended

to this propaganda campaign by the media in some Third World countries including Sri Lanka.

At Belgrade, this move was blunted and blocked. In the face of this reversal, the anti-Cuba campaign changed tactics. The chief aim was to dilute the powers of the Chairman by various measures disguised as wholesome 'procedural changes'. In Colombo, this attempt also met with failure.

Two issues then began to dominate the discussion and internal debate: Egypt and Kampuchea. Would the Arab League which expelled Egypt at the Baghdad meeting for Egypt's action in signing the US-inspired Treaty with Israel extend its policy of trying to 'isolate' Egypt. At the Islamic conference in Morocco, a larger forum, the anti-Sadat campaign scored a notable success. What would happen in Colombo?

The newspapers were full of a move to 'sack' Egypt. It was clear later that it was a two-pronged move—to condemn the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty and to 'suspend' Egypt.

The Colombo meeting condemned the Accords and the Treaty as a violation of UN resolutions and said that all agreements which excluded the Palestinian question and the PLO were null and void. Though the suspension move (surely a tactic?) failed the outright condemnation and the fact that the matter is now left to Havana takes the 'isolation' of Egypt a step further,

Incidentally, some African countries, particularly the Francophone countries, fought a hard rearguard action on behalf of Egypt. In the weeks after the Angola-Zaire-Shaba crisis, this journal had occasion to refer to the "french connection" in Africa. This 'connection' was quite visible in Colombo too.

The other issue was Kampuchea. A relentless barrage by the Western media for well over a year "buried" POL POT, long before he was ousted. Genocide, a barbarous regime, the virtual massacre of millions—the publicity put POL POT on the same plane as Idi Amin. Our press was full of these exposures.

Then came the direct Vietnamese/Chinese involvements in the Kampuchea crisis. Suddenly, the West (and China) changed the line. For months now, there has been an attempt to "resurrect" POL POT. Recognition by the non-aligned was one such method and some sections of our own press became POL POT — IENG SARY converts.

In Colombo, this move failed. The invitation to attend the 6th summit will go to the head of state in Pom Penh, as Mr. Hameed told the press.

Yugoslavia harboured some anxieties too. Yugoslavia has been the ideologue of the movement. But Dr. Castro, the next chairman, does not obviously need any special tuition in ideology or politics. Besides there is the question — after Tito, what?

So those who tried in Belgrade to "isolate" Cuba have now been isolated themselves. After Cuba, it will be Iraq's turn. And Cuba will also host the next UNCTAD meeting.

Post-Colombo diplomatic reports will bring no comfort to Western chancelleries or to Peking.

Students of world affairs may disagree on the strength of the non-aligned movement as a factor in international politics. From Havana onwards the main question they will have to answer is: what impact will the movement have on the correlation of forces on the world scale?

UNP, Non-alignment

The UNP has never cared to hide its indifference to foreign policy and its supercilious attitude to Non-Alignment. Before the Colombo parley however, the UNP's motto could have been "what the SLFP can do, we can do better — or, at least as well". During the 1976 Summit the UNP made a propaganda issue of this important conference both by ridiculing it as a "Karberi Magula" (loosely translated a Nigger Minstrel's Show). At the BMICH last week Mrs. Bandaranaike embarrassed a UNP big shot by politely inquiring "So, how is your Karberi Magula?"

In true Show Biz style the mainstream media sprung into the spirit of the thing. The bureau meeting which should have been played by the press in a studied low-key manner was held up to the full glare of publicity by the leading newspapers highlighting and sometimes magnifying contentious issues. The national press, including most of all the State-owned newspapers, forgot an elementary fact — Sri Lanka was host and Mr. Hameed the Chairman.

Besides exposing the UNP's inexperience and ineptitude in these fields, an overexcited press made matters more difficult for a hard pressed Mr. Hameed who on one occasion threatened to chuck his hand in sheer despair. On the last day however, Mr. Hameed who has won the regard of his counterparts pulled a couple of aces which he had kept up his sleeve and produced "consensus".

From President Jayewardene came a characteristically self-assured performance. Tone and manner were a perfect fit for the grand occasion. As for the speech itself, it was a masterly re-write of history. The word "non-alignment" was first used in Colombo by Nehru. Colombo, Bogor, Bandung, Belgrade. Such

is the historical evolution, and the UNP and J. R. himself are a part of it. The re-writing of history is often a compulsive exercise for politicians in many parts of the world. J. R. may be entitled to these claims since it was Sir John who, spoke at Bandung. Any newspaper library can disgorge the Colonel's contribution to the political philosophy of emerging Afro-Asianism and non-alignment. That is a chapter which cannot be re-written. It is best erased.

TULF, SLFP, Press

The Foreign Office is flexing its muscles once more to combat TULF propaganda abroad. The TULF repeated its 1976 Summit exercise at the bureau meeting last week. The TULF has two distinct advantages (a) it is on the offensive and (b) it has ready-made publicity bureaux abroad in its far-flung expatriate groups. In the past one year it has had two 'scoops' — the man who infiltrated the UN General Assembly and created a news sensation, and the Boston Declaration. The Boston Resolution was especially damaging to the government because the Carter administration has issued several testimonials on Sri Lanka's Human Rights record, and because the present economic policies rely heavily on international confidence, western aid and foreign capital.

It will take the government's best brains to mount an effective counter-campaign. While it plans this counter-offensive, it should note that the TULF's distribution agents abroad have got much propaganda mileage from the statements and speeches of UNP politicians. This includes a full 'tape' of a speech by a UNP frontbencher!

* * *

It is a happy publicist who finds that media at his doorstep. A fairly representative section of

the world press was in Colombo recently. Quite rightly the SLFP saw this as a most welcome opportunity to have its say.

A very well attended press conference of Mrs. Bandaranaike however proved a near-fiasco.

It came as a surprise to many correspondents on the South Asia 'beat' because Mrs. Bandaranaike, as premier, had impressed even hard-boiled western newspapermen by her self-confidence, her grasp of important issues and her disarming frankness.

This conference was so unprepared and poorly arranged that many participants were exasperated because they could not hear the questions, leave alone the answers, on account of the sound of traffic in the street!

It was a fine chance to present the SLFP view on constitutional amendments, elections, Commissions, F. T. Z., broken promises, family bandyism, etc etc.

If the one-hour encounter had been sensibly divided between policy (non-alignment) and local issues, the conference would not have been such a confused mess with queries about POL POT followed by questions on press freedom, then and now.

Mrs. Bandaranaike did drive one strong point home — that the CDN had excised JR's reference to her presence at Belgrade. Though one western newspaperman dismissed it as "woman's vanity", the large majority agreed that the CDN had been downright silly, if not churlish.

The mainstream media had its revenge though by headlining Mrs. B's plea for a 'free press'. But a not so alert pro-UNP press missed a heavily dropped brick. The SLFP leader criticised the government for "too many concessions to foreign capital" but conceded that the FTZ would help solve the unemployment problem!

Three days later, the CDN was to boast that the FTZ has provided 15,000 jobs — 1% of the registered 1.5 million jobless.

Local polls and the Left

The results of the recent local polls have provoked recrimination in the riven ranks of the Left. This is natural enough, but will it lead to a deeper re-assessment of strategies and tactics? The Left marched separately at the polls and received a drubbing —albeit with a lesser severity than in the 1977 General Elections. It did stage something in the nature of a comeback in its traditional strongholds, recovering

sufficiently from its dismal performance in '77 to emerge as the alternative to the UNP. However, making a partial comeback in its 'home bases' is still a far cry from emerging as the alternative to the UNP or even as a credible "third force" on a national scale.

The Left fared best in the areas where it contested as an undivided (though not undifferentia-

ted) entity, with the 'old' and 'new' left either in close cooperation or not in open contention. (Ratnapura is a case in point). This fact has not been lost on the Left's activists. The C. P. for its part, is not wholly dissatisfied with its showing and points to its cooperation with the 'new' left in Ratnapura and a few other areas. CP'ers took pains during and after the polls to emphasize that they had been willing to present a single 'red' state of the Left (a proposal originally mooted by the Vasu group), but had been thwarted by the intransigence by the old LSSP leadership. "The JVP beat Bernard in Colombo by 500 odd votes while Vasudeva campaigning on the MEP ticket polled some 1800 votes which made all the difference. If the LSSP leaders had come to some agreement they wouldn't have had to suffer the utter ignominy of being beaten into last place by the JVP's Gamanayake. We hope this will teach them a damned good lesson" a high ranking CPer told this journal.

As the implications of the new PR system with its high cut-off point have dawned on the Left, so also has the realization that unity is imperative if the Left is to survive as a viable electoral 'third force' let alone make a bid for political power.

Meanwhile, the 'old' LSSP and sections of the CP leadership seem to think that a more 'Euro-communist' look should be adopted to suit the increasing consumerism of the middle strata and especially the youth. They are also increasingly inclined toward seeking an accommodation with the SLFP — minus of course the 'right-wing' of its leadership as represented by the Bandaranaike family. In this connection the 'old' Left leaders place their hopes on several factors viz the new upsurge of antifamily sentiment within the SLFP following that party's sorry showing at the

Left unity - kaleidoscopic formations

A six page leaflet issued a few weeks back by the Socialist Students Union of the JVP traces the chequered history of left unity and the shifting alliances entered into by the Left, thus:—

1944 — CP leaders enter the Exco of the Ceylon National Congress (which later becomes the UNP).

1947 — CP electoral support for UNP as against LSSP.

1952 — Electoral no-contest pact between SLFP, LSSP and CP.

1956 — SLFP/MEP bloc; electoral no-contest pact between it and the LSSP-CP.

1963 — LSSP/CP/MEP forms the United Left Front on the basis of the 21 demands.

1964 — The great betrayal. Breakup of ULF and the LSSP enters into a coalition with the SLFP, while both pro-Moscow and the MEP's attempts to join the coalition prove fruitless.

1970 — SLFP/LSSP/CP United Front contests General Elections.

1975 — LSSP kicked out of UF govt while CPSL stays put.

1977 — The CP quits the govt, following the Weerasooriya shooting and the railway strike.

1977 — LSSP, CP, PDP, Dharmasekera and Mahinda Wijeysekera contest the General Elections as the ULF.

1977 — After the General Elections the ULF begins to crack up with the last three groups dropping out.

1978 — May Day: The LSSP-CP duo (plus TB Subasinghe) at Hyde Park. Vasudeva, PDP, Shan, Dharmasekera, Mahinda W, Gamini Yapa, Janatha Sangamaya et al at Kirillapone Park.

1979 — May Day: LSSP-CP duo at Hyde Park. Vasu, Shan, Dinesh, Tampoe et al at De Mel Park. Dharmasekera, Gamini Yapa at Muththiah Park.

Alliances at Campus elections.

1977 — 78 Vidyodaya: CPSL alone. Dharmasekera, Janatha Sangamaya, LSSP (Vasu Group) together.

1977 — 78 Vidyayanka: LSSP (Vasu Group) - CPSL and Maoists join hands.

1978 — 79 Colombo: CPSL and LSSP (Vasu Group) contest separately.

1978 — 79 Peradeniya: LSSP (Vasu Group) CPSL and Maoists join hands.

local polls, the cases filed in court the revelations at the Presidential commission — all leading to a possible upset at the SLFP's sessions in September.

The radical Left (including many of the CP's younger militants) have a different perspective. While they would not be averse to a limited electoral agreement, (such as a no-contest pact) and issue-oriented united actions on democratic demands with a de-Bandaranaike-ized SLFP, they think that the rigidity and exclusive character of the new electoral system necessitates that the main stress should be laid on extra-parliamentary direct struggles of the matters. Their models are Hartal 1953 and of course, Iran. This perspective is the reverse of that of the 'old' left leadership which accords such mass struggles only a subsidiary role, i.e. as a pressure tactic to supplement the contest in the parliamentary arena.

The results of the local polls therefore, have enhanced the political isolation of the 'old' LSSP leadership, exacerbated the tensions within the ULF which were evident in the run-up to May Day. (See **L. G. May 1st and May 15th issue**) Unless the CP manages to put a hammerlock on the LSSP and carry it kicking and screaming into a broader formation which encompasses the 'new' left, strains and stresses are likely to manifest themselves within the ranks of the CP itself.

One catalytic factor working for convergence of the 'old' and 'new' Left is the JVP's growing strength and the ferocious sectarianism it displays towards all its rivals without exception. The JVP which made a very intelligent decision to field 10 Tamil candidates (and accord the number 2 spot on its list to a Tamil) at the Colombo polls can derive some satisfaction from edging the 'old' Left into last place. It however fell short of its own goal — as stated in private by some of its top leaders — to vault the 1/8th cut-off point and thereby place at least a single representative in the Colombo Municipal Council.

From an almost exclusively rural petty-bourgeois movement up till 1971, the JVP's May Day showing and its electoral performance indicate that it has made significant inroads into the urban areas—especially among the youth. It also seems to be playing the role once played by the LSSP vis a vis the middle-class Tamil intelligentsia and professionals in Colombo and areas of the Sinhala south. Today's Colombo-based middle class Tamil youth, newly hostile towards the UNP, turned off by the TULF leadership, alienated from the North and insufficiently radicalized to take up the Eelam cry of their Northern and Eastern counterparts, seem to identify with the JVP stand—so ironically similar to that of the LSSP in its 'internationalist' heyday. The JVP's lack of a working class base casts serious doubts on its highly congratulatory post-polls self-assessment as the country's largest left party, though it may be correct in a superficial arithmetical sense. Some JVP cadres also seem to fear that the party's electoral efforts and experience will reinforce its new parliamentarist orientation.

The TULF for its part can derive great satisfaction from the fact that despite the lukewarm support extended by its militant youth wing (now detached from the parent body) it retained its hegemony in the North while winning Trinco into the bargain—thus disproving UNP claims that state patronage in the aftermath of the cyclone and Rajadurai's defection had effectively weaned the Eastern province away from the North.

Meanwhile, Mr. N. Sanmugathasan, splendid in his isolation internationally, can gain solace from the fact that an unprecedented number (just over 1/3rd) of the total registered electorate did not cast their ballots at the local polls.

Letters . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

II

I am heartily sick of watching this adolescent game played by Fowlers, Haans, Janszes and all sorts of other pedants. They remind me of those 5th graders who display their newly acquired vocabulary and shout at peers "so you know it ha!" These middle-aged adolescents seem to continue to use your esteemed journal to throw quaint little Latin phrases at each other and at readers, almost saying "so you don't know it". The phrases are mostly irrelevant and they make one wonder where they were picked from. I beg of you to call it a draw and devote that space in your journal to more important matters.

Kandy

Dr. R. Abeysinghe.

Fowler et al

Lakit St. C. Pieris in L. G. of 1. 5. 79 said that Elmer de Haan was none other than Dr. Walbeoff Jansz, "wearing false whiskers and rubber nose." Dr. Jansz by proving his identity has shown that the boot was all the time on the other foot! The "evil genius," whom many readers of L. G. now know, was perpetrating a hoax on them. This unholy trinity was one person masquerading under many names. He has now been silenced after Dr. Jansz's expose. "Lakit" in his doggeral (L. G. 15. 5. 79) referred slightly to a "symphony" of Haen's. Now, Haan has not written any symphonies, but he has **written 5 Quartets**. Two of them were chosen by the Union of Soviet Composers to be performed at the 50th death anniversary of Lenin. This body consisted of internationally known men such as David Oistrach, Kachaturian, Shostokovich etc. Can 'Lakit' 'Fowler' etc prove their identities in the way 'Dr Jansz has done? Or are they ordinary "intellectual" cowards?

Amaradasa Fernando.

This correspondence is now closed — Ed.

A deceptive lull?

by Gamini Dissanaiké

The lull prevailing in Jaffna, as my colleague Jayantha Somasundaram reported in L. G. April 1, may be deceptive. Could this be a prelude to another storm?

Since the visit of 35 journalists to the North several weeks ago the cry for Eelam or its tone hasn't changed a bit despite the drama that took place in the NSA since Mr. Amirthalingam's return from India. The TULF went about with the same vigour in their election campaign and their final meeting at the Jaffna esplanade turned out to be a great success. While the final UNP meeting drew a very poor crowd, the JVP publicity rally held a few weeks ago had made a better impression. At the final UNP meeting a speaker was misunderstood when he referred to the wisdom of the Sinhalese in a context different from the old adage; eye-brows were raised of the Sinhala VIPs' present and a few stones were hurled. Things also heated up at a Tamil Congress meeting when a speaker made a personal attack on Mrs. Amirthalingam. And when a youth from the audience climbed the stage and requested the speaker to guard himself against uttering such personal insults the speaker quickly retorted by calling the youth a "terrorist" and asking the police to watch him!

Speaking of terrorism, **Mr. Leo Perera**, the new Jaffna SP was still standing by what he had told the group of journalists that toured the North.

"If the police do not get cooperation from the people to contain terrorism in their areas" began Mr. Perera, "If cars are hijacked and used for offences, what do you expect the police to do?"

"The streets are quiet because over 16 members of the terrorist gang are in detention and their sources of inside information effectively blocked. They are detained

under the "Tiger law" and if the Government does not extend its validity we will have to release them.

"To preserve democracy you have to be undemocratic sometimes" continued Mr. Perera, and this is what I mean by asking for special powers:-

(a) "We are not dealing with normal offenders here. Every one we arrest invariably has a series of crimes behind him. Would you believe that a youth of 17 has committed no less than 17 crimes? How would you expect us to finish questioning him in just 24 hours? Therefore, we need at least 7 days to interrogate such a suspect.

(b) "Confessions made to police officers must be made admissible in a court of law.

(c) "Now, a witness to a crime may be bumped off before he could give evidence in court. Therefore, we want Section 32 of the Evidence Ordinance amended so as to make a statement by a witness (to a crime) made to a police officer be made admissible in court.

"I would like to make myself very clear on this" said SP Perera. "I am asking for these special powers to be applied to special cases only."

Mr. Perera then went on to explain the increased presence of the Armed Forces in the area. "Though they came originally to arrest illicit immigration and smuggling, over the years their role became confused. And, especially after the '77 riots when the police officers became targets of terrorist attacks, the Army's presence became much more than what it should be. However, for this poll I haven't invited a single soldier for security work. But the impasse is that although I would like to use the Army to the minimum possible, as it is, I cannot do without them completely."

While Mr. Perera was not himself happy with the general standard of intelligence and behaviour of the policemen I however, found that the men of lower rank were not happy either about the excessive security that was provided by higher officers for themselves. As for the targets made of police officers I also found that some of the policemen who were gunned down had "tough" reputations even in their dealings with innocent civilians.

The name-board at the Army Camp, Palaly (as SP Perera said) read: TASK FORCE, ANTI ILLICIT IMMIGRATION. **Brigadier Cyril Ranatunge**, an extremely unassuming person was one of those exceptional servicemen anyone could hope to meet. "We came here in 1953 to execute 'Operation Monty' - to contain illicit immigration. Then we were asked to look after smuggling especially, in the VVT area. Over the years, we have had to operate on the coastal belt stretching from Mannar to Mullaitivu, an extent of over 175 miles."

In May last year the Brigadier was asked to round up the 'terrorists.' "That means," said he "that we are now providing internal security."

Of course, as everyone knows, the Brigadier and his men rounded up about 32 out of a wanted list of 42, some surrendered through their MPs and lawyers but were later released for lack of evidence. Asked about the impression his men have created in the minds of the local population, Brigadier Ranatunge told me that he had been very firm with his men in respect of their dealings with the civilians. The term "Army of Invasion" was never tolerated by him. People of some remote parts still came to the Army detachments with their personal problems as the police were far away from them. "This is bad," said the Brigadier, "and the worst is that I cannot speak Tamil."

Decline of caste

Many of us in the South feel that caste is a pervasive force in the North. But the reality is that com-

mon socio-economic problems seem to be transcending such barriers more and more. The overall economic crisis and the feeling of insecurity are stronger factors. In the cosmopolitan Jaffna city only a few think of caste differences. All the temples are now open to all. There are a few public servants who are caste-conscious in Jaffna but **GA Fernando** has been very firm with them. Outside Jaffna caste differences do not count for much; the case of the Uduppidy MP is a striking example.

Perhaps one of the most depressing issues in the North today is the closure of banks. Only a third of the banks are open. Both inside and outside Jaffna traders, industrialists, fishermen, farmers and even the housewives are undergoing tremendous suffering with the closure of banks. Fishermen of the Point Pedro and VVT areas find it very difficult to continue without the assistance of the People's Bank's easy credit facilities and even a housewife who has to pawn some jewellery in an emer-

gency has to go about 20 miles in a bus to a People's Bank Pawning Centre. In VVT the local money-lenders are charging over ten rupees, monthly as interest on every hundred rupees. It was the same sad story in Pungudutivu, Mullaitivu or any other area.

Even the liberals now feel that there is hardly any real alternative to the TULF at present. If the Government views the National Question as a political question, solutions have to be found early. On the other hand, if they treat this as a "threat" things will rapidly move towards a bitter end. Will the Government at least implement the provisions in the new Constitution speedily? Will they develop the North without any discrimination and without delay? Will they care to survey the genuine grievances of the people? If the Banks were robbed in places like Nikaweratiya and Hingurakgoda in broad daylight and if those very banks are now open, why is it different in the North?

More committed people asked me whether the Tamils are not an **oppressed nation** and how dare the Sinhalese "**grant**" them rights etc. Do the Tamils have to be always at the receiving end of the so called Southern hospitality? Why should people in the South worry about whether, in the event of Eelam being founded, that separate State could sustain itself or not? Is it not like the concern of the master towards his servant? Or is it the master who has to depend always on the servant to get his things done? Such questioning reflects the mood of this segment of Tamil opinion.

As for me, I wholeheartedly endorse the view of **Mr. Lionel Fernando** when he says that in the North "we have the most innocent, submissive and hard working people of our country."

But the saddest thing is that our media and our politicians have never done justice by them. The picture made by them of the North has never been in focus.

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Fight to save UNCTAD

The more one studies the actual working of the international information system the more one is convinced that the non-aligned nations were absolutely right in making a 'new information order' as crucial a demand as the NIEO. In Algiers (1973) it was recognised as a major problem and inscribed in the action program. By Lima (1975) it was made a separate issue and from Colombo (1976) onwards, the developing countries opened a 'second front', so to say, in their continuing struggle against western dominance.

The first stage in any conscious struggle is a clear perception of the problem, a clear view of the hostile force. It was seen that the communications system was part and parcel of a long established world order in which the vested interests of the West were firmly entrenched. The same relationship of dominance/dependence which characterised the world economic order found a close parallel in the global information structure. More. The information system was not, as the western mythology so passively and so long accepted by many Third World elites, "neutral". It was an instrument, often used subtly and insidiously, for the perpetuation and consolidation of those material interests.

Three critical areas and phases can be identified in any study of how the twin demands (the NIEO and NIIO, the Economic and the Information orders) matured to become what they are today, major international issues.

First, third World expertise i.e. specialists who were not prepared to accept conventional explanations and assessments at face value and took a fresh, hard

look at the facts. Once the evidence was documented and the true nature of the economic order and its blatant injustices revealed, the demand for structural change stood on firm ground. This was the tremendous service performed by those Third World experts who could not be as easily co-opted into the establishment as in the past when the intelligentsia of the Third World periphery were mere 'agents' of their ideological masters in the metropolitan centres.

Next, the political will. Under popular pressure, the pressure from below of those hundreds of millions who have to bear the full burden of economic injustice and exploitation, Third World regimes were compelled to agitate for reform and re-structuring. Despite many differences, and diverse national interests, these governments gradually awakened to the vital fact of **common** interests.

The recognition of a common foe fostered a sense of basic unity and this in turn led to an increasing awareness of the need for **collective** action.

Finally, the international fora. Collective action but where? Obviously in the institutions to which these developing countries had ready access, and in any other forum they could create to use.

Once the West sensed the mounting danger, the counter-offensive ranged not only over issues but institutions. In all the post-war institutions (the UN and its agencies, the IMF, IBRD, GATT etc) the West had long enjoyed an assured dominance. They were therefore "stable"!

But the Third World began to use the only real strength they had. Even the poorest and the

The editor of this journal was invited by the Third World Forum, Geneva, to report on UNCTAD V, with special reference to world press coverage of the conference.

weakest has strength in numbers, their collective voting power.

From the West came a choric howl of protest. Dr. Kissinger spoke of the 'tyranny of the majority', Western leaders and diplomats cautioned the Third World against 'wrecking established institutions'. The Western media accused the Third World of dragging "politics" into conferences that should stay clear of such untidy matters.

UNCTAD and its Secretary-General, Dr. Gamani Corea are very much in the eye of this storm.

Raul Prebisch, the founding father of UNCTAD, gave us an instructive glimpse into the evolutionary history of these questions. In an informal discussion he reminded us that Sri Lanka's best known economist was a prominent member of an experts committee which reported on world trade many years ago. On the basis of that report, the battle-cry was raised. At that point of time, it was international trade and its gross inequities. But the scope of the debate has grown and grown as other problems have been identified, and inter-connections located. Remedial measures have been proposed, mechanisms and institutional arrangements discussed. And so we have trade and protectionism, money and finance, debt and aid, transfer of technology, the Common Fund and etc.

Advance has been painfully slow and fitful. As their own troubles multiplied, the rich have taken a harder and harder line. And why not? Their present prosperity has been built on the exploitation of the poor world's resources and the extraction of its wealth. Structural change of the international system would be the expense of the living standards of the affluent nation. As their own 'crisis' deepens even reform and re-adjustment become a "concession" too unpleasant to contemplate.

To protect their own interests, therefore, the west resorts to many tactics not always apparent in the smooth speeches from the rostrum.

UNCTAD itself is under attack. From Prebisch to Corea, UNCTAD has become the chief forum of the poor on economic questions. It has grown into what is perhaps the most active arm of the UN system. Ah, protests the West, UNCTAD should be an **international** agency, not a Third World forum. The poor shall not inherit even a corner of the earth.

Thus behind glitter and glamour of ritual orations and social ceremonies, there was a sinister attempt to smear UNCTAD, to scuttle it if possible or at least to weaken its will. In this, bureaucratic tribalism of the international civil service played a part too—the attempt, notably to erode the power of Geneva-based UNCTAD which had become too autonomous within the UN system. This was the New York/Geneva fight as the cognoscenti would have it.

The other devices were more traditional: division and diversion issues. In all this, the world press served its real interests with remarkable success.

Though there were gains, the sceptic may have had his suspicions confirmed in Manila. Nothing substantial, he would say, was achieved. But the Third World stood together in saving UNCTAD itself. And like the non-aligned conference, UNCTAD's next stop is Havana.

UNCTAD and all the news

Like other heads of delegations, Trade Minister Lalith Atulathmudali had at his disposal a Mercedes Benz and a local driver to take him each day from his hotel to the PICC, the convention centre where UNCTAD V was held. These were ordinary courtesies extended by the host, the Philippines government.

America's bestknown newspaper abroad, the **New York Times**

has as its proud motto "All the news that's fit to print", a motto frequently misinterpreted by those who do not know of its precise historical origins. The Mercedes Benz became the most important or interesting news that the NY Times chose to publish. The despatch of its staff correspondent was headlined:

MERCEDES IS SYMBOL

AT UN TRADE TALKS

But US declines limousines

Use, Feeling it Inappropriate

At Forum on Aiding Poor

Thus, Mr. Atulathmudali's car made a grand entrance in the opening paragraph:

"Car for Chad to the main entrance. Attention. Car for Sri Lanka up front."

The point of the story was that President Marcos had imported Mercedes Benz sedans, "the motorized symbol of affluence especially in the Third World" for the use of the chief UNCTAD participants. The US delegation "declined the honour"!

The correspondent (thoughtfully?) neglected to mention the mode of transportation favoured by the U. S. Was it a Bell helicopter? Or was it, in keeping with the spirit of the occasion and the pieties to which the headline gives such unctuous utterance, a plebian Volkswagen or cheap Japanese car? On the other hand if it was a solid gold Cadillac, we could have all raised a last hurrah for the 'new protectionism'.

COMMODITIES

"In the period since Nairobi, despite several preparatory meetings on as many as 12 commodities included in the Integrated Programme but not covered by international agreements, it has proved possible to bring only one product—rubber—to the stage of a negotiating conference. The traditional features of commodity discussions—the clouding of the main issues by a mass of technical detail, the requests for successive studies, and the avoidance of actual decisions—all these remain aspects of the post-Nairobi discussions.

"Often, the basic question of whether an international agreement was needed at all for a particular product was left open by developed countries as an issue on which light had to be shed. The alternative approach reflecting a firm commitment to the regulation of the market for a particular commodity and also to appropriate measures of a developmental character and to search for mechanisms to give effect to them was seldom in evidence."

— Gamani Corea

Since the unfortunate Mr. Andrew Young came to the PICC on a pair of crutches, one visitor was provoked into inquiring whether that awkward mode of ambulation symbolised, say, the present state of the US economy.

Should Lalith have airfreighted his own home-made rickshaw or borrowed a jeepney from his Filipino counterpart? Would the western press have applauded this transfer of intermediate technology?

Ridicule is a familiar weapon in the armoury of the propagandist. So is the smear technique. Reuter chose to call UNCTAD V "FUNCTAD", and this line of attack was followed by other agencies. Third World delegates were found fast asleep in the conference room because they had been having "fun" the night before with Filipino 'hospitality girls' (their escalating charges were solemnly recorded): An African delegate was bold enough to circulate a clipping from one of his own national newspapers to fellow delegates in the PICC lounge in order to demonstrate what the transnational agencies were telling the outside world.

Anybody who has attended a big conference in Manila or Tokyo, Paris or New York is aware that those who went to have "fun" know where to find it and the pleasure-seekers are not restricted to the Third World. The purpose of this "colour piece" is the impression conveyed, the image projected. Third World leaders may make fiery speeches demanding "justice" for their peoples but in fact they waste time and money in private orgies. Thus, the people at home (the audience of the national media) lose confidence in and respect for their representatives, and faith in the causes championed at these meetings.

The "Functad" story was carried in all our major newspapers, including the government-owned dailies. Why do we willingly circulate such reports? Why do we spit in our own face and become accomplices in this sordid game of self-denigration?

Perhaps there are innocent explanations—a sleepy night—sub stuck for copy or a not-so-vigilant "gate-keeper" who allows the report to pass thinking it is a "nice, juicy item", adding "colour" to the page.

But what is the end-result of millions of such "messages" transmitted to us everyday? We begin to see ourselves, our leaders and spokesmen as others want us to see them? We begin to see issues and events in the manner these are presented to us, in packages prepared elsewhere. By whom? Even a GCE student knows that UNCTAD is a forum where the exploited poor confront those who manage the world system, our true masters. It is a forum in which the poor demand fairplay and justice. Yet, the impression which is conveyed to our people (the mass readership is that carefully prepared by the news agencies, the information officers of the rich and the powerful. It is nothing less than protracted psychological warfare.

The conclusions are obvious. The national media are **dependent** on the international agencies, the MNC's in the sphere of communications. Secondly, we must educate our own educators, our own mass communicators who are now captive carriers of this insidious propaganda, and therefore enemies (perhaps unwittingly) within.

While UNCTAD coverage will also show a clear **under-representation** of Third World viewpoints, there was a blatant case of **misrepresentation** too, Again, for an important purpose. The West is preoccupied with the energy issue but 'energy' was not an item on the agenda. However some Central American countries, notably Costa Rica and Columbia raised it. When Venezuela, an oil-producer, opposed the move, the AFP carried a report which gave a false picture of the Venezuelan position. The Spanish news agency 'beamed' it to Spanish-speaking countries in South America.

When these reports were published by some Venezuelan papers, there was so much misunderstanding and confusion

that heavy telecommunication traffic was reported between the Venezuelan government and its delegation. There was even talk of differences within the delegation itself. When the facts were finally sorted out. **EL NACIONAL** a Venezuelan paper spoke of a "publicity offensive" against Venezuela "orchestrated by the industrialised countries."

— M. de S.

Very Odd Spot

Two days after the 1. a.m. incident at the BMICH where Deputy Foreign Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe smartly ticked off the Egyptian Ambassador for his haughty demands ('I want to see the President immediately') and his threats ('we may have to reconsider our relations with Sri Lanka') the *CDN* followed the *SUN* with a Page 1 "ODD SPOT". It referred to the locally based Ambassador of a non-aligned country but the journalistic clues (Sphinx etc) were easily understood.

The para seems to have put the Lake House bosses in a very odd spot with their DPL buddies. The next day the *CDN* said that the reference was NOT to a "locally-based Ambassador of a non-aligned country." Who then? Neglecting to answer this obvious question, it gave a gratuitous character-certificate to the ambassador. (still unnamed!). The unseemly row started with Egyptian Ambassador Neguib (New York) but Ambassador Wahab (Colombo) was very much at the receiving end of the ticking off. UNP'er and non-UNP'er were full of praise for the Sri Lankan VIPs who were not brow-beaten but Lake House placed personal relations before patriotism and self-respect. "Does Lokka know the correct version?" asked a top UNP'er in the NSA lobby.

Did Ambassador Corea, a witness to the affair, cancel his Lake House lecture in despair or disgust?

Pentagon and the Indian Ocean

by T. M. C. Rangunathan

Only quite recently it became known that the US is planning to establish its permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean by forming a whole armada consisting of aircraft carriers, destroyers, helicopter-carrying ships and atomic submarines called the "Fifth Fleet" which could function independently in the Ocean area. And now, it is reported that it is moving one major step further with plans to establish strike force too, made up of 100,000 troops including 40,000 combat soldiers ready for action "in defence of American interests in the sensitive areas" of the Persian Gulf. 'New York Times' says that, according to Pentagon, this force will include two divisions, one of them airborne and one brigade, which could be deployed anywhere in those sensitive areas, which extend from Iraq in the north to Oman in the south. As the Persian Gulf states are well armed at present, thanks to the massive US arms sales to them, it is said that the US believes that it needs more heavier weapons to overwhelm them now and as such, the present planning is aimed at a corps equipped with heavier weapons to meet contingencies. It is also said that these combat troops would be supported by supply, maintenance, communication and other forces. The key to the success of these forces, according to Pentagon, would be the speed with which the intervention force can be assembled, transported and flown to "threatened areas".

This report has many things to reveal indeed. It may be recalled here that after the US had lost Iran which during the regime of the Shah was reduced to the status of a hired cop and a bridgehead for Pentagon's dangerous military schemes, the US almost doubled its naval strength in the Arabian Sea and sent the aircraft carrier, "Constellation" into the area, which has been now replenished by the "Midway" and its escorts, in order to enhance "American prestige in the area."

In fact, after the changes in Iran where the American oil monopolies are stripped of the sources of tremendous profits, after the disintegration of the CENTO and the US failure in its effort to substitute the same by a new military bloc in the area and in the context of the growing anti-American feeling among the countries of the Arab world after the Israeli-Egyptian treaty concluded at the cost of the Arab cause and interest, the aggressive stances of the US strategists and statesmen became all the more pronounced by their blunt statements, followed by threatening moves by the Pentagon. Thus, the boss of the Pentagon, Harold Brown made it clear without mincing words that the US will not hesitate to use military force to "protect its vital interests" in the region.

All such statements and the subsequent moves of the Pentagon indeed have posed a challenge to peace and a threat to the security of many developing countries of the Indian Ocean area. The scope and overall strategy behind the US moves show how dangerous these military preparations are. The Pentagon makes no secret of the fact that Diego Garcia is a key point for the US and that it is from there it would aim its missiles at all coastal countries. From the strategic point of view, the proposed "Fifth Fleet", along with the Sixth one in the Mediterranean and the Seventh in the Pacific, could form a complete military ring embracing the entire Asian continent.

This makes clear that though the recent historic past has proved that strategy of show of force had often misfired, - to mention, it had neither prevented the birth of a united socialist Vietnam nor Bangladesh, - the US strategists and statesmen continue to believe that force is still one of the basic levers of American foreign

policy and that it will help to intimidate countries in the area to abandon measures aimed at consolidating national sovereignty over their natural resources and industry. And shockingly, from the reported news about the US plan of forming a strike force equipped with heavier weapons that could swiftly be sea-lifted and airlifted into the "sensitive areas" themselves in no time, it turns out that the US hopes that force can be used as an instrument not only to exert pressure on countries of this area but also to indulge in direct armed interventions, when it so chooses or feels that its vital interests are threatened."

Apart from enhancing the threat and danger the US creates for the countries of this area, this US move also lays bare the arrogance and indifference which the US displays towards the independent nations of this area. Needless to say this impels the peoples and governments of countries of this area to be far more incisive in moving to turn the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

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Bhikkhus in revolt (2)

Revival, revolt and race

by Kumari Jayewardena

In a colonial context, protests against foreign rule often take on a revivalist character, looking for inspiration to the social system and culture of an earlier period. In 19th century Sri Lanka there were broadly two types of revivalist movements—the armed revolts against British rule which took place in the first half of the century and the patriotic, semi-political movements associated with the Buddhist revival of the latter decades of the century. There were however important differences between these two types of protest.

The revolts in the Kandyan regions between 1818 and 1848, in which Buddhist monks played a prominent part, were essentially protests against the extinction of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815, the economic changes and dislocation caused by the imposition of plantation capitalism and the decline of traditional society and culture. Thus the Kandyan chiefs whose political power had dwindled, the Buddhist monks whose role as the guardians of the state religion was threatened and the peasantry who were restive over colonial land and tax policies, found common cause in the revolts and rebellions of the period.

These anti-imperialist movements were essentially revivalist in content, based on a nostalgic harking back to the traditional society of the Kandyan kingdom with its hierarchy of monarchy, nobility, clergy, and peasantry. Hence in all these struggles, the legitimising factor was the pretender (often a bhikkhu or ex-bhikkhu) who would make a dramatic appearance, claiming to be a royal prince related to the last

kings of Kandy, thereby attempting to mobilise the people to drive the foreigners out of the country, and restore the lost Kingdom.

The 1848 rebellion however, thirty years after the great rebellion of 1818, retained the form of earlier revolts, with a pretender, a coronation ceremony and active participation of influential bhikkhus, but the restorative character had changed. It was more of a revolt of the rural peasantry and protests of the Colombo working people (against oppressive taxes), led in the Kandyan regions by low-country adventurers, and in Colombo, by the more radical elements of the urban petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, who had been inspired by the upheavals of 1848 in Europe. The 1848 rebellion in Sri Lanka thus had elements of the restorative movements of earlier years and the more forward looking anti-imperialist agitation of a later period.

Incipient nationalism

The other important movement in which Buddhist monks played a leadership role was the Buddhist revival of the 1880s—a semi-political movement which had a religious form. The revival of Buddhism as a religion which had begun in the Kandyan kingdom in 18th century under the leadership of the Nayakkar kings and the bhikkhu Valivita Sangaraja, was never wholly abandoned, but was kept up by monks in the 19th century. The loss of state patronage, the association of British rule with Christianity and missionary activity, and the monopoly of high positions by local Christians (including the leading Mudliyarships and the Sinhala seat

in the Legislative Council) led to renewed efforts to assert the claims of Buddhist revival that occurred from around 1880 onwards, was qualitatively different from both the earlier attempts to revive the religion and from the restorative revolts that had occurred in the Kandyan kingdom. The new revival, taking place during a period when local capitalism was expanding, was linked to the nationalist stirrings of Buddhist sections of the emergent bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, and was also associated with certain dissident trends in Britain such as anti-Christian nationalism as well as converts of radical and liberal thought.

The dominant leader of the revival movement was **Migettuwate Gunananda**, an aggressive and dynamic bhikkhu who was the first to start mass agitation on Buddhist grievances among the urban and rural masses. In contrast to other learned bhikkhus of the period, he was a fiery orator, pamphleteer and a fighter who led the challenge to Christianity and the missionaries, and in this struggle did not hesitate to look for support to movements in the West which were in opposition to colonialism and Christian fundamentalism. As Olcott said of him :

"The famed Migettuwatta was a monk with a very intellectual head, a bright eye and an air of perfect self-confidence and alertness. Some of the more meditative monks habitually drop their eyes when conversing with one, but he looked you square in the face, as befitted the most brilliant polemic orator of the Island, the terror of the Missionaries. One could see at a glance he was more wrangler than ascetic...he was

the boldest, most brilliant and powerful champion of Sinhalese Buddhism."

Gunananda has been the main speaker at the famous Panadura debate between Christians and Buddhists in 1873, when he used his acquaintance with the writings of British free-thinkers to attack the missionaries. In 1883, Gunananda organised Buddhist celebrations at the Kotahena temple which clashed with Easter observances of the Catholics, resulting in a serious riot between the Catholics and Buddhists of Kotahena.

Along with several wealthy Sinhala traders, arrack renters and coconut planters, Gunananda became a member of the Theosophical Society which had been formed in New York in 1875 and translated some of their literature into Sinhala. As a result of these contacts, the two founder members of the Society, **Henry Olcott** and **Helena Blavatsky** visited Sri Lanka in 1880 to give an impetus to the Buddhist education movement. Militant Buddhism and European 'heresies' like Theosophy, found common cause in their opposition to dogmatic Christianity, colonialism, and their belief - that in contrast to the false ideologies and values of Western industrial society - the 'light' was to come from the East.

The wealthy Buddhist capitalists of the period financed the Buddhist revival and supported the Buddhist educational movement and the semi-political temperance movements of 1904 and 1912. This was a period of incipient nationalism and the militant bhikkhus of the period gave the movement strong backing; support also came from noted scholarly

monks such as **Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala**, **Valane Siddharta**, **Weligama Sri Sumangala** and **Ratmalane Sri Dharmaloka**.

However, it is important to note that there were two sides to the Buddhist revival. On the one hand it was an anti-imperialist, anti-foreign, patriotic movement designed to challenge, at the superstructural level, the ideology of colonial rule and missionary education. It was a protest against the exclusion of the majority who were Sinhala Buddhists, from political and economic power. In this sense it was a progressive movement, giving expression to the cultural nationalism of the period. But in the absence of a national bourgeoisie with major contradictions against imperialism and capable of leading a strong secular, multi-racial movement, the Buddhist revival - with its limited ideology and petty bourgeois puritanism, also had a chauvinist and communal content. For in the attempt to revive Sinhala Buddhism from the 1880's onwards, the 'enemies' were held to be not only the beef-eating, whisky-drinking, foreign whites but also the ethnic and religious minorities in the country. To the Sinhala petty traders and dependent class of Sinhala entrepreneurs the immediate rivals were the Moor and Tamil shopkeepers, and the Indian merchants who dominated much of the retail and wholesale trade and the export-import business of the island. This trading rivalry was to find its expression in communal antagonisms and clashes (such as the 1915 riots), which were the other side of the coin of Buddhist nationalism.

The Aryan myth of origin became bound up with the revivalist Sinhala - Buddhist search for national identity in the latter 19th century, leading to the emergence of a new current of communalism based on language, race and religion. The writings of many of the Buddhist patriots - **Anagarika Dharmapala**, **Piyadasa Sirisena**, **Battaramulle Sri Subuti**, and, articles in journals like the

Sinhala Jatiya and Sinhala Baudhaya, abounded in claims not only that Buddhism was the only true religion (all others being mere superstitions), but that the pure Aryan Sinhala of the Sihadipa were the chosen race with a historic mission to preserve Buddhism in the (Dhammadvipa) and were therefore superior to the Tamils, Moors, Malayalis, Sindhis and Chettians who were doubly doomed as being "infidels of degraded race".

This chauvinism and intolerance based on ethnic differences was in sharp contrast to the practice in feudal society where divisions based on caste and religion took precedence over ethnic differences. One example was the acceptance of Tamil kings in the Kandyan kingdom as long as they professed Buddhism and came from the 'solar' dynasty. Thus in the 19th century, many pretenders to the throne (who were Sinhala) had to often pretend to be Tamil and not only assume names like Duraisvami and Kumarasvami, in order to establish their royal claims among the Kandyan people, but also had to attempt to speak Tamil - the prestigious language in the Kandyan kingdom, since it had been used in court circles.

With the advent of British rule, the subsequent development of capitalism and the emergence of new class forces, ethnic group identity took on new dimensions. It is therefore necessary to be aware of both the progressive and retrograde trends in Sinhala Buddhist nationalism which was associated with the development of a dependant type of local capitalism, in order to understand the fluctuating phases of radicalism and communalism in the Buddhist movement, which had their influence on both the nationalist and the working-class movement of this country.

NEXT: Buddhism and the Labour Movement.

Nationhood (3)

Myths and realities

by Chintaka

Myth 16. The demand for a "separate state" is a threat to territorial integrity and for this reason it should be opposed.

Though in the first instance, the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie is national in form, in the last instance 'the proletariat has no country', in Marx's famous phrase. Thus, the Left has no mandatory obligation to defend the unity and integrity of the bourgeois state nor to defend any boundaries imposed by colonialism. Proletarian internationalism is the standpoint of any genuine socialist.

Marxists who advance this 'Myth' may be asked whether national sovereignty and integrity are not threatened rather by the "open door" economic policies of the ruling class. In that sense, the Left movement should be more concerned with the "penetrated State" i. e. the new and sinister threat of the penetration of international capital via Dollars, D-Marks and Yen. Any genuinely 'nationalist' struggle should be waged against this 'separatism'. To attack a non-existent foe means objectively to assist the existing foe, as Fidel Castro said in Algiers 1973.

17. Any struggle for a separate state will invite involvement by the superpowers, and the Tamils will be a pawn in their contention.

This view, popular among a recognisable breed of Marxists, sees the struggle of the global powers as the near-exclusive motive force of world history. It is profoundly undialectical, and unscientific. It focusses on external factors the determinants.

It is the kind of view popularised by Rosa Luxemburg who wrote in her "Theses on the Tasks of International Social Democracy" that "in the age of imperialism small nations are only the pawns on the imperialist chessboard of the major powers". This 'thesis' was mercilessly flayed by Lenin himself.

This erroneous Luxemburgist position has been adopted by the Chinese CP these days and is freely applied by local Maoists. They discern nothing but the manipulations of the 'superpowers, in world politics and thus fall into the most monstrous errors when they assess national liberation movements in this light (e. g. Angola), when this position led objectively to supporting the C. I. A. backed 'fronts' and South African intervention against the MPLA).

They ignore a fundamental thesis of Marxist dialectics, once accepted by Mao. i. e. "social development is due chiefly NOT to external but to internal causes, and the action of external forces is function of the internal conflict in which they intervene. The development of a phenomenon in movement whatever its external appearance, depends mainly on its internal characteristics".

Marxism holds therefore that national liberation struggles are the outcome of internal development "more or less influenced by external factors (be they favourable or unfavourable) but eventually determined and formed by the historical reality of each people" (Amilcar Cabral, 'Revolution in Guinea').

This was the position of Lenin, and indeed Marx, when they evaluated national movements.

It is best to remind Leftists who talk about 'superpowers' and "external forces" etc, that it was Marx and Engels who wrote thus, on the Polish question:

"It is not our job to hold back the Poles from efforts to win the conditions of their future development or to tell them that from the international standpoint their national independence is an entirely secondary matter".

18. It is detrimental to the class struggle in the whole country to focus on the national question because the class struggle is always the primary factor.

Class antagonism is always the key factor in capitalist societies. As Lenin says however "It cannot be categorically asserted that some particular national question cannot temporarily appear in the foreground of the political drama".

How apt this statement of Lenin is. The so-called Tamil problem was for a long time the 'sub-plot in the main parliamentary drama'. Now it is on the centre-stage. The issue will not vanish and all socialists and progressives should note that it cannot be relegated to a relatively unimportant place. The national question could be the 'key link' in the island's politics today. All socialists must grasp this fact for the issue could well become the very touchstone, 'the point of revolutionary definition' of progressive thought and action.

(To be continued)

Vaithianathan and Dias 'periods'

by W. Wiswa Warnapala

The changes introduced with the revision of the Overseas Minute in 1959 included the amalgamation of the Grades IV, V and VI (1st, 2nd and 3rd Secretaries) into one continuous scale approximating in salary to Class III of the then existing Civil Service. Several reasons were attributed in support of the amalgamation of grades, and it was mentioned that such a scheme will better serve the needs of the Service because it had the characteristics of a more equitable scheme.

The flexibility in the grades was achieved and the ranks are determined by salary points in the time scale. Above all, the amalgamated scheme gave flexibility in the disposition of the career diplomatic personnel. As a result of the new scheme, an officer appointed to a post in one of the missions abroad will assume with a rank, seniority and designation determined by the salary point which was effective at the time of his assignment. In other words, the ranking of an officer which is necessary for diplomatic work abroad will be determined by the salary point in the amalgamated scale. The Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, at its own discretion, determined the rank and level of the officer who was to be appointed to a post in an Overseas Mission.

The academic and social background of the 74 career officers who constituted the Overseas Service in 1975, deserves examination because it provides the answer to the lack of responsiveness on the part of this segment of the bureaucracy to the aspirations of the common man.

In the first phase of recruitment, which was known as the Vaithianathan Period, it was said that the selections were made from 'an elitist upper crust' in the island's society, and most of the

probationers came from the minority groups in race, religion, language and caste. Kanthiah Vaithianathan, in his capacity as Secretary, Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, dominated the entire fifties and he, according to Pieter Keneuman, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, was 'an all-world expert'. The emphasis which he placed on the recruits came to be reversed during the period of N. Q. Dias, who functioned as Secretary of the Ministry in the sixties. He attempted to recruit men with a loyalty to Sinhala and Buddhism. The source of recruitment, during the period of both Kanthiah Vaithianathan and N. Q. Dias, remained the same and in terms of their attitudes to international affairs, to ideology and politics, there was no marked difference.

Tissa Wijeyeratne, in his capacity as the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated a process of nativisation to reverse this tradition and its aim was to reorient the Overseas Service with values and ethos acceptable to the

great mass of the people. A probe into the academic and social background of the personnel in the Overseas Service is certain to throw light on the intricacies involved in such a process of nativisation. The table on next page explains the academic background of the recruits to the Overseas Service.

The postgraduate qualifications, unlike in the diplomatic services of certain countries, have not been encouraged, and the reason was perhaps the size of the cadre which demand no specialists. The proficiency in a foreign language was equated to a postgraduate qualification and the competence in a foreign language was limited to CGE (O.L.) London Examination. The postgraduate training course in diplomacy at the Commonwealth Relations office, and this course, the duration of which was 6 weeks, had been followed by 15 officers in the service. The Foreign Office of Australia in Canberra, benefitted yet another 11 officers and this course again, was, a four months training scheme. Three officers have followed the course at UNITAR in Geneva, and another officer

Ethnic Composition of the Sri Lanka Overseas Service

Year of Recruitment	Number of Sinhalese	Number of Tamils	Number of Muslims	Number of Burghers	Total
1949	4	1	-	-	5
1950	1	1	-	-	2
1951	2	3	-	-	5
1952	1	1	1	1	4
1953	-	2	1	1	4
1954	2	1	-	-	3
1955	4	1	-	1	6
1956	4	2	-	-	6
1957	3	2	-	-	5
1958	5	1	1	1	8
1960	2	2	-	-	4
1964	3	3	-	-	6
1966	4	1	-	-	5
1968	3	1	1	-	5
1970	2	-	-	-	2
Total	40	22	4	4	70

has completed the treaty Registration Course available at the Queens University in Canada. Two officers have completed the Diplomatic Practice course at the Sussex University, and two officers have completed the courses at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade and the Institute of Social Studies at Hague respectively. There were only two officers with Master's Degrees in International Relations. Though the training courses were considered sufficient qualifications for promotions and posting, the ministry made no attempt to stress the need for postgraduate qualifications in International Relations. This was primarily due to the belief that the Overseas Officer could emerge as 'an all-rounder' in the conduct of foreign relations. The lack of specialists, with post-graduate training in relevant fields, has interfered with the deployment policy in the Overseas Service of Sri Lanka.

The ethnic composition within the Overseas Service was yet another aspect which invited criticism from the nationalist elements in the country. The table illustrates the nature of the ethnic representation in the Overseas Service.

The position of the Tamil community within the public services of the island has been subject to controversy and the charge has been made that they enjoyed a disproportionate share of the appointments in the Public Services. The advantages, which they enjoyed during the colonial period, helped the Tamil community to obtain a considerable share of public appointments even after independence, and this trend was reflected in the recruitment to the Overseas Service. The sizable representation of the Tamil community within the ranks of the Overseas Service has been partially attributed to the predominant role which Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan played in the formation of the Overseas Service in its initial stages. The political development in the post-1956 period, though affected the recruitment policies in other areas of the island's bureaucracy, brought no significant impact on the composition of the Overseas bureaucracy.

Year of Recruitment	Name of University	Type of Degree	Number
1949	Ceylon	BA	4
1950	London	BA	1
	Ceylon	BA	1
1951	Ceylon	BA	1
	London	BA	1
1951	Ceylon	BA	3
	Ceylon	BSc	1
1952	Ceylon	BA	2
1953	Ceylon	BA	4
1954	Ceylon	BA	3
1956	Ceylon	BA	4
1957	Ceylon	BA	3
	Ceylon	LLB	2
1958	Ceylon	BA	3
	Oxford	BA	2
	Harvard	BA	1
	London	BA	1
	Melbourne	BA	1
1960	Ceylon	BA	1
	Ceylon	BSc	1
	Ceylon	LLB	1
1961	Ceylon	BA	4
Total			45

The traditions of the Vaithianathan period were continued till the early seventies and it, therefore, meant that the Overseas Service came to be drawn from the social classes which dominated the administrative services at the advent of national independence. The Overseas Service, irrespective of the political and social changes which took place after independence, retained the traditions and ethos which were inculcated into it at the very inception and it, thereby, emerged as a bureaucracy, by its attitudes, views and art of administration, displayed the characteristics of an exclusive caste of officers within the island's bureaucracy. These characteristics which are alien to the aspirations of the people, could be further illustrated by analysing the factors relating to the social background of the members of the Overseas Service.

The Students Records available at the Record Room of the Peradeniya Campus were perused with a view to obtain certain data which could help in the analysis of the social and academic background of the entrants into the Overseas Service. The Students Records of

forty undergraduates, who are now officers of the Overseas Service, were utilised to obtain information for the following discussion.

Ethnic Background of the Forty Officers

Sinhalese	26
(Low Country Sinhalese 18 Kandyan Sinhalese 8)	
Tamil	10
Muslims	1
Burgher	3
Total	40

Religious Background

Buddhists 22, Roman Catholics 6, Hindus 4, Christian Church of Ceylon 7, Muslims 1, Total 40.

Occupation of the Father

Farmer 10, Labour 1, Exorcist 1, Teacher 5, Government Clerk 3, Station Master 2, Customs Officer 1, Head Guard 1, Police Constable 1, Businessman 3, Doctor 1, Engineer 2, Proctor 3, Unemployed 1, Not known 5, Total 40.

Schools Attended and from which they entered the University

Royal College 4, St. Thomas, Mt. Lavinia 6, Trinity, Kandy 3, St. Joseph's, Colombo 2, St. Peter's, Colombo 3, Wesley, Colombo 1, Hartley, Point Pedro 1, Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda 1, Dharmapala, Pannipitiya 1, Jaffna Hindu College 1, Karadeniya Central 2, Hunumulla Central 1, Tissa Central, Kalutara 1, Ussapitiya Central 1, Naramala Central 1, Mahinda College, Galle 1, Dharmaraja College 1, Piliyandala Central 1, Kotte Anandasastalaya 1, Maha Vidyalayas 4, Vidyalandara Pirivena 1, St. Anthony's Wattala 1, St. Bridget's Convent 1, Total 40.

Nature of Academic Attainments of the Forty Officers

General Degree 17, Special Degree 23, Second Class 3, Second Class Upper 1, Second Class Lower 9, Class, Graduates 13.

The University Students Records revealed yet another feature; they included the information relating to persons who received bursaries from the University. 23 out of the 40 officers obtained bursaries to study at the University of Sri Lanka, and another two entered the University with 5th Standard Government Scholarship. It provided an indication to the effect that nearly half of the officers whose Students Records were perused came from the low income groups. This shows that a substantial segment of the Overseas bureaucracy did not belong to the upper crust of the elite of Sri Lanka.

Palangetiyo and social realism

by J. Uyangoda

Healthy developments are taking place in Sinhala cinema. Young artists, though still a small band, have been pointing new directions and opening unexplored terrain in search of new cinematic themes. Vasantha Obeysekera joins this select band with his latest effort "PALANGETIYO" (Grasshoppers).

For many reasons, the film deserves the serious consideration of both movie-goer and critic.

In the first instance, PALANGETIYO strives to bring the Sinhala film "from heaven to earth" (Ahasin Polowata, to use the title of a recent movie).

Unlike the work of some of those 'enlightened' film-makers, Palangetiyo has a theme which is not conceived in some dreamy, nostalgic mind. It is no airy or unreal theme but one closely and essentially related to the actualities of life. It is the self-same virtue which I recognised and commended in Sunil Ariyaratne's "Sarungale". But Vasantha Obeysekera in this movie shows far greater maturity in dealing with his material, a maturity even greater than Dharmasena Pathiraja that other talented film-maker in our midst.

With his story of two young lovers, Obeysekera sheds light not only on the intricacies of personal relationships but on the social circumstances which influence and condition such relationships.

His two characters, Sarath and Kusum, are recognisable representatives of their milieu. A just-left-school type, Kusum's thinking and responses to life have been shaped by pulp novels, and trashy films. Her father is a publisher of cheap books, and Sarath, a young migrant to the city, works in his printing press. An intense romantic attraction to each other leads to a 'secret' love, and the young Sarath elopes with his employer's daughter.

Right from the start, the film presents these two characters not merely as two romantic lovers but as individuals who are very much creatures of their upbringing and social background. They think, speak and behave in such a way that their intimacies as lovers or spouses are seen, as the drama develops, as the manifestations of social and economic forces that ultimately determine their values, ideology, outlook and subjective attitudes. In short, the film succeeds in portraying two characters whose private life, personal conduct and inter-acting behaviour are not abstracted from life but are inseparable from their actual social being.

Here, a useful comparison may be made with Pathiraja's "Bambaru". A major weakness in 'Bambaru' is that it is based on an imaginary situation ably touched up with real happenings in a fishing village. True, there may be no art without imagination. But the imagination must not do violence to reality. Pathiraja fails to make individual conflicts meaningful in these terms. In more senses than one, his 'village' is something of a romantic hide-out, cut off from social reality.

Obeysekera, on the other hand, succeeds in locating the complex conflicts on a human relationship and its vicissitudes (romantic love, frustration, escape, emerging frictions, ambivalent reactions, suspicion and overpowering feelings of betrayal) within the larger reality. One recalls what Lenin said in a letter to Inessa Armand. The important thing is not what you subjectively mean by love but the objective logic of class relations in affairs of love. In refusing to indulge in fabricated pathos and facile sentimentalism, Obeysekera is a liberating spirit in the Sinhala cinema.

If Obeysekera's maturity lies in his firm grasp of the integral conn-

ection between the personal and the social, his artistic skill rests on his ability to dramatise this through a well-constructed plot, and expressive sequences and images. I was especially impressed by the skill with which he depicts two different social settings, urban and rural, to describe it broadly. The two-storeyed home of the publisher-mudalali (Henry Jayasena) and his printing works nearby form the setting for the stirrings of romance and love, and the critical decision to elope. Kusum's secretive passion, the 'clandestine' affair, her dreams of romantic escape so natural to a young girl whose inner life has been nourished by the material of 'pulp' novels are matched by a sense of self-assurance in her own home and familiar surroundings. Such surroundings are of course alien to the poor boy from the village, caught between his emotions, and his hopes, torn between uncertainty and aspiration.

But Kusum's self-assurance cracks quickly under the pressures of the 'new' life in Sarath's village home, the misery and squalor of such living and the oppressive constraints of rural lower-middle class domesticity. Meanwhile, Sarath's fruitless journeys from one printing shop to another become the hopeless odyssey of his class and generation, as the quest for employment mercilessly exhausts his inner reserves to fight and survive in a world he never made.

The even more oppressive wretchedness of yet another 'home' (a hole of a room in a shanty) offers little solace to either. Life itself closes in, and the last glimmer of hope fades out. As cruel circumstances, social and economic at its roots, begin to overwhelm the pair, Sarath is unable to rebel against it, leave alone master it. In his growing despair, he is forced to renounce even those traditional

(Continued on page 24)

Bibliographer extraordinary

by Paul Caspersz

“With this publication*”, writes J. D. Pearson, Professor of Oriental Bibliography in the University of London, “Mr Goonetilleke enters the ranks of the greatest Oriental bibliographers of all times, that “super-league” to which are admitted those of the calibre of Cordier, and others whose bibliographical works remain the essential starting point for all research as well as the vade-mecum for the book-collector.”

On 1 May this year, H. A. I. Goonetilleke, unquestionably the greatest bibliographer our country has ever produced, relinquished his desk as the Librarian of the University of Peradeniya. Instead, he began at home his first day of leave prior to retirement from the post of Librarian. It was on the same first day of May twenty-six years ago that H. A. I. Goonetilleke joined the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, as Assistant Librarian.

To all those who know Ian Goonetilleke, his passion for the printed word, the intensity of his bibliographical scholarship, his uncommon dedication to our country and its University, the retirement, eight years too early, signals the passing away of an era. But the signal would be seen and heeded on one condition only: that one recognized the power of his incisive intelligence and had no fear of his unrelenting sponsorship of truth nor of his intrepid denunciation of falsehood and chicanery. These are the qualities, the principles and the values that guided Ian Goonetilleke in the performance of his duties. Is it that this

performance, in its turn, unfortunately caused a noisome reaction that has befouled the atmosphere in the groves of academe and led the Librarian for sheer survival to abandon the institution for the advancement of which he gave the best years of his life?

However that may be, an era of bibliographical achievement within the University and a great university librarian's services to students and researchers from his own and other lands seems to have ended. It should not be allowed to pass away unrecorded.

It was an era of quiet struggle for the supremacy of knowledge and truth by those men and women who shared with Ian Goonetilleke a commitment to learning and to life. “The quality of life”, Ian Goonetilleke has written, “is a much abused term, and the sad fact of its concentration within the ranks of a small elite is the greatest affront to the intelligence of the scholar and the seeker after truth and justice.”

Equal opportunities in life for all, scholarship, truth, inter-human justice; these were the ideals for which Ian Goonetilleke worked at Peradeniya and for which he was compelled to retire. For a university man to live by ideals in a university setting there must be university autonomy. But this autonomy is needed at two levels. The first protects it against external designs to stunt and warp it. The second insulated it from internal influences that would curb and inhibit the exercise both of responsible academic freedom and of the professional competence of each university man. Autonomy at both levels, allowed generously and used responsibly, is the bedrock of university excellence in a democracy. When it is under siege, good and capable men are forced to the door.

But can H. A. I. Goonetilleke continue to pursue scholarship in

this country divorced from the University which he so loves and helped to build? This is the question.

If he does not, our loss would be irretrievable and the world abroad would be perplexed. **A Bibliography of Ceylon** will shortly go into its fourth volume. And then every five years or so, until the man goes the way of his father, scholars and lovers of this land can look forward to further volumes supplementing the earlier ones and bringing the critical record of the printed Ceylonese word up to date.

There is, however, one ray of light breaking through the gloom. It is the light of courageous answers to the searching questions that honest persons will be led to ask themselves and others. Is academic and professional freedom in the area of one's proven competence something to be feared or to be fostered? Are the demands of freedom and justice to remain loud proclamations from the housetops or are they to have meaning for every man and woman in our land? Is a life of joyous pursuit of the ideals of truth, justice and honesty impossible in a hard world for persons who would otherwise serve their country well and ask for no greater reward than the reward of being able to serve?

“I have learned”, H. A. I. Goonetilleke wrote in a dignified farewell message to the eighty-nine members of his Library Staff, “that work is a sacrament and its only reward, and librarianship is, in its highest form, an art of social service to the mind of one's fellow-man.” It is perhaps too late to undo the damage of a premature retirement. It is perhaps not too late for all who have hopes in the University and for the University Council itself to seek complete awareness of the circumstances of this retirement. It is certainly not too late to see that the country's best bibliographer gets the only gratitude he seeks: the opportunity to work and the opportunity to serve.

* **A Bibliography of Ceylon: A systematic guide to the literature on the land, people, history and culture published in Western languages from the sixteenth century to the present day.**

Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company, 1970-76. 3 vols.

The missing second-person pronoun

by Reggie Siriwardena

They have seven or eight words for Thou, or You, which they apply to persons according to their quality, or according as they would honour them. And they are To, Topi, Umba, Umbela, Tomnai, Tamsi, Tamsela, Tomanxi. All these words are gradually one higher than the other.

— Robert Knox: *An Historical Relation of Ceylon.*

Knox's list of the second-person pronouns in the 17th-century Sinhala of the Kandyan kingdom (recognisable through the distortions of his English transliteration) reflects the linguistic usages of a society based on an elaborate system of caste and class hierarchies. It seems to me that today, after several decades of the erosion of caste, the decline of feudal relationships, and the growth of bourgeois democracy, the second-person pronoun (always one of the linguistic features most sensitive to relationships of power and class) is undergoing some interesting transformations in the Sinhala spoken language.

The pronouns listed by Knox ranged from the dominating **tho** and **thopi** to the deferential **thamunnanse** (Knox's **tomanxi**). **Umba**, in its traditional usage, could vary in significance, depending on whether its use was symmetrical or not between two persons. Clearly, a person who addressed someone else as **umba**, and was addressed by him as **thamunnanse**, would be using the former pronoun to express a relationship of superiority or power. But two persons could also address each other as **umba**, in which case the pronoun would indicate a familiar relationship between equals.

What has happened in the last few decades is that **tho** and **thopi** have increasingly gone into abeyance, except as terms of abuse and as survivals in some backward feudal pockets. **Umba**,

as an indicator of a relationship of superiority or command is also on the decline (though somewhat more slowly than **tho**), but we have reached the point where many people no longer feel that it is a proper form of address even to domestics. So it is likely that in time to come **umba** will survive only as a form of familiar address between equals—used more commonly perhaps by workers and peasants, but also by members of more privileged classes when talking intimately or jocularly.

So far, the changes in the second-person pronoun usage in modern spoken Sinhala parallel what has happened in many other languages during the evolution from pre-capitalist relationships to bourgeois democracy. Many European languages, for instance, have had at least two second-person pronouns, non-polite and polite—e.g. French **tu** and **vous**, Spanish **tú** and **usted**, Russian **ты** and **вы**. (In French and Russian the polite forms of address to a single person are identical with the universally used plural forms.) Originally the non-polite forms were used non-symmetrically to social inferiors as well as symmetrically by intimates, but with democratisation it is this second aspect that has become standardised.

In pre-revolutionary Russia, where bourgeois development was belated, and distinctions of rank were bureaucratically institutionalised, the official army regulations right down to 1917 even laid

down which ranks should be addressed by superior officers as **вы** and which as **ты**, and it required the February Revolution and the overthrow of tsarism to abolish this distinction. Even after October, however, the Soviet regime had to wage a long battle against the use of **ты** to subordinates in army or factory by officers and bureaucrats who had become habituated to it. Comrie and Stone, the authors of a new sociolinguistic study, *The Russian Language since the Revolution*, quote official exhortations to the use of **вы** to subordinates and condemnations of the use of **ты** by militiamen, managers and others, as late as the 1960s, which suggest that old habits had not entirely died out even at that time.

In French, Russian and other European languages, however, the decline of the non-polite form was accompanied by the universalisation of the polite form as the normal and neutral mode of address between non-intimates. But it is striking that in modern spoken Sinhala we have had the first development but not the second. There is in fact no generally recognised neutral second-person pronoun in Sinhala speech today. **Oba** is much too formal to be used outside public speeches and the dialogue of bad plays. **Thamuse** was apparently deferential in Knox's time, but in contemporary usage it has acquired a tone of familiarity, and sounds condescending when used to a stranger. What is tending to fill the gap, at least in urban speech, is **oya**. But **oya**, too, when addressed to non-intimates carries with it an air of brashness. I do hear **oya** often used, for instance, by bus-conductors to passengers, and while I understand and even

sympathise with this usage as a form of democratic self-assertiveness I would not use the pronoun myself to a stranger.

In my own Sinhala usage and that of many others. I find that in polite conversation with strangers or non-intimates, one tends to do without the second-person pronoun at all, for lack of an all-purpose neutral form. One says: **Mister Ratnayake heta enavada?** or **Chandratna dhen iskole nivadudha?** or even, to a complete stranger, **Mahatmayage nama mokakdha?** where one would say in English, **Will you come tomorrow, Mr. Ratnayake?** or **Are your school holidays now on, Chandratna?** or **What's your name?** Here social change seems to have outstripped the development of pronominal forms. (It would be interesting to know whether there is a parallel situation in contemporary Tamil.)

I have so far said nothing about English, which had at one time different polite and non-polite forms of the second-person pronoun. This is, in fact, like universal franchise, equality of persons before the law, and freedom of contract between employer and worker, one of those fictions of formal equality which conceal the real inequality of bourgeois relations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Britain, which led the rest of Europe in the development of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, should also have gone fastest and furthest in the accompanying process of pronominal change, obliterating the distinction between polite and non-polite forms altogether. It is also evident why this change should have taken place around the time of the 17th century English revolution. Significantly, where the myth of formal equality was abandoned, as in racial relations in the Southern States of America, other forms of address had to be developed by white English speakers to mark the openly acknowledged racial inequalities; hence, the practice of addressing Black American adults as **boy**.

One consequence of the development of the English second-person

pronoun is that you often cannot translate Russian, French or Spanish literature into English without losing some nuances of social or personal relationships conveyed by the second-person pronouns. For instance, in Dostoevsky's **Crime and Punishment** (Part I, Ch. 3), Nastasya, the servant in the house where Raskolnikov lodges, uses **ty** to him, because she regards him with affectionate familiarity: she is much older than him, and he is a poor student and therefore not appreciably her social superior. (David Magarshack in the Penguin Classics translation destroys this effect completely by making her address Raskolnikov as 'sir'.) In **The Idiot** (Part I Ch. 2) Prince Myshkin's indifference to class distinctions as against the common humanity of all men is brought out by his using **vy** to the servant at the Epanchins' home (while in Part I Ch. 8 Nastasya Filippovna, mistaking the Prince for a servant, addresses him as **ty**). The effect of the Prince's conversation with the Epanchins' servant is to make the latter feel something that was 'entirely proper between man and man but completely out of place between guest and servant'.

Something of the quality of these scenes (and of many others in Russian literature) disappears in English translation with the loss of the differentiating pronouns. Sinhala and Tamil, with their linguistic heritage of a hierarchical society, could convey these nuances better. It is not only the pointers to class relationships but also some of the subtler shades of personal feeling carried by the second-person pronouns in Russian that are obliterated in translation into English. It is not too much to say that in Russian fiction the two pronouns (and the corresponding singular and plural forms of the verb) serve as continual signals of the quality of a relationship, or of the shifts within it. Between a man and a woman, for instance, the change from **vy** to **ty** signals growth into intimacy or love; on the other hand, a reverse change indicates coldness or estrangement.

In Tolstoy's **Anna Karenina** the Karenins, who early in the

novel call each other **ty** (as is customary between husband and wife), change to **vy** as the relationship chills. Significantly, Karenin, to whom keeping up appearances is of first importance, uses the formal pronoun for the first time when Anna has betrayed the proprieties of marriage in public by openly displaying her emotion over Vronsky's fall in the steeplechase (Part II ch. 29). In the last chapters preceding Anna's suicide her rapid oscillations between bitterness against Vronsky and a desperate clinging to him are signified by her alternation between the two forms of address. 'We're definitely going tomorrow, aren't we?' Vronsky asks, and she answers, 'You (vy), but not I.' The **vy** is like a glass of cold water thrown in his face. The next moment, after he has left she sends him a note, 'Come home, I must explain. For God's sake, come I'm frightened' (singular forms, intimate, pleading).

Chekhov's **Lady with a Little Dog** is another example of how much a great writer can get out of the contrast between the two second-person pronouns. After Gurov has slept with Anna, the lady he has encountered casually at Yalta, he slips easily into saying **ty** to her (he is an experienced **roue**, who thinks of the affair as a passing diversion). She, on the other hand, continues to address him as **vy**, since she feels guilty after her act of marital infidelity, and holds herself back emotionally. Gurov goes back to Moscow, finds he can't get Anna out of his mind, makes a journey to her home-town and encounters her in the theatre. In the ensuing conversation not only she but he too uses the more formal **vy** — a sign of greater seriousness on his part, since he can no longer put on a show of easy intimacy. In the last section of the story we see them again after the relationship has grown into lasting though unhappy love, and here for the first time Anna is given a single line where she uses the second-person singular form of the verb (**ty** implied): the emotional barriers she maintained have fallen.

Western cultural heroes of the past

by Ariyadeva

In a previous article this commentator noted the continuation of cultural colonisation. I drew attention to the presence of West German agencies, appendages of the main West German political parties, in crucial areas of cultural importance to the country **West Germans today are therefore key cultural infiltrators and controllers in this regard, a height not reached by the Americans even during the Dullesian era.** (The Americans, one should note maintain today a relatively low profile and a more interactionist approach to culture similar to the profile maintained for quite some time by the British).

But the German presence here did not always fit the bill of the expatriate cultural commissar. The 19th century and the early 20th century is replete with names of Germans who came here got 'converted' to our heritage and returned to their land to propagate ideas they had discovered here—a cultural colonisation in reverse as it were. Although these Germans did not have the same impact on the Sri Lankan psyche as another Westerner, the American Olcott their work nevertheless was very important. I refer to Geiger, Oldenberg, Max Muller, Dalke and the more recent monks who took Buddhist robes with names having the prefix Gnana.

These persons performed a useful function, firstly in helping in a small way to free the then confident Europe from a narrow ethnocentricity—a process which is still continuing—Secondly—and more important to our context—these writers helped give the legitimacy and the stamp of Western recognition to Sri Lanka's and South Asian region's traditions at a time when the cultural

apparatus was firmly in control of foreign elements.

The feudal economy together with its pluses and barbarities was rapidly on the retreat and a new economy—initially mercantilist and later plantation based—was in the ascendancy, controlled firstly by Portugal and Holland and later by Britain. Accompanying the economic presence was a new cultural imposition in religion, education, entertainment and world view generally, which supplanted the traditional Sri Lankan culture emerging from a feudal structure as well as more Universal ones. These Universal ones related for example to questions about the nature of man and reality, the nature of perception, the nature of human nature, the nature of beauty and the aesthetic experience and such similar questions—to be dismissed by both Christian missionaries and secular critics including Marxists, as being either heathen beliefs or idealistic speculation. This cultural experience from the past included also the know-how to build large tanks and reservoirs, in fact the biggest irrigation system the world had seen till the 18th century. It also included technology to build the huge dagabas and similar examples of conspicuous state consumption. It also included at more human level the knowledge of a codified medical system.

The cultural genocide which occurred under European terms in the name of religion and later of science attempted to wipe out this early system. It is here that the Germans of the 19th century and the early 20th century Geiger, Oldenberg, Muller and Dalke find an important niche in Sri Lanka (and also South Asian) self assertion.

Geiger discovered in the Mahavamsa not fantasy and fairy tales

but a surprisingly accurate chronology of events and people extending over 2000 years. This chronology, it was true was seen through the distorting lens of the self interest of the Mahavamsa writers, namely a particular sect of the Buddhist clergy. But nevertheless it was a chronology and history differing only in degree in this sense, from the historical writings found anywhere.

Oldenberg and other European discoverers of the Buddhist tradition helped emphasise the very serious questions on the nature of human nature which generations of empirical thinkers had dwelled on. These questions to be discussed in seriousness in European psychology only recently were not of the kind to be dismissed as mere mysticism or idle speculation. (as they once were).

Max Mueller is remembered for his study of that important key to the culture of the region, namely the Sanskrit language. He and his like helped establish that writers like the 5th century B. C. Panini were asking and answering questions on philology thousands of years before Europe. Further, other writers on language like Bhartruhari were describing characteristics of language that were discovered only well into the 20th century Europe. These German writers (as well as other Western ones) helped also draw attention to the fact that a systematic knowledge on Algebra and Mathematics including the discovery of the zero existed in this region well before other regions.

In the third quarter of the 20th century, Europe is no longer in its prime. Self-doubt and a new questioning pervades its cultural sphere. In this mainstream of questioning, many so called

(Continued on Page 24)

A legacy of Empire

Speculating during the colonial era on what element of the British era in this country was most likely to outlast the dissolution of empire, John Still hazarded the guess that it would be cricket. It must have seemed an implausible answer at the time. It would have been more reasonable to suppose that a game suited to long English summer evenings, permeated by the English public-school ethos ('Play up, play up, and play the game'), and reflecting the English temperament in its boring prolongation over interminable stretches of time would wilt away in the tropical climate once the aura it acquired from the imperial connection was removed.

But Still seems to have been right, and the current World Cup tournament is a good occasion to reflect on the oddity of the fact that Britain should have been so successful in implanting cricket in her former Asian and Caribbean colonies. Come to think of it, cricket has been a much harder survival than that other game our one-time imperial masters taught us — the game of parliamentary democracy, which even where it is perpetuated in ex-British colonies of the third world, is hardly played according to Westminster rules.

Far from the game withering away in post-colonial Sri Lanka, it has percolated down to new social layers outside the circle of what Marxists would call the 'compradores' and their offspring who originally played it. Already in the 'thirties the emerging nationalist petty-bourgeoisie and the Buddhist schools which were their strongholds were proving themselves in the game, with 'big matches' in the style of the Royal-Thomian, as evidence that they had arrived. In post-colonial times the advance of free education has carried the gospel of cricket to the provinces and the countryside, and small towns now have

their own versions of the 'big match' ritual.

That Dr. N.M. Perera, one of the original founders of what was Sri Lanka's first militant anti-imperialist mass movement, should have ended as President of the Board of Control of Cricket, seems entirely appropriate to the sociological phenomenon I have been talking about. Incidentally, Dr. Perera is not the only Trotskyist, or ex-Trotskyist, to be enamoured of cricket. C.L.R. James, the one-time West Indian Trotskyist and historian (his book **The Black Jacobins** is the best study of the Toussaint l'Ouverture slave revolt in San Domingo) played first-class cricket in the West Indies and has written a book on West Indian cricket titled **Beyond a Boundary**.

Doctor (honoris causa)

Sri Lanka is probably one of the few countries where the Press refers to politicians who have earned honorary doctorates by their 'scholastic' titles. So 'Doctor' W. Dahanayake and 'Doctor' Badiuddin Mahmud used to be honoured by the newspapers in the past. But today the 'Daily News' has apparently adopted the new principle that honorary doctorates are to be recognised only as long as politicians are in power. Galle's veteran politician, who has been back in the news in connection with Municipal politics, has become plain 'Mr. W. Dahanayake', but the Minister of Education and Higher Education is still 'Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne'.

Department of Subtle Distinctions

"Art must reflect life...but it must also do more than that; in the classical formulation, it must also hold a mirror up to nature. This 'Palangetiyo' is able to achieve only spasmodically." (Gamini Seneviratne in a review of the film.)

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Western cultural . . .

(Continued from page 22)

Eastern strands have been added. To this self search and realising maturity of European thought, the Germans of the last century who came to our climes have contributed significantly.

They have also helped us free ourselves from the traditional moorings of our past heritage as well as from the new imposed cultural conditioning of the West and thus helped us in our own searches for both legitimacy and direction.

As a concluding note, we should also mention that the cultural conditioning and the view of our own problems was common not only to those of the dominant views of Europe, but also of Marxism, the newly found voice of the underprivileged: Marx himself—in spite of his analyses being perhaps the most incisive on the European scene—was a

creature of his times (or more prosaically of his references and source material). The Europe of his times had not yet opened its mind to the immense material, scientific and cultural achievements of the Asian region. Marx's stages of history were all more or less located in Europe moving from the slave owning Greek Roman Mediterranean region, through the feudal Western and Central European systems, to the capitalism of Western Europe. Asia, he relegated to a residual category of the Asiatic mode of production where he assumed (falsely) that communal property existed and history did not flow, and—worse—which Engels believed was not a "civilization"

True self search and a proper inquiry of our social, economic and cultural condition requires therefore not only a re-examination of the imposed dominant Establishment views of the West but also at times even its opposite. But then, that is another story, for another time.

Palangetiyo . . .

(Continued from page 18)

obligations and duties—the dowry he has pledged for his older sister. The younger sister, given her own inherited values and understanding, sees no hope at all and commits suicide.

Kusum, true to her self, finds momentary escape in a 'macho' on a motor-bike (Tennyson, a fine portrait by Rajan Mendis) and their caricature of Hindi film romance is a superbly placed double irony, just as the rhythmic counterpoint of a roving engine and pulsating passion is a brilliant touch. The tragic finale, an idyllic holiday in the hills they cannot afford, is Obeysekera's nicely considered, if tentative, observation on both the hopeless ones, and on society itself.

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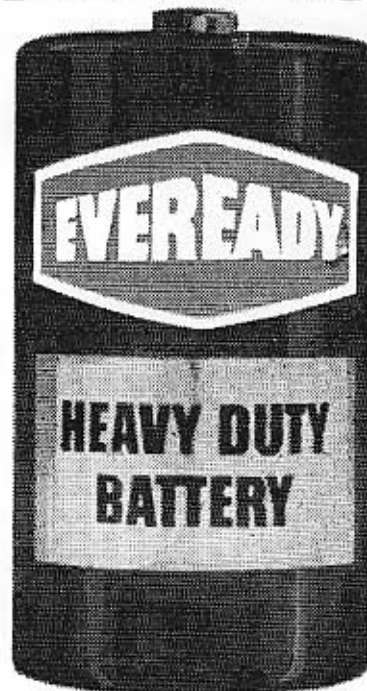
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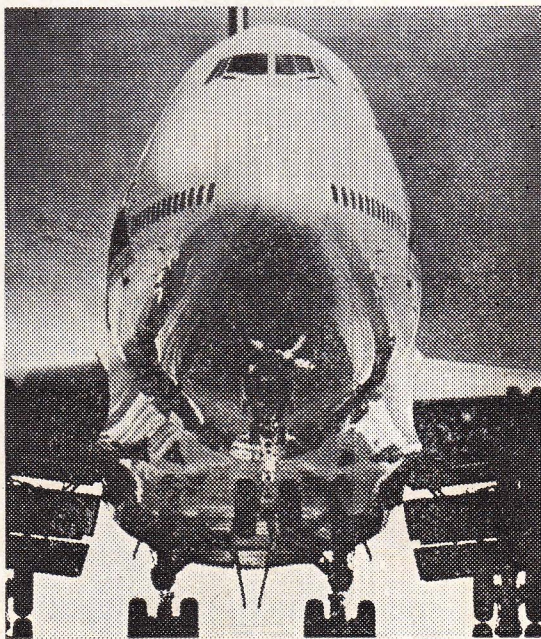
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