

GUARDIAN



NM

AN ASSESSMENT

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Congress Caravan in Colombo

Film Festivals

Nicaragua - Debate reopened

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GARADS

Big Brother

Every small country has its own 'big brother'. So close to such big neighbours as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, Sri Lanka has never been sufficiently conscious of the sensitivities of the Maldives, once a tribute-paying Sultanate.

The U. F. trod so officiously on Maldivian toes that relations between Sri Lanka and the new republic deteriorated steadily—a development which a smart New Delhi spotted and used to its advantage as Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Male proved. Flaunting the brand new, somewhat unimpressive, flag of an 'Asian Identity' (the Shah included) Mrs. Bandaranaike's ill fated Brzezinski, Mr. Tissa Wijeyeratne, tried hard to repair the damage but it was of no avail. Inspite of a prime ministerial visit.

Governments have changed in Colombo and Male. But relations have not improved. India, Pakistan and Libya, on the other hand, have established their positions strongly.

Though several Colombo-based diplomats went to Male for the National Day, Sri Lanka had no official representative at the celebrations. Now the new President has gone to Libya and from there for the Havana summit. "Now we don't look to our big neighbour, Sri Lanka, for advice when it comes to voting at the UN but alphabetical neighbour in the next seat—Malaysia", observed a Maldivian journalist.

Fascinating facet

Like a good gem, racialism has many facets. When you hold it to the light economics and commerce shine through brightly. In the land of gems, a young Buddhist monk is in hospital. According to his friends, he was dragged out of his temple, assaulted and marched down the road. His books were strewn about.

The day before this incident a meeting was held to protest, among other things against separatism. But what were the motives of the ostensible sponsors and their patrons? Was it really against Tamil separatism or against the Moslem gem boys? Two radical groups distributed leaflets and newsheets condemning the

racialism of the self-styled Sinhala patriots. One newspaper "Desha Vimukti" was lucky. The entire stock of papers was bought up by a couple of mudalalis but not because they appreciated the Sinhala prose! A bonfire followed.

Probably anticipating a clash between Ratnapura's strongly placed Left groups and the pawellite Patriots the meeting was poorly attended. The young monk, Gunaratne Thero, was quite prominent in protesting against those who use race and religion to further their business interests.

Hydro-crackers!

Firm action by the President himself seems to have prevented a Tongsun Park-Lockheed style scandal bursting over Sri Lanka. It concerns the most controversial of tenders, the 1,500 million rupee Hydro-Cracker job.

Japanese, British, French, Italian, American, Jewish-America—they were all in the running. But what really staggered the government was the avalanche of allegations and counter-allegations of "unfair practice" (and worse) that followed the opening of the tenders, the evaluation committee report etc. VIP reputations were so much dirty linen as the names of politicians, officials, wheeler-dealers, ex-CCS men, one-time Sri Kotha 'experts' and so on were quickly soiled. One top bureaucrat, a CCS man of the old school, came out of it with his own prestige enhanced. It was his refusal to compromise, it is said in business circles, that impressed the Big Chief who is now determined to keep a close and critical eye on all big deals.

Egypt's isolation

Mrs. Jean Sadat has cancelled her visit to Colombo for the UNFPA conference on population. She was likely to be star of the show. No reasons have been officially offered but the SUN has mentioned the fact that she was expected to have 60 security men to guard her. The Egyptian embassy was the target of demonstration in Colombo. Incidentally, the Egyptian Ambassador who figured in the BMICH incident in June will be

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Abrasive Ambassadors

I am a public servant and do not wish to have my name published. However as a reader of your journal I thought it would interest you and your readers to know of an incident to which I was witness, when I attended a recent diplomatic function. Three or four foreign diplomats (all from non-aligned countries I later found out) were rudely attacking the press of our country for not being 'independent'. By the way, your magazine was also attacked bitterly. What really amused me was that in all those countries which these diplomats represent the newspapers are all 100 per cent controlled, publishers editors are jailed, newspapers closed down and

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MASTERS

Summit and the showboat people

The Congressional cannon that rolled from Washington to Colombo a few weeks ago were scarcely the fastest guns in the West. It was certainly the fastest press conference in our crowded newspaper history, observed a disgusted veteran of the local media, after a dozen US Congressmen, badgered and battered by some simple straightforward questions they could not answer or probably did not understand were hurriedly hustled out of a hotel room by an embarrassed corps of Embassy staffers.

"They cut and ran", said the SLFP daily 'Dinakara'. (See below) Among those representing the SLFP press, by the way, was a former Deputy Foreign Minister who was heard to chuckle quietly as Congressman Wolff and his colleagues tried to preach the principles of non-alignment, the new American version, in the home of the 5th summit.

Congressman Wolff whose belligerence was overshadowed by his ignorance had led the attack on Cuba. Isn't Cuba aligned? After all, said another sagely, Cuba is receiving enormous Soviet aid. (Does this mean that all those millions which the US is pouring into various countries as 'aid' make the recipients 'aligned'?). Cuba, added the aggressive Mr. Wolff, is having troops in three African countries and killing hundreds of "black boys". (Ex-Ambassador

Andy Young should be asked for his opinion on that interesting revelation).

"It was more the Charge of the Light Brigade than Custer's Last Stand" remarked a young Lake House reporter as one of his colleagues, to the immense relief of the heavy Embassy escort, turned the discussion from non-alignment to Boston and Eelam.

Evidently this is the season for tax-paid Congressional junkets. (See Page 5). The 'boat people' have prompted so many congressional caravans to roll along Asia-wards. But neither the easy pleasures of politicians nor the antics of these Showboat people should blind us to the serious aims of those who orchestrate these well-timed visits.

The target is Cuba and the non-aligned movement. And this, a few weeks before the summit, was the final propagandist barrage.

The Lanka Guardian and authoritative contributors to it, like Professor A. W. Singham, an internationally known student of non-alignment, have been pointing out how the propaganda campaign was launched sometime last year. The attack is from both within, and without. From within, the most conspicuously vocal participant has been Yugoslavia, and the reasons for Yugoslavia's special specious, and increasingly frenzied

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India, Indira and 6th Summit

The downfall of Desai, the collapse of the shaky Charan Singh coalition and the prospect of a strong showing by Mrs. Gandhi's Congress at the polls have dispirited the anti-Cuba club, led by Yugoslavia, Egypt, ASEAN and the Francophone group within the OAU. Governments come and go but the nation's foreign policy goes on forever is a maxim that has not always proved true.

India is India and her sheer weight guarantees great influence within the movement. Those who were fighting to save Egypt's face, curb the next Chairman's powers by new procedural devices, and to restrain criticism of the US and the West were relying heavily on Mr. Desai. As a result, nobody (not even the US and China) mentioned the Indo-Soviet treaty which Mrs. Gandhi signed. During her time, the question was asked whether that Treaty was not a blot on Indian non-alignment. Delhi therefore had a key role to play in a diplomatic game-plan prepared most of all by Yugoslavia. Its genesis can be traced to an interview given many months ago by the Yugoslav Ambassador in New York to David Binder, chief foreign affairs analyst of the NY Times.

Egypt herself lost ground in Colombo when the final declaration clearly denounced the Camp David accords and thus went much further than the condemnation of "partial solutions" of the Arab-Israeli issue. When Egypt lost ground, the Egyptian envoys as we all know lost their cool, and had to put in their place by Sri Lanka VIP's and officials. What will Egypt do at Havana? Will it be able to retrieve her position, if not her prestige? Or, if the Camp David Accords are given the same beating as in Colombo, will Egypt make some theatrical gesture?

The trouble with the anti-Cuba game-plan ('dirty Brezinski business' was the phrase used by the correspondent of a Geneva-based Third World news agency) was that it worked on the assumption that Cuba would act tactlessly and annoy the majority of members who are not engaged in various subtle and subterranean plots, and stratagems. As Mr. Hameed insists on observing in every discussion, Cuba has acted with great caution and rectitude. While refusing to compromise on Cuba's own stand on various international issues (it does not subscribe to the dubious non-bloc doctrine of the Belgrade Baptist Church) it has conducted itself as Chairman-designate with utmost rectitude.



NM's death: Turn of the tide?

by Jayantha Somasunderam

Ceylonese have an obsession with death and funerals. Dr. N.M. Perera's death last month confirms this. In a quick tour of the NWP, the Uva, the Sabaragamuwa and the up country, we saw clear evidence of this. Every village had its share of white flags, all buses and trains carried posters and in some places, like Avisawella, illuminated pandals had come up. In Badulla, by the road, was a larger than life picture of Dr. N. M. Perera, before which flowers had been placed.

Care must be taken not to draw indiscriminate parallels with the past. But the comparison with Dudley Senanayake's funeral and its significance, becomes irresistible.

Dudley Senanayake's funeral followed three years after Mrs. Bandaranaike's landslide victory of May 1970. So devastating was her victory that she splintered her opposition almost beyond recovery. The UNP was riven with factions and the leaders J. R. Jayewardena and Dudley Senanayake, were at each others' throats. Slowly discontent and disillusion was growing as the government failed to measure up to the expectations of the electorate. But people were too afraid, too disorganised and devoid of an alternative political leadership to express themselves. And then Dudley Senanayake died.

His death served as the occasion for people to identify their sad predicament. His funeral became a passive show of political solidarity. With it the tide turned.

Two years in office has doused the flames of victory that the UNP has been enjoying. With inflation running at more than twelve percent it can only be a select few who are enjoying the course of events. But for the rest, there has been little coherent political leadership that could mobilise their discontent. The opposition remains dormant, divided and demoralised.

Mourning for Dr. N.M. Perera could not have been restricted to

those who worked for him or voted for him. It was a nation that mourned. And its mourning cannot be devoid of political significance. Dr. N.M. Perera's death could become the turning point. It has definitely become a rallying point for discontent and disillusionment with the government. Already he had been elevated to near-saint status and myths about his life and work are circulating among a younger generation who barely knew him.

It need not follow that his political comrades or heirs will necessarily reap the benefits of this adulation. J.R. Jayewardena who rode to power in the aftermath of the drama that was Dudley Senanayake's funeral, had been a thorn in the flesh of the latter. Their inter-party disputes had ended up in courts.

In death, as a memory, Dr. N.M. Perera may well be more dangerous to his political opponents than he was in his life time.

'Revolutionary culture'

Festivals and Scholarships

Does Cairo have a special affinity to Lester Peiris films? Recently we were told that **Puran Appu**—the film—would fly there with the special blessings of our Film Corporation for the coming international festival. The sponsors had tried hard to make the film the official entry to the Moscow Film Festival, arguing that for a revolutionary city you need a "revolutionary" film. The panel of judges, however, decided unanimously on another film "**Dandu Monara**", the story of how a petty clerk's infatuation with his new acquisition—a bicycle—ruins his married life. The director **Vijaya Dharmasiri**, we understand was asked to send his film

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A US view

Tax - free 'fact - finding' Congressmen

by Peter C. Stuart

Washington

The flood of "boat people" from Indo-China has uncorked a steam of "jet people" in the opposite direction: traveling congressmen.

Inspection trips to the crowded Asian refugee areas are supplanting last year's favourite congressional travel destination - mainland China - as a Mecca for touring lawmakers.

Three separate Capitol Hill delegations are conducting "fact-finding missions" there during the current monthlong summer recess, hard on the heels of at least two other congressional refugee trips in recent months.

A nine-member delegation appointed by the Speaker of the House is tramping through resettlement camps in Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Malaysia before going to the country from which most of the refugees have fled: Vietnam.

The group is led by Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal (D) of New York.

His entourage will come close to crossing paths with a larger contingent of 14 House colleagues also exploring the refugee situation in Thailand and Hong Kong, as part of a wide-ranging expedition to six Asian nations. This mission is headed by Rep. Lester L. Wolff (D) of New York.

The refugee problem is getting a third going-over by two congressmen from Washington State, Republican Joel Pritchard and Democrat Norman D. Dicks, who are visiting camps in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The excursions to Indo-China are part of a busy schedule of official, tax-paid foreign travels by lawmakers during this August shutdown of Congress, which the House euphemistically calls a "district work period".

The House alone is sponsoring at least seven overseas trips.

Besides the Indo-China visits, 11 members of the Armed Services Committee are touring West Germany, Italy, Turkey,

and Belgium to study NATO requirements and readiness.

Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Clement J. Zablocki (D) of Wisconsin will lead a delegation of undetermined size later this month to a conference in Vienna.

Among recessing senators, seven are visiting the Soviet Union for talks related to the pending strategic arms limitation treaty.

Three other committee members also are traveling: George McGovern (D) of South Dakota in Europe; Edward Zorinsky (D) of Nebraska in Nicaragua, then joining Paul S. Sarbanes (D) of Maryland at a US-Canadian interparliamentary conference in Calgary.

Recess travel draws increasing criticism, even within Congress itself. One of the most-traveled committees in previous years - the Senate Armed Services, which spent nearly \$100,000 on trips in 1976 - is conspicuously sponsoring none during this recess.



A critique of arms

by A Special Correspondent

And so the debate reopens. The first fundamental characteristic of the Nicaraguan revolution is that it was an **armed** revolution. Its victory reaffirmed the lesson of Allende's overthrow in 1973: The problem of state power can be resolved in the last instance only through armed struggle. This fundamental tenet of Marxism-Leninism, though confirmed and reconfirmed bloodily by history itself, has on the one hand been criminally overlooked by reformism, while on the other hand, it has often been misinterpreted by revolutionaries. An armed contestation for power, is inevitable in the struggle for qualitative social change, and therefore, the path of armed struggle is the only valid **strategy** for revolution. The famous 'peaceful path' leads to a dead end. In Chile, it led inexorably to the Santiago stadium.

To base oneself **strategically** on anything other than the 'armed road' is not only illusory, but also suicidal. However a caveat, and an important one, is imperative at this point. In his '**Guerilla Warfare**' Guevara pointed out something that most 'Guevarists' forgot mainly in Latin America, but also elsewhere eg. in Sri Lanka. A revolutionary movement should not initiate sustained armed struggle against an elected government which maintains constitutional legality and bourgeois democratic freedoms. To embark upon a campaign of armed action in such a context would result in the political isolation of the revolutionaries from the masses, and the military defeat of the former would be inevitable.

If and when a regime throttles bourgeois democracy, impedes democratic forms of mass protest, makes impossible peaceful socio-political change and thus loses its constitutional legitimacy in the eyes of the masses, then, armed struggle

becomes both necessary and inevitable. The masses themselves recognise that the military option is the sole viable one and identify themselves organically with the armed struggle. The armed revolutionary movement is not then a spearhead without a shaft, a lit fuse without an explosive charge. Rather it becomes the vanguard of the people and is recognised as such by the people themselves. Its armed action and the state's repressive responses are no longer viewed impartially by a popular mass which occupies a vantage point of a detached spectator. Rather, the revolutionary organisation becomes the mailed fist of the masses, its army becomes a People's Army and its war, a People's War. This is what took place in Nicaragua, where tightly controlled Presidential elections, the existence of a National Assembly and an opposition political party could not mask the reality of an oligarchy's monopoly of power.

The FSLN which was formed in 1961 and commenced armed struggle the following year, was one of the several dozen guerilla '**focos**' that sprang up on Latin American soil in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution.

Inspired by the victory of the Cuban guerilleros, the youth of Latin America took up arms in response to the clarion call of the Second Declaration of Havana: 'The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution!' The FSLN suffered military defeat in 1963 but recovered sufficiently to be militarily active the very next year. The period '66-'67 saw another military defeat inflicted on the FSLN, but the 1970's saw them recover and make steady gains. Still their military progress was unspectacular and even the masterly two-volume survey of the Latin American revolution ('**A Cri-**

tique of Arms', 'Revolution on Trial') authored in 1973/74 by that most perspicacious of contemporary Marxist intellectuals, Regis Debray, makes no more than two fleeting references to the Sandinistas.

In December 1974 however, FSLN commandos attacked a Christmas party thrown at an Ambassador's residence and seized several high ranking government officials whom they subsequently released for large sums of money. This signalled the Sandinista transition to the 'second stage' of guerilla warfare (ie, of near-equilibrium.) characterized by increasingly bold attacks on banks, bridges, military patrols, police stations etc. 1977/78 saw intensified guerilla action across the forested frontier, while 'phase three', that of strategic offensive was inaugurated, as is well known, in 1978.

Several factors concerning the FSLN's military achievement draws the attention of the student of revolutionary politics and revolutionary warfare. The Sandinista's struggle was protracted, low-key and sporadic, killing hundreds of National Guardsmen over the years, but never mounting the kind of campaigns that enabled the Tupamaros, for example, to capture the imagination of radical youth the world over. And yet, the Sandinistas have proved infinitely more durable than almost any other Guerilla movement in Latin America, with the possible exception of the Guatemalan. The serious set-backs suffered in the 1960's did not eliminate them militarily or domesticate them politically—the latter being the fate that befell Venezuela's MAS (Movimiento a Socialismo—Movement for socialism) led by Teodoro Petkoff. The Lankan reader for his part may ponder over the case of the J. V. P which was both defeated militarily and domesticated politically—even those militants who escaped to the jungles and survived there physically for quite some time proving incapable of reforming itself as a

guerilla foco which could have commenced activity during a repression and economic crisis.

The Sandinista's military campaign is also notable for its departure, or more correctly, variation, from the classic scheme of protracted People's War of both the Cuban and Chinese 'models'. Of course it is not the case that any Latin American guerilla movement ever considered a mechanical imposition of the Cuban, let alone the Chinese patterns, and in this sense there were no 'models'. Still, the FSLN's strategy is most interesting because of its masterly synthesis of two models of armed struggle which are usually (and incorrectly) considered to be mutually exclusive and contradictory. I refer to protracted guerilla warfare, the main theatre of which is the countryside, and armed insurrection in the urban areas. Of course the 'model' has always stipulated that a general strike and armed insurrection in the cities would mark the seizure of power, but only after the countryside had encircled the cities which were ready to be plucked like rotten-ripe fruits. The FSLN campaign however, did not proceed in a gradualistic fashion through all the stages and substages of escalation prescribed in the text book. The FSLN merged rural guerilla warfare and spectacular urban commando operations in a synthesis roughly envisaged in the 60's by Venezuelan guerilla leader Douglas Bravo in what he termed the strategy of 'Combined Insurrection' (Bravo gave undue weightage to the potential role of radical military-men and he himself later into political opportunism, but all that is another story). Without waiting to completely encircle the cities from the country-side, the FSLN correctly judged the depth and extent of the political crisis, the maturity and mood of the mass movement, and the overall balance of forces. They escalated their military campaign rapidly, moving from Phase 1 into Phase 2, telescoping the two phases, attacking the cities, mobilizing and arming the youth, simultaneous offensives in all parts of the country and thereby detonating explosion. This kind of military flexibility

and indeed creativity, where guerilla combat is combined with sudden and simultaneous frontal assault, for **maximum political impact** was of course best demonstrated by the TET offensive of 1968, in Vietnam.

One can only speculate as to the kind of debate that must inevitably have taken place in the Sandinista ranks before this 'strategic synthesis' was agreed upon. Particularly interesting in this regard would be exchanges between the 'Protracted People's War' tendency of the FSLN (led by Thomas Borge, presently Minister of the Interior) and the 'Tercerista' (Third Force) or 'Insurrectionist' tendency (led by Daniel Ortega presently of the 5 member Ruling Junta).

The Vietnamese Marxists have provided us with the finest illustrations of the correct understanding of a given conjuncture as a precondition for launching military initiatives and conversely of utilizing military action as a means of altering a given conjuncture in a given direction. The concept of conjunctures which Althusser identifies as the key category of Marxist political science refers to the exact balance of forces and the state of over-determination of contradictions in a given spatial location at a given time. The FSLN has also demonstrated a masterly grasp of the integral linkage and dialectical interrelationship between the political and the military which has so often and so tragically been misunderstood, under-stressed or simply forgotten by revolutionary movements in Latin America. In the past 2 decades, the continent has witnessed a disjuncture between the development of the mass movement on the one hand and the armed revolutionary struggle on the other. The disjuncture has occurred in dimension of both space and time. On certain occasion, guerilla action has broken out in a localised sector of the country isolated from the main social force of the revolution. In Bolivia for instance, Che's column which was the spark, remained disconnected from the main explosive charge i.e. the tin miners.

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IRAN

The 'other' face

The mullahs should go back to their mosques' said an indignant Shahpour Bhaktiar at a Paris press conference recently. As the ill-fated leader of a short-lived civilian regime in the Shah's last days, this frail figure caught in a political storm he had no hope of surviving may not be the most dispassionate observer of his country's present turbulence. Yet his remark does confirm the validity of a basic judgement made by many commentators, including this journal, on the "two faces", progressive and reactionary, of Islamic revivalism.

In recent weeks, the Iranian people, particularly the middle-class and the educated, have seen the uglier, fanatical and obscurantist face of this movement. Music which the Ayatollah Khomeini declared is as bad as opium has been banned on Teheran radio, and the new puritanism, intense in its zeal and indiscriminately cruel in punishing 'offenders', turns a fierce frown on drink, sex, certain types of dress, and any public display of emotion by women, including dutiful wives. Flogging is the instant verdict. Meanwhile national groups, Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans are being driven to open rebellion.

A Teheran University professor told **NEWSWEEKS's** Paul Martin "Those of us who lived through dictatorships have made up our minds.....we simply can't have another—Islamic or otherwise."

Bhaktiar's reminder that Iran existed centuries before Islam may raise fundamental questions about Iran's identity, past and future, but of immediate concern are: (a) the conditions of near-anarchy created by the attempt to impose both the backward-looking bigotry as well as the testy dictatorial will of Khomeini and his Qom-based clique. (b) the disaffection and disunity it is causing across the country, even among Islamic and ecclesiastical circles (c) the effort to legitimise all this through

an 'election' to a 73-member Council of Experts which advise on the draft constitution for a theocratic state (d) the wilful exclusion of groups and political forces which played an active role in the anti-Shah movement and (e) the insidious attempts to interfere in the affairs of neighbouring countries in the name of a future "Islamic confederation".

As the **NY Times**, whose correspondent has since been expelled, reported, the Moslem People's Republican party of the popular Ayatollah Shariatmadari boycotted the elections. So did the National Front which was the first political force to carry the organised opposition into the streets against the Shah. The N. F. was joined in the boycott by the National Democratic Front, the Leftwing (Moslem) fedayeen, the Tudeh party and others. The elections were so mullah-managed that A. P. reported on the way the explicit rules laid down by the Interior Ministry were flouted by Khomeini's agents who filled the ballot papers for hundreds of thousands of illiterate voters. As a result, many respected candidates like the governor of the Central Bank, Mohammed Ali Mowlavi, and the National Oil Company chairman, Hassan Nazih, withdrew their names in disgust. Ayatollah Khomeini has now declared that he stands for a theocratic one-party state but will "permit" the existence of one or two other parties which are "good". The army has also been alerted and a ruthless crackdown on all "opponents" seems likely.

The feuds between the Ayatollahs have reached such a point that the Arab religious leader Ayatollah al-Shuhair Khakani was arrested by Khomeini's men and taken to an 'unknown destination'. According to a report in the **Christian Science Monitor**, this followed an attack by Arab dissidents on oil pipelines near the huge Abadan refinery.

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FTZ, night work and ILO

by Gamini Dissanaika

For sometime now, the Government has not concealed its desire to employ women at night work. And a few weeks ago, the Department of Labour sent a circular to leading Trade Unions which said "A number of Industrial establishments in the F.T.Z in Sri Lanka will want women workers to work in the night contrary to the provisions of the I.L.O Convention No. 89, which prohibits night work for women in industrial undertakings, ratified by Sri Lanka.

"You are aware that since the convention was adopted, attitudes regarding the prohibition of night work for women have changed and consequently opinions have been expressed that legislation based on the convention is discriminatory against women in employment.

"It is, therefore, desirable to know the views of organisations of employers and workers for the government to formulate a meaningful course of action with a view to denouncing convention No. 89...."

In Sri Lanka the following laws prevent women from being engaged in night work:—

- (a) **Convention No. 89 of the I.L.O** prohibits employers from employing women in factories after 10 p.m.
- (b) **The Shop and Office Employees Act** prevents employers from making women perform overtime work after 6. p.m.
- (c) **The Employment of Women, Young persons and Children Act** prohibits women from being employed in night work.

The intention of the Government, therefore, is not only to denounce the convention No. 89 but also to

repeal the other two laws that impede women being employed in night work.

Naturally, the Trade Unions rejected the Labour Department proposal and in a characteristic reply the C.M.U said "Rather than "denounce" the convention No. 89, the government should denounce those who are seeking to exploit women workers in this country at night in factories, for their enhanced profit."

During the recent four month's strike at a leading Textile Mills Ltd, the employers tried to introduce into the Collective Agreement a condition to employ women on the 3rd shift i.e. between 10 p.m and 6. a.m provided, however, that such employment is not contrary to prevailing legislation or Government Policy. This was rejected by the workers.

A couple of years ago, under a new I.L.O international programme for the improvement of the quality of working life, two experts were asked by the Geneva-based agency to study the physiological, psychological, medical, family and social implications of night work. According to the two experts—Messrs James Carpentier and Pierre Cazamian the conclusions of their study are:—

(1) That no matter what technical or economic justification may be found for night work, they should not be allowed to outweigh the drawbacks.

The study accordingly advocated the reduction of night work to the strict minimum.

(2) That, to the over-tiredness (by doing night work) must be added the disturbance of the eating pattern: eating at night, when one's digestive processes are sluggish, can cause various digestive disorders. The practice—unwise but commonplace among night workers—of swallowing pills to be able to sleep during day and stay awake at night can only make matters worse.

Extract of I.L.O Convention No: 89.

Article 3

Women without distinction of age shall not be employed during the night in any public or private industrial undertaking, or in any branch thereof, other than an undertaking in which only members of the same family are employed.

Article 8

This convention does not apply to:—

- (a) Women holding responsible positions of a managerial and technical character and
- (b) Women employees in health and welfare services who are not ordinarily engaged in manual work.

(3) The I.L.O further notes that the dangers inherent in night-work increase with age and length of service,

(4) Working at night and sleeping during the day upsets the natural rhythm. On average, nightshift workers sleep about two hours less. Not only are the hours of sleep fewer than at night, but they are often of insufficient depth, with the result that the sleeper feels groggy when he/she wakes up. They are also punctuated by awakenings due to pangs of hunger.

(5) This overtiredness and the difficulties in sleeping associated with it give rise to nervous disorders: The "night-worker's neurosis" is recognised as the type of neurosis which may lead to a nervous breakdown.

(6) Nevertheless, social tradition which forces a woman into a dual role of employee and housewife is an aggravating factor—especially as women working at night will endeavour to do their house-work in the morning and sleep only in the afternoon.

(7) On the social side, the most obvious and irksome drawback lies in the disruption in the daily life of the family unit caused by night work, which may even seriously upset the mental balance of the workers concerned.

(8) There appears to be no way of organising the work that can counteract the harmful effects of night work, at least at the present time, the study concludes.

Mr. Bala Tampoe, the General Secretary of the powerful C.M.U told this writer about an illuminating study presented by Prof. Erich H. Jacoby, University of Stockholm (who died 3 weeks ago) at the special sessions of the International Union of Food and Allied workers held in June at Geneva. Speaking about our F.T.Z. the Professor had stated that over 70% of the employees were women and out of this 80-85% were between the ages of 15 and 25. This trend according to Prof. Jacoby was an attempt to promote transnationalization of the United Nations". Susan George—the author of the classic "How the Other Half Dies" whom Mr. Tampoe had also met in Geneva told him that "this is tantamount to the village subsidising the multi-nationals". She had further stated that this was only a case of "Shifting of employment" and not solving the problem of unemployment. For after about 5 years, these women workers at the FTZ will have to return to their village homes as paupers (and with many other problems). She had also noted that the majority of the FTZ were either unskilled or semi-skilled workers.

Recently, the Trade Unions protested strongly against the minimum wage rates published by the G.C.E.C in respect of F.T.Z factory employees. The Unions claimed that the G.C.E.C was in fact, "announcing to the world at large that the labour in Sri Lanka could be exploited for a few dollars".

The published wages per month were (a) Rs. 500/- for a skilled worker (b) Rs. 400/- for a semi-skilled worker and (c) Rs. 350/- for an unskilled worker. On these scales a skilled worker gets US \$ 64 but the foreign investor has to pay only half of that due to devaluation of the Rupee. This also means that at our F.T.Z. a worker is earning even less than 1/16th of what his/her counterpart is receiving, for instance in Singapore. And to make matters worse, while the average number of hours to be worked per week is over 48, the overtime work is paid for at a very low rate.

Two young girls from Ratmalana who ran for the gold at a garment factory in the F.T.Z told me the other day that they had to work 12 hours a day for six days a week (out of which 4 hours were compulsory overtime) but were earning less than Rs. 500/- a month.

The Editor of the 'Kantha Handa' does not mind night work for women provided they are paid well, and meals and transport provided. "That they are liable to sexual exploitation is something that concern us deeply" says she.

"Further, we understand that the police are making exhaustive inquiries regarding the political affiliations, trade union connections about all the women workers in the F.T.Z. We denounce this kind of police control on workers."

To get back to the Labour Department's desire for "denouncing" the Convention No. 89 and of repealing the other two laws, the main results of a removal of these legal obstacles could be summarised as follows:—

- (1) Tendency to employ only young, unmarried women in industrial organisations.
- (2) The possibility of working three shifts in organisations which have two shifts at present.
- (3) The threat of both men and women, who have exceeded the age limit, being thrown out of employment.
- (4) Further harassment of working women who are overburdened not only in their work places but also in their homes.
- (5) Opportunity for sexual exploitation of women employed in night work.

When I asked Mr. Bala Tampoe whether the Government's intention of employing women for night work would be restricted to factories in the F.T.Z. his reply was "By no means. It should be noted that if the Government denounces the ILO convention and repeals the existing provisions

in the labour laws that prohibit night work for women, the door will be open for foreign and local employers to employ women at night not only in industrial establishments that employ men for work in night shifts, but also in other establishments where women cannot be employed at night to do overtime work. This will also open the door to the sexual exploitation of women by unscrupulous employers and their executives besides enabling employers to compel women to work in place of men or together with them on night shifts.

"We are totally opposed" said Mr. Tampoe "to any attempt to deprive women in this country of the protection of the law in relation to employment at night. We have told the Commissioner of Labour that instead of seeking to equalise the exploitation of human labour at night for private profit, our Union considers that the Government should equalise pay for men and women, whenever they do the same or comparable work, by law and in practice, in private and public sector establishments."

Where black newsmen go to jail

Johannesburg

Zwelakhe Sisulu, news editor of the Sunday Post and president of the Writer's Association of South Africa (WASA), has just been sentenced to nine months imprisonment.

The reason: He refused to testify against another reporter and WASA member, Thami Mkhwanazi.

Meanwhile, somewhere in the labyrinth of South African jails and prisons, Mr. Mkhwanazi himself is entering his third month of detention without trial or formal charges.

Mr. Sisulu's sentence, now being appealed, and Mr. Mkhwanazi's detention are two more indications that a black news reporter in South Africa holds a high-risk job.

N M - A political assessment

by Reggie Siriwardena

The strains of the funeral ceremony at Independence Square are coming over the radio as I sit writing this article—a ceremony which comes as a climax to what appeared to be a national consensus of right and left to mourn the departed leader of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. Yet the bewildering diversity of the tributes paid to N. M. during this week—as revolutionary and leader of working-class struggles, as parliamentarian *par excellence* and constitutional scholar, as Sinhala-Buddhist and defender of the rights of the Tamil-speaking people—mirrored the dichotomies of the man himself and of the political phenomenon that he represented. It would be too easy and too superficial to say that these dichotomies corresponded with the divergent halves of his political career—early and late. The reality seems to me more complex than that: it is rooted in the very origin and development of the political movement that he helped to found and to build.

The historic significance of the foundation of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party in 1935 was that it represented both the first militant anti-imperialist mass movement in Sri Lanka as well as the first attempt to bring a Marxist consciousness to the working class. The first of these tasks was one which elsewhere—and notably in neighbouring India—had been performed by bourgeois nationalist parties. It was, however, the very absence in Sri Lanka of a bourgeoisie capable of leading a mass movement against imperialism which left this role unfulfilled until the formation of the LSSP. But this distinctive feature of Sri Lankan social development was also reflected in the dualistic character of the LSSP itself.

On the one hand, in the aspect in which it presented itself to the



people as an open and public political party, the LSSP of 1935-40 was Marxist neither in its organisation nor in its programme; it was a populist party agitating in the State Council and outside on a broadly anti-imperialist and social reformist platform. On the other hand, within the leadership of that party there existed an inner group imbued with Marxist theory which had very early set itself the goal of converting the LSSP into a revolutionary party of the working class with an organisation of a classic Leninist character.

To the public at large the LSSP was represented in its first aspect above all by two figures—Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera—because they turned the legislature into a base for a struggle against both the colonial regime and its brown dependants. Of the party in its second aspect the public had little inkling until the post-war years, since the transformation of the original loosely-built open LSSP into a party of selected and

politically educated cadres was consummated only under conditions of wartime illegality with four of its leaders in jail and its other activists reduced to the condition of a sect functioning in the underground.

In the inner party leadership which guided that transformation there was one dominant figure—Philip Gunawardena. His political leadership was then (and until the factional struggles which split the underground LSSP in 1942) accepted universally by his comrades in the party and in the leadership with the deference due to his superior experience in the left movement abroad, his profound knowledge of Marxism, and the incisive and penetrating force of his political intellect. It was also Philip who steered the LSSP towards Trotskyism—a development which was intelligible in Sri Lankan conditions of the 'thirties and 'forties when the formulation of the Comintern of the Popular Front

period just did not make sense in the local context.

Since both N. M. and Philip were to travel a long political distance between their beginnings and their ends, it is relevant to ask what in their personal qualities and their cast of mind helped them on this winding road. Both of them were, from the outset, divided figures, but the contradictions were of a very different character between the one and the other. Philip, in spite of the depth of his immersion in the Marxist political tradition, also had a part of his character and outlook which was coloured by the background in which he had been brought up—that of the rural landed gentry. This part of himself was not to emerge strongly until he had been driven into political isolation in the early 'fifties by his inherent incapacity to work in a party or an alliance except as unquestioned leader. But in that situation his hitherto submerged ties with his family and class background gained ascendancy and found expression in his compromises with Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and with the coalition politics first of the S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and then of the Dudley Senanayake government.

N. M.'s strengths and weaknesses were of a different kind. His mind had been formed, in an urban, secular and rationalist context, and whatever public genuflections he may have made later to traditional pieties out of political expediency, it is quite wrong to make out, as some of his biographers in recent weeks have done, that these were the motive springs of his thought and action. Where Philip's compromises with communalism in the latter period of his career seemed to spring out of something deeply rooted in his origins, N. M.'s corresponding shifts went against the natural grain of his thinking. N. M.'s real duality lay in a different direction—his curious intellectual blend of Marx and Erskine May, of Trotsky and Harold Laski. In his formative years the essential habits of his thought had been shaped by the left-liberal outlook of the LSE, and the later accretions of Marxism and Trotskyism

never really dislodged him from these first political roots. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the process of moving the LSSP in the direction of Leninist organisation and Trotskyist political theory, N. M. played a lesser role than not only Philip Gunawardena but also Colvin R. de Silva or Leslie Goonewardena.

Yet the end-product of the evolution of the LSSP was a party in which N. M. emerged as the commanding figure, overshadowing his colleagues—among them, some who used to whisper in the 'forties that N. M. was fundamentally a social-democrat with a Marxist veneer. Of course, in the process of N. M.'s ascendancy, the LSSP itself underwent a transformation from a revolutionary to a social-democratic parliamentary party. Here Sri Lankan history belatedly took its revenge on the LSSP and its leadership. The nationalist bourgeoisie who had failed to materialise in the 1930s, thus giving the LSSP the historic opportunity to build an anti-imperialist mass movement, emerged in the 'fifties under the leadership of Bandaranaike, displacing the LSSP from its role of sole potential alternative to the UNP. By the time that Bandaranaike began to build his own future base of power, the LSSP, while still paying theoretical deference to revolutionary politics, had in practice found the main field of its activity in parliamentarianism.

The truth is that the transformation attempted by the leadership within the party in the 'forties had been carried out in insufficient depth: it affected only the leadership and the politically trained and educated cadres at the top but did not really reach the broad mass of members and followers, and was therefore soon submerged once the party became caught up in day-to-day trade union and parliamentary activity. In that shift N. M. appropriately played the leading role. His particular skills and personal temperament made him fully at home in the parliamentary arena. Not only was he deeply wedded to the convention and decorum of the parliamentary game played

by House of Commons rules (where Philip at heart despised them), but his affable and equable temper (where Philip was volatile and unpredictable) was an asset in the give-and-take of parliamentary exchange, bargaining and compromise. The more the LSSP became involved, therefore, in the shadow-boxing of parliamentary politics, the more N. M. strengthened his dominant position in the party itself. But the inevitable result of that process was the coalitions of 1964-65 and 1970-75, in which the LSSP made its farewell to its revolutionary past, and in which N. M.'s social-democratic philosophy finally and irrevocably triumphed over the residual Marxism of his colleagues.

It is not really surprising, therefore, that N. M.'s death should have evoked such a wide-ranging expression of grief and tribute from the most seemingly unexpected quarters, or that Government, State-controlled Press, radio and film should all have joined in paying homage to the dead man as a national hero. But N. M.'s death comes also at a time when the social and political evolution of Sri Lanka has already, in the General Election of 1977, closed the doors on that era of compromise through parliamentary reformism and accommodation between classes which he incarnated and to the fruition of which he brought his talents. It may not be fanciful to suppose that the national consensus of widely different political elements which the mourning for N. M.'s death evoked was also the last regretful salute to the illusions of a past that has already ended.

Italy won't recognize sexual-status change

ROME, The Constitutional Court has ruled that people who change sex surgically must legally retain their former gender. It rejected a petition by an actor who had undergone surgery so he could "be accepted by society as a person of the opposite sex."

The court said changing sex is not an inviolable constitutional right, and that a person undergoing such surgery "has no possibility of being legally recognized to have changed sex."

End of a fighting innings

by Nawaz Dawood

(Director of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies. He is a regular contributor to the 'Nation' — the S.L.F.P. weekly.)

The passing away of Dr. N. M. Perera at the age of 74 signifies the end of an era. A brilliant scholar who passed out of the London School of Economics with a double doctorate, N. M. Perera came back and joined the Ceylon University as a lecturer in Economics. The traditional calm of a colonial university, then under the sway of that arch-imperialist Professor Marrs, could not possibly tolerate a fiery and dedicated Trotskyite like N. M. Perera. Within a year, he was literally forced out of the University, into the anti-imperialist struggle on the streets. From then on N. M. Perera committed himself to the formation of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and thereafter to its consolidation. Unlike many of his colleagues, N. M. Perera stayed steadfastly with the cause he believed in, right to the very end. In a country where politicians of all hues and colours leap-frog from party to party, that alone is saying a lot. It is the firmest proof of his grit and determination.

Generations of young men were inspired to delve into the depths of Marxism after listening to N. M. or after reading his unqualified berating of the bourgeoisie. I recall cycling to various meetings in Colombo as a schoolboy just to listen to N. M. speak. His easy going and almost bantering speaking style was in direct contrast to the fiery denunciations of many others who shared his platform. N. M. had a way of attracting young minds and establishing a rapport with them. Stories about his simple life-style added to the aura of the man, leave alone his intellectual abilities. Even his bitterest political enemies will concede that, had he

taken the classic route that other politicians took, he could have easily reached the top of electoral office in Sri Lanka. But N. M. opted for another road and a simple life.

Two streams of radical thinking went to form the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. On the one hand, came those who were influenced by Harold Laski's thinking in London. Among these were N. M., Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, Leslie Gunewardene and Dr. Colvin R. De Silva. The other group was led by Philip Gunawardena who had got his training under Professor Scott-Nearing in Wisconsin, USA. They came together to form the LSSP in 1935, and almost immediately a qualitative difference was seen in the anti-colonial struggle, the anti-feudal struggle and in the rise of trade union consciousness in Sri Lanka.

The growth and development of anti-colonial struggle in our country cannot be separated from the Suriya Mal Movement, the campaign against Malaria, the struggles of the workers in the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills and in the Harbour, incidents in Mooloya, the 1953 Hartal and the Bracegirdle Affair. In all these, in the forefront stood N. M. It is difficult for us 40 years later, to understand fully the nature of these events upon the growth of socialist ideas in Sri Lanka. What can be said, however, is that these events were in fact bitter struggles which were launched against the largest and perhaps the shrewdest empire that the world has ever known.

N. M. Perera and his colleagues retained their international connections among whom were Rajni Palme Dutt, Saklatwala, Jayaprakash Narayan and Krishna Menon in India and in the West Indies perhaps the most famous of West Indian Trotskyites Dr. C. L. R. James, author of the 'Black Jacobins' — the story of

Tousaint L' Overture. Interestingly C. L. R. James, an exile from his beloved Trinidad even today, like N. M. is a lover of cricket. James's book on West Indian Cricket became a world best-seller.

Till the early forties, with the exception of A. E. Goonasinghe's Labour Party, N. M. and the LSSP literally dominated the trade unions. In the early forties the debate in the International movement between Stalin and Trotsky had its repercussions here too. N. M. Perera stayed with his original belief in the Trotskyite ideology, particularly on the question of a United Front against imperialism. The LSSP's connection with Leon Trotsky was firmly established, so much so that Selina Perera (N. M.'s wife) went all the way to the Mexican border to meet the Outcast Prophet, but was turned back due to a messup by her American comrades. Meanwhile Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, D. P. Yasodis, Pieter Keuneman, Saranankara Thero, A. Vaidyalingam, C. Karthigesan, M. G. Mendis, W. Ariyaratna, T. Duraisingham, and some others formed the nucleus of what was to become the Communist Party. From then on, N. M. was opposed ideologically by the C. P.

Thereafter the working class movement in Sri Lanka was divided between the Trotskyite section led by N. M. and the international political line of the Comintern and the Soviet Union. In time, in the sixties, the Communist movement would also split along the basis of the Sino-Soviet split. Defections from the LSSP also took place at various stages, but through, out this entire historical period, the leadership of N. M. and his colleagues in the LSSP was never seriously challenged.

N. M.'s role as an able Parliamentarian began in the thirties after he defeated Adeline Mollamure in Ruwanwella and went to Parliament to join Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe who, by then, was representing the Morawaka constituency. In parliament N. M. pressed for and helped to push through many of the welfare measures, which we now take for granted and which include laws relating to the welfare of the working class, within the confines of a bourgeois State. Even before C. W. W. Kannangara, from prison, N. M. had written a booklet in favour of free education. The Statute book has many pieces of welfare and progressive legislation, in the passing of which the hand of N. M. Perera is clearly imprinted. In terms of electoral office, N. M. in his 45-year period as politician served as the Mayor of Colombo and also a Minister of Finance in a Coalition Government.

During the last phase of his political career, many changes took place in stance of the LSSP on fundamental issues like the United Front, Parliamentary politics and the Language question. These matters resulted in further divisions within the LSSP and debates on the validity of some of the LSSP's political attitudes to certain aspects of the application of Marxism - Leninism to concrete situations, especially the role of the peasantry, etc. Among these issues, the reasons for the failure of the LSSP to unite the peasant masses with the working class movement, will surely be in history seen as a chink in the armour of the Trotskyite movement in Sri Lanka. Whatever history's verdict on N. M. Perera's leadership of the working class under the LSSP, his name is indelibly written on the pages of the history of the trade union movement of Sri Lanka.

N M in perspective

by Kumar David

N. M., in our considered view, is the biggest and most important of the political leaders and personages of Sri Lanka during the first three quarters of this century. This is no hasty judgement. We have mulled over not only such personages as D. S. and Dudley, SWRD, and Philip, but also prominent persons from an earlier period such as the Ponnambalam brothers Sir D. B., Goonesinghe and even Anagarika Dharmapala, each in the context of his age. However, when the people's historian of future generations comes to write the annals of these times we believe that he will bear out our judgement. Two reasons prompt us to make this judgement; the imprint that the sheer length and steadfastness of his political career of near five decades has had placed upon this country, and secondly the qualitatively higher, the left wing and working class and therefore militant character, of the politics with which history has chosen to link his name and make him a symbol.

This has been said in other words. N.M.'s political life it is said, denotes a twin struggle, one for democracy, two, for socialism. The former of course stretches from the fight against British Imperialism for national liberation, which the LSSP and the LSSP alone led, to the steadfast struggles against military coups and would-be dictators in more recent decades. The latter is the site of the LSSP's greatest achievements as well as its most indefensible weakness. He who cannot understand this cannot understand history; he has no sense of history.

N.M.'s political life is a personification of the intertwining of the two determining elements of this country's politics in the last four to five decades—universal suffrage and proletarian class politics. The working class has intervened in politics as a self-conscious force,

but it has done so in the context of an extended and vigorous survival of parliamentary democracy. N.M. is Sri Lanka's greatest parliamentarian; at the same time the LSSP led, (and N.M. symbolises) the political emergence of the working class. There is no paradox here as the sectarian mind might presuppose but only a plain and factual manifestation of the two deepest determinants of political reality in this country.

Where then did N. M. slip? We believe that the site of his greatness was also the site of his weakness. He was too passive a manifestation, too true a mirror, of his age. A mirror placed on the left hand side of the historical process of course, but still a mirror. A revolutionary Marxist leader lives in a more dialectical confrontation with history and the proletariat; such were Lenin's acquiescences and confrontations. But N. M. and the LSSP especially after 1964, were prone to compromise too much.

“Carrying the stamp of one defect
..... the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal”

The dividing line between revolutionary flexibility and unwarranted compromises, initially at least, is a thin line. Once launched however the yeast of compromise leaveneth the whole bread, transforming the ideology, the practice and the character of a political movement totally. The number of movements that have taken the first step in the surrender of their revolutionary heritage quoting Lenin's block with Kerensky against Kornilov as their example is legion. Lenin however was a union of flexibility with intransigence, quite another thing from compromise.

It was the BLPI, not the N. M.-Philip group, that took a firm and correct stand in the late 1940's when the plannation workers were

disenfranchised. Again in the 1960's the LSSP compromised on the national question, capitulating to Sinhala chauvinist pressure that it had up to then commendably withstood. Worst of all however was class collaborationist politics from 1964 to 1975. Ruinous compromise. Hence the party of Suriyamal, the jail-break, the General Strike and the Hartal was also the party of compromise with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism. In a word, the failure of the LSSP was that when the broad masses, the petty-bourgeois masses, began to intervene massively in politics from about two and a half decades ago, the party failed to solve the central question of working class leadership of that intervention.

Our criticism then is a criticism from the left; it stands in contrast to that other criticism which we have heard often, viz: the LSSP did not appreciate Sinhala Buddhist sentiment, it did not immerse itself in the cultural ethos of Lanka, it did not go to the village etc etc. This latter critique we reject as both untrue and as a recipe for the obliteration of the Marxist specificity of proletarian revolutionism. We firmly believe that if the LSSP stood firm after 1956 it would have grown rapidly, not shrunk as it has done. N. M. and the LSSP faltered between these two positions because they were too true a reflection, albeit a reflection from the left, of the unfolding historical process. Their consciousness did not sufficiently separate itself and stand adequately far ahead of ephemeral immediacy.

This is how we understand the paradox that has been more simply, but less accurately, described as "N. M., the incongruous blend of the Trotskyist and Marxist with the Parliamentarian and the Democrat". But that was the man and no wonder then that there could have hardly been a working class home in which a tear was not shed or a sigh escape on the night of August 14th.

NEXT ISSUE—An assessment by Hector Abhayawardene. ●

Revolutionary . . .

(Continued from Page 4)

to Cairo by a senior official of the S. F. C but the ingenuous young man thought it would be an insult to the verdict of judges. However, the powerful **Puran Appu** lobby succeeded in clinching their case with Cairo.

Incidentally, Bulgaria had asked the Cultural Ministry here to nominate two young musicians for two scholarships under the recent cultural pact. The invitation had been directed to the Tower Hall Trust which named **Amaradeva** and **Victor Ratnayake**. Amaradeva's name was not approved by the donors as he was no more young but a substitute had not been nominated. "Thousands here expected the radical composer-singer **Nanda Malini** to be the obvious choice. But alas, a youthful country so rich in culture like ours, could only send one person for two scholarships" said a veteran music director to this journal last week.

—G.D.

Letters . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

journalists even whipped in public, Should DPL's "lie" abroad or does diplomacy mean hypocrisy? Pointing to the most garrulous of these undiplomatic critics, a young western diplomat told me a "even your Foreign Office chaps find him abrasive... he's a bit of a blockhead". Perhaps our papers, including your magazine, have not given prominence to him or supported his country's foreign policy?

Colombo 6 'Neutralist'.

(We are ready to discuss 'non-bloc' theories and even blockades but refuse to suffer blockheads gladly - Ed.) ●

Summit and . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

pleading were examined by this journal. (Aug. 1). At least it could be said on Belgrade's behalf that Yugoslavia has not not only been an active, and an enthusiastic member but one of the founders of movement that has become a significant force in world politics.

But what were the sources of propagandist attack from outside? Firstly, the western media. Even last week, the news agencies were putting out stories which every informed journalist knew was utterly dated. Why? The answer has become as plain as the purpose of the special performance put on by the Showboat people in Colombo last month. It was to sow discord and disunity, to divert the attention of the peoples of the non-aligned nations from the basic problems that the summit will have to discuss—politics, economics, information etc, problems which are rooted in western domination.

Secondly, the inspiration came from Washington and Peking, the new axis. Is Cuba non-aligned? The same question repeated a thousand times and often thrust into the mouths of pliant propagandists within the non-aligned community. Again the answer is plain enough. In Colombo, over 80 heads of states decided to hold the next summit in Havana, and only they have the right to adjudicate on such an issue—not Washington, Moscow, Peking, Paris or Bonn.

Why then this lately acquired passion of Washington and its travelling salesman for the "purity" of non-alignment? Is its concern as pure as its sudden solicitude for 'black boys'?

Mao used to say 'turn bad into good'. In a sense, the visiting Congressmen have done the non-alignment and Sri Lankan students of it a signal service. By their clumsy propagandist over-kill Washington's hand been exposed to our public.

The arc of revolutions (2)

The counter themes

The function of these arguments is to legitimate a new militancy in US foreign policy; they take on a special force in a period prior to the 1980 presidential election. Carter, assailed by his critics for his weakness at home and for his failure 'to stand up to the Russians abroad, is under pressure to show US muscle somewhere. All these setbacks allegedly indicate this debility. Even the Camp David talks failed to deliver the promised peace agreement between Egypt and Israel by the end of 1978. In such a situation it is tempting to disdain the debate posed by the right-wing alarmists; yet rather than denying that there is something to discuss, it might be more effective to pose an alternative argument, replying to each of the three themes already identified. This involves providing not only an analysis of the internal processes in the countries concerned and of US policy there, but also grasping in the much more difficult nettle of what Soviet policy in this region is. The right-wingers base much of their argument on a picture of the Soviet Union as an expansionist power. Their views are parroted in a different register by far left exponents of the theory of Soviet 'social-imperialism'. An alternative to the views of Soviet foreign policy is an essential component of any reconstituted, balanced, analysis of the region.

1 Instead of conceding that the new forces in these countries are primarily fostered from outside, it can be shown that in each of the four countries concerned, the changes of 1978 were primarily due to the evolution of identifiable internal conflicts. The Soviet Union played no instigatory role in these evolutions. If there was an external catalyst, it came in each case from the western countries and their local allies. The unity of the four countries is not therefore based on

a common fate as victims of Soviet designs, but results from the fact that autonomous revolutionary processes have advanced in each, with the common result that the interests of the USA have been reduced. In 1978-9, two of the countries experienced political revolutions—Afghanistan and Iran—while in the two others where revolutions had already triumphed (South Yemen 1967, Ethiopia 1974) a further shift to the left in internal or international alignments occurred.

2 The US responsibility in these situations has been far greater than the rightist critics, with their injured innocence, have conceded. The popular explosions had the ferocity they did precisely because of long years of suppression backed by the USA. Moreover, US interference, directly and via US junior allies, has remained a major factor in the radicalisation of each of the four countries concerned and identifiable forms of US interference continue through the region.

3 The Soviet Union certainly has taken advantage of these developments and plays an increasing role, where the situation allows. But this is quite different from claiming that the Soviet Union has directed events or that it is somehow behaving as an 'imperialist' power. Soviet military and economic intervention in these countries—the factors usually cited as 'imperialist' by left critics—is, on balance, positive. The real cause for concern lies at the point where fewer critics, of left or right, try to locate it, viz. in the nature of the political system being reproduced in these countries under Soviet influence.

The four crisis countries: The process of radicalization

1 At the beginning of 1978, the active opposition to the Shah seemed to be confined to the urban

middle class and to students, yet by mid-January they had been joined by the religious officials, the mullahs. They in turn mobilised the mass of urban poor in a series of street demonstrations from February onwards. By September, the Shah had to impose martial law, and by December, after three months of strikes, he had been persuaded to leave the country at least temporarily, by the USA. This he did on January 16 1979 and on February 10-11 a mass uprising swept the rest of his regime away. The causes of this very deep-rooted and rapid popular movement are essentially three: first, a political revolt against twenty-five years of monarchical dictatorship; secondly, a social revolt against the increasing inequalities and material problems associated with the pattern of capitalist development in Iran; thirdly, a nationalist revolt against the imposition of western advisers and culture upon Iran, coupled with Iran's subservience to the USA in regional affairs. The causes of the movement were pre-eminently internal to Iran and the one source of evident external support was the Ayatollah Khomeini, the Iranian religious leader whom the Shah had exiled in 1963. Some western commentators tried to claim there was Soviet influence—either directly or via Libya indirectly. Helms, Robert Moss and Lord Chalfont have all tried their hand at this, and US politicians have talked in vague terms about Soviet 'interference' in Iran. But this is nonsense—not least because the opposition in Iran are anti-communist.

2 The Afghan events have received much less coverage than those in Iran and it has therefore been easier to talk blithely in terms of a Soviet-supported' coup. The coup in question, that of April 27 1978, overthrew the government of President Mohammad Daud, which had itself come to power through a coup in July 1973. The April revolution installed a new regime headed by President Nur Mohammad Taraki. To all intents and purposes, this new Afghan regime

was controlled by the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which had grown up out of an underground communist group that had been established in 1965.

The PDPA is certainly pro-Moscow in orientation, and the Afghan army has for the past twenty-odd years been almost entirely equipped and trained by the Soviet Union. But does this mean that the Russians instigated the coup? No. Closer examination shows that the causes of the April events were, again, predominantly internal, and that the main outside influence was a rightist one, namely from Iran. Daud had initially allied with part of the PDPA (it was split into two fractions from 1967 to 1977) and had promised radical change, such as land reform. But after 1974 and under increasing pressure from Iran, by now playing its counter-revolutionary regional role. Daud abandoned his earlier promises. He broke with the PDPA, reached economic agreements with Iran that were generally felt in Afghanistan to be exploitative, abandoned Afghan support for the Pushtun and Baluchi peoples in Pakistan, and allowed officials from SAVAK, Iran's secret police, to work within the Afghan state machine.

Meanwhile the economy of Afghanistan was going from bad to worse, with population rising faster than food output, unemployment of over 20 per cent, a million Afghan men forced to emigrate to find work, and the foreign debt mounting. Literacy was below 10 per cent and per capita income was \$150 a year. By early 1978 a clash between Daud and the PDPA was inevitable and when Daud tried to arrest the PDPA leadership in early April, the party's underground organisation, well entrenched in the military but under the command of a civilian central committee member, struck back and seized power on April 27.

3 South Yemen is similar to Afghanistan in that virtually no accurate coverage of the events there has occurred, with the result that most commentators, from the Economist to Henry Kissinger, can talk of a 'Soviet backed coup'.

This presentation of the events in South Yemen is absurd: (a) the coup attempt was an anti-soviet one; (b) Soviet influence in South Yemen has been preponderant since the late 1960s, and it is therefore misleading to place South Yemen on a par with the other countries as if 1978 marked a turning point — it did not; (c) the events in South Yemen came to a head above all because of the increasing pressure put upon that country by Saudi Arabia, and indirectly, the USA. It was therefore a case of US-inspired 'destabilization' that in the end backfired.

In essence, what happened was as follows. South Yemen, an impoverished country of under 2 million people on the south-west corner of the Arabian Peninsula, has been independent since the nationalist revolution triumphed in 1967. Since 1969 power in the ruling National Liberation Front had been held by Abdul Fatah Ismail, the secretary-general, and Salem Robea Ali, the assistant secretary-general and president of South Yemen. Over the years, a number of divergences between the two emerged. These differences began with economic policy — whether to rely on the spontaneity of the masses (Salem Robea Ali) or on more orthodox centralised administrative procedures (Abdul Fatah) — and extended to what kind of party the NLF should be — a militant if loosely-structured group based on a strong ethical element (Salem Robea Ali) or a more established formal structure modelled on the ruling parties of Eastern Europe (Abdul Fatah Ismail).

These political differences — familiar from other revolutions — were interlaced with personal and regional animosities, but they also intersected with foreign relations. Saudi Arabia began in 1975 to make approaches to South Yemen trying to persuade it to break its ties with the Soviet Union and offered aid to Salem Robea Ali in his capacity as President. Abdul Fatah wanted to continue the close ties with the Soviet Union. This tentative opening was brought to an end by events in the Horn of Africa which polarised the conflict within the South Yemeni party. When the

Russians were expelled from Somalia in November 1977 they were forced to bring their military equipment to South Yemen, thus acquiring a direct stake in the country which they had previously lacked. Conversely the Saudis, angered by Yemeni resistance, cut off all aid and began to mass troops along the frontier. And in North Yemen, long a field of conflict between forces sympathetic to either South Yemen or Saudi Arabia, the political situation also became much more acute, with the assassination of the moderate President Ibrahim al-Hamdi by Saudi agents in October 1977. By force of circumstance, South Yemen was therefore pushed much further towards the Soviet Union and this weakened the position of the President, Salem Robea Ali.

4 A similar pattern of events can be discerned in Ethiopia, once the conventional western rhetoric about Soviet and Cuban advances is cast aside. From the end of the Second World War until 1974, Britain and the USA were well-entrenched in Ethiopia, backing the archaic and repressive regime of Haile Selassie. Ethiopia, with a population of 33 millions, and a land area of 397,000 square miles, 65 per cent of which can be used for agriculture, was the poorest country in Africa: in 1975 adult literacy was under 10 per cent, per capita income was \$100, and life expectancy at birth was 38 years. Responsibility for the continuation of this terrible situation must rest squarely with the western countries who financed and maintained the regime and, in particular, the 40,000-strong armed forces.

In February 1974 a popular movement, based on urban civilian protest and militias in the military, broke the power of the Emperor. He was deposed in September 1974, to be replaced by a military ruling body, the Provisional Military Administrative Council. The PMAC has been in power ever since. Was there any Soviet involvement in the events of 1974? No. There was not even a small Ethiopian Communist Party and the PMAC's ideology was, at best, an ill-defined

(Continued on Page 24)

The negotiating process

This brief account of the negotiating process as it has evolved in the Seventies provide a general idea of the negotiating task in the Eighties for which developing countries would need to prepare themselves. The extent to which the international negotiations in the Eighties lead to concrete achievements and positive results would depend primarily on the negotiating strategies which Third World countries adopt and the collective bargaining strength they are able to bring in support of these strategies. But the effort which the developing countries should apply to this task and the resources that they should devote to it would be determined by the value they place on the international negotiating process and on its capacity to deliver positive results. At the same time it could be argued that to some extent the reverse is also valid; the capacity of the negotiating process to deliver would depend on the commitment which Third World countries make to the process and the seriousness with which they address themselves to this task.

It is often possible to detect in Third World countries a strong undercurrent of scepticism and distrust of the international negotiating activity in its entirety. At its crudest, it is expressed in a cynicism which sweeps aside the entire negotiating effort as the product of U. N. bureaucracies resulting in futile exercises. At a more genuine level, many Third World observers concerned with development find it difficult to distinguish the unreal from the meaningful in the interminable sequence of conferences and meetings and the endless flood of documentation.

There are however two important categories of critical responses to international economic negotiations. They are based on conceptual approaches which are alternatives to international negotiations. One approach questions the wisdom of

relying on a process which requires international consensus and agreement, and needs a reconciliation of the conflicting interests of developed and developing countries as a precondition for any meaningful action. It recommends a strategy which relies essentially on unilateral forms of action by the Third World passed on its own capacity to mobilise its collective strength and countervailing power. Such an approach will find its strategic responses in OPEC-type actions, in collective pressure through producer associations, and the exercise of countervailing power which the Third World has in its markets for developed country exports, or even in its huge indebtedness to the banking system of the developed countries. The second approach stems from a more fundamental critique of the ideology of development which is considered as implicit in international economic negotiations. In such an approach the emphasis on international economic negotiations and the management of external relations is perceived as having the effect of deflecting the developing country from a self-reliant pattern of development. A strategy which gives priority to international economic negotiations could lend support to export-oriented growth which gears the systems of production in developing countries to satisfy the demand in affluent societies; it could seek to preserve the links between local elites and the centres of economic power in the developed countries; it could promote a pattern of development which is neglectful of the basic needs of the poor majority in the developing societies.

The balance sheet

The disillusion with negotiations is also the result of the performance in the Seventies. First, there is the frustration inherent in a process which is painfully protracted and where progress towards agreement and action is by advances which

are minute and faltering. International economic negotiations are by their very nature slow and time-consuming. This has been as true of the negotiations in GATT as of those in UNCTAD.

The disillusion and impatience with the international economic negotiations have to be viewed against an assessment of the outcome of the negotiating effort since 1974. The outcome would seem grossly inadequate or moderately successful depending on the standards which are applied or the expectations which are brought to it. Spokesmen of the developed countries have argued that there have been major advances on their side in regard to the fundamental approaches and basic concepts regarding international economic relations and their management, and the concrete results achieved have also been significant. The developing countries, on the other hand, contend that intensive negotiations that have taken place have little to show in the form of positive achievements and no effective international action has been taken in regard to the deteriorating terms of trade of developing countries, their steeply rising external indebtedness, or the persisting disorder of the international monetary system. When a balance sheet is drawn and a final account is taken of the international economic negotiations that have taken place in the last five years, the debits appear to far outweigh the credit. The Paris Conference on International Economic Cooperation which sought to provide a framework for international action on a broad front ended in failure. The efforts in the IMF have not been successful in evolving a new framework to reorder the international monetary and financial systems, and deal with the prevailing disarray; neither have they been able to manage the worsening problem of the imbalances in international payments, and the increasing burden of adjustment which consequently continues to fall on developing countries. The

outcome of the GATT negotiations have confirmed the fear of the developing countries that the trading rules established by developed countries after the Second World War will be manipulated by them to their own advantage; no serious effort has been made to grapple with the problem of rising protectionism in developed countries. In UNCTAD wide-ranging negotiations were launched in 1976 in the field of commodities, technology, restrictive business practices, and external indebtedness. The negotiations on individual commodities have had a poor record. With the exception of sugar, no agreement has yet been negotiated on any new commodity.

As against these debits, the credits have been a few isolated achievements. A billion dollar International Fund has been established for Agricultural Development. There have been modest increases in IMF quotas, a new allocation of S. D. Rs, the creation of the Trust Fund from the sales of IMF gold reserves, and some improvements and extensions of borrowing facilities—all of which fall far short of meeting the problems of adjustment of developing countries. On the external debt, developed countries have agreed to limited concessions by agreeing to apply current terms of aid with retroactive effect to development assistance given in the past to "poorer" developing countries. This has resulted in the cancellation of the debts of a selected number of countries. On the individual commodities, an agreement was successfully negotiated on sugar and a firm basis evolved for agreements on rubber and olive oil. The most significant achievement in the recent period was the agreement on the basic elements of the Common Fund. The developing countries however have been disappointed that the Fund falls short of the objectives envisaged in the original proposal. The Fund in its present form will have less power and flexibility to intervene in commodity markets.

Unilateral action and self-reliance

When the credits are weighed against the debits, there is still no doubt that the international negotiating process has yielded little in the form of significant changes in the international economic system and concrete benefits to developing countries. What has been achieved such as the concessions on external debt, the Fund for agricultural development or even the Common Fund, cannot bear comparison with the historic change that was effected through the unilateral action taken by OPEC. But unilateral action and international negotiation need not be perceived as two mutually exclusive or contradictory approaches. It would be unrealistic for the Third World to plan to restructure the world economic system solely through its own unilateral action.

The other overriding question relating to international economic negotiations we saw was the place of such negotiations in a self-reliant development strategy. The Group of 77 itself have reacted strongly to the attempts of developed countries to link the need for changes in the international system to the need for internal changes in the socio-economic structures of developing countries. The group has been unambiguous in its criticism of any strategy which makes the structural changes at the international level conditional on issues relating to the satisfaction of basic needs or the affirmation of human rights in developing countries. It is clearly important for developing countries to oppose any such conditionality. The structural changes in the international level are essential for themselves. Moving the economic relationships between developing and developed countries in the direction of greater equality, improvement in the terms of trade of developing countries, a reformed monetary and financial system, create the international environment which is conducive and in the long term supportive of the internal transformation of developing countries. They enlarge and strengthen the resource base for the pursuit of self-reliant strategies.

This position of keeping the question of international structural change separate from the national strategies in the North-South negotiation does not however dispose of some of the more basic conceptual issues that are raised. These issues are concerned with the nature of the N.I.E.O. that is being negotiated and its own impact on the pattern of development at the national level. Changes at the international level which are primarily concerned with improving the mechanisms for exports from developing countries and facilitating conditions for the flow of transnational investments may run counter to national strategies which concentrate on raising the levels of mass consumption in the developing countries and strengthening the economic and technological base for their self-reliance. In this sense, the changes that are being negotiated at the international level are not neutral to the processes and patterns of development within developing countries; they could either create conditions which are conducive to self-reliant growth or could reinforce conditions of dependence.

The leadership which the Third World countries give to the process of structural change at the international level should be strengthened by a broader understanding of international economic issues within the developing countries themselves, and supported by a growing mass awareness of these negotiations and involvement in them. It is only through such a political process that the international economic negotiations can acquire a wider national relevance and can emerge as an area of activity which can become part of the political priorities of national leaders. Such a process will also help to define better the priorities in the international negotiating tasks themselves, align these tasks with the national strategies of development and close the gaps between the international structural changes and the internal changes in developing societies. A political process of this kind may not be possible in all parts of the Third World. (To be continued)

Reassessing electoral system (2)

The Law on PR

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS

(SPECIAL PROVISIONS) LAW, No. 24 OF 1979

SECTION 25

Every general election of the members of a local authority shall—where such authority is a Municipal Council or an Urban Council or a Town Council, be held within the period of four months preceding the date on which the term of office of the members who are to be elected is due to commence; or

(b) Where such authority is a Village Council, be held within the period of five months preceding the date on which the term of office of the members who are to be elected is due to commence."

SECTION 47

Every ballot paper shall be substantially in the form as set out in the Third Schedule, and —

(a) shall contain the names of the recognized political parties contesting the election in Sinhala, Tamil and English, arranged alphabetically in Sinhala in the order of the names of such parties and with the symbol allotted to each such party set out against the name of each such party, and immediately thereafter, if there are any independent Groups contesting the election, the words, "Independent Group" repeated for each such group and the distinguishing number in the serial order and the symbol allotted to each such group set out against the distinguishing number of such group;

(b) shall be capable of being folded up;

(c) shall have a number printed on the back; and

(d) shall have attached a counterfoil with the same number printed on the face.

SECTION 65 (1)

(a) After the receipt of the documents referred to in section 64, the returning officer shall determine in the manner hereinafter provided in this section the candidates to be declared elected as Mayor, Deputy Mayor and members.

(b) The returning officer shall from the statements of the number of votes given at each polling station, add up and determine the number of votes given for each recognised political party and independent group.

(c) The candidates whose names appear first and second in the nomination paper of the recognized political party or independent group to which the highest number of votes has been given shall be declared elected by the returning officer as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively.

(d) When an equality of votes is found to exist between two or more recognized political parties or two or more independent groups or two or more such parties or groups and the addition of a vote shall entitle the candidates of one such recognized political party or independent group elected, the determination of the recognized political party or independent group to which such additional vote shall be deemed to have been given shall be made by lot drawn in the presence of the returning officer in such manner as he shall determine.

(2) (a) Every recognized political party and independent group polling less than one-eighth of the total votes polled at the election shall be disqualified from having any candidates elected as the other members of the local authority.

(b) The votes polled by the disqualified parties and independent groups, if any shall be deducted from the total votes polled at the election and the number of votes

resulting from such deduction are hereinafter referred to as the "relevant number of votes."

(c) The relevant number of votes shall be divided by the number of members, other than the Mayor, and Deputy Mayor, to be elected at that election for that local authority. The whole number resulting from such division (any balance votes not being taken into account) is hereinafter referred to as the "resulting number."

(d) The number of votes polled by each recognized political party and independent group (other than those parties or groups disqualified under paragraph (a) beginning with the party or group which polled the highest number of votes, shall then be divided by the resulting number and the returning officer shall declare as elected from each such party and group in the order in which their names appear in the nomination paper, such number of candidates (excluding the candidates declared elected as Mayor and Deputy Mayor) as is equivalent to the whole number resulting from the division by the resulting number of the votes polled by such party or group. The remainder of the votes, if any, after such division, shall be dealt with, if necessary, under paragraph (e).

(e) Where after the declaration of the election of members as provided in paragraph (d) there are one or more members still to be declared elected on the remainder of the votes referred to in paragraph (d) to the credit of each party or group after the declaration made under that paragraph and the votes polled by any party or group not having any of its candidates declared elected under paragraph (d), the candidate next in the order of priority in the nomination paper of the party or group having the highest of such votes being declared elected the next member and so on until all the members to be elected are declared elected.

(f) Where an equality of votes is found to exist in the balance number of votes to the credit of one or more parties and groups

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GRANT K & E

How US decolonised news

by Chakravarti Raghavan

Information and communication are in reality two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. In traditional societies, where information and communication are still basically through word of mouth, in individual conversations, village gatherings or discussions, drama, story-telling and other forms of entertainment, education (of the nonschool or informal variety), and a hundred and one other different ways, is basically horizontal and to that extent democratic and participatory. It is part of the industrialised society characteristic, where the spread of information has been facilitated by technology, that the entire process is becoming more and more vertical.

The power to inform and communicate vests in those who can afford, control and command the means, and this is an increasingly small number, and even when in different hands, is oligopolic in that the interests and motivations of those behind the means are the same. This vertical information, as a consequent of technology (or uncontrolled technology), is prevalent in the so-called political democracies, where the means of production, including information and mass media, are in private hands, and in so-called socialist countries where it is publicly owned.

In both cases, information spreads from the centre to the periphery, from the owner or his agent (or the State and its organs) to the readers who are mere passive receivers.

The demand for cultural freedom and independence, and its reflection in the rejection of the metropolitan country culture in the ex-colonial countries and peoples, often takes some extreme forms, including an occasional chauvinist mode. Elite leadership (among politicians, bureaucrats, journalists and professionals) that is willy-nilly part of the transnational phenomenon,

often tends to attack and reject the strivings of peoples for cultural freedom as obscurantism. The TN attempts at homogenising tastes and consumption, and the TN production-distribution process often passes for 'modernization' among these elites. Any reaction and rejection thus appears to be an attempt to go back in time.

The achievement of political independence by colonial peoples was merely the beginning of their efforts to restructure their national lives, and as a part of it their international life. Even after the attainment of political independence, this has involved a continuous struggle to achieve their economic, social and cultural independence, without which political freedom was empty. Some of these struggles involve actions of third world countries within their own societies. But as their perceptions of the interdependent world has grown, the third world has begun to strive for a new ethos internationally that would enable enjoyment of political, economic, social and cultural freedoms. Some in the North, who have seen the TN production-distribution-consumption process as environmentally ruinous and as alienating peoples, have also begun to perceive the need for a new ethos.

The 'free flow of information' doctrine owes its origin to the drive of the United States to liberate itself from the cultural and economic domination that Britain and Europe had over the United States, two centuries after its independence and despite its growing economic strength.

From the second half of the 19th century, when Europe had established its control over much of Africa and Asia, and began its economic exploitation, the role of information and news as an adjunct

to the 'flag', and later as an aid to commerce was perceived. Aided by the technological underpinning, and financial and political support of the 'flag', European news empires of Reuters, Wolff and Havas were built.

As the US economic giant began to realise its strength and flex its muscles, media men like Cooper of Associated Press of America began to perceive and resent the way Britain, in alliance with the continental interests, was exercising influence over US policies and thinking through the flow of information and news to the US, and distorting and misrepresenting the US to the rest of the world.

The US attempt to decolonise information began through the doctrine of 'free flow of information'. The role of information in selling goods and services abroad, and in obtaining political and other influences for the new centre of power in Washington, was clearly foreshadowed in the free flow of information doctrine that was built into the postsecond world war international structures. It was as important a brick in building the current world order as the Bretton Woods structures or the GATT in bringing together the new capitalist empire whose driving force is the transnational phenomenon. The control and manipulation of demand through transnational flows of information, culture and advertising became an important element of the total structure.

The US, and specially the Associated Press of America and the United Press of America (later United Press (International)) that, between the two world wars, began this decolonisation campaign in the realm of news, once they had succeeded in overthrowing the Reuter hold and took on the mantle themselves, became the vehement critics of the decolonisation of information

campaign now being waged by the third world, and have sought to label it as Marxist, communist or a totalitarian concept, opposed to democratic principles and fundamental human freedoms.

India, after independence, had refused to align itself in the cold war, and under Jawaharlal Nehru the Indian people had struck out on the path of nonalignment. The West set out to remove the underpinnings of popular support to the government by a campaign of information, and often misinformation, about the policies of the West, East, and of other nonaligned countries and their policies. The distorted way the transnational agencies presented to the Indian public even the view-points of Indian spokesmen at international fora on various issues of the day brought home to Indian policy makers and the public the importance of information, and decolonising information from imperial control and manipulation.

Nonalignment in the fifties was a much ridiculed policy amongst the so-called (western-trained and culturally alienated) elites, including journalists of the newly emerging countries (and more so amongst the English language newspaper world of India). The Press Commission's argument and recommendations for decolonising news, and liberalising the two-way flow of news from the American and European communication channels, was carefully worded, with much genuflections towards the doctrine of 'free flow of information' and the distortions of the concepts of human rights, already introduced by these doctrines. The Press Commission's report was a plea for decolonisation of news, but without a basic understanding of the TN phenomenon.

Gradually, by the sixties the non-aligned movement began to gather strength and adherence as a political movement, and its leaders and protagonists increasingly saw the need to foster solidarity among their peoples through better understanding of each other. The perception grew about the need for cultural and information exchanges and need for direct flow of news and information

to each other rather than the distorted images of each that the other was currently receiving through the western news agencies. This found its expression in the Algiers non-aligned summit declaration.

Although in India, as early as 1954 the need was perceived and cogently argued for nonaligned countries to see each other directly or through their own eyes rather than hostile western eyes, nothing much was actually done about it. There were many reasons. The mass media was dominated by western-trained and totally alienated media-men. Media channels were being run on the basis that information is a commodity to be sold for a profit. The dominant owners were the industrial barons, who when they were not running it for profit were doing so to build up influence on the body politic for their economic empires. Each of them had his links with the TN economic structures. Often they used the TN power centres like the World Bank and the TN news channels to mount a campaign against domestic policies that sought to bring about the rudiments of economic democracy.

Yugoslavia in Europe, because of the structure of the State and the ownership of the media, was able to move in the direction of providing to the nonaligned countries an alternative channel of information. The Yugoslav news agency, Tanjug, from the sixties began an expansion. It had its own network of correspondents abroad, and was also trying to provide a service abroad. Concentrating on some of the leading non-aligned countries, Tanjug tried to interest the media in its news service and like the western agencies and Tass, tried to help the process in the Afro-Asian countries by providing the local agency, the radio receivers and teleprinters to receive the news broadcast on radio from Belgrade.

The service still merely provided a check or a Yugoslav viewpoint or interpretation of events as different from British, American or French viewpoints. It was still European ethnocentred and, while socialist, had a modern technology culture. But it provided a useful alternative from some of the then embattled areas of Asia and Africa.

However, Tanjug soon discovered that many of the agencies that had been supplied the equipment to receive the Tanjug news free (principally news about Yugoslavia with some foreign reportage from a few key capitals) used the equipment to receive the TN news and often did not even monitor the Tanjug cast.

Tanjug then conceived a way of hooking these agencies on to the Tanjug transmission through the idea of the pool. It offered to add to its own transmission, news items landed in Belgrade by any nonaligned country news agency. Each country was asked to restrict its daily coverage to two news items of about 500 words in all. This process increased the total content of the Tanjug service, and each of the sending agencies would naturally monitor the Tanjug cast (and hopefully use some) to make sure its own news was used. The Tanjug pool concept was no different from the TN newsgathering and distribution machinery in the earlier days, though the pool was much ridiculed both in the East and the West.

Even now, the TNs depend upon the local news sources, including the local State-owned agencies in many parts of the world or the State broadcasting organisations, for 'news' of what governments tell each other or their peoples. In many areas this monitoring is done by the British-American-intelligence network, and the monitored copy is made available to the AP-UP-Reuters and AFP men at key points. Thereafter the TNs rewrite this stuff, putting in their own interpretations, backgrounding (and inevitable distortions in the process) and ladle it out to the rest of the world as 'news'

The concept of exchange of news, broadcasts and films, books etc—the whole range of information—amongst nonaligned countries was endorsed by the Lima meeting of foreign ministers of nonaligned countries in 1975, and ultimately resulted after the nonaligned ministerial meeting in New Delhi and the summit at Sri Lanka (both in 1976), in the present nonaligned news pool with several regional relay centres.

(Continued on Page 24)

The other . . .

(Continued from Page 8)

Far more alarming however is Iran's hand in the affairs of neighbours. From Baghdad have come strong hints that Iran may have had a hand in the abortive coup in Iraq. An Israeli intelligence digest also spoke of "Saudi money" and "Egyptian influence" working towards a change in Iraq's unyielding opposition to the Camp David accords.

Sometime ago Pakistan suspected Iranian influence in the Baluchi revolt. An insurgency broke out in Pakistan's western province in the early 1970's. But western correspondents now concentrating on the "Pakistani bomb" are convinced that Iran and Pakistan, especially after Foreign Affairs adviser Agha Shahi's visit to Teheran, are acting in concert over Afghanistan and that the Afghan rebels have training camps and facilities in both neighbouring states. In Iran the key coordinator is the Deputy Prime Minister, General Zia who is in a terrible dilemma over his long overdue elections may find the Afghan situation a helpful diversion especially when western and Chinese aid will be guaranteed. Since both Iran and Pakistan are new members of the non-aligned movement, their activities are being closely watched in Delhi where analysts wonder whether they will turn to be what Colonel Gaddafi identified at the Colombo Summit as "trojan horses". ●

Trends . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

leaving Sri Lanka soon. It is described as a routine transfer:

Investment and democracy

Mr. Hameed was always a quick-witted debater in the House but 2 years chairmanship of the non-aligned Foreign Ministers' conference has certainly improved his style to the point that he can now cross swords with even the most aggressive of foreign politicians.

On non-alignment Hameed dealt smartly with some Congressional inquisitors and then drew blood on foreign capital and democracy. JR's

best achievement was not merely to win a landslide victory but to push the UF government to the point that it had to hold an election. The investment guarantees therefore have the support of a huge parliamentary majority. Ah, asked a Congressman, what happens to those guarantees when another party is elected? Does it mean, snapped back the Foreign Minister, that dictatorship is what you regard as the only safe guarantee for your capital?

The Law on . . .

(Continued from Page 20)

referred to in this subsection and the addition of a vote would entitle any candidate of such party or group to be declared elected under this subsection the determination of the party or group to which such one additional vote shall be deemed to have been given shall be made by lot drawn in the presence of the returning officer in such manner as he shall determine.

(3) For the purpose of this section the number of votes polled at any election shall be deemed to be the number of votes actually counted and shall not include any votes rejected or void.'

NEXT: PR by G. R. Tressie Leitan

How US . . .

(Continued from Page 23)

The nonaligned news pool, and the connected or parallel moves for exchange of radio broadcasts, television material, films, books, etc, among nonaligned countries is at best a technical infra-structure for intra-nonaligned horizontal flow of information and cannot be confused with information itself. Some of the nonaligned governments—and India under Mrs Gandhi's internal emergency rule was an example—used the ideological and conceptual philosophy, distorting it in the process to justify their own authoritarian domestic ways. But the concept and ideology of what had by now come to be known as the New International Information Order was not the same.

The growth of communication science and research had begun to show up the deficiencies of the existing flows of information, where news

as a commodity was reportage of exceptions. A series of exceptions strung together presented a false picture of existing realities (and thus distorted and influenced other products dependent on information). Communication researchers and some professional communicators began seeing doctrines like freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and freedom of information, and information itself as part of development—development of the human being as an individual and social entity or groups of entities in the global whole. (To be continued)

The counter . . .

(Continued from Page 17)

form of nationalistic 'Ethiopian Socialism'. Until early 1977 the PMAC maintained good relations with the USA and although a substantial military agreement with the Soviet Union was signed in December 1976, this was not immediately honoured by the Russians. Why then did the PMAC strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union in 1977 and 1978? There are four main reasons. First, in February 1977 the USA cut off all military aid to Ethiopia—in protest against the internal policies of the PMAC, in particular with regard to 'human rights'. Secondly, in June-July 1977 Ethiopia was invaded by neighboring Somalia at the active instigation of the conservative Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and with at least some direct encouragement from the USA. In this situation Ethiopia cut off from its traditional source of arms had to turn to the USSR and in the face of an all-out Somali attack Cuban troops were sent in to use the equipment that Russia provided. Thirdly, the Saudis and Egyptians were advocating a general policy of turning the Red Sea in to an 'Arab Lake', and were manipulating the Eritrean guerrillas and inciting the conservative Ethiopian Democratic Union, as well as Somalia, in an attempt to bring down the PMAC. Fourthly, the Soviet Union gave support to the substantial and radical social measures taken by the PMAC inside Ethiopia, in particular the land reform measures of March 1975.

NEXT: The US role.



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