

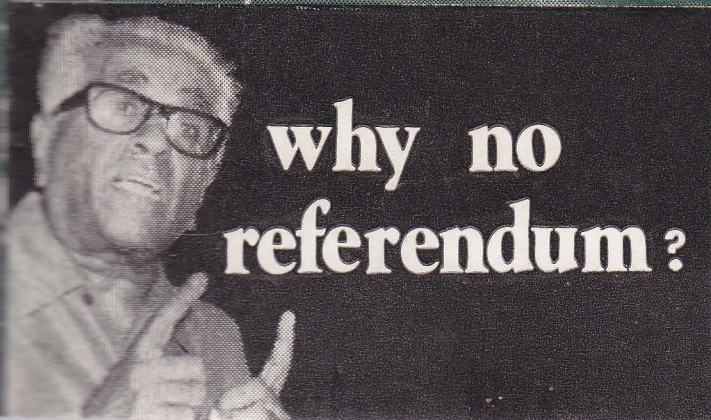
**LANKA**

November 1, 1979

# **GUARDIAN**



## **INSURGENCY II**



**why no  
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GARADS

### Ill Winds From Galle

Has the Galle by-election already produced strains on the newly formed 5-party 'bloc' of the once hopelessly fragmented Left? Wijeweera presented the others with a fait accompli when he nominated Lionel Bopage. Do the other parties have to line up automatically behind the JVP candidate?

Both the LSSP and the NLSSP have not taken too well to the JVP's unilateral move. The NLSSP thinks that the CPSL had a fair base in Galle and should have fielded a candidate with the blessings of the other four 'allies'. The CPSL did issue a statement calling for a single Left candidate.

The LSSP would have preferred a common anti-UNP candidate—the ideal choice being W. Dahanayake. The LSSP argued that the UNP's courtship of Dahanayake was a clear indication of the UNP's own diffidence. The CPSL and NLSSP feel that the JVP move can only help the fraction within the LSSP which is far more interested in an old-style 'coalition' with the SLFP, with the prospects of portfolios in 1983 as bright as in 1963, than in promoting 'Left unity'.

### Communication Chaos

Would Sri Lanka's journalists, members of one of the oldest professions, (no wisecracks, please) be press-ganged in order to bring them within the ambit of the EPS Law? With two of the largest press groups nationalised, it could be said that they were professionals within the public service like any GMOA member.

This fear was based on the fact that officials of the Press Council played an active role in the formation of the new Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association and were closely associated with the backstage meetings where the distribution

of 'posts' was discussed in basement bargain fashion. Press Council officials stood at the door and checked the credentials of members at the inaugural meeting. The presence on the platform of the Press Council chairman fortified these misgivings. But Mr. Subasingha, wise man, maintained a discreet silence throughout the stormy exchange which R. L. Michael, in a signed article in his paper '**The Independent**', called a "din-augural". Minister Anandattissa de Alwis, patron saint of media men, found that his experience as Mr. Speaker was very useful. And said so. Cross-talk and confusion, trilingual tirades, ill-tempered outbursts and vulgar wise-cracks turned the meeting into a sorry spectacle.

A Gilbertian twist to the proceedings however dispelled doubts that this was a government-controlled exercise. It might have been stage-managed but not State-managed said a veteran reporter. From the crowded hall, a Sri Kotha journalist protested that the UNP press had been kept completely in the dark!

### Para-Military ?

Along with the news that the police force will be strengthened by another 6000 men came the headline story that all Army officers will be vested with the powers of A.G.A's. A high-ranking LSSP'er was heard to say: "This is not the decentralisation of the administration but it's militarisation...."

But this, quite obviously, is too ominous an interpretation. The Cabinet spokesmen explained that the officers will have AGA's powers to deal with illicit felling of timber, encroachments on State land etc. If at all, the Army is being bureaucratized rather than the bureaucracy being militarised. It may lead to a parallel administration but hardly to a para-military administration.

### Concerning Lenin

I had often wondered how long Mr. Sriwardena could hold his peace while nestling cheek-by-jowl in the pages of the **Lanka Guardian** with a Stalinist like myself. Disappointingly though, the gauntlet which he has seen fit to throw down lands as lightly as a lady's glove.

There is absolutely no contradiction between my portrayal of Lenin on page 26 L.G. Oct. 1st and the characterization of his remarks in the comment on 'China at 30'—a comment, the contents of which I identify myself with fully. In the latter case Lenin was speaking of the trajectory of

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the world revolution in the aftermath of the failure of the European revolution. Clearly, a conceptual problem and a strategic one. In the former case the issue is on a different plane altogether. It was a perceptual one and Lenin's perception of the 'Georgian incident' was conditioned not only by the reliability of the information he received, but also his attitudes to the personae involved. If anyone approaches a sick man with tales of brutality, of people being beaten up and humiliated, it is hardly surprising that he reacts in a subjective manner and casts aspersions on the very people, such as Stalin, in whom, when well, he had reposed his fullest trust.

Furthermore, there was another factor in play. On 24th of December 1922 the Bolshevik Polit-Bureau held a conference with Lenin's doctors among whom was Professor Otfried Foerster, the distinguished German neurologist. This meeting decided that in order to spare Lenin undue excitement, which would be extremely detrimental to his rapidly failing health, he should not receive any political visitors, be given political news or enter into literary correspondence. The Bolshevik Polit-Bureau delegated Stalin to be its liaison with the doctors in the supervision of Lenin's treatment. This inevitably involved him in conflicts with the sick leader and his wife, Krupskaya, so much so that at least on one occasion Stalin wanted to resign from the job, but was prevailed upon by the whole Polit-Bureau to continue. At the time Lenin's temper was brittle and his mood overly critical, Lenin himself said that his "debility was due to nerves..... while (his) head is perfectly clear." (Diary of the Secretaries).

No one, including Mr. Siriwardena, should be surprised that Lenin's attitude to Stalin should have been rather subjective at the time since

the latter was a constant source of irritation, in that he was imposing restrictions on Lenin's freedom. The course of the world revolution, as Mr. Siriwardena will appreciate, is a somewhat different problem from that of a colleague who is rude to one's wife and persists in playing "nurse maid".

Mr. Siriwardena, who chooses to avoid the issue of the Bolshevik PB, CC and 12th Congress' endorsement of Stalin's position, makes instead a snide reference to 'Stalin the Immaculate and Infallible.' For reasons of brevity I will desist from commenting on the fallibility or otherwise, of others' "heroes".

— Chintaka

### So much for now

Readers of both my assessment and Mr. Reggie Siriwardena's comment on my review of 'Hansa Vilak' will not fail to discover that Mr. Siriwardena is unduly disturbed.

Mr. Siriwardena seems to be upset about the publication of my critique before the film is released for public viewing. My review entitled, 'Hansa Vilak—an opportunity lost' was written soon after a preview of the film and sent to the editor of 'Lanka Guardian' offering him the option to publish it either before or after the release of the film.

Readers will agree that this is purely a question of editorial discretion. The fact that the publication of my review before the film is publicly shown has prompted at least Mr. Siriwardena to react so sharply, in itself, proves that this editorial discretion has been well and cleverly used.

On the other hand, I think, that the discussion of a film prior to its release for public viewing, in the present context, is in fact something healthy, as far as the aesthetic development of the public is concerned. It will also help create an interest in the minds of the public and

even help the film secure its release without being pushed down the line in the long queue of Sinhala films seeking early release by various means.

Now that Mr. Siriwardena has written in defence of 'Hansa Vilak', readers are in a better position, anyway, to judge for themselves once they got the opportunity to see the film. Until then, or at least until further comments are forthcoming, I will not jump the gun, to use Mr. Siriwardena's phraseology.

But for the moment, I must clearly state that I disagree with what Mr. Siriwardena has said about Dharmasiri Bandaranaike's 'Hansa Vilak' and about my review of this film. He has misunderstood the film as well as my review.

— H. A. Seneviratne.

### Havana Summit

Though you did not say it in quite so many words, the clear implication of your review of the Havana Summit is that non-alignment is about nothing—at least reading that piece left me with that uneasy feeling. It is a sort of an international Quango without commitment, not different in frame work from the Summit that takes place when Jimmy Carter calls on Margaret Thatcher. It is a meeting of tough people who are pursuing different policies in their respective capitals but value a chance to get to know the other wielders of power on a personal basis—the sense of comradeship among captains, kings and presidents. The commonly expressed view is that though nothing has ostensibly been achieved, it is important to meet at Summit level if only because people understand each other better if they meet and talk world problems over. Nobody lost their tempers in public at least. No one threw a stink bomb at Castro. Most of the discourtesies were exchanged privately.

(Continued on Page 11)

# Cabinet re-shuffle – columnists collide

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

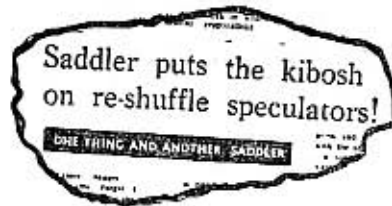
The liveliest topic of current political interest, a major Cabinet re-shuffle, finds the two leading columnists of the two biggest newspaper groups sharply divided.

"CABINET CHANGES? RE-SHUFFLE? FORGET IT".

This confident prediction and self-assured advice to the politically conscious 'Daily News' reader comes from the pen of 'Saddler', its Saturday columnist.

The very next day (Sunday Oct 21) MIGARA, (Men and Matters) of the **WEEKEND SUN** is not only certain that major changes are in the offing but is clearly in support of a re-shuffle. To underline the point his lengthy article is accompanied by a standard Information Dept. picture of the whole UNP Cabinet—plainly an invitation to the reader to play the usual "Who'll be in? Who'll be out?" guessing game with the aid of the inspired hints strewn liberally by Migara himself.

The CDN today has no 'political correspondent', a 'wise decision seeing that the 'pundits' in the ANCL Sinhala papers are busy re-writing history, with little consideration for either substance or style. The CDN's "political correspondent" was once the acknowledged mouthpiece of his Master. For many years, the CDN's 'Saturday Sermon' (the CDN preaches but never on Sunday) was religiously read and studied by every reader who was interested in knowing what was what on the political front. Only the initiated may have understood the mysteries of its corporate power but it was enough for the editorialist and columnist to realise that if Lake House was not the power-behind-the-throne, it was certainly the power-behind-the-power-behind-the-throne. Omniscience was comfortably wedded to omnipotence.



As a result the Political Correspondent's efforts was a multi-purpose, multi-track exercise. There was inside information, and the dark hint, the friendly persuasion and the arm-twisting, the minister singled out for attack and a ministry's incompetence exposed. But there was also the pace-setting—what the CDN said today, the government did tomorrow often because the man who ran the government had taken the trouble to inform Lake House of what he planned to do. If Lake House helped him to prepare the ground, the ordinary reader marvelled at the prophetic prowess of the CDN. Such an exercise was possible because Lake House was at the centre of the close-knit, Colombo-based power structure.

Life and politics have humbled Lake House. The old airs have gone. So have the assured skills and the panache.

By the late 60's when the ANCL's power-play was becoming more and more adventurous and and more and more politically risky it was plain that the Gunasenans were ready to become the Wijewardenas of the 70's. Whether the Sri Lanka of the 70's and 80's have a place for a Beaverbrook or a Murdoch is of course a debateable question. Politics is in command and politicians dictate. The 'independence' or 'autonomy' of the press lords seem things of an irrecoverable past. Humbler commissars and faceless competent authorities have taken over.

Yet, the **SUN** group does enjoy within this ever-narrowing

area of freedom, a relative autonomy. And that's what makes Migara's column interesting. He is far better informed or as the initiated know, better briefed. If he quotes from a ten year old Commission report or from the parliamentary record, it is not that he is an avid reader of Hansard but because somebody has directed his attention to Vol. 14 Page 1674 Column 2.

As for 'policy' or the 'line', the essentially rightist or conservative views of the group do not seriously conflict with UNP policies. However the **SUN** has been smart enough not to cut off its friendly communication links with the SLFP leadership despite the closure of the paper under emergency regulations. Probably drawing a lesson from the fate of the ANCL, the Sun group has sufficient political sagacity to back the system (UNP-SLFP) whatever its preference for a particular party.

All this makes its commentaries extremely interesting at a time when the UNP, now approaching its third budget, is plainly experiencing the all-too familiar trials and tribulations of a popularly elected government that has serious doubts about its popularity.

In similar psychological situations, past governments conformed to a pattern of stock responses.

(1) First it blames the press. The people are with us but an irresponsible (anti-government?) press is presenting a false or distorted image. This is the classic error of confusing cause and effect. The press is not creating public grievances but only recording or ventilating them. This alibi is no longer available because two of the biggest groups are state-managed, and the **SUN** is by no means anti-government.

(Continued on Page 4)

## SLFP — internal explosion ?

**W**ith four suspects remanded, the SLFP has refrained from any direct comment on the "bomb plot". But it has stressed, and quite correctly, that it has been the victim rather than the perpetrator of conspiracies, coups, assassination etc.

Five years ago, the UNP "uncovered" a Janavegeya plot and showered Mr. Kumar Rupasinghe's Gang of Fourteen with a publicity that it certainly didn't deserve. Will the State Ministry's press release end up the same way? The most puzzling phrase in that communique was "insult or assassinate", a curious choice to say the least.

In any case, the newspapers are finding it difficult to keep the story alive. Readers are more interested in the Galle by-election. Already the SUN has reported that police investigations have also led to a different kind of 'plot', a plot which involves the vacant post of the SLFP's trade union federation! The State Ministry's press release may have unwittingly helped to bring internal SLFP tensions to the point of public explosion and exposure.

In that sense the UNP has scored a propaganda victory. As dissatisfaction grows, the SLFP is the first and major beneficiary of the changing electoral mood. However the factional feuds prevent the SLFP from making maximum use of this situation. The gang-war in the SLITUF is only a manifestation of high-level discord in the party.

## BAY OF PIGS 2?

**W**hen the US announced a 'mock invasion' of Cuba by US marines, a stand-up comedian in a New York nightclub inquired solemnly whether Hollywood would be giving US "Bay of Pigs II".

No great nation seems so amply endowed with such an astounding capacity to ridicule itself. What the brilliant cartoonist Herb Block once called "American PRolitics" (politics as a PR exercise) has now thrown every American, from President downwards into self-inflicted agonies and adolescent tantrums over the alleged threat to US security by the presence of an alleged Soviet combat brigade (2000-3000 soldiers) in Cuba. Even SALT 2 may not be ratified,

In the first instance nobody, not even those who are competent to judge these matters, is sure whether there is such a combat brigade or not. Having studied intelligence and aerial surveillance

reports, some say this and some say that. The Soviet Union categorically denies the presence of any combat brigade. The Cubans say that there are about 3000 Soviet military advisers who form "Training Centre 12" and that the presence of Soviet experts training Cubans in the most sophisticated weaponry is a fact well known to the US administration from President Eisenhower's time; that is, for nearly 20 years!

On July 27th, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said; "There is no evidence of any substantial increase of the Soviet military presence in Cuba over the past several years or of the presence of a Soviet military base, "Then on August 31st, State Department Spokesman Hodding Carter announced; "This is the first time we

### Cabinet . . .

*(Continued from Page 3)*

(2) The government is okay but the opposition is obstructing its effort to implement its correct policies efficiently. With its 5/6ths majority and no opposition to reckon with, the UNP cannot make use of this argument either.

(3) Who then is to blame? The bureaucracy, of course. The wreckers, saboteurs, conspirators and miscellaneous enemies are in the administration — many of them 'placed' there by the previous regime! In the old days when the CCS was very much a part of Colombo Establishment, Lake House and the **TIMES** rushed to its support whenever a government put a non-CCS man or political appointee to a key post. Recently, MIGARA presented the exactly opposite view.

(4) When 'beat the bureaucracy' propagandist line does not visibly improve the government's stock with the electorate (a situation which has its real roots in economic actualities and the growing gap

between voter expectations and the day-to-day frustrations) the government at last turns inwards. So, the miracle cure of the Cabinet re-shuffle.

Reading MIGARA carefully, and between the lines, we note the following:

(a) On his return from Singapore and conversations with Premier Lee Kuan Yew, the "architect of the Singapore Miracle" President JR spoke of the need for Cabinet changes. Lee Kuan Yew had spoken of the need to give young talent a chance.

(b) Ministers Hameed and De Mel have been globe-trotting too much.

(c) Education Minister Wijeyeratne has been "requested to return" from a UNESCO parley to look into the 'A' level scandal.

(d) Changes are likely in Education, Plantations, Agricultural Development, Social Services, Culture, Rural Development etc.

Which columnist will be proved correct?

have been able to confirm the presence of Soviet ground forces unit on the island."

At the same time, Senator Frank Church, the key figure in the Foreign Relations Committee starts hollering about Soviet combat troops and threatening to scuttle SALT 2. Earlier the self-same Frank Church had not only been one of the stoutest champions of SALT 2 but had rejected the slightest suggestion of a "linkage" between its ratification and any other US-USSR issue. Finally, the President himself chooses his birthday to broadcast to the nation ("one of his most important speeches" proclaims the White House) on what he has decided to do about this latest danger to US security.

It is not only these acrobatics but timing which is interesting. On August 31st the non-aligned Foreign Ministers were meeting in Havana to prepare the ground for the 6th Summit. Though maladroit, this was a calculated move to divert attention from the Havana summit. (See 'Havana Diary' L. G. Oct 1). Richard Gott and Mark Arnold Foster in the 'Guardian' (London) go further. Describing

it as an attempt to "embarrass" Castro, they wrote; "Nonaligned nations profess hostility to the idea of foreign military bases and the State Department revelations might have been deemed to discredit Castro as the host to the conference."

As for President Carter he was to confess publicly that the popularity ratings showed the US Public had lost confidence in him. Why? And what to do. In recent weeks the "news" has been dominated NOT by major public issues but by political characters who know how to use the instruments of public information. Carter, he wrote, was in trouble partly because he is not dominating the news, not taking command not sounding 'presidential'.

So he sounded very 'presidential' on his 'most important speech', warning the politicians not to magnify the issue and push the US back into the cold war but assuring the nation that he knew how to 'face the challenge'. Yet as David Buchan noted in the F.T. Carter "did as much as anyone to inflate the issue".

Though the US may have suffered the humiliation of a military defeat in Vietnam, it remains the world's mightiest power. This gives the whole episode its grotesquely funny touch. If the USSR did have a combat brigade in Cuba would it represent a threat to US security? Would the Russians suddenly storm the beaches of Florida, slice through US territory Patton-style and plant 'the hammer and sickle' on Capitol Hill?

As 3500 US marines in four amphibious craft stormed Guantanamo (Oct. 18) to re-live the glories of Iwo Jima, the "special reinforcement demonstration" thrust the best-equipped army in the world into the theatre of the absurd. There is a foreign combat brigade in Cuba, and it is American. Since 1960 Cuba has asked the US to vacate its territory but the US forcibly occupies Guantanamo justifying its presence by a treaty signed in 1901. Washington continues to pay the rent, and Cuba does NOT cash the cheques!

The less laughable aspect of this affair is the new Caribbean Task Force. The gun-boat diplomacy of the 1980's? The 'fire-engine force' was initially planned to meet the threat to western security in the Gulf-area after the downfall of Washington's regional policeman, the Shah. Now the plan has been implemented in the Caribbean and not in the Indian Ocean.

The revolution in Nicaragua, the unsettled conditions in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, the-forced retreat (though not total) from the Panama Canal, have brought nervous anxieties closer home. As the **Washington Post** wrote editorially, "in the name of stability and anticommunism, the US has helped prop up one dreary dictator after another". Now as the new dominos fall or look like falling, the US resorts to old devices, economic aid, military training, arms and a mobile "police" force.

Will the new "invasion" of Cuba teach Havana and Moscow a lesson? Said the NYT: "Neither peace nor peace of mind can be achieved by amputating a foot to treat a bunion".



# A people's revolution

by A Special Correspondent

**W**hile the armed struggle was the highest, the most intense expression of the Nicaraguan revolution, it is imperative to examine the other, less 'visible' aspects of the struggle. This requires an examination of the various instances of the Nicaraguan social formation. It is only an understanding of these instances—political, ideological and economic—and their articulation that would enable us to grasp the essence of the complex totality that was the Nicaraguan people's struggles. More specifically it is only such an approach that would help us comprehend the contradictions within the various levels of Nicaraguan society: the fusion, of these contradictions that led to the final revolutionary crisis and the qualitative rupture.

Determined as they are in the last analysis, by the economic factor, the various instances constituting a social formation are none the less autonomous in a relative sense, and it is permissible to treat them as such in the course of our analysis, while simultaneously appreciating the dialectical inter relationship between them.

A revolution is both political and social, as Marx pointed out. It is social in that it is engendered by the contradictions embedded within society; in that it is a contestation between social classes; in that it leads to a radical reconstitution of social relations. It is political in that the question of state power is the main issue in any revolution.

How then can we define the Nicaraguan revolution? What was its socio-political character? There are those in this country and elsewhere who declaim loudly on behalf of the Nicaraguan revolution, while ignoring or glossing over the strategy and tactics, the slogans and programmes, blocs

and fronts adopted and entered into by the FSLN. Like every victorious revolution since 1917, the Nicaraguan (and Iranian) have demonstrated the utter sterility of the 'absurdly left' (Lenin) metaphysic of 'Permanent Revolution'. We may ask why history has bypassed this fine theory, queried Lenin mockingly in 1915. Nicaragua poses the question and provides the answer once more. If the Nicaraguan struggle completely negates the theory of Permanent Revolution, it strikingly affirms in all its fundamentals, the Leninist-Stalinist theory of 'uninterrupted revolution by stages'.

**Which class or classes wield state power and consequently must be displaced? Which class or classes must seize state power? It is the answer to these questions that determines the character, i. e., the 'stage' of the revolution.** A reading of Lenin's 'Letters on Tactics' bears this out. State power in Nicaragua was wielded by what may be best described by the (admittedly imprecise) category of 'oligarchy'. In their speeches and writings, Fidel and Che have described the oligarchy as an alliance between the big (or 'upper') bourgeoisie and the large landowners. The large landowning system is the basis of the economic power of the ruling bloc. A most reactionary class which cannot survive on its own, these land owners are in alliance with imperialism and facilitate the exploitation of the lands by North American Monopoly capital. The big bourgeoisie has the import-export trade as its economic power base and therefore has interests consonant with those of imperialism and the landowners. "Imperialism,.....a ferocious latifundismo.....a higher bourgeoisie.....these are the great allied forces which directly oppose the new popular revolutions of Latin America",

wrote Che in 1961 (Cuba: exception or Vanguard).

These then were the enemy classes, the anti-people forces from whom state power had to be forcibly wrested. The nation versus US installed and supported oligarchy on the one hand and the broad, national-popular forces on the other was the principal antagonistic contradiction in Nicaraguan society. The contradiction between capital and labour, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is indubitably the principal contradiction on a world scale in the present historical epoch, but it does not follow from this correct Leninist thesis that the bourgeoisie proletariat contradiction is the principal one within each and every national entity ('national' social formation) at all times. This kind of mechanical reasoning, so characteristic of Trotskysm, never once marred Lenin's thinking—as his subtle writings on the national liberation movements in the East readily bear out.

"Know your enemy, know yourself. A thousand battles, a thousand victories" wrote Sun Tzu in "The Art of War" and Mao underscores this fundamental point in his military writings. Lenin, Gramsci, Stalin and Mao remind us that what is true of military strategy often holds good in the realm of politics. If imperialism and the oligarchy (the upper bourgeoisie and the large land-owners) were the enemy, which social forces constituted 'the people'? Mechanistic Marxists often forget that the notion of 'the people' does not remain static, but rather changes in character, in consonance with the different 'stages' and 'phases' of the revolutionary process. There are those who try to apply Mao's correct characterization of the social composition of 'the people' during the course of the New Democratic Revolution in



China, to the entirely different social formation of Sri Lanka today. Plainly, this is too broad a characterization of 'the people'. There are others for whom Lenin's identification of the alignment of class forces in the Russia of mid-1917 is readily applicable to contemporary Sri Lankan reality. Equally clearly this is too narrow a notion of 'the people'. Sri Lanka is at once post-colonial and neo-colonial; post-colonial, in that state power is wielded not by the metropolitan, but the native bourgeoisie.

Thus the stage of the revolution is no longer New Democratic or National Democratic, which it was until 1948. The concept of 'the people' is therefore narrower in social terms than it was in China of the 1920's, 30's and 40's. Having on the other hand a neo-colonial, dependent capitalism dominant within the existing social formation, important anti-imperialist tasks remain high on the agenda. The concept of 'the people' is thus broader than in Russia of October 1917 or metropolitan capitalist societies. The trend towards neo-fascism accord the democratic tasks a pre-eminent place on the agenda and this too implies a broader concept of 'the people' than in the case of a 'classic' anti-capitalist proletarian revolution. All this means is that 'the twin banners of 'National Independence' and 'Socialism' have to be raised simultaneously in today's Sri Lanka, as in most other peripheral nations dominated by a dependent capitalism.

Given the historically determined social formation of Nicaragua in all its concreteness, which social forces constituted 'the people'? The proletariat, the peasantry, the marginals of the barrios, the urban petty-bourgeoisie (especially the students of the high schools and the universities,) the Catholic clergy and yes, the 'non-monopoly' or 'middle' bourgeoisie. Regis Debray was correctly summing up six decades of experience gained by the world revolutionary movement when he wrote in 'A Critique of Arms' Vol 2.

"One would of course settle down for life in a Trotskyist sect,

and spend fifty years chanting the Open Sesame of a single Proletarian Front and a Workers and Peasants Government, but incantations of that sort have little effect on the practical course of history." (Revolution on Trial'. 1974).

The Nicaraguan revolution was therefore an anti-oligarchic revolution, a democratic revolution. It was an anti-imperialist revolution, a nationalist revolution. It was one of "the new popular revolutions of Latin America". (Che).

The term 'peoples revolution' is as objectionable to sectarian Marxists as is the term 'Peoples War', and yet its origins are impeccably Marxist. Lenin quotes Marx's letter to Kugelmann (April 1871) to the effect that the smashing of the bureaucratic military state machine is the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the continent:

"Particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is 'the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution.' This concept of a 'Peoples' revolution seems strange coming from Marx. and the Russian Plekanovites and the Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a 'slip of the pen' on Marx's part. They have reduced Marxism to such a state of a wretchedly liberal distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the anti-thesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution—and even this anti-thesis they interpret in a lifeless way....." (Lenin)

Lenin follows this up with the comment that "in Europe in 1871 there was not a single country on the continent in which the proletariat constituted the majority of the people. **A peoples' revolution, one that actually brought the majority into movement, could only be such if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasantry. These two classes then constituted the 'people'.**" (my italics)

Debray goes further. In any semi-colonial country at the present time "the future of the revolution, or rather perhaps the question of whether or not there can be a revolution, depends on the union of the urban, petty-bourgeoisie within the popular forces, the poor peasants, the proletariat and revolutionary intellectuals" In the same body of fine essays i. e. 'Prison Writings' (1970-73) Debray goes on to identify what he considers an important and encouraging phenomenon namely, "the radicalization of large bodies of the middle class, who have grasped that capitalism, as it works out in a semi-colonial country, can offer them nothing, can do nothing to ameliorate their lives, but will only process a continuous, rapidly worsening under-development." He speaks of the positions taken up by "doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, teachers etc, which indicate that 'the professional class is ready to enroll as junior members in a popular regime..... supporting socialist aims."

The urban petty-bourgeoisie — professionals, intellectuals and students — were important allies of the workers and peasants in the popular revolutionary bloc that finally crystallized in Nicaragua.

**NEXT: The bourgeoisie and the United Left.**

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# Danger of totalitarian power

by Jayantha Somasunderam

CENTENARY

Thirty nine years ago Trotsky was in exile in Mexico City watching from afar as Europe blazed with the fires of war, after Hitler and Stalin had concluded the devils' pact. The world seemed on the brink of destruction and few were those who were turning to 'the prophet', Stalin in supreme power, in the Soviet Union however went to extremes to kill him, because though powerless, Trotsky was, as he still is, a symbol of the true Workers State. More, he was a soldier, political and military leader; a thinker and writer, who led a revolution, created an army, won a war, and evolved theories that brilliantly described social processes.

When the February 1917 Revolution broke out in Russia, Trotsky who was living in America returned to Petersburg conscious of history being on his side. Trotsky and Lenin were united in their identification of the Permanent Revolution: that the social metamorphosis in Russia would lead to all of Europe being ignited with the spark of revolution.

When Lenin was forced into hiding in August, Trotsky remained in St. Petersburg and created the Red Guards. While Lenin and Trotsky refused to join the Provisional Government that had deposed the Tsar in February, all the other parties did so. Thus when the Provisional Government could not give the people what they wanted: Peace, Land and Bread, they turned to Trotsky. The Soviets—Workers' Committees—constituting a parallel Government, were to fall one by one into his hands. Finally in October, the Provisional Government collapsed, and all powers passed on to the Soviets and to Trotsky. Lenin was now to return from hiding, offering Trotsky leadership of the party, which Trotsky declined, assuming office as Foreign Secretary.

After concluding peace with the Germans Trotsky became Commissar for War, built the Red Army, and led it to victory in the civil war against the counter revolution. But he labelled the Civil War "disgusting barbarism.....war like revolution is founded on intimidation. A victorious war destroys only an insignificant part of the conquered army, intimidating the remainder and breaking their will. The revolution works in the same way; it kills individuals and intimidates thousands."

In 1920 he finally got down to the task of rebuilding the So-



*Leon Trotsky was born a hundred years ago, November 7th 1879. After his assassination in August 1940, his concept of Permanent Revolution was to become a political force in only one country, Sri Lanka. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Bala Tampoe's Revolutionary Marxist Party and the LSSP (New Leadership) identified with Vasudeva Nanayakkara, characterise themselves as Trotskyites. Trotskyism is also a significant element in the ideology of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.*

—Ed.

viet Union. "We are participants in this unprecedented historic attempt to attain a new society in which all human relations will be based on cooperation and man will be man's brother, not his enemy."

Yet the problems confronting Lenin, Trotsky and the young Soviet Union were such that conflicts appeared. While Trotsky fought for freedom of expression he had to insist on a strong centralised party. Thus in the early days itself the seeds of Trotsky's downfall were already sprouting. Having tasted both the passion of revolutionary opposition and the strength of power, he found that while being right in theory, in practice ranged against him were those who were both cowardly and unprincipled, but whose policies seemed to work. Too late Trotsky realised that political principles if pursued truly, result in paradoxes. Too late he realised the danger of the totalitarianism of power.

Stalin, "the outstanding mediocrity of the party," as Secretary of the Central Committee, controlled appointments and thus manipulated the powers of patronage and propaganda to gain control of the State. Lenin from his deathbed wrote: Stalin has acquired immense power in his hands and I am not certain he will always know how to use his power with sufficient caution. On the other hand Trotsky is distinguished not only by his remarkable abilities: personally he is no doubt the most able person in the present Central Committee.

As history conspired against him Trotsky pursued learning outside of politics. He was writing articles on Freud, Russian literature, Constructivist architecture and Shakespearian tragedy; he studied chemistry and physics foretelling the release of energy

(Continued on Page 24)

# Stalin : a hero remembered

by Chandra Senanayake



Stalin

The ongoing rehabilitation of Joseph Stalin, in the USSR is the subject of much comment and discussion in the Western press today. A recent issue of the **Christian Science Monitor** for instance, carried an article by special correspondent Paul Wohl, entitled—“Stalin: a tyrant in life; a hero remembered.”

Noting that this is the year of Stalin's birth centenary, Wohl writes that a spontaneous wave of private sentiment favouring Stalin's memory has been building up in the USSR over the past year, and this 'wave' is likely to crest on December 21st, the 100th anniversary. In March last year, which was the 25th anniversary of Stalin's death, leading Moscow dailies carried the picture of a young soldier in front of a heap of red carnations and tulips that had been placed at the foot of Stalin's statue at the Kremlin wall. At the time, **NEWSWEEK** carried the item prominently in its columns and commented on its political significance.

The Monitor's Paul Wohl mentions an article by Soviet, dissident writer Victor Nekipelov (a member of Moscow's Helsinki Watch Committee on Human Rights) in the latest issue of *Kontinent*, the emigre dissident quarterly. The article tells of a deluge of privately circulated Stalin portraits in all formats—on the windshield of trucks, buses and taxis and even in the homes of victims of the late dictator's purges!

Earlier this year, a report in this *Christian Science Monitor* mentioned the rapid sale of Stalin buttons by WW II veterans, on the Moscow subway, and in buses.

“Stalin the cruel despot is forgotten, it would appear. Stalin the wartime chairman of the State Defence Committee is remembered and identified with victory, order and discipline” writes correspondent Wohl. He says that the re-emergence of a posthumous Stalin cult is especially

remarkable in the Soviet Armed Forces. Referring to an incident which drew the attention of **NEWSWEEK** magazine, the Swiss Press Review and the London **Economist**, Wohl writes of last year's celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Red Army held in the Kremlin's Palace of Congresses. On this occasion, when Defence Minister Dmitri Ustinov mentioned the appointment of comrade Stalin as Chairman of the State Defence Committee, the more than 6000 officers present—the 'creme de la creme' of the Soviet Officer corps spontaneously leapt to their feet and applauded thunderously. It took the Defence Minister nearly quarter of an hour to resume his speech.

Victor Nekrasov, one of the best known of Russian writers in exile, in a book recently published by Juillard in Paris, called attention to Stalin's posthumous popularity among young Soviet Officers and even young intellectuals. In an interview given a few months ago to **NEWSWEEK**, famous dissident An Sinyavsky speaks of the 'nostalgia for Stalin' which is sweeping the USSR.

The same point is made at much greater length, by Pulitzer Prize winning veteran **New York Times** journalist Hedrick Smith who spent three years in the USSR. In his book *'The Russians'*, Smith devotes an entire chapter to the popularity of Stalin throughout the entire spectrum of Soviet society, but especially among the youth—workers, army men and intellectuals. He relates the interesting anecdote of a young Russian who was such an arid rock music fan, that he risked arrest to sneak into an Embassy compound for a showing of 'Concert for Bangladesh'. Smith was witness to a heated argument between the young man and his father, in which the youngster strongly defended Stalin. Hedrick Smith corroborates Paul Wohl's point that Soviet youth contrast Brezhnev's cautious conservatism

with “the picture of power and outward glory of the Stalin era.”

'**SURVEY**', the journal of East European and Soviet Studies notes that the rehabilitation of Stalin is a process that began as far back as the ouster of Krushchev in 1964. This process picked up in 1968/69 with the US defeat in Vietnam (Tet offensive) the Czech Incident and tension on the Chinese border. Both '**Survey**' and the **Christian Science Monitor** disclose that fullscale rehabilitation was on the cards in 1969, the year of Stalin's 90th death anniversary. A special editorial and page 1 photograph for *Pravda* had been prepared. Quoting dissident Medvedev, they claim the project was abandoned owing to opposition from the Hungarian and Polish Communist parties.

The journal '**Problems of Communism**' confirms this and details the rehabilitation of Stalin that has since taken place in the fields of historiography and literature. The rise of Eurocommunism, rightist tendencies in Poland and Hungary, the dissident elements in Soviet society, the new instability in US-USSR relations and the tensions in Sino-Soviet relations are presented as some of the factors to which the Stalinist rehabilitation is a reaction or 'backlash'.

Meanwhile, Stalin is back in the pages of Soviet encyclopaedias and most notably in newly issued military histories, including a spate of worktime by veteran Soviet generals. (These are accessible to

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# EPS Law and the Constitution

by Colvin R. de Silva

VIEWPOINT

**G**overnment has amended the offending clauses of the EPS Bill in line with the Supreme Court's suggestions. They have thereby avoided the need for a referendum.

Every person in our country should understand what has happened. The purpose of this article is to help such understanding.

The matter begins with the threat of the Government Medical Officers' Association to go on strike regarding certain issues which had arisen between the Association and the Minister of Health. The rights and wrongs of that threat and those issues do not arise for consideration by us here. But it is a fact that people generally, being concerned with the fate of patients during a doctors strike, ordinarily take a dim view of such a strike.

What concern us here is the nature of the action which the Government took upon receiving the Association's strike notice. The Government rushed precipitately into Draconian (that is to say, harsh, disproportionate and literally cruel and inhuman) action. They made the doctors' threat the occasion for hitting not only at the doctors, their supporters, friends and sympathisers, but also at all public servants, local government servants corporation servants and (would you believe it?) also co-operative employees, their supporters, friends and sympathisers. Government brought forward the Essential Public Services Bill.

We shall not seek to set out here the provisions of the Bill. Most of the provisions are anyhow fairly well known because of the agitational struggle that has been launched against the Bill. Suffice it, therefore, to set out here, verbatim the clause in the Bill that attracted the condemnation of the Supreme Court. That clause is clause 4, which declares:—

"4 (1) Every person who commits an offence under this Act shall, on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate, be liable

to rigorous imprisonment for a term not less than two years and not exceeding five years or to a fine not less than two thousand rupees and not exceeding five thousand rupees or to both such imprisonment and fine.

(2) Where any person is convicted by any court for any offence under this Act, then, in addition to any other penalty the court shall impose for such offence, the court shall make order —

(a) that all property, movable or immovable, of the person convicted shall be forfeited to the Republic; and

(b) in any case where the person convicted is registered in any register maintained under any written law as entitling such person to practice any profession or vocation, that the name of such person be erased from such register.

(3) Where the court makes order under paragraph (a) of subsection. (2) in respect of any person, every alienation or disposal of property made by such person after the date of publication of an Order under subsection (1) of section (2) in relation to any service provided by such person shall be deemed to have been and to be null and void."

It is in regard to the provisions of this clause that the Supreme Court has said in a noteworthy passage of their judgment:—

"This piling up of punishment on punishment makes these penal provisions one of extreme severity.

"... Clause 4 is a blanket provision covering all offenders, irrespective of the kind of offence they are involved in, or their degree of blame-worthiness.....

"In our view, the piling of punishment on punishments, indiscriminately as in this case, whether they be old forms of punishment or new, must pass the test of Article 11, if they are to be valid. In our view,

## The EPS Bill

*The EPS Bill proved to be one of the most controversial measures of recent years. In line with the Supreme Court's order, the Bill was amended and then passed by a 2/3rds majority. But was the government obliged to hold a referendum too? Are there other constitutional issues involved? Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, former Minister of Constitutional Affairs, raises these questions. The Ministry of State has been invited to present the government's view on these matters.*

this is not a case of the mere excessiveness of the punishment but one of inhuman treatment and punishment.

"We are of the opinion that the compulsory forfeiture of property and the erasure of the offender's name from his professional register in addition to compulsory imprisonment or fine, constitutes excessive punishment and savours of cruelty. In our view, clause 4 of the Bill contravenes Article 11 of the Constitution."

Article 11 of the Constitution should be known to every person in our country. Here are the very words:—

"11. No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

This is the constitutional position which the U. N. P. Government, had set out to break!

Now, what the Supreme Court has stated is not that the Bill, with its condemned provisions, cannot be passed, but that it can be passed into law if, and only if, the Government will observe and satisfy two other constitutional provisions. The other two provisions are two

safeguards for the people against the Government and Parliament which the Constitution provides. these safeguards are:—

(1) That the Bill with the offending clause, shall be given a two thirds majority by Government; and

(2) that the bill shall be subjected by the President to a successful referendum.

Now, it is well known that the Government has a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Indeed, the Government had already announced by endorsement on the Bill when presented to Parliament, that it was going to use that two-thirds majority. The rub is in the second safeguard.

Upon a referendum, the Government has to face the people themselves, directly, face to face and under a barrage from the opposition in the wide country. And Government has quailed at this prospect and has dodged the referendum. It has amended the Bill as suggested by the Supreme Court, seeking to cover cowardice under a veil of self-acclaimed virtue. It pretends that it is carrying out the wishes of the Supreme Court when in fact it is running away from the Supreme Court's decision and its own previously determined course of action.

Why has Government not dared to stand up to its convictions?

The cumulative blows that Government has struck at the masses, systematically according to plan, since it came to power have resulted in an accumulation of mass resentment which it cannot hide from itself though it tries to hide it from others by putting up a bold front to the world. An appeal to the people might well show that the breaking point is near; in which case; woe unto their hopes for the future and for the inflow of foreign capital they are hoping for with fast waning expectancy. These are the things which make Government afraid to go to the People for support. Government has overreached itself.

There is one point we should like to make about the Supreme Court's judgment before concluding this article. While characterizing the

provisions of clause 4 as "inhuman" and "savouring of cruelty" both being terms taken from Article 11, which expressly prohibits them—the Supreme Court has at the same time said:—

(1) that it is in order if a court is empowered to impose such sentences in appropriate cases; and

(2) that there can be appropriate cases, namely "a fit and serious case."

But what Article 11 prohibits — and prohibits absolutely — is, **intertalia**, "cruel, inhuman" punishment. (The limitations placed on "the exercise and operation" of various other fundamental rights in the Constitution have not been placed in the case of Article 11). What is prohibited absolutely by the Constitution is absolutely prohibited to the courts also. There seems, therefore, to be a contradiction here.

Perhaps we should add that the political struggle over the Bill, which has now been passed after amendment into law by 128 Government votes to 28 Opposition votes, is not over. On the contrary, the struggle goes forward with a new start. There is now an Act or law to fight and get off the statute-book and not merely a bill to be prevented from getting on the statute book. The Act is still "cruel", "inhuman and degrading". Moreover, it is utterly undemocratic and destructive of essential freedoms. It will be the task of all progressives to enter into the fight against the Act and for its repeal.

### Letters . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

The symbol of authority, the gavel, has an elusive grasp. President J. R. Jayewardena, ran a relay race with Mrs. Bandaranaike to hand over the gavel to Castro. Even at the UN, the pattern was the same — although Shirley Amerasinghe was elected President of the UN Assembly in 1977, A.C.S. Hameed presided at the concluding session and wielded the hammer.

**Mickey Jayasundera.**  
Nugegoda.

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# WHY THE OLD LEFT FAILED

RESEARCH

by Charles Abeysekera

One of the most important sections of Keerawella's study concerns the Left movement in Sri Lanka. In studying its growth and development, he is trying to answer the question why the frustrations and discontents of the rural petty bourgeoisie did not find an expression in the C.P. and the L.S.S.P. but had to create a new party the J.V.P. He does not go into the objective factors behind the growth of the Left movement; he content himself with noting some of the subjective factors behind its origins such as "some youthful members of the rural bourgeoisie and of the upper middle class who went to the west to pursue higher education, showing an inclination for Marxism."

Keerawella notes that the LSSP formed in December 1935 just before the State Council Elections of the following year was "not strictly a Marxist party but a social democratic parliamentary party." Studying the growth and development of Left politics since then in rather summary and inadequate fashion, Keerawella charts the numerous splits and merges within it; from 1935 to 1965, he describes its history as "one of constant vacillation and consistent disintegration". The formation of the United Left Front in 1963, with

the combined strengths of the LSSP, CP and MEP, on the basis of a common programme while ignoring ideological differences is seen by Keerawella as a high-point, as being "responsible for the building up of a strong united Left movement". The SLFP then in power was perturbed by this challenge and, in the context of a worsening economic crisis and of possible threats from the working-class, sought a coalition with the Left; the LSSP jettisoned the ULF and joined the government. Keerawella sees this step as being decisive with it, "the traditional Left forfeited the opportunity that it had to provide leadership to the radicalised younger generation of the petty bourgeoisie as well as to the working-class". He reasons that this move "led to intense dissatisfaction among the members of the Left movement at grass-root level. Whereas the masses were generally unconcerned with the splits in the Left movement and their inner ideological differences, they viewed the alignment of these parties with the capitalist parties with almost contempt". This conclusion may be contested by the traditional, old Left parties in the LSSP and the CP, in terms of strategy and tactics, but Keerawella is right in stressing its subjective impact.

After recapitulating summarily the splits in the Left groups since then—one feels here the lack of a more detailed and specific analysis of both objective and subjective conditions—Keerawella summarises the dissatisfaction with the Left which in his opinion led a number of groups to coalesce together in the JVP:

1. The gap between the leadership and rank and file of the Left parties. Keerawella quotes with approval Obeysekera's remark that all the political parties in Sri Lanka including those of the Left as "factions of a ruling elite.... The leadership of all these parties came from elite ranks almost without exception. They came from the same schools, went to the same clubs, spoke English and marriage alliances cut across political differences. The Communist and Trotskyist leadership spoke for the under-privileged but were themselves privileged and lived an unabashedly high style of life... It was no accident that Left-wing leaders could not mobilise a peasant organisation; their class position and physical isolation militated against it. They were successful in building working class trades unions, though here again the social gap between the elite leadership and the workers themselves was immense." This gap crystallised into a complete loss of confidence in the leadership of the traditional Left parties.

2. The policies of these parties was seen as social reformist; they were deemed incapable "of bringing about structural changes in the existing socio-economic set-up."

3. The acceptance by the traditional Left parties of coalition politics. This was seen as opportunist and as a betrayal of the interests of the proletariat.

4. Their trade union policies were also seen as a reflection of



Warakapola Police Station  
after the attack

their social reformist politics. These policies were directed mainly towards obtaining concessions from within the system itself, described as 'struggles for a cup of porridge'; they were 'not directed towards truly working-class politics'.

5. Failure of the Left to mobilise the peasantry. "The Old Left, although they advocated a worker-peasant alliance in theory, failed to work among the peasantry".

These then are seen by Keerawella as the main factors behind the disillusionment with the Old Left felt by the new ranks of the educated petty bourgeoisie and the formation of a new political party in the J.V.P. These feelings can be summarised by a passage from Rohana Wijeweera's speech before the C.J.C. quoted by Keerawella: "Because the Old Left movement had no capacity to take the path of socialism, had gone bankrupt and deteriorated to the position of propping up the capitalist class

and had no capacity to protect the rights and needs of the proletariat any longer, we realised the necessity for a new Left movement".

This is, of course, the critique that all new Left groups make of the Old Left. Some of it may be justified but many of its features are merely subjective. In them one feels not so much an ideological stance as a subjective feeling of alienation. The criticism of the life-style of the Old Left leaders is given exaggerated importance but one cannot evade the fact that it may have had a significant impact on the consciousness of petty bourgeois elements.

Though expressed in rather a crude way, this is an indication of the social chasm which separated the dominant elite of the

traditional political parties including those of the left from the newly-emerging Sri Lanka educated elements. In fact the insurrection of 1971 may be chiefly noted for the fact that the whole tradition of Sri Lankan politics being dominated by sections of the upper classes was called into serious questions for the first time. Whole sections of the underprivileged began to organise themselves rather than wait to be organised by their "social superiors". This feeling that their needs could be met only by their own self-assertions may turn out to be one of the lasting results of 1971.

The social chasm, which to Keerawella and the others of the JVP is an important factor, would also probably explain the lack of comprehension shown by most sections of the old Left towards the phenomenon of the JVP.

(To be continued)

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## Ideology and social psychology

by J. Uyangoda

Many analysts, both Marxist and non-Marxist, have attempted to identify the factors which led to the emergence of the JVP. One commonly shared and largely acceptable explanation related these factors to the socio-economic conditions that prevailed in the 1960s. The worsening economic crisis resulting in social discontent and unrest had created a situation where the most affected sections of the society found no solution within the existing system. Podi Athula attempts to give a new dimension to the origins of the JVP relating it to the theoretical-ideological factors. His starting point is the Sino-Soviet dispute—a phenomenon that had, and continues to have, tremendous implications for the international socialist movement as well as its various national detachments.

I think this is an important aspect of the origins of the J.V.P. which deserves examination, though Podi Athula does not successfully do so. Important because the ideology of the J.V.P. was, to a large extent, to be shaped by its stand towards this great debate. Though Wijeweera had his political schooling in Moscow, he disembarked at Colombo leaning towards Peking. Sometimes, an unsympathetic critic may give over-consideration to this or that aspect of Wijeweera's behaviour in his Moscow days, and to his breakaway from the Moscow "line". Nevertheless, it was basically positive on the part of Wijeweera to accept, at that time, the Maoist critique of Khrushchevite revisionism. Any Stalinist would have realized that Khrushchev's peaceful co-existence and peaceful transition theories were a gross rejection of the essence of orthodox Stalinism.

The political importance of Wijeweera's conversion to Maoism and his joining Shanmugathasan's Pro-Peking CP, initially

was that he apparently accepted Maoism as the correct ideological tendency in the World Communist movement at that time. Given the seemingly aggressive and militant nature of Mao's policies in the early 1960's at least in the sphere of international politics, this could not have been otherwise.

If the Sino-Soviet dispute had any effect upon the formative period of Wijeweera's own political thinking, it never led him

(as he does now), but from the point of view which was vaguely related to the conventional Leninist analysis and its 'Castro-Guevarist' variant. Unlike most of the local Maoists, Wijeweera looked at Maoism, or at least, the applicability of Mao-Tse-tung thought and the Chinese experience to the local context with some reservations. Viewed retrospectively, I think, this was one welcome feature of the ideology of the JVP as it prevailed at that time.



"Surrender"

to a position of total adherence towards the official Peking ideology 'Mao-Tse-Tung thought'. He attempted to remain independent of both lines—Moscow and Peking. It was this ideological 'non-alignment' that led Wijeweera and the JVP, in some important aspects, a little closer towards Cuba. Furthermore, sometime after the formation of the JVP, Wijeweera tended to criticize some tenets of Maoism, not from the point of view of Trotskyism

Though Wijeweera had the courage to criticize, he never possessed the ability to present a coherent and rational ideological alternative. This lack of a definite and a clear-cut ideology had its manifestations in almost every aspect of the JVP. When one talks about the class nature of the movement, one can easily describe it as "non-proletarian". On the one hand, this non-proletarian character may be attributed to the fact that



in the decade of 1960s due to the deepening socio-economic crisis 'sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and such marginalized social elements as the unemployed, opted for radical and revolutionary changes. On the other hand; neither Wijeweera, nor any other leader of the movement realized the fundamental importance of basing the ideology and the organisation of the movement firmly on the working class. In other words, the Ideology was shaped in such a way that it had to be the manifestation of the major grievances of certain oppressed and marginalised elements of the society, but not of the most advanced class. Here one can see the dialectical linkage as well as the dynamic inter-relationship between the class nature and the ideology of the JVP. On the one hand the non-proletarian class character prevented the movement from grasping the real essence of Marxism and adopting the strategy and tactics of a revolutionary proletarian ideology did not enable the movement to base itself on the working class.

The personality of Wijeweera, as described by Podi Athula, is an enigma to the reader. In the first pages of his book, the author seems to have attempted to be objective, if not impartial, in his literary portrayal of the main protagonist. But, before long, the reader will notice that Wijeweera is depicted more as a dishonest and ruthless political schemer possessing an unmatched Machiavellian touch than an ordinary political leader. At the moment, and for the sake of argument, I am not disputing this characterization of the personality of the JVP leader. Let us assume that Wijeweera actually possessed all these evils. Then how can one explain the fact that this demonic personage had been able to command a tremendous following of honest faithfuls? Surely, the thousands of devoted adherents of Wijeweera could never have been mere blind followers. One easy explanation given by many critics is that these youthful followers were politically so uneducated, and inexperienced that Wijeweera would have easily "misled" them.

I think, this theory itself misleads us, even if one accepts it. What is basically important is not Wijeweera's occult skills and ability to "misled" his followers, but the latter's willingness and readiness to be "misled". It is in this instance that Marxian social psychology becomes relevant. When social unrest becomes acute, and the faith in the existing system is drastically undermined; when whole sections (not just individuals) of the population become rebellious, it is not this or that personal quality of the "redeemer", but the emotional and mesmeric nature of his appeal that assumes decisive importance.

When Wijeweera launched his own political movement, somewhere in 1967, armed with a meagre knowledge of Marxism but equipped with all the skills of the power-game (as Podi Athula might have put, it), he had a fairly receptive clientele comprised mainly of the youth disillusioned with the existing social system and disgusted with the traditional Left movement. It is true that Wijeweera's political thinking in particular and the JVP ideology in general, were characterized by an element of irrationality. **This irrationality, in Reichian terms, is nothing but an expression of the social elements and forces for which the JVP provide political leadership.** As a political movement, the JVP never possessed the psychology of the most advanced section of the oppressed masses, that is, the class of the proletariat. Narodnik-type adventurism, self-proclaimed messianism conspiratorial secrecy, horizontal—not vertical—expansion, youth-vanguardism, all such explicit features of the JVP cannot be explained unless the mass psychology behind the movement is understood. In this sense, I would say, the individual psychology of Wijeweera is essentially a crystalization of the general psychology of the social section to whose desperation and aspirations he gave expression.

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# STALINISM AND CHINTAKA

by Kumar David

DEBATE

It is not without reason that Stalinism is linked with falsification and the big lie. Chintaka, I repeat, has written a useful series on the national question (**Myths and Realities**) whose good points greatly outweigh its defects. However, in his latest reply (LG-October 1) to my criticism of his two weak points, that is his 'ritualistic Stalinism' and his inability to conceptualise the nature of a 'programme for the revolutionary party' on this question, he slides back to these aforementioned traits of Stalinist politics.

Chintaka makes two points, incorrectly, and in respect of a third point reveals his hopeless inability to understand what we, the New Samasamajists, are talking about. Allow me to take them up one by one.

1. Chintaka claims that the ailing Lenin's confrontation with Stalin in 1922/23 on the Georgian national question had to do with "the subjectivism of the bedridden Lenin's judgement, based as it was on incorrect, incomplete and second-hand information". Chintaka asserts this, he does not produce one shred of evidence or analysis in respect of the nature or sources of this "incorrect and incomplete information" or the roots and causes of this "subjectivism". That's Chintaka's version of the scientific nature of Marxism! The truth in fact is quite the opposite and Lenin's last struggle far from being a subjective outburst was an interwoven campaign linking together these issues: (i) the monopoly of foreign trade, (ii) the Georgian question, and (iii) the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate and its amalgamation with the party Central Control Commission. Taken in its totality, as indeed Lenin did take it, he was developing a major struggle against bureaucratisation of the state and party and especially a campaign against the secretariat headed by Stalin - recommending a change of general secretary as well in the 4. Jan. 1923 postscript to his testament. Chintaka prefers not to know any of this.

Lenin's conflict with Stalin on the national question did not originate in March 1923 as Chintaka would have us believe, but much earlier in September 1922 (before he was "bedridden") when he threw out the latter's "autonomisation plan" and proposed the creation of the USSR instead. In November he abstained from voting in favour of the composition of the commission on the Georgian affair nominated by Stalin. In December he wrote the notes condemning Stalin, Dzerzhinsky and Orjonikidze from which I quoted in my last letter to LG (Aug. 15). In March 1923 he wrote a series of notes to Trotsky, Kamanev and the Georgians in preparation for a confrontation with Stalin at the forthcoming party Congress. The struggle on the Georgian issue developed as one of the major themes of Lenin's developing perspective of overhauling the whole structure of the party organisation and leadership. This was no "subjective" undertaking as the whole subsequent objective history of Stalinist Russia has fatefully confirmed.

Presuming that Chintaka's frequent references in debate to "recommended reading" and "mandatory reading" flow not from intellectual vulgarity but serious concern, it would, perhaps, not be improper if I add two titles to the list, E. H. Carr's *The Interregnum* (especially Chapter 11) and the more complete narrative contained in Moshe Lewin's *Lenin's Last Struggle*. These will bear out at least one point - quite apart from being "subjective" and ill-informed Lenin was full steam ahead in a political battle and was well briefed by personal meetings with party leaders, Politburo and Central Committee dossiers and by his own private investigation committee into the Georgian affair. Carr also describes the efforts that were made by the Politburo even before Lenin's death to keep Lenin's attack on Stalin a secret. Kuibyshev, Stalin's protegee, went so far as to suggest

to the Politburo that a single dummy issue of "Pravda with Lenin's article 'Better Less but Better'" be printed for Lenin's eye's only!

Chintaka makes much of the fact that the 12th Congress of April 1923 did not condemn Stalin. Of course not, neither Lenin's testament nor his sharp rebukes of Stalin on the Georgian issue were known to the Congress. They were kept a guarded secret by a small section of the leadership. Stalin as general secretary had already developed a certain amount of bureaucratic power over the apparatus and did not scruple to use it. Trotsky certainly erred when he failed to break this conspiracy of silence and launch the struggle against Stalinist bureaucracy in April 1923 itself as Lenin had intended to do and would have done had not the stroke of March 10th put an end to his political activity. Trotsky prevaricated for more than a year in marshalling the forces for an attack on Stalinist bureaucracy and in this he committed a grave tactical blunder. This however is another line of discussion. I have so far only sought to mark one point, that is, though Chintaka speaks of Marxism as science, in truth, when it comes to the falsification of history ("subjectivism", "incomplete and second hand information" etc without one shred of supporting evidence or argument) he proves himself a better thoroughbred from the Stalinist stables than I had suspected.

2. Chintaka contends that Stalin was a consistent Leninist when he denied the right to self-determination to minority nations after the formation of the USSR. Briefly then the right to self-determination ends at the moment that the revolution takes power! This presumably is the "wholehearted" support for Tamil Eelam that Chintaka extends to the Tamil peoples struggle. Under a bourgeois state they are denied self-determination because their democratic rights are in any case denied, when Chintaka's (one-

man) party establishes the proletarian dictatorship the right to self-determination is now outdated! Heads I win tails you loose! That's what Chintaka calls dialectics - in the old Greek the word was used to mean perverse argumentation.

The national question arose in Stalinist Russia because, among other forms of oppression, national oppression raised its ugly head. The deportations and decimations of the Crimean Tartars, Ukrainians, Volga Germans, Jews and the Georgian peasant uprising of 1924 are now fairly well known. Stalin's solution to the national question, the abstract and fixed formula that after the formation of the USSR self-determination becomes a counter-revolutionary demand, belongs to the concrete reality this absurd oppression. Chintaka's abstract remarks about the importance of "concrete analysis of concrete situations" are no substitute for concrete analysis itself. Stalin's anti-Leninism on the national question in the USSR can be concretely understood only in the context of this national oppression in the USSR. It is vulgar apologetics to abstract away from this. In closing let me only add, lest I be misunderstood, that I do not for a moment deny the enormous economic and cultural advances that most nationalities and especially the more backward ones achieved in the post-revolutionary period thanks to the social transformation of October 1917 and despite Stalinist bureaucratisation of state and party. This fact, however, in no way abolishes Stalin's un-Leninist theoretical position and practical actions.

3. This is the most important point that I have to make as it concerns the living struggle and not a matter of history. It is quite clear to me that Chintaka does not in any way grasp the point about the importance, and character, of the programme of the revolutionary party. He even dismisses it as "Trotskyist fetishism"! This is the kind of irresponsible verbal luxury that only a non-party (or one man party) journalist who has no need for guiding programmatic "encumbrances", since he never intends to get down to political action and struggle, can afford.

Firstly Chintaka does not still understand what even mediocre liberals have finally understood. Namely, that there is no contradiction, as Lenin tries to explain in page after page, in advocating and supporting the right to self-determination on the one hand, and on the other hand, in putting forward on behalf of one's party, a national programme that does not take as its point of departure the setting up of a separate state.

The recognition of the right to divorce does not necessarily mean the advocating of divorce in any particular case. The formation of a united front with Tamil militants (whose central programmatic point of departure may be Tamil Eelam) does not necessarily mean that one's own party programme too must have Tamil Eelam inscribed on it as the correct solution to the national question.

The revolutionary party puts before the minority nation its own programme (constitutional and linguistic state power, land, culture and education, self-administration etc.) Whether the revolutionary party puts before the Tamil people, and puts forward on behalf of the Tamil people, the demand for Eelam, depends on its assessment of how the class struggle and the struggle for socialism and democracy can best be taken forward. This is a concrete question, and right now, concretely, our programme is not an Eelam program. The Marxist party is not always for, or always against secession. It depends on the concrete situation. For example, in the case of Bangladesh in 1973, not merely the demand for self-determination of the Bengali people but the demand for the break-up of Pakistan itself (secession and formation of Bangladesh) would have been championed by a Marxist party. The forms of struggle, the actions and campaigns and indeed the organisational forms within the party too, would have flowed from this.

Our party does not put forward (recommend, advocate) the demand for Tamil Eelam at the present time. It would take too much space to describe why we consider the programme and methods of struggle by the TULF and the so-called radical

Tamil group a complete dead end. However we accept the right of the Tamil people to Eelam if they so decide, our programme of anybody else's programme not withstanding. We will struggle to protect that right. We will also struggle to win a majority of the Tamil people over to our programmatic positions and to the methods of struggle that we think are most fruitful. For example the renunciation of terrorism in favour of the politics of mass struggle, the renunciation of narrow isolationist nationalism in favour of a united front of the oppressed minority with the proletariat and so on. Obviously Chintaka cannot understand what Vickremabahu says in his statement of 6th July 1979 because he cannot even conceptualise the matter in this way.

If our party were ever to put forward the demand for Tamil Eelam it would be a serious, considered and action oriented demand. Not only our programmatic positions but also the forms of struggle that we develop will be different from what we are doing today. In this sense and to this extent today we are opposed to Eelam, or if you prefer we are different from Eelam. Surely Chintaka, you can't have your cake and eat it! One can't put forward, as one's programme something that does not flow from an Eelam perspective, and still contend that one is all for Eelam. That only Stalinists, perhaps, are adroit at managing. Thus when Chintaka writes that our programmatic position implies that we are "opposed to the oppressed Tamil nation's liberation struggle, its struggle to exercise to the fullest its democratic right to self-determination", either logic has failed him or he is guilty of political mischief.

We are prepared to enter into common struggles against the bourgeois state on common issues with Tamil militants, those who base their programme on Eelam and those who don't, provided only that they are serious about the struggle. We refuse however to adopt anybody else's Eelam Federal, Red-Tamil or any other programme in preference to our party programme and strategy. This we will develop

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# In the guts of the living

by Reggie Sirlwardena

LITERATURE

As I tried to show in my article 'Marxism, literature and time' (LG, Oct. 15), the customary Marxist approach to a work of literature — of interpreting it in terms of the productive and social relations of the time in which it was written — is illuminating for the sociology of literature but inadequate as a basis for literary criticism. It needs to be complemented by a recognition on the part of the Marxist critic that the meaning of a literary work changes with the developing experience in time and history of its readers and audiences. As Auden wrote in his memorial poem for Yeats:

'The words of a dead man  
Are modified in the guts of the living.'

Accordingly, I think the right answer to the bourgeois academic view of great literature as that which expresses what is 'timeless and unchanging' in human experience should be to assert that, on the contrary, **great literature is that which has the greatest capacity to change and renew its meaning with evolving human experience.** I should like to demonstrate this from the plays of Shakespeare, not because they are unique in this respect but because they have been performed and read continually from his time to ours, and therefore afford the clearest example of the fact that each generation reinterprets the literature of the past in terms of its own experience, derived from its own social relations.

For this purpose, it is useful to look at the task of a theatre (or film) director in presenting a play of Shakespeare on stage (or screen) today. The academic scholar-critic may approach a Shakespeare play through his understanding of 'the Elizabethan world picture', the orthodox Marxist critic may interpret it in the light of Elizabethan social relations; but for the director involved in performing Shakespeare such an approach

would be deadening. If the play doesn't come alive to the audience in the theatre today as much as if it were a contemporary work, the director has failed. Hence, it is in the theatre rather than in the scholar's or critic's study that the contemporary meaning of Shakespeare's plays has been brought most fully to life. When Jan Kott called Shakespeare 'our contemporary', he startled many academic critics, but the phrase should be a truism in the light of the modern theatre, where **Coriolanus** has been presented as an anti-fascist play, **The Tempest** as a parable of decolonisation, **Timon of Athens** as an exposure of the affluent society of waste, and **Othello** as a tragedy of black-white racial relations.

Does this impose on Shakespeare a meaning extraneous to the original work? — On the contrary, as Ralph Berry writes in **On Directing Shakespeare**:

'It is a complete naivete to speak of the "meaning" of a Shakespeare play as an entity that can be defined, established and placed on record in perpetuity. The play is changed by the act of selection, which implies the social context of the new production. In selecting the play, the director undertakes to guide his audience to an area of contemporary consciousness and enlarge its understanding.'

It seems to me that the essential function of the critic, and of the Marxist critic in particular, in dealing with the literature of the past is the same: 'to guide his audience to an area of contemporary consciousness and enlarge its understanding.' If the function of criticism is to explore more deeply and to illuminate the responses we make in the act of reading or watching a performance, the critic should start from the recognition that in reading or seeing Shakespeare today, we inevitably react to him as people living in the third quarter of the twentieth century. We can amass knowledge about what Elizabethans

may have thought and felt. We can engage in intellectual efforts of historical reconstruction, but we cannot get into their skins, we cannot respond as Elizabethans. What the critic can do is to bring fully to consciousness how our reactions to Shakespeare are related to our contemporary social experience and to bring to light hidden connections between the work and that experience.

Let us take the case of **King Lear**. Many critics and readers today regard it as the supreme Shakespearean masterpiece. But far from this being self-evident, the widespread acceptance of this view is very recent. G. K. Hunter in the New Penguin Shakespeare edition of the play dates it at 'some time during the Second World War'. In the eighteenth century, in fact, the play was considered shocking because its ending flouted the principles of poetic justice (even the greatest English critic of the day, Dr. Johnson, agreed), and in stage performance Shakespeare's **Lear** was displaced by Tate's adaptation where Cordelia lived happily ever after. (The critical and stage history of the play would be a good practical demonstration of the falsity of the belief in a single, unchanging meaning of a Shakespeare play.)

But if we admire **Lear** where the eighteenth century rejected it, that isn't because we have restored the **Lear** that existed for the Elizabethan audience. It seems reasonable to suppose that Elizabethans would have been strongly moved by the situation of a king, with the sanctity associated with such a personage, reduced to destitution and homelessness. This element survives in some of the words of the play ('a sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch, past speaking of in a king'), but for most of us, when we read or see the play today, it recedes into the background or is overlooked. What emerges powerfully for us is the

situation of a man who finds the world he has taken for granted disintegrating around him and who is therefore compelled to question his own identity: 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?' — a situation that we recognise as real and immediate to us. We are similarly affected by the spectacle in the play of men subjected to the extremities of violence and cruelty (if Hunter is right, it was the generation of Auschwitz and Hiroshima which accepted Lear as Shakespeare's greatest play); of Lear's recognition of the sufferings of 'poor, naked wretches' and its part in his own moral growth; of the breakdown of his false social self in madness and his regeneration through this very process of a universe in which the gods have ceased to exist and in which man has therefore to create his values for himself.

I suggest, therefore, that the essential task of the Marxist critic is to see literary meaning as a phenomenon changing with history, to confront the question of the significance every work in terms of our social relations and experience, to recognise that great literary works are not objects stored in a museum of antiquities but organisms living and moving in the perpetual flux of (to use another phrase of the young Auden) 'Time, the refreshing river'.

### Stalinism . . .

(Continued from Page 18)

in accord with our analysis of the best interests of the class struggle and the struggle for democracy and socialism. In the most general sense this may or may not be an Eelam perspective — right now it is not. Similarly we are prepared to enter into united front actions with Stalinists, Maoists, pseudo-Trotskyists, Fidelists or anyone else provided it lies on the road of the historical development of the proletariat. Our organisational, programmatic and ideological independence however we will retain. This is a problem that a Leninist party, and one that is active in proletarian and minority struggles faces. Chintaka does not face this problem nor, therefore, can he conceive of its solution in these dialectical terms — lucky man!

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# Shakespeare, Zoysa & Sartre

— As he likes it

SATIRE

The Outsider

*Jean Paul Sartre is my third favourite playwright. First, the non-pareil Shakespeare, second Lucien de Zoysa, third Jean Paul Sartre. I know I have left myself wide open for broadsides from the Press and others, but before I come to Sartre, a few sentences, not to justify but to state why Lucien de Zoysa ranks second.*

*Firstly, because I believe that theatre cannot grow, cannot flourish, cannot prosper in any country without indigenous playwrights churning out plays for actors and producers from which to choose their next performance. It is not good enough to do the best plays written by foreign writers about matters which are not strictly speaking really relevant in this country. Secondly, Lucien de Zoysa has tried conscientiously to model the construction of his plays on the pattern set by Shakespeare for this aspect of the art.*

LUCIEN DE ZOYSA

(Sunday Observer)

“Hey you, William.....hold it....” I yelled, spotting young William Shakespeare Jr., the up-and-coming genius of the little world of ‘English’ theatre in this other Eden, and taste of demi-Paradise, by the grace of Air Lanka.

Turning a deaf ear (a self-protective affliction which most sensitive souls acquire in the Wendt Memorial Hall and its immediate environs) the young rascalion darted into the thick, sweating throng of theatre-lovers, lunatics, long-haired poets, beardos and weirdos, hobos and hobgoblins making its impatient exit. He had probably expected me to demand the return of the two hundred rupees I had given him — a modest advance on a musical comedy based on the Duchess of Malfi.

I was not to be that easily thwarted. Not for nothing had I excelled as the ‘Observer’s’ top investigative reporter on the cop round before occupying my present Parnassian perch as the ace arts columnist and critic of the aforementioned gazette. I disappeared through the side door and cut off his exit by coming on at the Tennis Court end, as cricket commentator Lucien De Zoysa might have said, conscientiously modelling the construction of his sentences on the pattern set by Jack Fingleton.

“Look William I am not after my money....I am only after a story....just a few quote-worthy comments on playwright de Zoysa’s humble claim that he ranks next to your old man but just ahead of Jean Paul Sartre....”

“Who the heck is Jean Paul Sartre?” he asked as I led him gently towards the Orient Club....

“The famous French existentialist philosopher, and writer”.

“Oh,” said W. S. Jr. “I thought he was the new U.T.A. manager....”

Letting that pass I read out the opening passage from de Zoysa’s article.

“As a hired newspaper hack” he snapped back “I would have imagined you’d respect certain common decencies....Though it be honest, it is never good to bring bad news....”

In truth, young William holds the Old Boy’s style in the deepest contempt, considering it both laboriously ornate and fustian. In kindlier moments, he is ready to grant that the Bard despite his limited talents, may have achieved much more if he had been suitably served by an aggressive press and public relations manager a tie-up with some philanthropic group like the Jaycees or conducted a

joint promotion campaign with say Tongsun Park’s world renowned firm Koreagate, the Instant Box-office people or the Martin Bormann Stiftung. He regards his own inimitable conversational idiom and stagecraft, not only more native to the grain but much closer to the human condition. But, many a time and oft, in the Rialto and the Arts Centre Club, he has a habit of dipping into the old man’s phrase-book, which politically partisan commentators, notably of the Sri Kotha school of literary criticism, are quick to stigmatize as old-fashioned family bandyism.

Recognising the ‘quote’, I said “Ah, ‘Tony and Cleopatra’, deliberately affecting an easy intimacy with the Bard’s work. Sure, I was only a hired scribbler. Not being a politico’s son (or daughter) I have got through my ‘A’ levels without cribbing or fudging my marks. Though I was weak in my maths, I certainly knew that 3 and 8 was 38 and not 88, which is all the eights, a pocket calculator’s trick I had picked up in the company of my grand uncle, a habituee of such aesthetic abodes as the Atlanta, and a man of infinite culture, equally familiar with Tom Nashe as with Tom Bola. Veteran theatre-goers may remember him for the inexpressible delight he brought to the stage in his first and last performance when he played the Fool in de Zoysa’s King Lear’.... Or was it somebody else’s?”

A long patient pause.

“Okay, Outsider, I’ll spare you five minutes because I am in a way grateful to you for those broadsides you fired at me in the early years of my career....Ah, those early years” mused young William, suddenly borne away on the wings of a poetical reverie as romantic as a Singapore airlines ad. “Dear God, those early years” he went on “those years of hard work and heartbreak, sans money, sans recognition, sans publisher or producer

(Continued on Page 22)

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# Higher education in Sri Lanka

by Sunil Bastian

BOOK  
REVIEW

*"SRI LANKAVE USAS ADYAPANAYA" - an SCM Publication 1979.*

This booklet is a result of the annual conference of the Student Christian Movement. The title coincides with the theme of conference held in September 1978.

Four speeches by four university dons form the major part of the book. Three of them were delivered at the conference and the fourth by Dr. Osmund Jayaratne at a later occasion when the SCM organised a seminar on the New University Bill. The topics dealt with in the other three speeches are 'Educational and Academic freedom in the Higher Educational Institutes' by Dr. Carlo Fonseka; 'Higher Education and Society' by Dr. Hema Goonethilleka; and 'Crisis in Higher Education and Christian Reaction' by Mr. Seelan Cadiragamar. Two group reports of the conference, one dealing with Education and our task; and the other on Student problems of Sri Lanka, resolutions and statements by the SCM on major student issues of Sri Lanka form the rest.

On the whole the material presented cover a wide range of topics on education at every level. Specially the group reports summarises some of the basic problems facing (bourgeois) education in Sri Lanka today. Probably it reflects the fact that this booklet is a result of a collective effort where varied opinions and expe-

riences were analysed. At the same time herein also lies the short coming of such efforts since the wide range does not allow an in-depth analysis. This type of publications therefore to my mind can serve a very useful purpose of raising the issues and opening discussions—a thing which bourgeois institutions of Sri Lanka today are unable to do. Such an objective can be achieved if publication or any results of such conferences are given a wider circulation.

Speeches forming the major portion of the booklet if viewed critically raise some basic issues in relation to education. These could be raised here in correspondence to each speech.

● Can we talk of 'Academic freedom in higher education' without considering the political nature of knowledge itself? Or

In other words, Is there anything called 'objective knowledge' in a class society outside the class framework, which a university could impart through people selected on the basis of 'objective criteria? Or do we have one political reality here where knowledge both content and institution wise has an impact on itself from the type of, society that they are born in and play a prominent role in keeping that society as it is?

● If we understand that the Higher Educational Institutes bear the characteristics of the society that they function in, what can be the role of these institutes in working for a radical social change? More specifically what

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## Shakespeare . . .

(Continued from Page 20)

....How could I dream then that I would stand here today, right beside the Lionel Wendt, the cradle of so much literary and histrionic genius, talking to you, assured in my own mind, if no other's, that if I cannot claim to be superior to the matchless Mollere at least I can outdo John Barrymore in 'Merry Wives'.... Perchance...."

"Willie boy, I trust the time spent on this long day's journey into the past will not be subtracted from my five minutes...."

"All right, Outsider.... fire away.... but only two, three questions please.... I have a date with my leading lady...."

"How do you rate Lucien de Zoysa....?"

"As a writer, producer, opening bowler, or sports commentator?"

"As a writer and man of theatre generally...."

"Primus inter pares...."

"Pares meaning who exactly....?"

"Well, Lanerolle, Tambimuttu, McIntyre,....etc"

"Why only the locals.... accompanied by one of the more talented members of his troupe he actually went to London and nearly set the West End on fire...."

"I did say once that he'll go far...."

"But neither the BBC nor the London stage found much use for his near—Shakespearean genius.... he came back home quite quickly...."

"He probably travels light...."

"Just one more thing.... do you think he had reached his peak.... Sartre's work, most critics agree, saw a sharp decline in the 70's.... I ask this because theatre gossip has it that he is planning to bring yet another 'written-directed-produced-and-acted' things to the BMICH or LW.... How do you view that prospect....?"

"I'm afraid I'll have to steal a couple of lines from the Old Man again.... here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English....!"





# Our own colour prejudice

AS I  
LIKE IT

Touchstone

'She's dark but she's pretty,' said somebody the other day to me about an acquaintance. 'She's dark and she's pretty,' I snapped back. Actually, the colour prejudice in favour of fair skins against dark is just as widespread in Sri Lankan society as it is in the West, though, ironically, when a Sri Lankan girl is described as 'fair', Westerners are usually bewildered because all they can see (naturally) are different shades of tan.

A few years ago, a West Indian writer wrote a book about the way in which the English language creates problems for blacks who learn it because its idioms are steeped in the racist assumption that white is good and black is evil—e.g. 'black as sin'. Well, what about Sinhala? To call a girl 'rathu' (fair) is a complement; one of the commonest endearments is 'sudho' (white one), and a way of protesting against being treated coldly or indifferently is to ask, 'Api kaludhe?' (Are we black?).

I attribute, conjecturally, Sinhala colour prejudice to the survival of original Aryan racial attitudes, perpetuated together with the myth of the Sinhalese as a pure Aryan race, and reinforced perhaps later by white colonialism; and I wonder how much this has to do with our racial problem.

## Quoting Scripture

I don't want to join the battle that is raging currently in the *Lanka Guardian* between Chintaka, Laxman Jothikumar and Kumar David, but it strikes me that many Marxists are just as bad as religious believers in their practice of flourishing a quotation from Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin or Mao (depending on which

chapel the writer belongs to) in the belief that an argument is ended by this appeal to scripture.

As far as I can see, the only justification for quoting anybody (in the course of a debate) is that the point you want to make has already been made so effectively by another writer that it would be a waste of time for you to find the words in which to say it yourself.

## Solution

This is the solution to the problem of monk and the mountain in the last column:

Imagine that on the second day when the monk started to descend, another monk at precisely the same time began to climb the mountain, and that the latter walked in exactly the same way as the former had done in climbing the previous morning (at the same speeds, stopping in the same places for the same length of time, etc.). It is obvious that the paths of the monk descending and the imaginary monk ascending will cross at the same spot. That spot is also the place in which the monk in the story was at the same time of day on both the way up and the way down.

## Limeraiiku

There's a vile old man

Of Japan who roars at whores:

'Where's your bloody fan?'

(*Ted Pauker*)

## Tailpiece

Epitaph on a certain Edward Longbottom, who died at the age of twenty-five:

'Ars longa, vita brevis.'

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## Danger of . . .

(Continued from Page 8)

from the atom; he wrote homilies, on mundane affairs—on family life, manners and morals.

Instinctively however Trotsky was hostile to Stalin: "I was repelled by those very qualities that were his strength—the narrowness of his interest, his empiricism, the coarseness of his psychological make up." But Stalin had formed a triumvirate with Zinoviev and Kamanev to keep Trotsky, the obvious successor, from taking power when Lenin died in 1924.

Trotsky while reflecting on the impossibility of power — on how to combine political control with dignity and freedom — was appealing openly to the Workers: Away with passive obedience, with mechanical levelling by the authorities, with suppression of personality, with servility and with careerism.

Ideologically the conflict was based on the concept of the Permanent Revolution and the opposition to privileged bureaucracy. Trotsky held that socialism to be workable necessitated revolution on an international scale. Stalin confined it to one country and wanted it imposed by a narrow bureaucracy.

Trotsky's supporters were repressed. One of them committed suicide leaving this note for Trotsky: "Politically you were always right. Some day the Party will realise it, and history will not fail to accord recognition. Don't lose courage if someone leaves you or if not as many come to you. You are right, but the guarantee of victory lies in nothing but the extreme unwillingness to yield, the strictest straight forwardness, the absolute rejection of all compromise."

In 1928 Stalin had the Party Congress pass a resolution exiling Trotsky to Turkestan, the following year he was expelled from the Soviet Union altogether. Finally he was to settle down in Mexico City.

With Trotsky gone mayhem reigned in the Soviet Union.

Stalin went in for massive industrialisation and forced collectivisation. It is believed that the collectivisation claimed ten million lives and was the beginning of unparalleled brutality. To prevent any opposition Stalin now began to liquidate political leaders. Zinoviev and Kamanev 'confessed' to being agents of Trotsky, were tried and shot. The Moscow show-trials continued throughout the late thirties with Trotsky being held responsible for disasters in coal mines, smashes on the railways, poisoning peasants, spreading swine fever and scattering nails in butter.

In one year 25,000 officers of the Red Army and 98 out of the 139 members of the Central Committee disappeared. It is estimated that 700,000 were executed while 3 million out of the 8.5 million in the labour camps died.

Trotsky finally launched the Fourth Communist International as a rival to the Stalinist Third International. Stalin now proceeded to systematically wipe out the Fourth Internationalists. Trotsky's own son Lyova who coordinated the FI in Paris was poisoned, others met similar fates. Finally it was Trotsky's turn.

From his deathbed Trotsky proclaimed his confidence in all that he had believed in, worked for and was now dying for: say to our friends, I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International—Go Forward!

At his autopsy it was discovered that not only was Trotsky's brain unusually large in size—so was his heart.

## Stalin . . .

(Continued from Page 9)

English speaking readers throughout the world in the form of the 'Progress Military Series'.)

Earlier this year the *Economist* (London) featured a story under caption 'Joseph Stalin: Born 1879, still going strong.' "Josef Djugashvili, self styled Stalin, cannot quite be described as alive and well and living in Georgia. But for a man who not only died in 1953, but whose memory was

officially obliterated shortly afterwards, he is displaying amazing longevity as in the midst of a remarkable comeback" was the *Economist's* observation. It pointed out that the official CPSU calendar *Politizdat*, which is displayed on every important Party cadres' desk, carried a short eulogy for Stalin in its entry for December 21st—the centenary.

Travellers returning from the USSR bring reports of a hugely popular T.V. serial running into 20 parts. Made by a top team of international moviemakers, it is also meant for Western T.V. viewers and is narrated in English by Burt Lancaster. Dealing with the USSR's predominant role in defeating Fascism, it is entitled "The Unknown War" and figuring in virtually every real way is the personality of Joseph Stalin.

## Higher education . . .

(Continued from Page 22)

can the radical intellectuals who are the products of these institutions do in this situation? Is there anything that could be done within these institutions or should the role of the radicals be to search for better alternatives and help in developing them?

● What has happened to the student movement of Sri Lanka today? (Or was there ever a 'movement' as such) Shouldn't the students who are interested in building up a student movement go back into the history of the student activities of Sri Lanka in order that they may better understand the reasons for the failure in the seventies?

One final point. It is heartening to note at least this land of critical evaluation of the Higher Educational Bill at a time when the academic community, professional bodies and all the products of this bourgeois education are disgustingly quiet about what is happening in the universities — on second thoughts, is it really possible to expect a protest against the system from a social strata benefitting from the system? Are our expectations of such manifestations only a naive hope in bourgeois liberalism?

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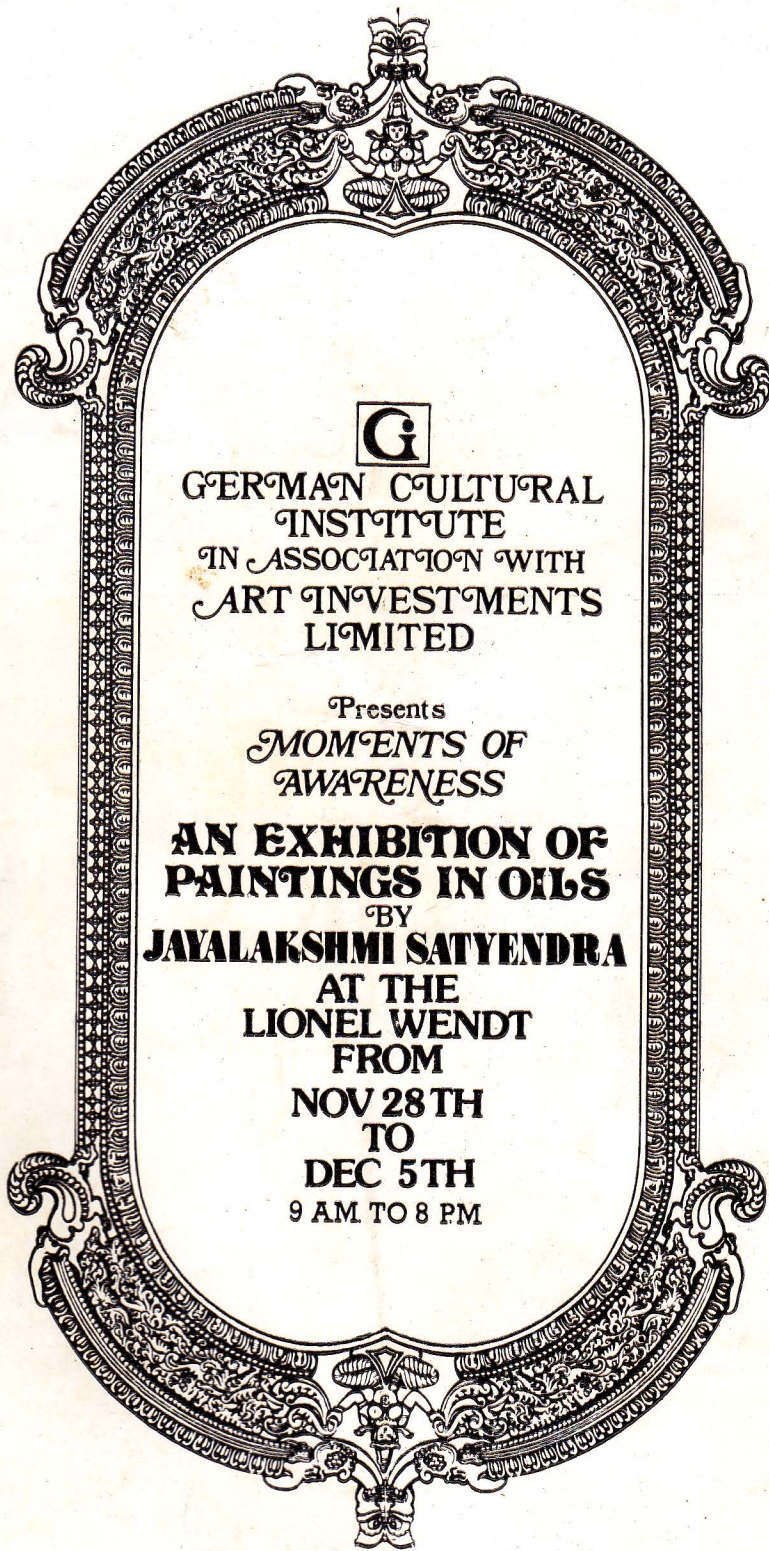
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