

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

November 15, 1979.

# **FOCUS ON THE LEFT**

**GALLE: FIRST FISSURES  
A SECOND LEFT FRONT**

**SOCIALIST AND TAMIL ISSUE**

**RELIGION AND RADICALS**

**MARXISM AND LETTERS**



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**Pandora's Box**

Galle has proved a Pandora's Box for all the parties. Since the constitution has virtually wiped out by-elections as a needless nuisance, the ruling party can ill afford to lose any. And whatever self-congratulatory utterances may be made on public platforms and however lavish the praise that gushes forth daily from a starry-eyed press, the UNP leaders and the Sri Kotha experts know that the electorate's mood is far from favourable.

Hence the fierce debate over Dahan. With his personal following Dahan should be able to ride home safely on an elephant's back. What of a 'pure' UNPer? The UNP selectors know that it could make things a bit dicey.

On the other hand, the UNP's failure to field its own man (Albert Silva) will be read as an open admission of its diffidence. If Albert Silva was not good enough for some reason, how about another party man? For a party that advertises itself as the most powerful elected government in the world the nomination of the man who contested its candidate only two years ago is obviously a public embarrassment. What would it do to the party's image? And party morale?

The argument went back and forth. A "pure" UNP candidate had a strongly led lobby. The clincher came with the question: "are you ready to lead the campaign and take personal responsibility in case of defeat?"

So its likely to be Dahan's day.

**Caught Again**

The Lake House papers have been the victim of many a sensational stunt or hoax. First there was the obituary of "D.E.M. O'Cracy", a close relative of 'L.I. Berty'. The next time the Editor of the Observer (not the ANCL Advertising Department) raised a horse laugh by 'resurrecting' three women who showered praise on the First Lady, Mrs. Bandaranaike, and 2 other editors (male) were sacked by the lesser Premadasa.

Now the Ad. Dept. has done it again. On the other side of the first page of a Soviet National Day supplement was a half-page advertisement announcing a new book by Oruwela Bandu on Soviet prison life. One-time junior lecturer, Oruwela Bandu is not in jail, here or in the USSR, but he is certainly confined—to the Angoda Lunatic Asylum! The propoganda stunt is being investigated at the highest levels. Who would pay nearly 10,000/- for such a stunt? And why did the CDN conceal the name of the advertiser?

**Foreign Policy**

A post-Havana 'transition'? It may be asked why such a question should be posed at all. We are, after all, steadfastly nonaligned and presumably intend to remain so, if one goes by authoritative pronouncements on the subject. But the question has been publicly raised by the author of a fairly lengthy article which deservedly received prominence in the CDN's editorial page.

Though much of it carried the heavy air of tutorial, both the author and the thesis have been widely discussed in diplomatic circles. Devinda R. Subasinghe is a student at Johns Hopkins Univ, US, and was a member of Sri Lanka's delegation to the 6th Summit. As Chairman of the conference, it was not expedient for Sri Lanka to get 'actively involved' in international issues. Now that we are free of this responsibility we can plan a more 'dynamic' policy for the 1980's. Such a policy must reflect the government's new economic strategy. That's his main line of argument.

On this basis he recommends closer ties with India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Japan and South Korea. ASEAN should be given special importance.

Since it was this journal which first wrote of the 'ASEANIZATION' of our foreign policy, the question whether the 'transition' is already on has an obvious relevance.

(Continued on Page 2)

**EPSB debate**

The article entitled, "EPSB DEBATE: DEMOCRACY AND/OR DEVELOPMENT" (OCT 15, 1979) in my opinion, would have been more rigorous. In its coverage of the EPSB "issue" had it played down the trivialities of the parliamentary debate (noise) and given more emphasis, instead, to the democracy and/or development syndrome and particularly, to the politico-economic content of the "stability equation".

The "stability equation" is much more than "a standard phrase in the parlance of the Third World Debate". On the contrary, the 'stability equation' is the very essence of the "Development" efforts of the nations of the Third World which have embarked on the capitalist path towards "development".

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whether be it of the "State Capitalism" variant or the "dependent Capitalism variant", or a judicious combination of both. "Stability" in the above context simply refers to the politico-economic conditions or prerequisites for "accumulation" by a bourgeois state in accordance with Capitalism's own vision of "development"—and, a fundamental and a necessary condition for the capitalist "Model" of accumulation is an highly disciplined and a docile work force. The means that a bourgeois state adopts in creating such a condition are as numerous as the class "intensity" with which these instruments are used depends to a large extent on the politico-economic environment and the social basis of the ruling regime.

**Kethesh Loganathan**  
Colombo 6

### Caste in Jaffna

Caste means an exclusive social class. Every service in the feudal system formed a caste. Distinctions in services and functions emphasises differences in social status and occupational groups formed themselves into separate social units. But under the levelling influences of modern economic & sociological forces and with the tendency for everyone to do every kind of work, casteism is on the way out.

So one cannot but agree with Mr. Gamini Dissanaiké when he says that "Shan grossly overplays the caste factor." This is very obvious when Shan refers to "untouchability as practised in Jaffna" and thinks "that caste oppression is man's greatest (emphasis mine) inhumanity to man."

Then how are we to describe the fate of Lin Piao, who for nearly a decade was waving that little red book behind Chairman Mao, the humiliations undergone by the victims of the cultural revolution, the Bokassa's subjects, Idi Amin's Ugandan's, the deaths of thousands recently on

the China/Vietnam border, the helpless victims of tortures in Chile and other Latin American countries?

Casteism is dirty and inhuman but it is on the way out.  
Jaffna **N. Deva Rajan.**

### Quoting Scripture

**Touchstone** (LG. Nov. 1) writes: "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".

This generalisation needs to be qualified. Much depends on the nature of the debate. Here, Jothikumar, Kumar David and I are NOT debating 'self-termination' but the correct **Marxist-Leninist position on that issue**. Therefore we obviously need to quote Marx, Lenin etc. in order to support our own claims that our interpretation of Marxism-Leninism is the right one.

**Chintaka.**

### Concerning Lenin

Stalin's body lies a-mouldering in the grave (beneath the Kremlin wall, not inside the Lenin Mausoleum), but his soul goes marching on — in Chintaka's breast! He writes as if Lenin's distrust of Stalin was only over the latter's role as 'nursemaid', not over the momentous political issues affecting the destiny of the Soviet Union that were gathering to a head at the time of Lenin's illness. However, in view of Chintaka's remark about "other" heroes", I must say that I write without adherence to any cult — Stalinist, Trotskyist or any other — and I don't regard history in terms of heroes and villains.

### 'Hansa Vilak'

I wrote one paragraph regretting that Mr. H. A. Seneviratne had 'jumped the gun' on **Hansa Vilak**, and two pages saying

what I thought was wrong with his review. Mr. Seneviratne takes nearly a column to justify writing about the film before its release, then remarks enigmatically in one sentence that I have 'misunderstood' both his review and the film. Where and how? Shouldn't he have spelt this out — at least in respect of the first, if not the second? **Reggie Siriwardena**

### Colvin and EPS Law

It figures that Dr. Colvin R. de Silva should consider a proposal to confiscate private property as cruel and inhuman punishment; what does not is that he should purport to be spokesman for 'all progressives'.

The death penalty, I submit, is far more cruel and inhuman than any confiscation of private property. But Dr. Colvin R. de Silva does not appear to consider this relic of barbarism worth his powder and shot.

**Dr. Costain de Vos.**

### 'Not an organiser'

On page 4, column 2 of the "Lanka Guardian" Vol. 2, No: 11 — there is a reference to Mr. H.A. Seneviratne as having been my "top t-u. organiser". This is factually incorrect. Mr. Seneviratne was the editor of the CMU Sinhala bulletin "Arambhaya". At no time was he a "t-u organiser".

**Bala Tampoe.**  
General Secretary.

(Continued on Page 24)

### Trends . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

Recently, the Third World countries introduced a resolution in the UN on the TNC's. "On controlling the activities of the transnationals, the response of nonaligned countries is as automatic as an apartheid" an African ambassador remarked after the vote was taken. The behaviour of the ex-Chairman of the NAM, Sri Lanka, raised many an eyebrow in the UN lobby.



# Galle – Nomination problems

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Speaking as the topic of 'The Proletarian solution to the present crisis' at Kandy's YMBA Hall last month Rohana Wijeweera berated and ridiculed the conception of a United Left Front. As his point of departure he took the article in the *Lanka Guardian* of Oct 1st on 'Left Unity: Problems and Prospects'. Denying that there were differences in the JVP concerning relations with other Left parties, Wijeweera rejected the notion that there was a need for a programmatic unity of all Marxist organisations and asserted instead that the building up of the JVP as the strong revolutionary party of the proletariat was the task of the day. He made it perfectly clear that the present 'coming together' of 5 left parties was for the strictly limited purpose of agitation and propaganda on the basis of the three key slogans. It was a joint effort to protect democratic rights and was in no way a united front. Using a favourite metaphor he said that the JVP 'bus' would halt for five minutes and those of other left groups could disembark from their own buses, leave behind their drivers, and hop aboard the JVP bus where there was some room at the rear for such passengers.

Contrary to the hopes of the other Left parties and rank-and-file progressives, the '5 party bloc' is turning out to be exactly the kind of limited detente that the JVP leader spelled out in Kandy. The most painfully obvious proof of this is the unseemly squabble among the Left over nominations for the Galle by-election. "The five parties launch a pair in Galle" cackled the SLFP's widely read *Dinakara*, using a catchy Sinhala headline that loses much in translation. "March separately; strike together" is the Trotskyist conception of united action, but these chaps seem to be marching together and striking separately, or rather, speaking together and voting separately" said a bemused Maoist veteran.

The trouble started when Wijeweera, with a studied casualness, announced at a top level meeting of the 5 parties, the JVP's intention to field a candidate at Galle. He also sought confirmation as to whether the NLSSP would put forward Vasudeva Nanayakkara. Then on September 26th, while addressing a large crowd at Sugathadasa Stadium on the issue of 'The Journey's End of the SLFP' Wijeweera announced the candidacy of Lionel Bopage Politbureau member and defacto deputy leader. In Kandy a fortnight later, he told the crowd that the JVP Politbureau had nominated him to handle the Galle campaign.

The other Left parties responded belatedly and confusedly. Already Wijeweera's rather undiplomatic conduct at the Oct 2nd Hyde Park meeting (*L. G. Oct 15th-Trends*) had raised eyebrows and tempers including Mr. Bala Tampoe's. Only Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara's NLSSP made the sensible response of writing on October 18th to the other 4 parties urging discussions with a view to putting forward a single Left candidate. Privately the NLSSP lobbied for a candidate who would be representative of the working class and who could be backed by the JCTUO Action Committee. CPSL's L.W. Panditha was mentioned in this connection.

Predictably, the appeal fell on deaf ears, as the L.G. commented in its issue of November 1st, (ill winds from Galle) the JVP's unilateral move paradoxically helped strengthen the fraction within the 'old' LSSP leadership which is far more interested in a coalition with the SLFP than in Left unity. SLFP-LSSP discussion were held to settle on a mutually acceptable candidate and the name of the "nationalist" ex army officer Prasanna Dahanayake (a nephew of W. Dahanayake) kept cropping up. But SLFP inner party dissension has caused rifts in the party organisation at Galle and on the other hand pressure from the LSSP's left partners mounted. And so,

the 'deal' fell through, especially when Prasanna Dahanayake demurred.

SLFP is said to have decided on Sarath Dias, a former Police officer who had earned a very 'tough' reputation in April 1971.

Then, in a dramatic move, the LSSP played the 'Podi Athula' card. "This is the smartest manoeuvre the LSSP has staged since 1964. I didn't think they were capable of this kind of tactical flexibility" said a usually anti-LSSP campus don of radical persuasion. By any standards Podi Athula is a very good pick indeed. A student of St. Aloysius College Galle and former Jesuit seminarian, he was once a prominent JVP'er whose right hand was mangled in an accidental bomb blast. At the CJC trial he was one of Wijeweera's foremost detractors and the CJC trial judges were so impressed as to remark that he was the most colourful personality to stand in the dock. Sentenced to 8 years R.I. he served 6 of them. Athula came to the attention of the LSSP leaders with his book on the April Insurrection which was a searing polemic against Wijeweera (*L. G. Oct 15th; November 1st*) An independent Marxist with strong principled views on the National (Tamil) Question (*L.G. July 1st*) he has cordial contacts with all sections of the Left, including the NLSSP and JVP breakaway 'Janatha Sangamaya'. A prolific reader and polemicist, who has also published articles recently in the 'Aththa' as well as the (Maoist) 'Desha Vimukthi', Podi Athula has friends among radical Christian clerics, too. Born in Akmeemana, he has local support and is something of a hero to the youth of the area.

Clearly a candidate capable of rallying broad Left support as against the UNP and SLFP he offers the LSSP a chance of giving the "sectarian" JVP a suitable

riposte. But old habits die hard, and the LSSP, which was earlier dealing with the SLFP, 'launched' Podi Athula without any consultations with their ULF partner the CPSL, let alone the other members of the 5 party bloc and those Left groups outside it, thus throwing away the opportunity of gathering the considerable support enjoyed both by the CPSL and Vasu's NLSSP in the Galle area.

Taking umbrage, Mr. Nanayakara's NLSSP has threatened to toss its own hat into the ring if no agreement is reached before November 21st. Dinesh Gunawardena's MEP has followed suit. The NLSSP has no objections to Podi Athula but rather, to the old LSSP's conduct, firstly in contacting the SLFP and then in paralleling JVP sectarianism. The LSSP despite the considerable support it has always enjoyed in Galle, stands in danger of repeating its experience of the Colombo Local Polls where the JVP pipped it to the post for 3rd place.

Furthermore, relations within the ULF are strained since the LSSP informed the CPSL of Podi Athula's candidacy 10 days before it was publicly announced but only after the decision had been taken. The CPSL, is in a quandary. On the one hand it considers the LSSP and itself as the major working class parties, which means that their bilatered relationship shouldn't be damaged. On the other hand the CPSL does not want to jeopardise the incipient detente relationship with the JVP. The sectarianism of both LSSP and JVP seem to render these two objectives hard to reconcile, at least, in the short run.

But more importantly, this ugly electoral bickering among the left can only make a dent in the political credibility of the '5 party bloc', while the electoral advantages will doubtless accrue to the SLFP, despite the latter's own divisions and weaknesses.

## Socialists and the Tamil issue

"It is irony of history that the Left movement has been brought together to confront the National (Tamil) Question, by a Jesuit priest" remarked **CMU Assistant Secretary Upali Cooray** who was making the keynote address at a seminar sponsored by the recently founded Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality, better known by the acronym MIRJE. The Jesuit priest that Mr. Cooray was referring to was the Oxford-educated sociologist **Paul Caspersz** who is Secretary of MIRJE. His efforts have merited him a centre page blast in the inaugural edition of the militant Sinhala paper '**Mathrubhoomi**' (Motherland). More recently the findings of a MIRJE delegation led by Fr. Paul, on Civil Rights violation in the North since July this year, were quoted by TULF MP Yogeswaran during the Emergency debate, earning a strong reply from the UNP's Harin Corea. Since then Sir Senarath Gunawardena and Fr. Tissa Balasuriya have addressed an appeal to the government on the same matter.

Addressing the seminar, **Upali Cooray** presented a clear, and sophisticated restatement of the Marxist position on the National Question, locating the views of Marx, Engels and Lenin against the backdrop of the changing phases in the evolution of the world capitalist system. Placing a very Leninist emphasis on the need to recognise the progressive content of the bourgeois nationalism of an oppressed nation, Cooray made a persuasive plea for the recognition of the right of the Tamil peoples in the North and East, to national self-determination. Such recognition was the *sine qua non* for the cooperation necessary to combat the class enemy, he said.

**Rajan Philipupillai** followed with an analysis of the gradual evolution of Tamil consciousness right upto the present demand for Eelam. Though he considered a united Sri Lankan state to be the best framework for achieving the historic aims of both Sinhala and

Tamil working peoples, he was not willing to recommend the maintenance of a unitary setup under the present situation. Examining the class character of the Eelam slogan, the speaker commented on its dual aspects. It was progressive in so far as it mobilizes the broad Tamil masses and especially the youth.

Expressing the views of the JVP breakaway group '**Janatha Sangamaya**' (Peoples League), **Patrick Fernando** said that when they were in the JVP, they too had shared that movement's social chauvinistic position on the Tamils. This they recognised in the spirit of self-criticism. Now however, they considered the Tamils an oppressed nation and defended the right of self-determination i.e. the right to national independence. They did not support or advocate secession, and were of the view that unity between the two nations could be ensured only by a two-fold process, namely, the defence of the Tamil's right of self-determination by Sinhala Marxists and the advocacy of voluntary union with the Sinhala working class by Tamil Marxists. The latter task was rendered difficult since the Sinhala Left had not provided the Tamil people with any serious show of solidarity after 1964.

**O. V. Ramaiah** of the pro-Peking '**Red Flag**' Union argued that every effort should be exerted to solve the Tamil question within the existing socioeconomic setup. This would be a short-term measure but should be pursued even to the extent of supporting the UNP govt's initiatives if these moves were objectively helpful. He also warned against external (especially superpower) intervention on the side of secessionism.

Rejecting this line of argumentation, a spokesman for the **Lanka Social Studies Circle** said that he had no doubts that the UNP leaders would like to defuse the Tamil crisis through reforms and cooptation. However the dependent underdeveloped capitalism of this country, caught up furthermore, in the vortex of global

economic recession rendered this a non-option. This was not a question of the UNP or SLFP leadership but rather a structural question, a question of the structural crisis of capitalism. The speaker also regretted that the symbols of nationalism which the Left should utilize as in Nicaragua, to mobilize the masses against imperialism, were today being used, albeit in distorted form, for anti-Tamil chauvinism.

A representative of the wellknown radical Tamil journal 'MANITHAN' (Man) argued that he stood for the Eelam demand not because he was hostile to Sinhala-Tamil unity but on the contrary because he stood for such unity. Genuine unity can exist only on the basis of equality and such equality could be achieved only if the Tamils stood up as a nation equal in political status to the Sinhala nation.

**Saatchi Ponnambalam**, former State Counsel in Lusaka, Zambia and a radical economist as well, said that what the Tamil people wanted was quite simple: equality. This demand for political equality should be recognised as a basic democratic demand.

Perhaps the most important intervention of the day was made by **Bala Tampoe** whose Revolutionary Marxist Party, (of which Upali Cooray is a prominent member) has taken a clear position on the Tamil issue. (In this the RMP is at one with its rival, Edmund Samarakkody's Revolutionary Workers Party). Mr. Tampoe made a distinction between the situation of the Tamil plantation proletariat and that of the Northern/Eastern Tamils. The problems of the latter have resulted inevitably in the Eelam demand and the right to raise this demand should be unequivocally recognised. The former however faced different problems to which Eelam was no solution. Tampoe played the JVP which was represented in the person of Indika Gunawardena, for failing to defend the right of the TULF to political existence and activity, when there was a threat to ban that leading opposition party.

He argued persuasively that the impact of the efforts of MIRJE and Fr. Paul Caspersz should not be underestimated. The demands to lift the Emergency in the North and combat the 'anti-Terrorist' and 'Tiger' Bills were first raised by MIRJE at a meeting to which all Left organisations were invited. Then these demands had been taken up by the JCTUO Action Committee. Though the country's oldest Left party had demurred at the outset, the concerted pressure of other trade unions in the Action Committee had caused it to drop its objections. Finally the 5 Left Parties had taken up these demands as their main rallying point. The JCTUO AC meeting at Hyde Park on Sept 20th (as well as the 5 party rally at the same venue on Oct 2nd) witnessed mass working class audiences endorsing these internationalist slogans by prolonged and thunderous ovations. This was of historic significance. Now even the SLFP Trade Union federation had adopted these slogans in their capacity as JCTUAC members, which brought them into conflict with the SLFP leadership who had argued for the maintenance of the Emergency in the North alone.

**Mrs. Kusala Abhayavardhana** stressed that what is taking place in the North today would inevitably engulf the rest of the island as the intensive neocolonization of the economy proceeds apace.

Among those Present at the seminar were V. Ratnayake of the Ceylon Communist Party, Student Christian Movement representative Kumudhini Rosa, Katubedde University Student Council President, S. Walgama (Presently under suspension), J. Uyangoda from Peradeniya University, CPSL Youth League representative Sarath P. Liyanage, Annathi Abeysekera of the Christian Workers Fellowship, and Kumari Jayawardena of the Social Scientists Association. The seminar which was organised and coordinated by the indefatigable S. Balakrishna of the MIRJE Secretariat, was chaired by Fr. Caspersz.

## SLFP and OPEC

The SLFP is most unlikely to support the government-sponsored petition to OPEC. The government which hopes to collect 3 million signatures has invited the support of the opposition parties. Only the TULF has so far responded.

Judging by two strongly worded articles in the SLFP's 'Nation', the SLFP will not extend its support to the UNP move.

The OPEC petition campaign is described as a "figleaf" with which the government hopes to conceal the real reason for the country's economic policies framed on the dictates of the IMF, the World Bank and the multinationals. The nation's special correspondents also say that the petition is part of a propaganda effort launched by the western mass media and other US agencies.

## A second Left Front

While the Galle by-election has aggravated subsurface tensions, specially between the LSSP and the JVP, in the newly formed 5 party "bloc", 5 other Left organisations which style themselves Marxist-Leninist have banded together to form a new 'peramuna'. The five organisations are the Ceylon Communist Party (N. Sanmugathasan), the Janatha Sangamaya (Premapala Hewabatage) the Nava Lanka Communist Party (K. Wimalapala) the New Democratic Party (A.M. Jinadasa) and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (Wimalasiri Navaratna).

They hope to form a single Left party in the future. Meanwhile all decisions will be taken by a Secretariat representing the five groups.

Internationally, they are opposed to US imperialism, Soviet social imperialism and the policies of present Chinese leadership. Ideologically, they criticise the 5 party 'bloc' and revisionism, Trotskyism and Guevarism. They reject the parliamentary path.

They are anti-UNP and are opposed to the SLFP 'rightwing'.



# POLISARIO - victory in sight?

FOREIGN  
NEWS

by Mervyn de Silva

*(An interview with Mohamed Salem Salek, member of the Politburo of FRENTE POLISARIO, and Information Minister of the Saharoui Arab Democratic Republic)*

**Q :** How would you characterise the present situation in the Sahara and the prospects of Saharoui independence ?

**A :** We continue to win victories in both the diplomatic and military spheres. The government of King Hassan which has illegally annexed our land on the other hand has faced a series of defeats.

**Q :** What factors have helped to bring about the situation you have described ?

**A :** Several factors ..... the main reason of course is the will of the people. The right of self-determination has been recognised by every relevant organisation — the U.N., the nonaligned movement, the OAU. They all support our just cause. But to have a

right to self-determination is one thing; to be ready, if necessary, to struggle for it and make sacrifices is another.....the will of the Saharoui people to make great sacrifices has been proved with every passing month. The other factors are support from those who sympathise with us.....I refer not only to international opinion as such but to direct material support.....then there is our diplomatic effort to isolate Morocco, our chief enemy. Finally the situation in the battlefield.

**Q :** When you spoke of the isolation of Morocco are you referring to the OAU decision and King Hassan's absence here in Havana .....

**A :** He was absent at the OAU summit too.....He could not

face African and Arab condemnation just as he feared the denunciation of his policies here by the nonaligned countries. But I was referring to more definite developments..... most important of which is the decision of Mauretania to give up its claim to part of our territory..... so that Morocco was left alone. This forced Morocco to make matters worse by forcibly occupying the area which was earlier claimed by Mauretania. King Hassan was in a dilemma. He thought we might be satisfied with half our territory and have a government there. At the same time, he wondered whether we would do this and fight for the rest of the land, which is now claimed by Morocco. So he has now occupied the whole of the Sahara. Militarily, this suits us fine..... I recently read in a US magazine that some American general had told the correspondent that no



*"We keep the military initiative all the time..."*





*Mohamed Salem Salek*

conventional army can fight for long in this terrain.....I agree .....only the Saharoui people know their land.....

There's one other advance in the diplomatic field.....as you know the U.N. recognised our right to self-determination by an over-whelming majority..... now we have formed our government and one by one other governments are recognising us.

*Q : Could you give me a general account of the military situations?*

*A :* I'll start with the last point I made in that connection .....during Spanish times, it used to be said that it was really impossible to fight a war in a desert like ours.....but you see each every people know the secrets of their own land, their own territory.....those secrets are not known to foreigners.... those secrets could not be discovered even by French intelligence which was placed at the service of Morocco and Mauretania at the start of the war. Those secrets cannot be found by US satellite surveillance and handed over to King Hassan.

Yes, let me give you a general picture.....first, we have organised our liberation army to make it more efficient .....also political education goes on.....of the cadres, of the officers and soldiers .....then we keep the military initiative all the time.....we take not only territory but a large number of weapons.....we get the weapons from the enemy who

gets it from his foreign supporters.....from the US and the West.....or from Egypt which gets them from the US, from the West, and now China. Our battles today have become battles for positions.....and our army has effective control of large areas .....the Moroccan army defends positions.....when we launch serious attacks the officers are the first to flee.....this causes low morale.....or we cut off their supplies and they live in their barracks holed up..... in the night they are all alone in the desert.....they are frightened men.....already we can see a qualitative distinction between the Liberation army and the Moroccan army.

*Q : Will King Hassan sue for peace.....will he be ready for negotiations.....*

*A :* We are ready at any time .....of course, the right of independence cannot be negotiated .....but the termination of the war, yes.....we can discuss but Hassan is in deep trouble .....he imposed the war on us and in a way, dragged Mauretania into it because he wanted to find a so-called cause to capture the imagination and feelings of his people and divert their minds from their own serious problems but the war has made the situation much worse..... do not ask me, ask any Moroccan .....there are some Moroccan journalists here, ask them about the economic situation, about the goods in the shops and prices ..... about what is happening in the universities in Rabat and in Casablanca.....about the strikes and so on.....if Morocco does not end the war, it will be in the same position as Portugal was when there was the liberation struggles in their African colonies."

**THE SRI LANKA SOCIETY FOR  
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**TRADE UNIONS AND  
FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION  
IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY**  
at

**The Sri Lanka Foundation  
Institute**

on

**24th November 1979 at 9.00 a.m.**

**Keynote Address:**

**CAPT. C. P. J. SENEVIRATNE**  
Minister of Labour

**Chairman:**

**MR. V. TENNEKOON**  
Chairman, Law Reform Commission

**Speakers:**

**MR. K. RAMA MURTHY**  
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# History's secrets

The revelation of History's secrets has a fascination of its own. What Journalists like to call the 'inside story' is all the more enthralling when the narrators credentials are not only impeccable but unique. Such was the rewarding experience which students of China's zig-zagging foreign policy and its dramatic about-face in recent years drew from Enver Hoxha's book. The Albanian leader was not only the first to denounce 'soviet revisionism' but remained for long China's steadfast friend.

Whatever their own ideological proclivities or partisanship in the raging China-Vietnam conflict, students of foreign affairs, particularly the making of policy in a country as important as China, will find their intellectual curiosity more than satisfied and their knowledge enriched by a new book put out by the Vietnamese government. It is called "The Truth about Vietnam - China relations over the last 30 years."

The case history is especially rich in its pointed lessons because Peking's 180 degree turn in world affairs has no parallel in modern history. As the introduction notes, no "other leaders in the world have on the strategic plane reversed their policy of alliances, turning friends into foes, and reverse, so quickly and thoroughly". The USSR, China's principal ally at one time, is the main enemy today. US Imperialism whose "character will never change" is now a major ally. So much so that Vice President Mondale told his Peking University audience in September that an attempt by any one to "weaken China" would be a threat to the security interests of the US. China which advised the Shah, during Hua Kuo Feng's visit in 1978, to strengthen CENTO now parades herself as an 'eastern NATO' when 20 years ago it branded SEATO as a US imperialist design to 'encircle and contain' China.

China which hailed the coming 'revolutionary storm' in Africa, during Chou En-lai's historic visit to the continent was in active collusion a decade later with the CIA-financed FNLA, Mobutu and South Africa in fighting the MPLA in Angola.

The authors of this book not only affirm the close solidarity of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples in their common struggle against imperialism in the early phase but freely concede that China's assistance to Vietnam's liberation struggle was tremendous. Yet a quarter century later, Peking proudly announces to the world that it will teach Vietnam a lesson and a huge Chinese force crosses the border. Churchill said Russia was an enigma wrapped in mystery. The Chinese puzzle is surely an object of even greater mystification.

Using Vietnam's own experience with China over 3 decades the new book strives to solve with the help of historical facts hitherto unknown to the student. The analysis is centred on China's global strategy and its single-minded pursuit of Peking's ultimate aim of 'third superpower status.'

## Moments or betrayal

Marking out four broad phases in China's relations with Vietnam, the book identifies three historical moments of 'betrayal'.

(a) China faced 'wars of aggression' in the north (Korea) and in the south (French Indo-China) and the general US policy of encirclement. In order to breach this 'wall', China helped the Vietnamese fight the French up to Dien Bien Phu and it helped the North Koreans to throw back the US-led forces. But China never wanted a strong, unified Vietnam or an independent Indo-China for this would stand in the way of Peking's traditional "expansionist" aims vis-a-vis South East Asia, a region crowded with 'overseas' Chinese.

(b) This direct participation and assistance gave China the chance to come to the Geneva conference (talks on Korea and Vietnam in 1954) and take part as an active negotiator of equal standing with the Big Four. But in drawing up the Geneva agreements, the Chinese position was closer to that of the French than of the Vietnamese delegation. It suited Peking's purpose to weaken the French but to 'limit' the Vietnamese victory. Thus, they advocated along with the French the Korea-type solution of partition. It would 'divide' Indo-China, give the French a presence in the area preventing a total vacuum which the US, then China's main enemy, would promptly fill.

Since after Dien Bien Phu, the balance of forces was such that French colonialism could have been completely wiped out from the region, this agreement, engineered mainly by the French and the Chinese, was a gross betrayal.

(c) After the Ngo Dinh Diem regime collapsed, it became clear that the whole of Vietnam could be liberated but China's real aim was to maintain the political status quo in the country. It would help the Vietnamese to fight a long war with the US, which had now stepped in, but not to help them liberate the south. The solution to the partition, said Mao Ze Dong may take 10 years but 'we should be prepared for 100 years'. Thus, the Chinese recommended the policy of prolonged ambush, of "defending the 17th parallel", of "lying low" of "mustering strength" etc.

A prolonged war would bleed the US. According to Hassanein Heikal ("The Cairo Documents") Nasser's intimate friend and aide, Chou told Nasser "the more troops the US sends to Vietnam, the more delighted China is, for we know we have them in our hand and we can bleed them... .. If you want to help Vietnam, you must encourage the US to send more troops...."

## Second betrayal

Meanwhile Peking was exerting strong pressure on Hanoi to



reduce its reliance on Soviet arms aid. The book unravels the knots in the Chinese reasoning. When a politically and economically besieged US had no other choice but to pull out of Vietnam, it would have to turn to China (rather than the USSR) for a face-saving formula. The Chinese, Vietnam's supplier, could put pressure on Hanoi. China could extract a price from the US—recognition, and a deal on Taiwan.

With the gradual worsening of Sino-Soviet relations, Deng Xiaoping offered Vietnam a billion yuan if Hanoi turned down all aid from Moscow.

The Chinese long-term plan succeeded when Nixon wanted an "out". Mainly for domestic political reasons, Nixon had to bring back the US forces as the first step to an escape from the Vietnamese imbroglio. The Chinese had encouraged the US bombing of North Vietnam, had blocked any diplomatic effort at a Hanoi-Washington understanding, and had fought the US, as General Maxwell Taylor put it "to the last Vietnamese". By reducing aid and by threats to cut off relations between the two parties (China and Vietnam), Peking prevented any scaling down of the war or any US withdrawal until the US was ready to deal with Peking.

Ping-pong diplomacy started as China prepared to turn westward. Kissinger himself had spoken of a "multi-polar world" replacing the "bi-polar world". This fit neatly into China's own grand design to become the third superpower.

While Mao himself admitted that Nixon would never have come to China but for the Vietnam war, China's true aims were revealed on their 'advice' to Hanoi not to liberate the South. In recorded conversations with Le Duan, both Mao and Chou advised that "the whole of Indo-China should relax for some time, five or ten years....."

Finally when the Van Thieu regime did not honour the Paris peace accords, the Chinese, who had been reducing military and

economic aid to Vietnam, refused to back the liberation of the South. This was the second betrayal.

#### Final betrayal

With 'quotes' from authoritative US sources, the book seeks to establish the fact that Peking had told the US "not to allow yourselves to be defeated in Vietnam, and not to pull out forces from South east Asia". Already China had openly identified the USSR as the main enemy and begun to follow the maxim of Chinese emperors—'unite with distant opponents to fight the enemy nearby'. And this in turn was part of the ultimate aim of using one superpower to combat the other or as Mao said "to sit on the mountain top and watch the tigers fight".

The sudden collapse of the Saigon regime, the liberation of

#### Sahara

## King Hassan—tomorrow's Shah

Morocco's King Hassan is discovering that the issue of Saharan independence is a double-edged weapon. Two unsuccessful attempts on his life (1971 and 1972) were followed by a long period of social and political unrest, dramatised by strikes and student troubles. King Hassan had the standard answer: repression. But he thought he had another useful weapon—the claim to part of the western (Spanish) Sahara. The other part was claimed by neighbouring Mauretania. Both claims were contested by Polisario, the Saharoui Liberation Movement.

In 1975, King Hassan rallied his discontented people on the single nationalist slogan of 'Greater Morocco' and silenced his domestic opponents by launching the famous 'Green March'. Responding to his patriotic appeal, nearly half a million Moroccan civilians marched into western Sahara. On the crest of this wave of 'popularity' King Hassan announced "political liberalisation" on condition that the opposition parties (notably 'the Socialist Union of Popular Forces')

the South, the liberation of the whole of Indo-China, and the unity of the peoples of Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos in the course of a common struggle, incensed and dismayed Peking.

Since then it has pursued the consistent policy of weakening Vietnam and spoiling relations between Vietnam and her neighbours. Evidence is offered of how China pressured other countries and even international agencies to refrain from or limit economic aid to war ravaged Vietnam. When Vietnam went ahead with its reconstruction, China 'attacked' Vietnam through Pol Pot in Kampuchea. When Pol Pot was ousted, China committed the final act of treachery against a smaller, socialist neighbour—and tried to teach Vietnam a lesson, as Deng Xiaoping said publicly on his way back from the US and Japan.

the leading trade unions and student organisations would support the "patriotic war" against Polisario. The UN has voted in favour of Saharoui independence and Polisario is recognised by the OAU and the Non-aligned Movement. It is actively assisted by Algeria and Libya.

Once a rallying cry and source of domestic support for the embattled Hassan, the war has now become a major burden under which the monarchy may ultimately collapse.

The price of phosphates, Morocco's sole export, is less than half it fetched five years ago. Inflation is exceeding 20% and the external debt is devouring 30% of the export income. Defence spending (one and half billion dollars last year) is a third of the national budget. More and more of it goes to fighting the Polisario. Far from unifying or mollifying the people, the war has begun to exacerbate political conflicts and social tensions in Morocco.

## South Korea

# THE DOUBTFUL MODEL

For all its wildly improbable and cinematic features, the gun duel in a KCIA-run restaurant which ended in the killing of President Park, leaves behind some serious questions unanswered. Was this a well planned murder and the necessary finale to a political plot to oust him? Was there a hidden hand behind the coup?

For other reasons as well, Park's bloody demise will prompt sombre reflections among students of Third World' and Asian politics.

In the 1960's South Korea's foreign investment-based, export-led industrialisation was held out by western experts and like-minded Third World specialists as 'model' for economic development. Like Taiwan, it was ardently advertised as a "miracle." At other times, Brazil, Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Phillipines, and Singapore were put on display in a showcase arranged on IBRD-IMF expertise.

With equal assurance, it was argued that South Korea's political stability was the prerequisite for this "take-off" and "prosperity." Certainly, General Park who ousted the ageing Syngman Rhee in 1960 created the required conditions of stability. But what did it really represent? Reporting recently from Seoul, Newsweek's Asia Editor, Andrew Nagorski wrote of the country's "seemingly endless cycle of repression, protest, repression."

The North Korean threat and the Communist menace reinforced Park's ritual defence of his repressive regime. The strategic importance of the Korean peninsula, US Security interests and the presence of about 40,000 US troops helped earn Washington's unblushing patronage of harsh military rule.

The South Korean miracle has begun to lose its magic. Pusan, a major city, and Masan were

rocked by strikes and student demonstrations. Two months ago, unemployed women workers staged a protest at the Opposition party office. The police response was only too familiar. They beat up the women and the Opposition party officials.

Though many of Park's critics had lost their nerve, the main opposition party and its outspoken leader, Kim Young Sam became too troublesome for a regime for which the slightest word of disagreement was tantamount to subversion. When Park manoeuvred the expulsion of the Opposition leader from parliament, 66 MP's decided to boycott the assembly indefinitely.

With riots, martial law and indiscriminate arrests, the U.S. found itself trapped in a now familiar dilemma which is often over-simplified as a painful choice between a tyrannical ally and its own human rights credo. "Morality in foreign policy," a popular debate in the first years of the Carter administration, conceals or clouds the real issue, which is strictly political.

When the accommodating agent or client (national leader or government) is or soon becomes a repressive ruler, he does guarantee the stability necessary for the protection of the patron's interests. But whatever the duration of his stay, the irrepression itself invites protest, and protest provokes greater repression. With each turn of the screw however, the protest becomes more violent, more organised and more popular, often gathering together broader and broader social forces. This is the lesson the US learnt from the downfall of dictators from the Shah to Somoza i.e. at a certain point, the local client or ally, far from protecting US interests, is in fact endangering them. It is not a choice then

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# JVP's IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS

RESEARCH

by Charles Abeysekera

Having thus analysed the conditions that led to the emergence of the J. V. P. Keerawella briefly describes the alternative ideology and policy put forward by the JVP and some factors that influenced its organisational methods. As far as its ideology was concerned, Keerawella notes it lacks of clear cut and definite ideology: "Their's was not a Marxist-Leninist ideology but an eclecticism consisting of various shades of Stalinism, Maoism, Guevarism etc. **He characterises the ideology of the JVP, however, as anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-capitalist but as essentially not an ideology of the working class.**

The eclecticism and confusion of JVP ideology went so far as to include elements of the Sinhala chauvinism that had earlier affected even traditional left parties. As far as organisations went, the petty bourgeois nature of the membership and the manner in which recruitment was done—mainly on the basis of an expanding circle of personal relations—is seen by Keerawella as having resulted in a number of characteristics:

1. The membership of the movement came to be based primarily on students and unemployed educated youth. According to figures given of a survey of 10,192 suspected insurgents, students, unemployed youth, casual labourers and cultivators—probably unemployed rural labourers—came to 67% of the total number.
2. The organs of party management were not democratically elected and in the course of time, became authoritarian. Because these organs were also largely the result of personal relationships, factionalism was rampant.

3. These organs were also relatively immature and inexperienced.

Keerawella supports these conclusions with an examination of the class origins and the character of the polit-bureau of the JVP. It may be desirable to give the conclusions of this study in Keerawella's own words:

"The petty bourgeoisie originating in the context of the colonial economic transformation constituted the social basis of the JVP. The petty bourgeoisie was necessarily not only a leftist force.... But in peripheral capitalist countries like Sri Lanka where the economic crisis got aggravated constantly the petty-bourgeoisie could become a Leftist force as clearly shown in Sri Lanka in 1971. Thus the JVP and the 1971 uprising can be defined as a Leftist challenge of the younger radical elements of this crisis ridden petty bourgeoisie.

"On the other hand when the traditional Left degenerated into social democratism.... the working class was deprived of revolutionary leadership and became wagging tails of the 'elitist' leadership. The working class under the control of the traditional Left did not come forward to play the role it was expected to play. Thus it was that the radical elements of the petty bourgeoisie came forward to fill this vacuum"

In assessing finally the role of the JVP, Keerawella believed that though the movement was uncompromisingly anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist, **it failed because it lacked working class leadership. This itself he sees as a characteristic of the petty bourgeois nature of the party.**

\* \* \*

Keerawella's valuable study (which this article has summarised

with some comments), thus lays bare the roots of the JVP. He answers effectively, but sometimes very briefly, the questions he has set himself.

The evaluation of the JVP and its ideology in the context of Sri Lanka's movement towards socialism has not been his aim but incidental to his main thesis. What this study however throws up is the necessity for further research in a number of related areas; for example, the development of capitalist relations in the economy, the growth of the 'comprador' bourgeoisie, the reasons for the lack of a 'national' bourgeoisie, the impact of capitalist relations as the village and the growth of class differentiation in the agrarian sector.

The general conclusion drawn by Keerawella is that the JVP was in essence an organisation of the petty-bourgeoisie and that its characteristics and failures stem from this fact. One should, however, also study and verify the claims made by Wijeweera in his evidence to the Criminal Justice Commission that though "the JVP was implanted in the rural proletariat the lumpen proletariat and certain petty-bourgeois layers", it had begun, by 1971, to expand into the urban areas and that some sections of the working class had been drawn in. Edmund Samarakkody, writing in May 1971, appears to confirm this claim: "Also included in the fold of the JVP were young militant workers drawn mainly from the state industrial corporations and the state agricultural sector, e.g. the Land Development Department, the Survey Department and colonisation schemes". Rather than relying solely as available statistics regarding the 10,000 or so who surrendered to the state at the declaration of an amnesty, one might try to probe a little deeper into the membership composition

of the JVP and its class nature and establish both the size of the influx of the urban proletariat if any and its impact on the structure and policies of the JVP. **One doubts whether such a study will seriously disturb Keerawella's conclusions, but the total picture might then be somewhat clearer.**

The characterisation of whole layers of rural society as petty-bourgeois seems to be also in need of some clarification. The traditional petty-bourgeoisie of small producers small traders, artisans is a familiar enough concept; but in the face of advancing capitalism, this class has steadily dwindled. There has now arisen a new stratum—teachers, government or state sector employees, technicians, traders with links to urban centres, middle-men who enter into the transactions between rural producer and urban traders; some of these have no ownership claims to land or other productive resources and depend solely on the sale of this labour. This class, which has arisen also in the developed capitalist countries has been called by Nicos Poularitis and others the new petty-bourgeoisie—with some difficult characteristics but the primary identification being made as the basis that though they appear quite different at the economic level, both these bear the same ideological relationship to the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class and that this ideological relationship is enough to merge them into a single class. This formulation by Pontantas has been the subject of much debate, but it is brought out here because it has some relevance to the characterisation of class formations in our rural society. It can be argued that the economic interests of the traditional are the new petty-bourgeoisie are somewhat different—the advance of capitalism serves the interests of the new while it works against the interests of the old. In this contact one will have to analyse carefully the economic interests that are the ideological standpoints of these two groups, and this relationship to

the proletariat. One will also have to work out carefully the boundary between the working class and this new segment of the petty-bourgeoisie. Such an analysis is important not merely in an academic sense but also because it must surely influence the policies and tactics of socialist parties.

Another aspect that needs to be investigated at greater depth is the disillusionment of radical youth elements with the traditional left. The reformist policies followed by the CP and the LSSP which ultimately resulted in coalition politics and the impact of such policies not only on the radicalised youth but also on the urban working class itself needs to be studied. To quote Samarakkody again, "the failure of the working class to be even articulate against the murders and atrocities of the government (in 1971) is the measure of the disorientation of the working class that had taken place through coalition politics since 1964 and of the process of absorption of the trade union apparatus into the capitalist state structures which had been taking place." Indeed one may ask whether the excessive preoccupation with economic struggles at the trade union level was not one of the factors that determined reformist political positions.

Another area that will require attention is the ideological superstructure. The relationship of ruling ideology to the economic base, growth of a socialist ideology in Sri Lanka, the ideology of the traditional Left and of the new Left—there will have to be studied in detail for a proper understanding of the Left movement and its many vicissitudes in Sri Lanka.

It should also be interesting, in the light of its past, to look at the present structure of the JVP, its ideology, composition, organisation and methods of struggle. Such a study might reveal whether it still suffers from the ideological and organisational drawbacks pointed out in this study might reveal whether it still suffers from the ideological and organisational

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# Making of JVP theory

by J. Uyangoda

In the first part of the present series of articles, I stated that the ideology of the JVP has still not been subject to serious examination. The account given by Podi Athula, in the second chapter of his book gives the reader some factual information on the genesis of the "theories" of the movement. As the author correctly comments, these theories were mainly concerned with the grievances of the peasantry and the worst-affected sections of the petit-bourgeoisie, such as the unemployed youth. To take Podi Athula's point further, the JVP over-estimated the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and the youth (an unconscious influence of Fanon and Nkrumah via the African Socialist environment of Lumumba University) which was simultaneously the inevitable result of a gross under-estimation of the role of the working class in the Socialist revolution. This situation may be explained in terms of the class nature of the JVP.

Now we came to an interesting point by which we can identify yet another peculiarity of this political movement. Its ideology has been a manifestation of the major grievances of the social forces that were neglected by, or not given due place, in the traditional left movement. In other words, the failure of the old left to organize the peasantry and the youth under the leadership of the working class, had created a situation where those social forces had to find their own voice in a new "orchestral arrangement". If we accept Podi Athula's statement that Wijeweera had a Narodnik-ish instinct for the peasantry and that he preferred the rural peasantry to the urban proletariat as the leading force of the revolution, then Wijeweera reflected not a posi-

tive but a negative aspect of the Lankan Left. Here, the paradox was that this absence in the traditional left parties became a presence in the JVP. It is pertinent to recall that not a single left party in this country has ever presented a revolutionary programme for the peasantry and made a serious effort to organise this class, though they have paid lip-service to the concept of "worker-peasant alliance". In the lecture entitled "The Economic Crisis" - the main emphasis of which was on the grievances of the peasantry and the youth - it was the lamentations of the neglected that found utterance.

The less known and therefore variedly interpreted fifth lecture "The Path that the Lankan Revolution should Take" - has had a peculiar origin, according to Podi Athula's book. It is said that Wijeweera had to grapple with the problem of strategy and tactics of the Lankan revolution only after he had discussions with G. I. D. Dharmasekera and D. A. Gunasekera with a view to win them over to his movement. Dharmasekera had held the view that the revolution should take the nature of an armed guerilla struggle along the lines of the Cuban revolution, while Gunasekera opted for a protracted revolutionary war as happened in China. Accordingly, Wijeweera's theory of revolution - Country-wide scattered and simultaneous struggle - is a synthesis of these two theories. Analysing Wijeweera's "new theory" one can go further. In the mid-1960s, the Lankan Left had been pre-occupied with the false problem of "How to make the revolution?" A technical problem. In this context, the new-left groups, as against the traditional left parties, derived inspiration from either Chinese or Cuban revolutions.

Those who adhered to the "Mao Tse-tung thought" believed in a simplistic strategy for revolution. They faithfully accepted the applicability of the strategy and tactics of the Chinese experience to this country in total. Protracted war, rural base areas (liberated zones) were its essential ingredients. On the other hand, to those who were attracted by the revolutionary romanticism of the Cuban "model", an armed guerilla foco, through its gun-fires, could start the Prairie fire of revolution.

In retrospect, it can be observed that the influence of these two schools of revolutionary strategy and tactics upon the Lankan Left was, unfortunately, in the direction of chaos and confusion. The great debate within and among the groups of gauche extreme revolved not around the fundamental and basic problems of Lankan revolution, but around the tactics and techniques of the armed revolutionary struggle. Was it to take the form of a "SULU ARAGALAYA" or "MAHA ARAGALAYA". Or was it to be a short-term struggle or a long-term struggle? These concepts of "SULU ARAGALAYA" and "MAHA ARAGALAYA" can be translated in to English in a very clumsy manner as "lesser struggles" and "Single devastating blow" respectively. - They are so uniquely indigenous (Lankan) and foreign to the accepted Marxist Vocabulary that there exist no parallel English terms. It is this false identification of the false problem that led Wijeweera to the false-synthesis expressed in the theory of 'scattered and simultaneous struggle.'

One positive development of the JVP ideology, in its post-1971 phase, is its partial abandonment of its earlier stand towards the Tamils. Nonetheless,

the new position cannot be considered strictly Marxian, because the JVP does not stand for the right of the Tamil people in this country to exercise their selfdetermination i. e., political separation. The 'old' JVP ideology was characterized by a clearly declared aversion towards the Tamil people, including the plantation workers. This antipathy seems to be one of the most sensitive areas in the past of the JVP. Though its leaders criticize and attack the other left parties for their 'oportunism' concerning the Tamil problem the JVP remains shyly noncomittal regarding its own chauvinistic past. Podi Athula's short but revealing description on the origins and the contents of the JVP theory of "Indian expansionism" is

basically correct. According to him, Wijeweera adapted this theory (first formulated by the Chinese leaders in their dispute with Nehru's India), since he pragmatically sensed the appealing power of such a concept to the anti-Tamil sentiments of the Sinhala masses. Given the expansionist dynamic of the Indian big bourgeoisie, one could have, to a certain extent, justified the concept of Indian expansionism. But when one attempts to conflate the cry of the Lankan Tamil masses for justice and equality with the aspirations of the Indian bourgeoisie, one would surely go astray. This was exactly the problem with Wijeweera's theory of Indian expansionism. Actually, this so-called Indian Tamil threat became a useful catch phrase to

draw more and more Sinhala petty-bourgeois elements to the movement.

(To be continued)

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**JVP's . . .**

*(Continued from Page 12)*

drawbacks pointed out in this study or has been successful in overcoming them; a superficial impression would be that it still does suffer from these disabilities and that it has still been able to extend its influence in a significant way to the urban working classes.

One hopes that local academics will, now that the ice has been broken, turn their attention more and more to research areas that are very pertinent to the problems of our time.

(Concluded)

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# Religion and radicalism

by Yohan Devananda

**W**hen Bishop John Robinson published his book "Honest to God" in the early sixties of this century, he was greeted by howls of protest from conservative churchmen who denounced him as a dangerous radical. He patiently explained that being radical (derived from the Latin word meaning "root") meant getting back (or down) to the roots. By reference to the Bible and the real tradition, he was trying to get at the true meaning of the concept of God and, at the same time, expose and remove the layers of superstition, corruption and misunderstanding that had accumulated round the concept, and had not merely made it unpalatable to modern man but robbed it of all potency to inspire action in response to people's need. Incidentally, getting back (or down) to the roots does not mean merely a return to the past. It means getting to the springs of creative living, thought and action.

This kind of re-thinking had been going on for a long time and exploded in the so called Death of God Theology of the sixties. Thus was the way prepared for the Liberation Theology of the seventies, which has put forward a positive Christian Gospel that responds to the urgent needs of the people. The latest fruit of this movement has been the revolution in Nicaragua, where the Christian poet and priest, and active ally of the cause of the Sandinista guerillas in their struggle against the Somoza regime, Fr Ernesto Cardenal has declared: "This revolution is fundamentally Christian. The people of Nicaragua are, in their great majority, Christian, and it was the people who carried out the revolution".

## The Prophetic Vocation

Bishop John Robinson and Fr Ernesto Cardenal are typical examples of the classic vocation, which is, fundamentally, a call from

falsehood to reality, from indifference and sloth to compassionate action for justice on behalf of the oppressed. When a society grows old and corrupt, charismatic leaders are raised up from among the people who with critical insight into the corruption of the old society call them out to new visions and new creative actions which respond to the challenge of circumstances and human needs. And this is a vocation that is common to all religions,

## The Monk

What about the monk? The monastic vocation is often thought of as a negative flight from the world. Such has often been the case. But this is a perversion of the monks vocation. Fundamentally, the true monk does not give up the world but the corruptions of the world. Or to put it in another way, he does not turn away from society but from the status quo. The great monks of history, after a ripe experience of society, came out of it to be alone, to contemplate, to understand the truth. But then disciples gathered round them and they formed new communities and went back to the world to reform society. Here, again, this is a vocation that is common to all religions.

## True men of religion

True men of religion — of all religions — have always integrated both action and contemplation in their lives. This is clearly evident in the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Saint Benedict, Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther, The prophet Mohammed, Swami Vivekananda, Paramahansa Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Anagarika Dharmapala, and countless others. And all their lives and ministries had a clearly radical content, in their own particular historical situation.

## Liberation Types

The Liberation Theology of Latin America has, in recent times,

publicised the radical character of Christianity, and this has aroused interest in the liberation types or figures in Christian history, going right back to Christ himself, and even before him, to Moses and the Prophets.

But it is not yet widely recognized that Buddhism, too, has a profoundly radical character and that there are innumerable examples of liberation types or figures in Buddhist history which illustrate this.

The liberation theologians in Latin America discovered the Liberation Christ as they became personally involved in a revolutionary situation and committed themselves to the liberation struggle. So they read the Bible with new eyes and woke up to fact that Christ himself had lived in a revolutionary situation and had been engaged in a struggle for the oppressed against the oppressors. They are thus able to draw great strength in their own struggle, through solidarity with the Liberation Christ who has been before them in the struggle, and whose presence they sense still with them in the power of the Resurrection that triumphed over evil and death.

In Sri Lanka, Kuliypitliya Fernando of the Democratic National Front is an outstanding and powerful interpreter of the liberation content of Buddhism. He is a graduate of Peradeniya University, deeply versed in the Buddhist Texts, and has been involved in revolutionary politics. He spent 4 years in prison camps consequent on the 1971 Insurrection, though he was not actually involved in it, having belonged to another revolutionary group. He is often called upon to speak on this subject but has not had anything as yet published. There is obviously a need and a demand for this kind of thinking and approach. But it cannot be claimed, yet, that it is widespread.

Kumari Jayawardene has made a study of the Labour Movement in Sri Lanka during the past century, which has been published, and much used by working class and peasant groups. She has also made a study, of the Buddhist Revival Movement. Recently, when she wrote a series of articles in the **Lanka Guardian** on "Bhikkus In Revolt", Reggie Siriwardena, who had earlier claimed that there was no radical movement in Buddhism, wrote again to say that the revolt of bhikkus has been purely to protect or recover their institutions and vested interests, and insisted that this cannot be equated with true radicalism. He claimed that bhikkus have not stood for the rights of the people and ideas of equality as Christian and secular radicals have done. He pointed out that Kumari Jayawardena had not quoted any radical pronouncement of the bhikkus she wrote about and said this must have been because there weren't any to quote! He concluded that the radical movement in the future in Sri Lanka cannot expect any Buddhist contribution.

In a country where Buddhism is still strongly entrenched this is indeed a dismal prospect for the revolutionary cause. But, of course, some so-called Marxists confidently expect that the hold of Buddhism on Sri Lanka will dissolve into thin air when the capitalist contradictions duly mature, and the trade unions will then duly usher in the new era! They have been expecting this to happen for the last forty years! However, it must be emphasized that true Marxism does not depend on such naive and shallow predictions. Nor does it require ruthless extermination as some others imagine. We may quote here the Russian Marxist Parfionovich:

"Well, didn't Lenin say that Marxism, far from repudiating the past, should absorb and work on it as the only sure foundation of a proletarian culture?...."

"Who can deny that Buddhism has been not simply a religion, but a way of life for millions?

That its cultural and historical values have moulded the spiritual heritage of mankind?"

We may add, also, here a quotation from Fr. Aloysius Pieris S. J. of Sri Lanka, who has made a deep study of Buddhism:

"Buddhist monasticism is, therefore, never neutral to the socio-political reality. The dialectics between withdrawal from the world and involvement with the world—or contemplation and action—is nowhere so clearly attested as in the political role that spiritual men play in a Buddhist culture".

### The Buddha

Illustrations of the radical role of Buddhists must, of course, begin with the Buddha himself. The Buddha was part of a historical movement that witnessed the rise of the Kshatriyas against the domination of the Brahmins. Through an inspired encounter with reality—depicted in the story of the signs—the Prince Siddhartha realised the need for seeking a way of liberation for the oppressed. This involved a radical break from home and society. Then came the wilderness experience and the awakening to the path of liberation. After that followed the return to society. He founded the Sangha as a nucleus and pattern for a new society. This Sangha had to take the dharma among the people, in word and deed—"Go, now, and wander for the good of the people, for the happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world." This involved struggle. The Buddha denounced caste and positions of power and honour that were held without responsibility and service to the people. This, in turn, provoked opposition against him. The pattern of radical life and action is clear.

### Illustrations

This was not, and in fact cannot be, just an isolated example. It is a pattern that has had a deep impact on history and remains one of the fundamental options and challenges for the human spirit. There are innumerable

examples of those who have responded to it in Buddhist history.

Sri Lanka has had an ample share of liberation types or figures. In the recent past, too, there has been a revival of Buddhism, and there has been a long line of liberation fighters, which Kumari Jayawardena has mentioned. There are, of course, certain spurious and unfortunate features of this movement such as chauvinism and racial intolerance, which must be exposed, opposed and eradicated relentlessly. But there are also, clearly, genuine radical elements, not so well publicised, which must be diligently searched for articulated more clearly, encouraged and developed, and organised for the revolutionary tasks ahead of us. As the revolutionary situation ripens in Sri Lanka more and more of this will come out to the front. The masses of Sri Lanka, especially the peasants, cannot be properly mobilised for the revolution without an imaginative and creative use of our Buddhist religious and cultural heritage. The new society which must emerge will desperately be lacking in health and wholeness if the radical Buddhist contribution is not made.

(To be continued)

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# Empiricism, revisionism and revolution

DEBATE

(A rejoinder to Jothikumar by Chintaka)

Lenin, Louis, Althusser, and the Chinese Marxist-Leninists, correctly identified empiricism as one of the fundamental philosophical bases of Right opportunism. Jothikumar (singular or plural?) bears this out. In his first paragraph he resorts childishly to the device of **reductio ad absurdum**, imputing parallels I never drew—as the reader would recall. His main point however is that “there is nothing or little in common between (their) conditions, problem and ours”. I thought I had replied this adequately on a previous occasion (L. G. Aug 15th) but it seems that I have to underscore the point. It is certainly necessary to grasp the specificity of every national situation and make a concrete analysis of concrete conditions. However, one must never lapse into the kind of vulgar empiricism that Jothikumar and his ilk do. This approach fails to see the wood for the trees. Or if you prefer, in terms of Marxist epistemology, this exclusively ‘case-by-case’ approach renders it impossible to move from the purely **preceptual** level to a the **conceptual** level in the process of cognition.

In my reply to Kumar David (L. G. Oct 1st) I identified the very hub of the Marxian frame of reference, applicable also to the National Question:— “It is **right to rebel against reaction**”. (Stalin, Mao). Let me explicate further, borrowing some terms which the discipline of bourgeois sociology itself borrowed from the field of cybernetics. Is one’s perspective that of system-change or that of “system-maintenance”? That is the fundamental question. If one’s perspective is one of system-change i.e. revolution, then it is imperative to locate and identify each and every centrifugal factor operating within

the system. That is to say, it is necessary to locate and identify each and every force working to destabilize the system. Changing the idiom somewhat, we may say that revolutionary Marxists must locate the multiple, complex and unevenly structured contradictions within a given socio-economic formation, with a view to hastening the ‘fusion’ or ‘condensation’ of all these contradictions to the point of ‘explosion’. Just as the struggle of the oppressed nations in Tzarist Russia, ‘the prison-house of the nationalities’ gravely undermined Tzardom, the revolutions in the colonial, semi-colonial and dependent entities attacked world imperialism in its rear. Be it at the global level or in a local context, the national liberation struggles to exercise the right of self-determination opens up a second front so to speak against the common and chief foe, i.e. the class enemy, the ruling bourgeoisie.

The working class movement and the oppressed nations in ferment are each other’s natural allies, just as, for example, the USSR and the ‘Third world’ peoples are natural allies in today’s struggle against imperialism. The working class movement and the national movements of the oppressed, should logically seek to **reinforce** and **radicalize** each other’s struggles. Though Jothikumar is correct in a general sense when he writes that “Marxists are expected to view problems from class and not as chauvinistic and emotional points of view” he fails to see the pitfall of a **reductionist** approach, one which would mechanically reduce the National situation to ‘mere’ class factors. It is necessary to comprehend the dialectical interrelationship of national and class struggle, of a revolutionary nationalism and scientific

socialism, of national liberation and social revolution. Marxists therefore, must extend full and consistent support to the struggle of the oppressed nation for self-determination firstly because it is right to rebel against reaction and secondly because the opening up of new fronts and formation of new alliances is of fundamental strategic significance for the revolutionary struggle.

Of course all this holds true only for those who, like Lenin, have grasped the actuality of the revolution; who, like Stalin, have a sense of **revolutionary realism**. But then, Jothikumar’s perspective is clearly not one of ‘system change’ but one of ‘system-maintenance’ and ‘conflict management’ which is why he is hysterical about the possibility of India, Burma, China (?) Pakistan, Yugoslavia and several other countries being torn to pieces in the event of the recognition of the right of self-determination. This is also why in the same article he so feverishly seeks solutions to the problems of the Tamils “within the bourgeois state and the United Sri Lanka” (L. G. July 15th). It is to make the contrast with this perspective of system-maintenance (reformism) that I drew attention to the line of those genuine Marxists in these and other countries who are in the actual struggle for radical, qualitative ‘system-change’. Their position on the national question in their own societies flows consistently from their revolutionary perspective. Maoists many of them may be, but in the best sense of the word—quite unlike those local acolytes of Deng Hsiao Peng who denounced the railway strike of 1976 as a counter-revolutionary plot; who graced same platforms as Sirima Bandaranaike and called for support to the SLFP in the 1977 general elections; and

who attack any form of Left unity in the pages of the SLFP Mudalali press.

Those who supported the SLFP at a time when it was jailing and torturing Tamil youths in the North, while burning and looting estate lines in the guise of land reform, have no moral right to speak on the Tamil issue. Those very elements who passed resolutions calling upon the UNP government to combat Cuba and Vietnam within the Non-aligned Movement, have no moral right to cast aspersions at heroic Vietnam, that unshakable outpost of the Socialist camp in South-East Asia.

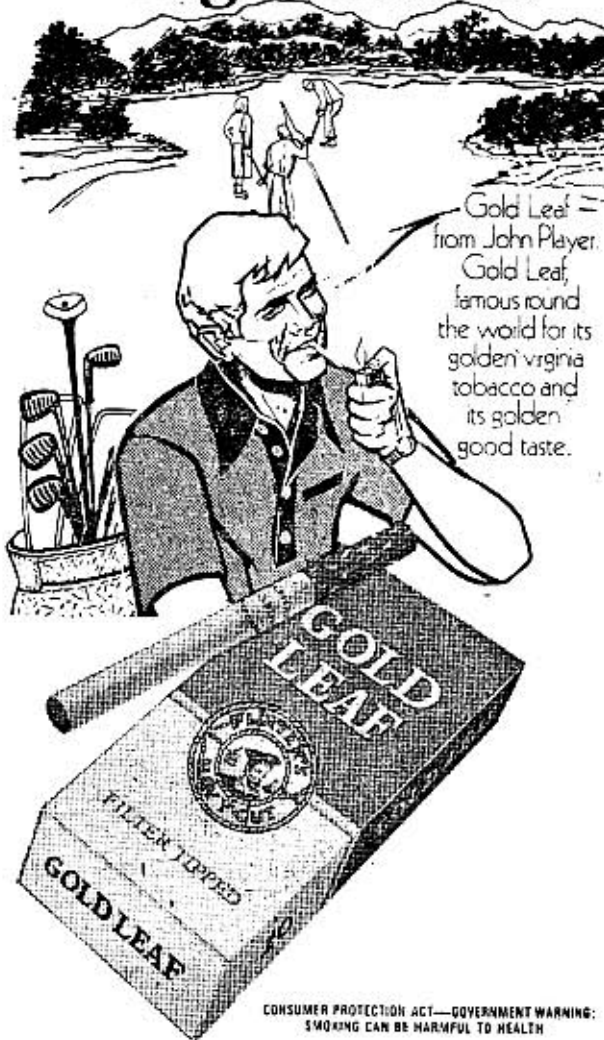
As for the National Question, a vulgarly empirical 'case-by-case' approach bears not the slightest affinity with Leninism. Lenin's formulation contained in the Resolution of the London International Congress, 1896 is one of absolute clarity: "this Congress declares that it stands for the full right of **all nations to self-determination** and expresses its sympathy for the workers of every country now suffering under the yoke of **military national or other absolutism**. This Congress, calls upon the workers of all these countries to join the ranks of the class-conscious workers of the whole world in order jointly to fight for the defeat of international capitalism and for the achievement of the aims of international Social Democracy." (my italics).

Furthermore, in the same work 'The Right of Nations to Self-determination' Lenin says:

"The policy of Marx and Engels as the Irish question serves as a splendid example of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nations should adopt towards national movements, an example which has lost none of its immense practical importance. It serves as a warning against that "servile haste" with which the philistines of all countries, colours and languages hurry to label as "utopian" the idea of altering the frontiers

(Continued on Page 24)

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MASTERS

# 'Literature and Revolution': a reassessment

LITERATURE

by Reggie Siriwardena

Trotsky's literary criticism has undergone the same fate as his strictly political writings. Buried in unmerited oblivion or obloquy by his antagonists, it has been turned into an object of uncritical reverence by his adherents. Even Isaac Deutscher, though not an orthodox Trotskyist, was over-adulatory in the chapter on Trotsky as literary critic in *The Prophet Unarmed*.

Literature was certainly one of Trotsky's life-long and central interests. When, in the 1920s, a Soviet literary group complained that there were 'no Soviet Belinskys' (Belinsky was the great Russian critic of the mid-nineteenth century), Trotsky answered: 'If Vissarion Belinsky could be transported alive into our times, he would probably be... a member of the Polit-bureau.' It is possible that Trotsky was thinking of himself in writing this sentence. He undoubtedly had some of the equipment for a 'Soviet Belinsky'—a keen sensitivity towards literature, a Marxist awareness of the interrelations between literature and society, and a rich and incisive prose style. But not only was his literary criticism fragmentary and occasional, as a marginal activity engaged in during moments of respite from his political life; it seems to me also a blend of brilliant and penetrating insights, blind spots and partialities of vision.

All the more reason why an objective and impartial assessment should be made of Trotsky as literary critic, and the present centenary would be an appropriate occasion. Writing in Sri Lanka, however, one cannot attempt this in a comprehensive manner, not having access to some of the essential material—for instance, the rare volumes of Trotsky's *Collected Works* published in Moscow in the twenties, of which two were devoted to his writings on litera-

ture and culture. That is why I have confined this article for the most part to his book on post-revolutionary Soviet literature—*Literature and Revolution*—which was his most sustained work of literary criticism.

In *Literature and Revolution* (1924) Trotsky was still writing as a member of the ruling group in the Soviet Union, and both non-Marxists and non-Stalinist Marxists have been favourably impressed by the liberalism of his stand on the question of party policy towards literature:

The party exercises leadership in the working class but not over the entire historical process. There are some fields in which it leads directly and imperiously. There are other fields in which it supervises...and still others where it can only offer its co-operation. There are finally fields where it can only orientate itself and keep abreast with what is going on. The field of art is not one in which the party is called on to command.'

While this pronouncement is still as valid as when it was made, Trotsky's estimate of the Soviet literature of the immediate post-revolutionary years appears now surprisingly wide off the mark: 'The arts have revealed a terrible helplessness, as they always do at the beginning of a great epoch.' Trotsky argued that the absorption of energies in political action had spared little for the arts, and drew an analogy with the barrenness of literature in the years of the French Revolution (an analogy adopted also by Deutscher).

I think, on the contrary, that in the Soviet Union the first decade after the revolution can be seen in perspective to have been a brilliant period in the arts—certainly in literature, also

perhaps (as qualified critics of these media have suggested) in the theatre and painting, while the cinema was about to blossom when Trotsky wrote of the 'helplessness of the arts' (the *Battleship Potemkin* belongs to the next year). Trotsky's analogy between the French and Russian Revolutions is misleading. The immediate impact of the Russian Revolution on the arts was vivifying: the decline didn't come till the bureaucratic regimentation of the arts at the end of the twenties.

Why was Trotsky so depreciating in his view of post-revolutionary Soviet literature? A re-reading of *Literature and Revolution* suggests that this was due to a combination of different factors. However liberal his approach to literature may have been in comparison with that of his successors of the Stalin era, his judgments on some of the non-Marxist writers reflected the limitations of a political activist in the range of his sympathies and responses. Hence, perhaps, Mayakovsky's epigram on Trotsky; adapting the Russian proverb, *Pervyi blin komom* (The first pancake is a lump), he wittily turned it to *Pervyi blin narkomom* (The first pancake is a people's commissar), implying that even as a critic Trotsky couldn't help remaining a commissar.

On the other hand, Trotsky was too good a judge of literature not to look critically at some of the extravagant claims made for the pro-revolutionary writers in his own camp. Thus, on different grounds he tended to find both the revolutionary and the non-revolutionary artists unsatisfying. Specifically, as I shall suggest, he was wrong about Blok and Akhmatova, he was both right and wrong about Esenin, he was right about Mayakovsky, and he failed to take

notice of Isaak Babel, perhaps the finest writer of prose fiction of the early Soviet period.

Trotsky devoted a whole chapter of his book to Aleksandr Blok (the only writer so honoured). Dismissing all Blok's pre-revolutionary poetry (a rejection which is too sweeping), he hailed **The Twelve**—that astonishing work written a few months after October, and drawing its life from the stormy life of the streets of post-revolutionary Petrograd. 'But none the less,' wrote Trotsky, '**The Twelve** is not a poem of the Revolution. It is the swan-song of the individualistic art that went over to the Revolution.'

Trotsky found justification for this view in two elements of the poem. The killing of Katka by Petrukha, the Red Guard (Trotsky said 'Vanka', but that was an error: Vanka was the bourgeois officer) seemed to him an act of individual hooliganism which revealed Blok's failure to understand the sobriety and ascetic character of the revolution. And of the apparition of Christ carrying a red flag and marching ahead of the Red Guards, which climaxes the poem, Trotsky wrote: 'Christ belongs in no way to the Revolution, only to Blok's past.'

It seems to me that time has vindicated Blok's poem against Trotsky's criticisms. To Blok, who responded enthusiastically to October, a naive idealisation of the revolution was as alien as it must be to any genuine artist. In celebrating the heroism and self-sacrifice of the revolution in spite of the fact that Petrukha uses his rifle to settle a personal vendetta, Blok was conveying a realisation of the fact that revolutions are made not by angels or supermen but by human beings with their imperfections and weaknesses.

Trotsky's reaction to the Christ-figure at the end of Blok's poem reveals a similar incomprehension. He could see Christ only in terms of the exploiting character of organised religion and of the oppressive and reactionary political role of the Russian Church. But it is perfectly clear from Blok's poem

that he set Christ against the Church—Christ at the head of the Red Guards (who don't see him and who disown him) against the well-fed priest of the early part of the poem.

Perhaps today, in the light of the theology of liberation, we can appreciate Blok's insight better than Trotsky could. But Blok's Christ-figure has behind him several centuries of Christian—and specifically, Russian Christian—history. Serget Hackel's recent study of the poem has shown how consciously Blok underlined the fact that his Christ was the Christ not of the Orthodox Church but of many generations of Russian heretics, dissenters and rebels, Blok, neither Marxist nor Christian, effected in his poem the most significant literary confluence in modern literature between the two traditions.

In fairness it must be said that on Blok's poem Trotsky erred in the company of other early Soviet critics (e.g. Lunacharsky). Lenin too remarked rather ironically to an acquaintance that he couldn't understand the last two lines of **The Twelve** (the apparition of Christ). But on both critical points raised by Trotsky Soviet criticism of the post-Stalin era has shown a more just appreciation of the significance of Blok's masterpiece. On the eve of Blok's birth-centenary next year, **The Twelve** doesn't appear the 'swan-song' that Trotsky took it to be. A comment by Sergei Hackel, who calls it 'the poem of the Russian revolution', may be contrasted with Trotsky's analogy, in the literary sphere, between the French and Russian revolutions. 'The French revolution,' says Hackel, 'found no comparable spokesman: out of its throes no comparable masterpiece was born.'

(To be concluded)

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# WHICH WAY FOR THE LEFT?

## (II) Gamini Yapa - Peradiga Sulanga (East Wind) Group - Part II

*Q: Unlike most other Left groups, you once succeeded in establishing a fairly strong base in the North, though this support now seems to have been heavily eroded by separatist youth militants. What is your position on 'Tamil Eelam'?*

*A: Based on our acceptance by the equality of nations, we also accept the right of self-government of Tamil nation, hence the right of self-determination of Tamil. But as Lenin taught us we are not to support each and every movement for self-determination, since some such movements will ultimately lead to the strengthening of reaction and imperialism. Though we would accept the concept of self-determination of nations because of its democratic character, such a slogan is necessarily a bourgeois one. In contrast our slogan will be self-determination, for the proletariat and working masses.*

We disagree with the notion that there is Sinhalese imperialism to deal with. To say so will be professing a vulgar notion of imperialism not a scientific one.

And as the facts stand, the struggle for "Tamil Eelam" will ultimately bring about a separate state in North and East which will be a virtual colony of Soviet social-imperialism. This will be a worse situation than what exists now. Also it will be disastrous to the progressive and revolutionary movements of Sri Lanka. On the other hand this struggle undermines the traditional unity and friendship between the two working peoples of the two nations, who organised themselves together and waged democratic and progressive struggles together for several decades. Therefore the demand for a Tamil Eelam, creates disunity and division of forces amongst progressive and revolutionary movement as well as brings the intervention of Soviet Union.

In our opinion it is quite wrong to subject the Tamil population to armed suppression on this issue. But as matters stand, we hope that there should be a compromise and a friendly atmosphere must be brought about so that they can give up their present demand for a separate state.

The problem of the Tamils can be ultimately solved only in the course of new democratic revolution with the working people becoming their own masters amongst both Sinhalese and Tamil populations.

*Q: You have recently published two volumes in what is projected as a multi-volume series 'A Socialist Analysis of the Agrarian Question'. What would you say is the present situation and prospect facing this country's peasantry in the context of the UNP government's policies such as the Mahaweli scheme?*

*A: The policies of the UNP government are leading the country more and more into indebtedness. Hence the long term outcome of the present development is not beneficial to the peasantry. And the path of agricultural development as envisaged by the UNP does not lead towards economic independence but will bind us more and more to the international imperialistic financial and economic organisations and institutions. Although it can increase the production of rice and other food items it will definitely weaken our political and economic independence and sovereignty.*

As shown in the other parts of the developing world, this kind of bourgeois development in agriculture will accelerate the class differentiation of the peasantry, being sufferings to millions and benefits to the privileged classes in the countryside.

*Q: How would you characterize the evolving situation in the country as a whole and what are the tasks of the Left in this context?*

(The first part appeared in the LG on September 15)

*A: The situation in the country is evolving towards a foreign-monopoly dominated, dictatorial form of political and social structure as in South Korea or Taiwan. The recent trends in governmental borrowing foreign economic participation and enactment of Draconian legislation points towards this direction.*

The left forces in the country have mostly lost the confidence of the masses due to their past performance. Since they were not thoroughly based Marxist parties, all the way they have degenerated into bourgeois parliamentarianism, and petty bourgeois opportunism. The traditional parties through their participation in suppression of worker's and people's struggles and involvement in malfractions and corruption while in power have lost the confidence of the masses. Meanwhile the revolutionary forces have lost it because of their extremist political lines.

The task of the left forces now seems to be serious study of first experiences, resolute work at grass-root level to organise the masses, especially the workers peasants and lower middle class elements and then join hands in the struggle against all forms of foreign domination and domestic reaction. Whatever unity amongst left forces has to be backed by serious political, educational and organisational work at the mass level.

*Q: What are the main obstacles towards Left unity and especially the reunification of the Maoist movement in Sri Lanka? Now that 5 pro-Albanian Maoist groups are said to be converging do you still hope to build up an independent party of your own or to integrate with like-minded pro-Chinese Maoist groups such as that of Dr. Dharmasekera?*

A: Concerning the unity of Left forces the main obstacles lie inside the left parties and organisations itself. There are ideological as well as historically developed differences amongst these parties. Even among groups with the same ideological basis there will be differences created in their past relationships.

The bigger parties lack the initiative in this respect having lost the confidence of the smaller ones. And also past experience had shown clearly that in whatever unity achieved the bigger parties will strive to establish their own domination which always creates distrust among the partners. It will not be possible to achieve true and strong unity among the Left, till such attitudes are overcome.

The antagonistic attitude shown by these major left parties towards the organisations professing revolutionary struggle also hinders the achievement of unity amongst the left forces.

As regards to the Marxist-Leninist of Sri Lanka, we believe that a form of unity can be evolved through closer coordination and co-operation in ideological and organisational work. Even amongst these parties there are differences in working styles and organisational procedures which have developed during the past years of experience.

The pro-Albanian groups cannot be considered as Maoists since, the Albanian party leaders, who in Mao's lifetime proclaimed him to be the greatest Marxist-Leninist in our era, have suddenly found him out to be only a social democrat devoid of all Marxist-Leninist thinking.

At present our movement is also engaged in a procedure to come to closer cooperation with organisations such as Democratic National Front led by Comrade Dharmasekera, and Marxist-Leninist Party of Sri Lanka.

Q: *One of the notable efforts of your group was in the field of literature and literary criticism for which you published a bulletin called 'Nava Sahithya'. What do you think of the present trends and also the tasks of progressives in*

*the field of creative and literary-critical endeavour?*

A: Though we have contributed to literary criticism in the earlier period, we must admit that at present our contribution is small in this field. Regarding the present trends, we hold that those led by the magazine "Mawatha" shows a healthy and creative performance which should be encouraged.

But it seems to me that the question of the actual relationship between politics and literature is one of the basic issues not yet solved, and demands a lot of ideological discussions among all the progressive sections concerned.

Q: *While you assert that the UNP is the main foe, you also state that the USSR is the main external enemy. Since the UNP is clearly pro-Western aren't these 2 positions contradictory?*

It is true that UNP is in allegiance with the Western imperialisms. In the case of USSR she has transformed first into a capitalist state and then into an imperialist power, in fact which is exhibited more and more by her economic, political and military performance in various regions such as Afganistan, Ethiopia and South East Asia. Our two positions are contradictory only in the sense that there are contradictions between Western imperialism and Social-Imperialism.

Q: *Several Maoist groups which were formally pro-Chinese, have become quite critical of China's foreign policy in the post-Mao-period and even during the last stages of his life-during which they say, opportunist deviations took place. They have also gradually dropped the term Mao Tse-Tung thought. (For eg. Shan's CCP, Nava Lanka CP etc). What are your comments on this phenomenon?*

A: Though there are allegations about so-called "recent opportunist deviations" in China's foreign policy, we can only observe its long time evolution based on the scientific analysis of the actual international situation by Chairman Mao. To understand Chinese policy it needs one to examine processes such as, the transforma-

tion of the Socialist Soviet Union into a capitalist and then to an imperialist state, the evolution of Soviet foreign policy into a hegemonistic policy seeking global economical, political and military domination, the decline of the other superpower, the US mainly due to the struggle of the people of the world during the 50's and 60's, the emergence of the developing countries as a collective force in international politics etc. Of course there are always his interpretation of Chinese policy by those people who make the worst mistake in our times by taking Soviet Union as a Socialist community, more a community rigourously exporting socialism to other communities.

We must mention here that there is a tendency in international politics where the two superpowers US and Soviet Union and colluding to attack and destroy forces, (even important individuals) which are friendly towards China. This was clearly revealed in the case of Ali Bhutto in Pakistan, and the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. Another aspect of this feudening is the commivance and assistance accorded to the Soviet hocked forces by US imperialism in the suppressing of pro-Chinese and Marxist-Leninist forces wherever possible.

In spite of the inseparation of China's present foreign and domestic policies as bending towards capitalism we hold that there is an actual strengthening of the socialist system there and the new measures of modernisation and change keeps with the spirit and essence of Mao's thoughts. It is quite possible that to our Socialists who for a long time had anticipated socialism as a system of beauraucratic manoevering delivering, socialism to the people, it is difficult to understand and grasp the enriching experiences of socialist democracy and socialist ideology in China.

The progress of international events has proved and is proving daily the correctness of the analysis of the Chinese. And we must note that whatever step China takes in respect to international matters she does so in an open manner.

## The Doubtful . . .

(Continued from Page 10)

between human rights and stability, but between the client's interests and the patron's. In short, at a critical point frequently unforseen (and this is the real challenge for the decision-makers in Washington) the once indispensable dictator becomes not merely expendable but a pressing danger.

Two events dramatised the US dilemma. The US Ambassador in Seoul was recalled as Washington began to persuade Park to "compromise." But Park, in power 18 years, was in no mind to oblige. The very next week, Defence Secretary Brown was in Seoul assuring South Koreans that US security interests will be safeguarded as strongly as before.

In such a situation the only available option is to find a 'compromise candidate' who will "liberalise" in a way acceptable to the opposition and thus 'contain' the situation. In Iran, it was tried but too late; in Nicaragua, the same exercise failed again. In El Salvador, right now, the dictator has fled and a 'new look' junta ready to "liberalise" has been put in place.

Park has gone. In the idiom of the Vietnam era, the dominos fall, the models collapse. Who next? Marcos and his 'New Society'?

## Empiricism . . . .

(Continued from Page 10)

of states that were established by the violence and privileges of the landlords and bourgeoisie of one national

If the Irish and English proletariat had not accepted Marx's policy and had not made the secession of Ireland their slogan, this would have been the worst sort of opportunism, a neglect of their duties as democrats and socialists, and a concession to English reaction and the English bourgeoisie. . . ."

I assure Jothikumar and his literary colleagues that the quotation is not edited.

(The Chintaka-Jothikumar debate is closed — ED.)

## Letters . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

### Rejoinder to G.G.

"If one wants to clarify a matter, one does not go to an interested party" says Mr. Ponnambalam, in his letter to the Editor, published in the October 1st issue of this journal.

In his earlier letter on the same topic published in the July 15th issue, the same Mr. Ponnambalam says: "I challenge Dissanaik to prove it by asking the Police, who were present at all our meetings."

So, taking these two statements together, one can logically deduce that in Mr. P's opinion the Police, unlike the TULF fall into the category of a **disinterested party**.

I, for my part, have nothing further to say to any person who thinks that the Police are a disinterested party to any dispute that involves the elected representatives of the Tamil people—the TULF—and its leadership. Police statements at the Sansoni Commission sittings reveal clearly just how 'disinterested' are their views on **Mr. & Mrs. Amirthalingam**.

It strikes as particularly ironic that Mr. G. G. Ponnabalam Jr., practising the same profession as his distinguished father should recommend to me the Police as the most reliable source when the highly successful career of G.G. Ponnabalam Snr. was largely built on proving the exact opposite.

**Gamini Dissanaik**

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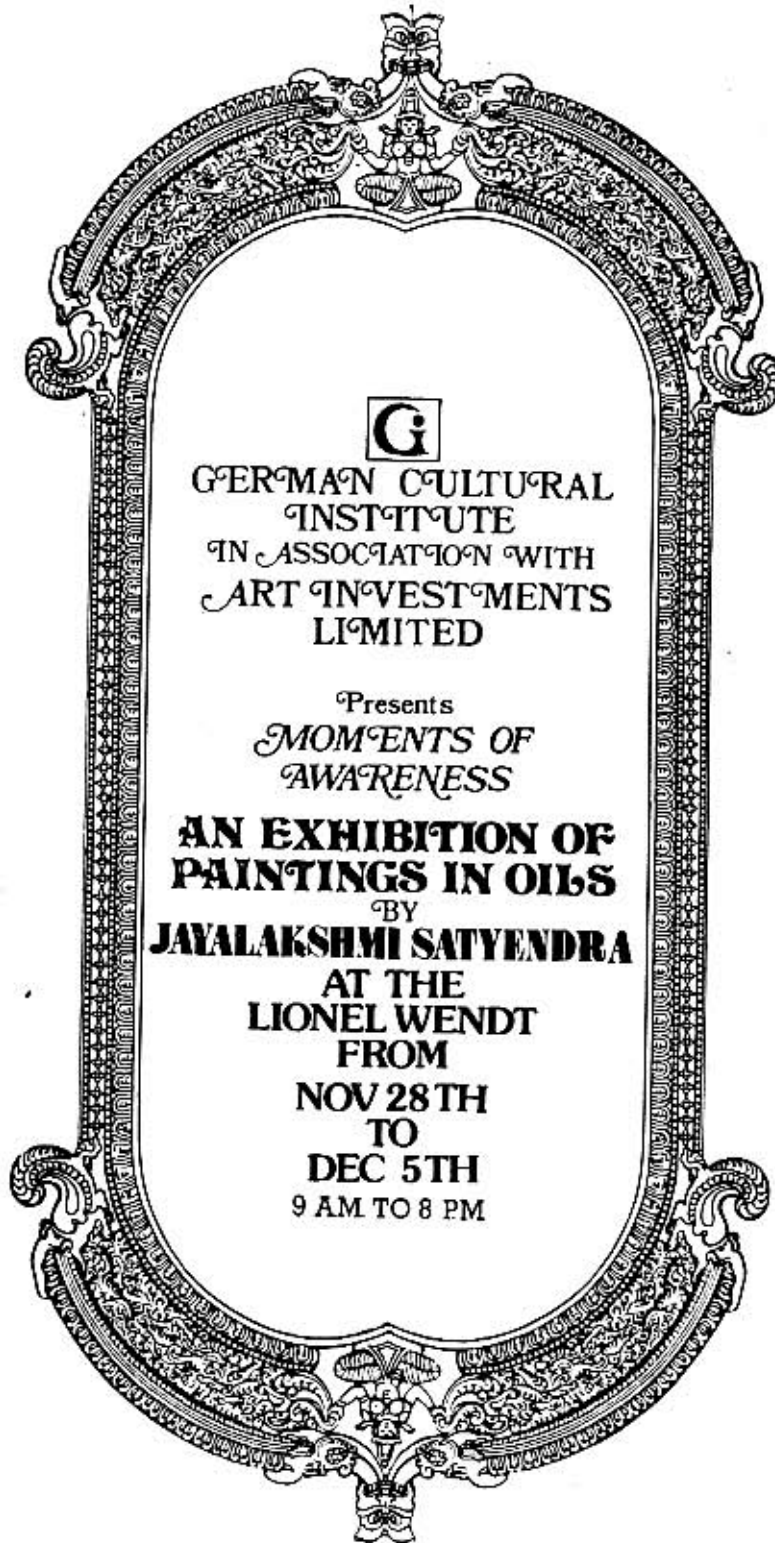
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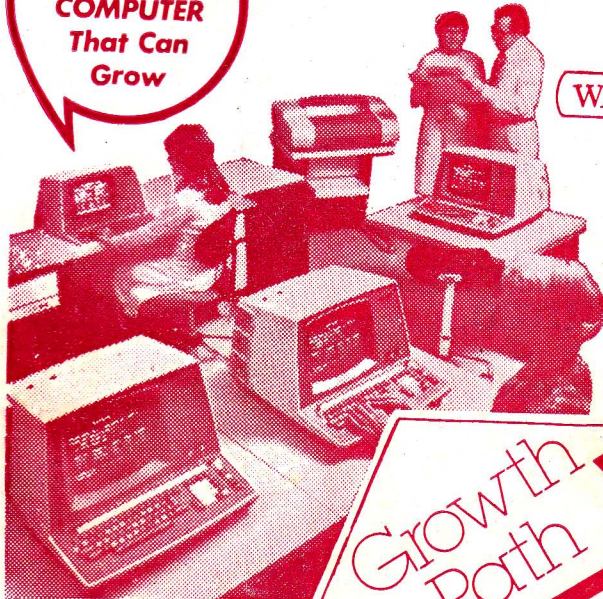
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