

Special report
J. Uyangoda

HISTORIC TU CONVENTION

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TULF and

the DDC

'carrot'

Culture and Tamil awakening

— K. Kailasapathy

Crime, punishment and society

— Gamini Fonseka

Mahaweli problems

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New Line

"Too many Bandaranaiques" — a most unlikely observation in SLFP circles. Yet this was the now (party) line used by the once all-powerful Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike when he withdrew his name from a contest for the post of secretary of the SLFP's Gampaha district committee. Evidently this move was warmly welcomed by party boss Mrs. Bandaranaike who came in as president of the committee unopposed.

Eventually ex-minister Mr. S.K.K. Sooriarachchi won the election (21/15) defeating another Bandaranayake the Gampaha MP, S.D., who spells his name with a 'Y'.

The committee elections are being held as the first step in choosing a new SLFP executive committee and central committee. Already about two thirds of the islandwide elections have been completed. Commenting on these elections Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, president of his district said "the new generation is taking over... the average age of the delegates is about 30". Mr. Anura Bandaranaike made the same point in a public speech. As the L.G. reported exclusively, there have been however some odd surprises which political observers are busy analysing.

Party stalwarts like Mr. Maipripala Senanayake and Mr. T. B. Illangaratne were elected unopposed while other veterans like Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle and Mr. V. T. G. Karunaratne came through only after surviving factional intrigues.

Sorry, Wrong Model

"So you want to model your country on Singapore...? It's the wrong model...why don't you consider Malaysia which is a country like Sri Lanka in many ways...?" This observation was made by a foreign banker who spent a couple of weeks here on an on-the-spot study of investment potential.

Asked to amplify his remarks, he added: "The leaders of Singapore rightly decided to make their island a service centre for

the region...and that means a first-class communications system. My hotel says that it cannot get a number I asked for because any number starting with "8" gives you an engaged tone all the time."

Eelam and Excursions

The West Germans have followed the French (L.G. Feb 15), in deciding that Sri Lankan visitors need visas. The TULF propaganda abroad has certainly made an impact. A Sri Lankan businessman who returned from West Germany was astonished to find himself bombarded with questions about the "oppressed Tamil minority" when he was travelling in the T. E. E.

The London-based TULF Propaganda unit has spread its message to US, Canada and Western Europe. It is particularly effective in the Scandinavian countries.

And now this same organisation has scored a major success in India after the visit of Mr. K. Vaikunthavasan the London organisations chief spokesman. It was Mr. Vaikunthavasan who made world news by posing off as the Foreign Minister of Eelam and addressing the UN General Assembly for two minutes! In Delhi Mr. Vaikunthavasan has met Mrs. Gandhi, the Indian Finance Minister, the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Sanjay Gandhi and many

(Continued on page 3)

Doctor's Dilemma

I read your news report on the above subject with great deal of interest, as not only am I a 'Doctor' but also I am in a 'Dilemma'. I believe your 'News Background' has presented the facts and issues correctly and hence it would have drawn the attention of doctors; indeed it has been a talking point amongst doctors.

The medical profession is the second oldest in Sri Lanka. It has maintained very high standards, within available resources and is comparable with those in the developed countries mentioned in your news item. In Sri Lanka, the medical course is the most difficult one and entry into Faculty of Medicine is undoubtedly the most difficult. The expenditure incurred by parents and guardians is much more than what the state incurs in training a person to qualify as a doctor or medical practitioner.

The government policy towards medical education and doctors to say the least is paradoxical and contradictory in its economic and development policy of 'open economy', non-restrictive free development,

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invitation to foreign entrepreneurs etc. Whilst allowing foreign GCE 'A' Level examinations why disallow foreign medical examinations especially when the Post Graduate Medical Institute has not yet got off the ground? It is nothing but fair to allow Foreign Medical Examinations till such time as Medical Degrees of the Post Graduate Institute achieve worldwide recognition. With regard to appointments the Government is at liberty to take into consideration local degrees.

With regard to medical mudalalies, it could be said that only Physicians, Surgeons, Paediatricians and Obstetricians who are in Colombo come into the high income group and that too after very hard work of 10-15 hours per day. The other consultants come into upper middle class with few exceptions. It has now become the standard practice for outstation consultants to use public transport for outstation travel. When compared with politicians, gem merchants, transport and timber contractors, high income lawyers, architects, estate 'superintendents, top government bureaucrats, bank managers etc. Their income is not that high.

So with inflation, except the very few Colombo consultants, others are finding it extremely difficult to maintain decent living standards. Its no wonder that doctors especially the juniors are in revolt. With passage of time, as the doctors get 'marginalised', they would be forced to join hands with the rest of the working class.

The doctors, here again, the more junior, are yet to realize that no longer will it be possible to enjoy high living standards, and that it is only in a socialist state that they would get their due recognition and job satisfaction too.

Kandy.

Doctor

Aid without string-hoppers and all that

In 'Lanka Guardian' of March 15th, Ambassador Woeckel like a white Victorian Prophet of the Empire, expounds the shining credo of aid without strings.

Now will some bright boy-scout from the Ministry of Planning pipe in and tell us, on oath, (he can swear on the Mien Kampf) how Sri Lanka has spent these exciting shopping allowances for capital goods;

(1) In the Western and Far Eastern Supermarket

(2) In the Socialist Bloc

(3) In the Industrialized Non Aligned Countries

U. Karunatilake

Try this one

Dear Touchstone, not even in the ideal state, say Stalin's Russia, would a governor of a prison be empowered to free a prisoner who passed an IQ test, far less to enhance the sentence of one who failed it. Be that as it may, from the fact that Peter took as long as 10 mts we can deduce that all 3 discs employed were white. If both black discs had been used it would have taken Peter only a second to figure it out and if one black disc had been used maybe a minute. Any self-respecting Sri Lanka prisoner would have solved your problem in 2 mts.

Try this one: Stalin arrested Trotsky before he escaped to Prinkipo. He visited his prisoner in Death Row on Sunday morning and told him: "As you know Leon Davidovich, I'm going to have you shot in the neck. you will be shot some morning before next Sunday but only I know which morning. For old times' sake I'll give you one faint chance. I'll be passing your cell each morning one hour before execution time. If on any morning you

ANNOUNCEMENT

On account of the steady increase in production costs, we have been reluctantly compelled to raise the price of the "Lanka Guardian."

The price of local paper alone has been increased by the National Paper Corporation by 80 per cent. The price of imported paper has also been increased at the source, while import duty has gone up by 25 per cent.

From May 1, the "Lanka Guardian" will cost Rs. 3/50. Paid-up subscribers will get their copy at the old rates till their subscriptions expire. The new subscription rates, both local and foreign, will be announced in the May 1 issue.

There will be no issue of the "Lanka Guardian" on April 15. The next issue, May 1 — our Second Anniversary — will be a double number, priced at Rs. 3/50.

call out to me: "This is the morning, Joseph Vissarionovich" and you are right I'll set you free". The very next morning, Monday, Joe was going past Leon's cell and Leon called out: "This is the day". He was right. How did he know?

Solution: The basic fact to remember is Joe wants Leon dead. If he puts it off till Saturday Leon would have no difficulty in escaping because on Saturday morning he would call out "This is the day" there being no other day possible. If then Saturday is ruled out Friday would have to be ruled out as well for the identical reasons. Thursday too, and then Wednesday and finally Tuesday. Monday remains as the only possible day. P.S.: Joe had Leon shot regardless.

Colombo 3. V. P. Vittachi

Nationality

Dr. W. I. Siriweera's reassessment of the Dutthagamini-Elara episode in the 'Lanka Guardian' of February 1st was interesting reading. It is indeed heartening

(Continued on page 8)

TULF and the DDC 'carrot'

NEWS
BACKGROUND

"J. R. Is the supreme master of carrot-and-stick tactics...the stick seems to have been heavy enough, at least for the moment...will the carrot be juicy enough to tempt the TULF?"

This comment was made by a Left leader when prominent Opposition personalities met immediately after the recent National Convention of T. U's to discuss May Day. The discussion led to the possible participation of Tamil trade unions, the situation in Jaffna and the likely TULF response to any proposals of the government on Devolution, following the Tennekoon Commission report.

According to an official report (CDN) organised crime in the North has shown a marked decrease. The number of premeditated murders, armed robberies, hold-ups of banks, co ops etc has dropped sharply. The report adds that this change is "attributed to the stringent security measures adopted by the police and army last year".

While 'development' is the self-avowed objective of the proposed District Development Council, there is little doubt that it has a clear political aspect, at least in regard to the Tamils and their long-standing agitation for federalism, regional autonomy, and Eelam. Thus, the L. G. in its last issue, posed the question in the headline of its lead story: "Will Devolution satisfy the TULF?"

The TULF heirarchy is already discussing the report, or rather reports, submitted by members of the Presidential Commission. The TULF nominee, Dr. Neelan Thiruchalvam has submitted a separate report.

Both TULF and SLFP leaders claim to know the main contents of the majority report. On the basis of this information which may or may not be absolutely accurate, the common view is that only one or two TULF MP's may be

prepared to try out the experiment...on an interim basis. But the hardcore of the TULF leadership (and this includes TULF General Secretary, Amirthalingam, President M. Sivasithamparam and the Jaffna MP, Yogeswaram, a key figure) may agree to work along with the DDC's but not accept the idea as a **Political settlement**.

According to these sources, the government will have to consider the following points when it discusses the implementation of the Tennekoon Commission report:

(1) The DDC will be a corporate body with, if necessary, subordinate law-making powers, subject to parliamentary approval.

(2) The composition of the Council should be such that (a) MP's continue to enjoy the authority and influence they now wield in relation to priorities and allocation of money to district projects. (b) heads or local authorities should also be included in the DDC. I.e. Mayors, Chairmen etc. (c) the DDC must reflect the diversity of political opinion in the district.

The MP's will constitute the majority of the DDC membership. Besides MP's and Mayors and Chairmen, a third category can be elected at a general election on the PR system. Voting for DDC's can be on a separate list. The formula for this could be that the nomination list of every recognised party can have 2 categories.

(3) An Executive Committee to implement a District Development Plan. The Committee could consist of the District Minister and three members of the DDC.

(4) The District Development Plan can cover the following: (a) Agriculture and food; (b) Land use and settlement; (c) Animal husbandry; (d) Co-operatives; (Small and medium scale industries; (f) Fisheries (g) Rural Development (h) Housing; (i) Education (j) Health Services; (k) Cultural Affairs; (l) Minor irriga-

tion; (m) Agricultural marketing; (n) Social services; (o) Agrarian services;

(5) An independent advisory Commission will examine the question of financial allocations on the basis of certain criteria. The Commission will bear in mind area, population, development potential etc.

(6) Local government institutions will have a three-tier structure — Urban Council, Municipal Council, DDC.

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

newspaper editors. He has handed over a report to Mrs. Gandhi on the Tamil situation here.

Anxiously Awaited

A new sessional paper (the third of its kind) which reports the decisions of the Parliamentary Select Committee on top appointments is now in print. It will include the Committee's observations on the Directors of the Free Trade Zone (GCEZ)

What if any are found "unsuitable"?

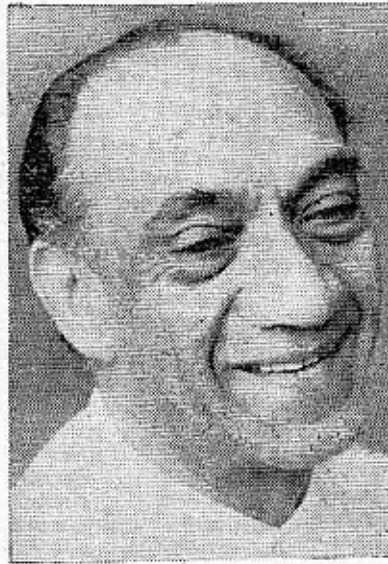
This interesting innovation of the Jayewardene government is an adaptation of the US practice. "But there is an important difference" notes a wellknown law lecturer. "In the US, the Congress is part of the appointing process. It can therefore block any Presidential move before the appointment is actually made...Here, the parliamentary committee only reviews high-level appointments" he adds.

A senior Queen's Counsel sees the hypothetical situation from another angle. "The Select Committee reports to the House... the appointing authority is not legally obliged to take notice and reverse his decision...however there is the force of convention.

JR as 'structuralist'

While each strong leader (and sometimes, each regime) finds historians who can be persuaded to re-write history in his idealized image, a future political biographer who consciously strives to be non-partisan (if that is possible in politics) may well decide to describe J. R. as a "structuralist".

From the very beginning, J. R. has acted on the assumption that whatever a government's policies — good, bad or indifferent — the self-declared aims can only be achieved if the appropriate structures exist. And so, he has initiated sweeping structural changes, the most far-reaching in our modern political and constitutional history. Central to this experimentation is of course the question of power, its mobilisation and concentration, and its effective distribution.



President Jayewardene

The centralisation of power which the UNP's opponents from

the SLFP to the Left see as a departure from democracy, as incipient Bonapartism or as neo-fascist tendencies, has affected every critical area of political life: the constitutional system, parliament, the electoral system, the political parties etc.

And yet the President confesses a sense of disappointment. What troubles him is development; in other words economics and the material satisfaction of the people. The UNP's 'new' policies have brought results, but not enough. Once, again, J. R. was thinking aloud about structures. At a weekend rally in Harispattu, he spoke about development, the polls system, district councils etc. So yet another experiment seems on the cards. Will it work?

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Mahaweli — a dream come true . . .

Inaugurating the Victoria project, President Jayewardene said the earlier plan considered by D. S. Senanayake and Dudley Senanayake and then by C. P. de Silva was to complete the Mahaweli Development scheme in 30 years. But the following important questions were left unanswered.

- Where shall the dams on the Mahaweli be located?

- Where is the money for that work?
- Where are the men to do that work?

When the present government took over in 1977 they decided first that the Mahaweli work should be completed not in 30 years but in 6 years because the people of Sri Lanka could not wait for 30 years to get the food,

clothing and electricity they needed.

He was happy to tell them now that they had all the money now to go ahead with all that work. They had also started work on many projects under the Mahaweli Accelerated Programme. For that he wished to thank his Ministers, the MPs, the officials and the people of this country he said.

. . . and a time for nostalgia

by A Staff Reporter

The Union Jack was flying once again. It was part of what was the biggest "road show" enacted by this government in nearly three years in office — the inauguration of the Victoria Project. Large stretches of the Colombo-Kandy-Teldeniya road were decorated with green flags. Beyond Kandy the road was punctuated by elaborate pandals. Some carried greetings but one carried the portraits of the President, the Prime Minister and Minister Gamini Dissanayaka. There was one striking pandal with a larger-than-life picture of the President.

In keeping with a well-established, non-partisan tradition, school children from the villages on the Kandy-Teldeniya road had been pressed into service. They lined the road carrying the national flags of Sri Lanka and the UK. In one village the Royal standard of Queen Elizabeth II was flying.

Who said the sun has set on the empire? In the past, trade followed the flag. Now the flag follows aid. For one, hundred

million pounds the Union Jack flies again. But is aid a form of imperialism as Teresa Hayter claims? Or is aid a form of "creeping socialism." The Victoria project gives a much-needed boost to British contractors. And aid to Sri Lanka from the British Government (100 million pounds as outright grant) may provide much needed work for British engineering firms and employment for British construction workers.

The inauguration of the Victoria project, the largest dam on the Mahaweli, was a time for nostalgia. Minister E. L. Senanayake spoke about the Parakramabahu era and its glories. He ended up prophesying that future historians will write about the "Jayawardene Era."

The President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, told the vast crowd which was in a carnival mood, about Queen Victoria after whom "the falls" were named. A noble queen she had even acceded to the wishes of the people of Kalutara and helped to preserve a Bo tree on the road.

The Governor who had wanted to cut it down for a "development" purpose had laughed off the protests of pious Buddhists but the Queen, as her own most famous saying goes, was not amused.

Queen Victoria he reminded the people of the hill country, was a descendent of King George III who took over the kingdom of Sri Lanka from the Sinhala dynasty. The last kings and queens of Kandy were of course from India and a large part of the gathering at Victoria were workers of Indian origin who had walked across from the nearby estates.

The President continued to trace the monarchy, from George III to Queen Elizabeth II. Republicanism came along in 1972, ending an ancient monarchy, one of the most ancient in the world ranging from the sixth century BC with Vijaya to Queen Elizabeth II, unbroken for 2,500 years, equalled only by the Japanese and Iranian monarchy.

Historic TU convention

by J. Uyangoda

It was a historic occasion in the annals of Lankan working class movement, as speaker after speaker stated amidst continuous applause from an audience of over 3500 trade union delegates. Some spokesmen of militant trade unions wanted the occasion to be more significant by adopting a programme of immediate action to protest against the policies of the UNP regime which have resulted in ever worsening living conditions and the erosion and even denial of some of the basic democratic rights.

The National Trade Union Delegates Convention convened by the Joint Trade Union Action Committee (JTUAC) held on the 8th and 9th of March, at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium was historic at least in two senses. Firstly, a majority of the trade unions (except mainly the pro-government and pro-JVP unions), irrespective of their political and organisational differences assembled together, through their delegates, to discuss the current situation. Secondly, it was an occasion of class unity and solidarity of the working people of this country transcending communal barriers. As the veteran trade unionist N. Shanmugathasan of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation put it, it was the anti-working class policies of the government that paved the way for this unity!

There were the delegates of the trade unions and trade union federations sympathising with or politically affiliated to the LSSP, CPSL, SLFP, TULF, NLSSP, CCP and the RMP. There were also some other independent unions. The Lanka Guru Sangamaya (one of the strongest teachers' unions and a long-standing member of the JTUAC, now with JVP political leanings) has thought it wise to withdraw from the JTUAC and stay out of the convention. A little confusion broke out outside the Sugathadasa stadium,

just before the proceedings started on the first day when a group of young JVPers started shouting slogans alleging that the Lanka Guru Sangamaya was expelled unjustifiably from the Action Committee "by the bureaucratic trade union Mudalali's". But, according to the Action Committee, the Guru Sangamaya withdrew on its own volition because, as a silver-haired member of the Committee put it, it had been looking for a chance "to shun the coming struggle." At any rate, the presence of H. N. Fernando, the leader of the Sangamaya (a knowledgeable and capable trade union leader in the country) was sorely missed.

In the course of the two day convention, over 60 T. U. spokesmen addressed the delegates. Throughout the proceedings, there was a unanimity concerning two matters. First was that working class unity is the imperative of the day. The various segments of the working class movement in this country can no longer afford the luxury of staying apart, given the gravity of the challenge posed by a ruling class which is more than prepared to discard its 'democratic' guise. As a young militant spokesman stressed, it has become a situation of "Unite or Perish". Secondly, almost every speaker emphasized the need for positive action. The organised sections of the working class should do something to protest against policies that are leading the people towards hardship and the country towards debt and dependence.

There were some differences of opinion as to what "steps" ought to be taken. Although most speakers talked, amidst applause, about a showdown between the working class and the capitalist class, it was clear that, coming to the question of concrete action, only a few favoured immediate action. There appeared

two trends as far as this "action" was concerned. Unions which follow the politics of the NLSSP (Vasudeva) were the main agitators for "a decision and a date" or a country-wide mass protest. Supported by an enthusiastic audience, they put pressure upon the JTUAC not to vacillate and to take a decision for a programme of action. The voice of the militants was first raised by T. Andradi of the Central Bank Employees Union which is always in the forefront of working class struggles.

The other trend was that of the "conservatives," as an observer at the convention put it. They were mainly representatives of the Unions politically following the lines of the SLFP, LSSP and the CPSL. Even the CMU appeared to be in the camp of "moderates". Warning the militants of the dangers of dragging the working class in to "adventurist struggles" without proper and adequate preparation and organisation, this "old-guard" exhibited a kind of restlessness developing in their minds over the growing tendency towards viewing an immediate struggle as the only available option. Even Vasudeva Nanayakkara, veritable idol of militant workers and the non-JVP youth, disappointed his own followers when he attempted to defend the Action Committee which came under implicit but unmistakable criticism of the "radicals".

However, it was the task of L. W. Pandita, the veteran Unionist to present a compromise formula. At the end of the two day proceedings, he announced that the Action Committee would meet very soon to fix a date for an island-wide mass protest. The delegates who had been pressing for an immediate decision seemed to have been satisfied at least for the time being. What kind of protest

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GARADS

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 2)

to find that scholars are beginning to study critically the Buddhist historical writings of our country such as the Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa, Culavamsa and Pujavali especially in relation to the Sinhala-Tamil conflict.

There are two points on which I disagree with Dr. Siriweera. First regarding the date of the Mahavamsa and Second regarding the ethnic identity of the generals in Dutthagamani's and Elara's armies through their names. The Anti-Tamil tendency in the Mahavamsa clearly indicates that it was written in the 7th century A. D. Till about the sixth century A. D. harmony and tolerance characterized the relations between the different religions in South India. In the Tamil Epic Manimekalai written before the 7th century we find the heroine advised to study in Kanchi, the philosophical systems of the Veda Siva, Vishnu, Ajivika, Jaina, Sankhya, Vaisesika and Lekayata. It was in the 7th century that the Tamil people began to entertain fears with regard to Buddhism and Jainism. With the conversion of the Pallava King, Mahendravarman I to Saivism by Swami Appar there was a revival of Saivism. Yuan Chwang, the Chinese traveller who visited India in 642 A. D. mentions with regret that his own religion, Buddhism was on the decline. In Sri Lanka too Hatthadatha with the help of the Tamil population in the North occupied Anuradhapura and made himself King with the name Dathopatisa. He also annoyed the monks of the Mahavihara by building a Vihara within its boundaries for the monks of the Abayagiri Vihara. This period was one of great insecurity to the Mahavihara due to the powerful revival of Hinduism in South India and to the threat of Buddhist heresies in Sri Lanka. There was a great fear that Buddhism would lose ground in Sri Lanka as it was happening in the mother country.

Regarding the ethnic identity of

the generals it has to be borne in mind that many Tamils had Sanskrit and Buddhist names and many Sinhalese, Tamil names from very early times. Even today the Sinhalese have pure Tamil names such as Tennekoon, Illangakoon, Ilaperuma, Elayaperuma etc. There were also in ancient times Tamil Buddhists and Sinhala Hindus. Hence names are not helpful at all to identify the ethnicity of the generals or commanders in the armies. It is a fruitless enterprise.

It is also interesting to note two traditions in the Mahavamsa with regard to this episode, the oral folk tradition as found in chapter twenty one and the written ecclesiastical tradition in chapter 22, following. The oral folk tradition from the "Athakathas" collected by the monks especially from the "Uttaravihara Athakathas" reflects the point of view of the ordinary people. Here Elara is described as a King who ruled for forty four years with even justice toward friend and foe. It contains folk tales of his deep sense of justice and of tolerance. The tales show the influence of the Tamil folk stories regarding Manumural Kanda Cholan and the quotation from the Tamil classic "Thirukkural" shows the popular influence of Tamil Ethics. It is interesting to note that popular Tamil appraisal of a Sinhala Buddhist King was found in one of the Tamil inscriptions which belong to the latter part of the Anuradhapura period. It is in the form of a verse and here is a translation in English:-

"In the shade of the Enlightened One
Ever Virtuous,
In oppression and wrong to all lives
Just and Kind,
In observing the moral law and lore
He never fails,
As King and Guardian of this domain
With equity he reigns".

Finally it is very much hoped that studies of this nature will help us to enlarge our horizons and enter into dialogue instead of clinging to our inherited myths as fixtures of absolute truth.

Rev. D. J. Kanagaratnam
Theological College of Lanka,
Pillimatalawa.

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AFGHANISTAN

Some illusions

"Another Czechoslovakia!" protest anti-Soviet "Left" groups as they join western critics of the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan. "Another Vietnam!" proclaim American analysts more in hope than out of conviction.

"Too much, too soon" was the theme of the L.G.'s examination of the Afghanistan upheaval and the disruptive impact of far-reaching radical reforms of the Taraki regime on this backward society.

Land reform, women's emancipation, marriage and education were some

of the sensitive areas which proved fertile soil for the anti-Kabul revolt, covertly but extensively helped from outside. (Recently, Kabul TV screened interviews with self-confessed Chinese agents.)

On-the-spot impressions of ROBERT FISK who reported from Kabul for the Christian Science Monitor strongly support the argument that the real roots of the revolt lie in the feudal structure of this country and its age-old tribal ways and conflicts. Here are some excerpts from Fisk's last despatch:

When you sit in the Afghan capital of Kabul and listen to the shortwave radio transmissions from Washington, London, and other Western nations, you might be forgiven for thinking that Afghanistan is in Eastern Europe rather than Southwest Asia.

For the invective used to condemn the Soviet intervention there is almost identical to the language used by the British and American governments when the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968.

But things are not that simple. There are a lot of illusions being nursed about Afghanistan.

Not the least of these involves the territorial integrity of the country itself. That it was once a semi-independent monarchy is a historical fact. But as a nation-state, it never really existed.

The king was never a popular man and his only serious political function was to act as a figure-head who would hold the warring tribes of Afghanistan together. Even under the monarchy, the main roads out of Kabul were seldom safe from bandits, and the last two centuries have witnessed as many factional wars as they have wars of liberation.

In the rural villages, with their 95 percent illiteracy rate and their traditional Sunni Muslim life, the 1978 revolution of Nur Muhammad Taraki was bitterly re-

sented. It was, the Muslims felt, an atheist ideology that was dominating their country. And since their monarch had long been deposed, they had only their conservative - some would say reactionary - church to look to for nationalist inspiration.

The mullahs resented the new regime's attempt to impose land reforms and its efforts to educate

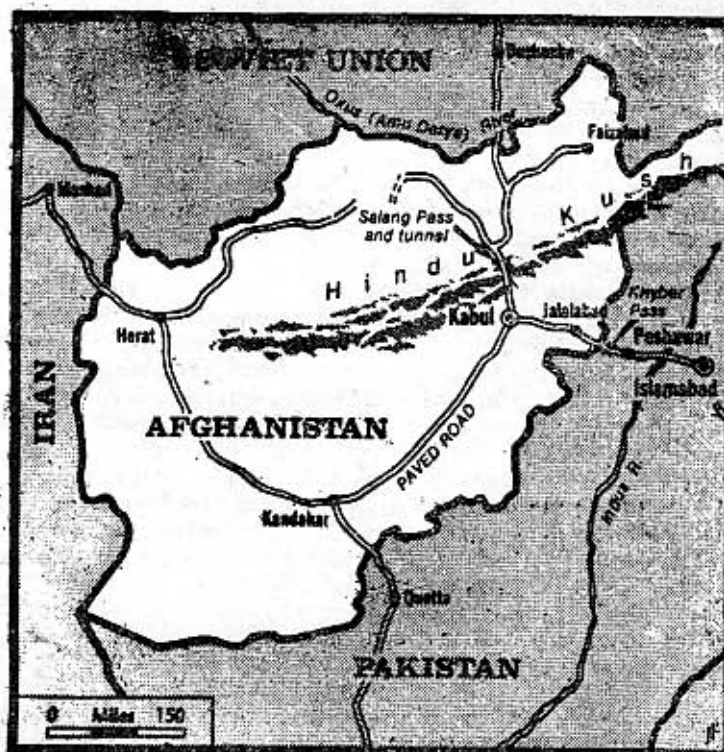
women. The men opposed the communist government's insistence on equal rights for women. In some villages this led to tiny insurrections, the calling in of government troops, and bloodshed.

If the government had not been communist and backed by the Soviet Union, its modernizing aspirations would probably have been applauded by many liberals in the West.

Furthermore, many of the hill tribesmen, particularly the Pushtun and the Hazara, used newly captured weapons for robbing civilian travelers on the main roads of Afghanistan. They fought each other as well, mixing prosaic greed with a patriotism that Westerners, including Mr. Carter, now help to inspire.

When Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin assassinated President Taraki and took over the government -

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A second Cuba or another Algeria?

by A Special Correspondent

Marxists are not clairvoyant and Karl Marx once stated that he had no intention of preparing communist recipes for the cook shops of the future, thus casting grave doubt on Trotsky's much later assertion that the strength of Marxism lies in its ability to predict. What will eventually be the shape and character of the new Nicaragua? No answer can be given which is sure, certain and absolute. 'Kto Kogo?' was the key question, in Lenin's view. **Who will beat whom? Who will win? The struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road is not resolved once and for all in favour of the former, solely by the fact that the masses have triumphed by means of armed struggle.** Algeria provides the perfect illustration of a valiant protracted peoples war of national liberation against the colonialist oppressors, which none the less failed to make it over the National-Democratic 'hump' to the next stage, i. e. that of socialist construction. The ouster of Ben Bella, who by 1962 had undoubtedly opted for the socialist road, was the turning point in a process which has since resulted in the building up of state capitalism, the strengthening of neo-colonial linkages and the consolidation of a military bureaucratic state bourgeoisie as Algeria's ruling class.

Cuba of course provides the contrary example of an anti-imperialist anti-oligarchic revolution being transformed swiftly and uninterruptedly into a socialist revolution by a combination of the internal dialectic, interaction with a hostile external environment and of course the subjective factor i. e. the conscious choice made by the revolutionary leadership whose organic relationship with, and total commitment to, the working masses made them adopt the scientific socialist perspective.

This leads us to a point of fundamental importance. What the Cuban and Algerian experiences prove—the one, positively, and the other negatively—is that **in the contemporary historical epoch, the anti-imperialist struggle in a dependent country can be taken to its conclusion only by means of the establishment of socialism.** The task of "carrying through the national-democratic revolution to the end" is possible only through a transition to the stage which sets up a government of the oppressed and exploited classes, a workers and peasants government which will proceed to curb and eliminate steadily the capitalist relations of production. **Socialism is the only guarantee of genuine and definitive national independence. Socialism is the only guarantee that the anti-imperialist and democratic gains of the liberating national revolution, will remain irreversible and indeed will be consolidated and advanced.**

This thesis the validity of which has been proven repeatedly by contemporary history, bears no relation whatsoever to the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution which posits the hitherto unproven hypothesis that colonial revolutions must **"at the very outset..... make deep inroads into capitalist property relations."** The Trotskyist theory of the colonial revolution fails to differentiate between the stages of the revolution and identify appropriate class combinations and political alignments corresponding to each stage. Unable to comprehend that the national question is in essence an agrarian question, the theory of Permanent Revolution involves a sectarian under-estimation of the role of the peasantry and intermediate social strata. Fro-

zen in the historical aspect of the Petrograd soviet of 1905, Trotskyism fetishizes the revolutionary general strike and the classic Russian model of soviets. The workerist mystique which replaces Lenin's emphasis on the worker-peasant alliance, utter insensitivity to the latent potential of revolutionary nationalism, the inability to comprehend the relative autonomy of the nation state—all these are facets of the permanent failure of the permanent revolution to grasp the problems of the national-colonial question. This failure renders Trotskyism a historico-political anachronism in today's world.

Radically contrary to this is the perspective set out in the paragraph before the last. This perspective is one of a revolution in stages which grow over uninterruptedly into the other. The process begins, more often than not, with a minimum programme of anti-imperialist and democratic demands (rather than a socialist programme) and culminates eventually, **through a series of mediatory and transitional phases,** in the setting up of a socialist state. This is the Marxist-Leninist perspective of uninterrupted (not 'Permanent') revolution, deriving from Marx, applied by Lenin to the colonial and semi-colonial context, developed by Stalin, the Comintern and the Cominform with special reference to the problems of revolutions in the periphery in the post-world war two period. Abandoned or revised by the CPSU and pro-Soviet CP's during the Khrushchevite and early Brezhnev period this correct Marxist-Leninist position has been rediscovered and revived by many Soviet and Eastern European theorists over the past five years or so. It is the Vietnamese and Cuban Marxists however who have maintained most steadfastly the correct theoretical position on this issue.

Le Duan in his 'Report to the third session of the Vietnam Workers Party Central Committee' in December 1960 said: "In our time the national liberation movement and the movement for democracy are closely interrelated and cannot but aim at socialist revolution."

Then again in his superb analysis of 'The Vietnamese Revolution-Fundamental problems, Essential Tasks' (1973) Le Duan spoke of "The greatest truth of our times—in the present era, national independence, democracy and socialism are inseparable." In this excellent essay Le Duan identifies Stalin's speech at the 19th Congress of the CPSU and Ho Chi Minh's assertion that "only socialism, only communism, can free the oppressed nations and the toiling people of the world from servitude" as the supportive sources of his thesis. The 4th Congress of the Vietnamese Workers Party (Vietnamese Communist Party) held in December 1976, had this to say in its analysis of 'The world situation, the international duty and the foreign policy of the party' — "In the present historical conditions when capitalism is well into its last stage and has become an obstacle a reactionary force to the development of human society, socialism emerges as the immediate goal of struggle of all countries. Never has the socialist revolution a more powerful potential for development than today. All movements for national independence and democracy are closely linked with socialism and oriented to socialism. The road to socialism ensures all nations genuine independence and keeps them away from neocolonialist domination. It also ensures genuine democracy, democracy for the majority of the people in society, a democracy which goes far beyond the limits of outmoded bourgeois democracy." (Communist Party of Vietnam 4th National

Congress Documents-FLPH Hanoi 1977)

Le Duan's essay on 'The October Revolution and the Vietnamese Revolution,' penned on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 1917 Russian Revolution reaffirms and restates this thesis in a masterly form.

Those Maoist comrades in this country who characterize the thesis of 'raising high the twin banners of national independence and socialism' (which is currently being put forward by sections of the CPSL) as neoTrotskyists, should re-read Ho Chi Minh and Le Duan. Similarly, the JVP, those covert Trotskyists of the radical left in Sri Lanka, who imply that Le Duan and the Vietnamese CP are anti-Stalin, betray only their political illiteracy or the contempt they have for the political literacy of their audience. But let us not digress.

In what will be the final part of this series we shall address ourselves to the question of the prospects of a socialist transition in Nicaragua.

(To be concluded)

Historic . . .

(Continued from page 6)

is yet to be seen. But one thing is clear. Unless a meaningful decision for a programme of action is taken—meaningful not only to the radical elements of the Unions, but also in the present political context—even the very legitimacy of the JTUAC which is being challenged by the JVP right now, would be seriously undermined.

It was really heartening to see the solidarity expressed by the audience when the Tamil trade union delegates spoke. When Sambanda Moorthi of the Tamil Trade Union Federation assured the support of the Tamil people for the common struggle of the working class, the delegates responded by shouting the slogan "Long live the Sinhala-Tamil working class unity"!

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Crime, punishment and society

by Gamini Fonseka

It is 3 o'clock today, the 22nd February 1980. This film "Sagarayak Meda" was first censored on the 28th of January after which they took no decision. Subsequently, they saw the film again on the 14th of February and until now, until just now, we were expecting their decision. Just now, at 3 o'clock, I have been informed that they have failed to take a decision for the second time and that the entire Board must see the picture on the 28th of February. Now you will realise what this is costing the producer. This is a colour film. Let me explain the technicalities of the whole thing.

It is a colour film and what we submit for censorship is the cutting copy, in other words, a whole series of shots stuck together with cello tape and each time such a print runs through the projector there is damage to the print, and if it is damaged to a great extent then the producer will be compelled to reprint, re-edit and some times even re-mix the sound-track. This could happen. Already the print of the film is fairly badly damaged. Now they have asked for a further viewing of the picture on the 28th of February. The reason being that the entire Board has not seen the picture. I believe the censors are paid for seeing such films and I will also have to tell you that each time a picture is screened, the producer has to spend certain sums of monies for projection theatres, transport, etc, etc. Now all this is disregarded by the lethargic censors who turn up for censorship in small groups of fives and tens, which makes it quite evident to you that there is no sense of responsibility among the censors despite the monies they draw from an entertaining past-time. The film has to be processed outside this country. It has to be sent to Hong Kong. The entire process of cutting the

Gamini Fonseka's 'Uthumaneni' continues to draw crowds though it has "no songs, no dances" as director—actor Fonseka himself notes with pride. We publish the second part of his exclusive interview in the Lanka Guardian.

negative, grading and printing has to be done outside for which, technicians have to be sent from here to the laboratory and maintained there at the expense of the producer until the picture is over.

We are told that colour films will be given priority releases, but the release of the picture itself is further delayed because of the utter indifference of the censors. Now, if after two viewings by the Board and after the Jnr. Minister concerned has also seen the film on the 14th of last month, they still cannot take a decision, I do not see any earthly use of the same Board or a part of the same Board seeing the film for the third time. Nor do I see the validity of such a Board. Alright, you might want to know what the subject matter of the film is. I tell the story of politicians who make arbitrary decisions or arbitrarily change the laws of a country which affect the lives of millions of people. I talk about politicians who have been given too much power by the people, who exercise these powers to the detriment of the very people who voted them in. It is true that the evident background of my story may point to a particular period in our political history, but what I am trying to say is that it could have happened yesterday, it could happen today, it may happen in the future if the people do not watch out, if the people are not careful about the kind of persons whom they appoint to rule them in turn.

QUESTION 6 & 7—With regard to the incidents narrated in "UTHUMANENI" were they based on any real life incidents?

Yes, I would say, as a matter of fact, they were based on thousands of real life incidents. I have had rather lengthy discussions on this subject with responsible police officers. I am informed by them that 75% of such cases are never reported to the police, because of the shame, the humiliation that goes with it. We are a nation that looks up to the purity of women. We have a tradition in this country where a woman is required to be a virgin until the day of her marriage whatever her age might be. You are aware that there is a tradition in this country where the respective parents of the bride and groom visit the married couple on the day after the marriage in order to ascertain whether the daughter or the daughter-in-law has been pure, a virgin.

Take, the case of the girl Pushpa, in this story "Uthumaneni". Young, 17 years old-looking forward to giving up her schooling and settling down in life by the following month; waylaid and raped by the four culprits in the story. What happens from there on is the story of these thousands of people I have talked about. These thousands of victims I have talked about—victims of rape. Most of them think a thousand times before they go to the Police, before they decide to seek justice. They are advised by their closest kith and kin. By some, to seek justice, by some others to just forget about it because of the shame of the whole affair, which is bound to affect the victim even more than the culprits.

Alright, take the case of Siri-pala, who after a delay of five days, finally decides to go before the Police and complain. What

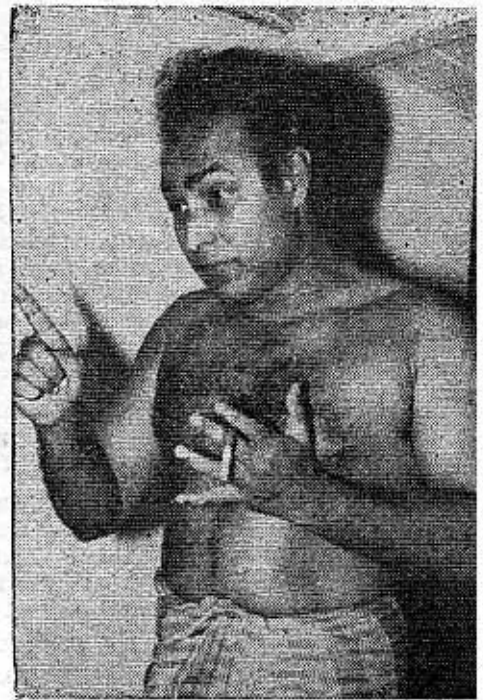
happens? - There is this humiliating experience of Police Constables to whom the whole thing becomes a source of entertainment, questioning him at length about what happened to his sister. Sometimes in bawdy language. Alright, let's say the statement is accepted sooner or later. Then the victim is taken before a Medical Officer and the young victim is physically probed to establish rape-to determine whether she actually had been raped, whether at the moment of rape she had been a virgin-so forth and so on.

Then comes the court case. The case is heard in the presence of hundreds of people who are not even remotely connected with it. In other words, the dirty linen of some of the people have to be washed in public. The poor victim is made to re-trace all the incidents and re-live the whole gory incident. Highly paid defence lawyers not only try to establish the innocence of their clients by distorting evidence, they even try to distort the character of the victim-(indulging in character assassination,) finally proving that, (one of the things that are commonly done under various influences) the girl has been of loose character—the girl has not been a virgin at the time of rape—that she had lost her virginity as a matter of fact, many years ago, and they also attempt to prove that she had connived or co-operated with the culprits.

It had been predicted to Siripala by somebody who knew better that this is the kind of thing that could happen. Of course here we have discounted or left alone, or perhaps forgotten to mention the newsmonger, the paper man, who capitalises on the issue. I remember there was an evening paper, a Sinhala journal, which thrived on nothing else but this type of muck; divorce, rape, seduction, homosexuality, every single headline in the paper was to do with this sort of thing. Without any qualms about it they went on selling this paper, just minting money. That is another element we should have touched on in

the film, but left alone due to lack of screen time—but it is, I think, mentioned in one of the lines of dialogue how newsmongers exploit this kind of situation.

I presume you are aware of the punishment for this kind of crime. 20 years imprisonment and a fine at the discretion of the judge. These two things are very seldom carried out in their entirety. Relief is given in terms of sentence, for youth—that is one of the first claims of a defence counsellor in the event of a culprit being sentenced. So, a few years will be reduced due to the fact the culprit is a youthful offender. The next thing is the fact that it is a first offence. Once again, a few years will be reduced for that. Finally, let us say he receives a sentence of 10 or 8 years. (For good behaviour during the term of imprisonment he again gets a further reprieve) The culprit comes out fit to rape ten more women, whereas the future of the victim is, in our society, almost totally ruined. We've found umpteen cases where the people have been virtually driven out of their villages, especially if they happen to be villagers. In the more affluent families, the children are perhaps sent out of the country until such time the whole episode is forgotten, or they live out of the country and get married outside, where virginity is certainly not the first qualification for marriage. The poorer people, the daughters of poorer people, have become totally destitute, unable to marry, unable to escape the stigma. A lot of them have turned to prostitution—that is a subject for another film. Is it not high time that we did away with some of these antiquated laws which were framed by people who had little knowledge or no concern at all for our customs, our culture, our tradition. We have been independent for such a long time, but somehow the British and Roman-Dutch Law with all its stupidities and its cockeyed aspects still seem to prevail unchanged, so the system ensures that the punishment is really on the victim and not so much on the culprit.



Answering the 2nd part of your Question 7—**Have you had any feed back from audiences or from professional bodies regarding such changes?**

Gamini
Fonseka

Yes. A considerable amount, as a matter of fact. I have had clergymen, especially from the Christian and Catholic clergy I suppose the Buddhist Monks are not able to visit a theatre and see such a film. I have had lawyers, doctors and prominent politicians all writing in appreciation of the attempt. I have very interesting letters from a harbour worker, a port employee, several government servants, from one or two people who call themselves political observers, that sort of people, a fair cross section really and also a number of letters from those who are aware of many such cases, or who have actually been victims of such cases, or the relatives of such victims.

The fact that people have been going back over and again to see a film with no songs, no dances, none of the traditional Sinhala cinema—that alone is a pointer. That alone is a pointer to some of my critics who have been treating this as yet another Sinhala film about a lone ranger, or a lone avenger or whatever

it is. I think some haven't been able to see beyond their rather short noses. When one has blinded oneself with very narrow philosophies, one cannot help that, especially, when one has lived all one's life in that kind of cloistered little world. If they just open their eyes wide enough and look around then they will realise the reality of this subject, the reality of what I have been trying to talk about through this film "Uthumaneni".

QUESTION 8 & 9 Was there any special reason which made you select this subject?

Further to what I have already said I must add one thing more. There are many things in life that have made me angry and when I direct a picture and whenever I find the backing of the right producer I just like to open out, let out steam so to say, on whatever has made me angry and this is one of those things. Apart from that, I would like to talk about the people involved in this film in response to Question No. 9. I don't have any special comments to make except that almost all the people involved in this film have worked with me sometime or other.

Our biggest problem was the casting in this film. We had to find an actress. A very young girl who could have pulled off this role and it was almost impossible to think of anybody that was totally raw, but that would have been preferable to casting a mature looking girl, a star that looked too old for the role, so we had to make a decision and finally I decided on Farina Lye, who was considerably older than she looked. She looked youthful, she could have easily been put into a school uniform and made to look like a school girl and she had proved on previous occasions that she had considerable talent. She had proved it before and on this occasion I think, she has pulled off her role, despite her inability to speak Sinhala too well.

Then we had the other problem of finding somebody to play the role of the Chairman. It took quite a bit of search. Earlier, I

had in mind Mr. Rex Kodipili, who finally played the defence counsel and acquitted himself creditably. I think he gave what most people think is the finest performance of his career (in just 2 or 3 scenes.) Talking about the Chairman, which Rex was to play earlier — but as I told you in answer to one of your earlier questions — once again Rex had got involved in so many other films, my programme was disrupted thanks to the State Film Corporation officials who sat on the script for 7 months. I had to find somebody whose time was available. Therefore, I went to the theatre and found a newcomer, Mr. Somi Ratnayake, who had only made a very brief appearance in one or two films earlier "Hulawali" especially, just one of those "walke-on" parts so to say. Well, I think, in him we have discovered what you might call a 'major talent' and after this film, merely on word-of-mouth publicity, even before the picture was shown, studio hands, and producers and directors who saw the rushes, talking about his performance has enabled Mr. Somi Ratnayake to secure some of the finest roles in subsequent films. He is very much in demand now-acting in about 20 films at the moment.

I must also talk a few words, about Mr. Vamadevan, the director of photography, who started off as an apprentice in Vijaya Studios under the training of M. Masthan, who in recent times has emerged as one of the best, one of the finest cameramen in this country. He has done a very, very good job. Viewers must have seen his work in a film called "Rampage". That was his first job in colour and of course there are dozens of black and white films to his credit also equally well done.

In relation to your Question No. 8, you have had a sub-question which asks—"Would you say that the film shows a social awareness on your part, a new social awareness?" I don't know exactly what you mean by that but I hope I am not sounding pompous when I say that I have always been socially aware. I am sure most of us are, but unfortunately there is very

little we can do or say about it in a climate that tends to muffle or gag you all the time. It is true that they all, whoever the rulers may be, whatever the party may be, always talk about democracy, they talk about the freedom to criticise the freedom of this and freedom of that, but I don't know how many others have enjoyed this freedom, but the film maker has certainly not had it. He has not enjoyed it yet. I think most of us are socially aware, especially people like myself who come from a middle class background, who by the virtue of our profession have had the ability to ply between two different social structures, the lowest and the highest, so to say, but we as film makers have always been stifled by a group of odd-bods in the country, who think they are capable, and they are the only ones who are capable, of thinking for everybody else. What is more they even go to the extent of trying to prevent other people from thinking.

Take for instance the politician who, because he has managed to temporarily convince, or may I say hoodwink a greater number of the people, is elected. Seldom has he any other qualification except the ability to make them believe. I dare say they have other talent as well. The film industry has lost some of its greatest talent to politics. The finest actors, some of the finest I have seen, were in Parliament. Apart from that, I don't know with what justification they believe that they have been sent in there for their intellectual capacity. I believe some of them even venture to dictate or teach the specialists their trade. A very ordinary man who is voted into Parliament, sometimes sits down and tells a doctor how to practice medicine, tells an engineer how to get about his trade, tells a farmer how to cultivate, tells an economist how to handle the monetary affairs of a country. This sort of thing is happening all the time, to the extent of making the entire business of politics a massive joke. But as I told you earlier, I haven't directed a film officially for a long time. "Parasathumal" was my last assignment, before "Uthumaneni" and that was way back in 1965.

The film has been, and continues to be one of the biggest successes. It has been seen by more than one generation of people, and it has survived to be appreciated by the new generation as well. After that I ghost directed a number of films, may be twenty five or thirty. I may have directed sections of other films, but officially, "Uthumani" is my second directorial venture. So I can't say that my social awareness could be judged by the kind of films I have acted in. Acting is just a job you do under someone else's direction, and guided and controlled by another. But when a man becomes a Director, then he is responsible for the entire thing. It may not be so in Ceylon all the time, but certainly when an experienced director, a guy who understands his trade directs a picture, then he is totally responsible, and everything that happens in the picture is an outcome of his thinking—his worry. He should also take the fullest responsibility for any flaws in the whole project.

Going back to my childhood, talking about social awareness, there are a lot of things which have made me angry, extending back to my childhood. Take for instance the 1958 communal riots. I was just out of College. I remember the times when we went to school, played about, and moved about very closely with one another, the Tamils and ourselves—the Tamils, Burghers, Moors, Malays; the harmony that existed then. And suddenly came 1958 and politicians instigated the people to fly at each other's throats. Suddenly, one morning, at about 7.30 we heard a lot of noise down the road we lived and we found a man bleeding profusely from his head and face, running up Station Road, Dehiwela, where we used to live, and he was pursued by a mob of howling Sinhalese, I'm ashamed to say, but it was the truth. So my father intervened and he took the man into his protective custody, and managed to disperse the crowd by whatever means.

Subsequently, when we tried to hand him over to the so-called protective custody of the Police the Police Inspector of the area, seemed to be totally indifferent to the whole thing. He just didn't bother. Later we got the news that the boutique in front of my house was to be burnt along with the people in it, by a mob of the thugs in the area. Again we tried to convince the Police Officer that he should take these people away and protect them at the station. You know, he just didn't care. He said "Don't you worry, we are around." It took us only three days to find out that the same Police Inspector, one SI and three constables had been charged with looting. Some of the Tamils had closed their shops and gone away and this group of policemen led by this Police Inspector broke into the shop and carried away what was available. I remember the SI and two constables went to jail, the IP himself escaped prison sentence but lost his job.

These things have made me angry and it is that kind of thing which provoked me to write "Sarungale" which came out as a film in the late 1970's. All those years I could not find anyone to sponsor the film, and I didn't have the stature in the industry to be able to tell a producer that he should be doing this kind of thing—that he should be doing a more serious sort of cinema. Well, roughly about 7-8 years ago, I found myself on that kind of footing from which I could make certain demands, and that's what I've been doing. So as a result, even the films I've merely acted in have had that influence. There were times I sat down and changed a script or re-wrote it, or re-did the dialogues, or even directed some of the sequences. Quite recently there was a script submitted to me; had it been turned out the

way it was written, the Sinhalese and Tamils would have started killing one another all over again. So I convinced the script writer that we should toe a different line, we should work towards a more decent goal, a humane goal, and I sat down on location and changed the whole thing. I think the outcome has been a decent film, maybe commercial, but quite decent. As human beings, people who made the picture could some day be proud of their achievement. However simple a film's story might be, there is something we can get across through that.

Of course the critics, (I must say I am even pointing an accusing finger at you,) especially the English critics, all these years seem to have lived away from the people, lived away from the Sinhala race, you know, always forming their equations out of what happens in the West,—have not been able to see this, but out of the simplest Sinhala film, even what you call the song and dance nonsense, the writers and sometimes the Directors, have been able to get something across. That is why I think they've been able to hold their audiences for such a length of time. We had to emerge through that. In other words we had to stay in the battlefield and fight the battle instead of doing so from arm chairs. So, to be able to do the kind of cinema that we are attempting today, we had to come through the mire, and that is exactly what we have done. If we indulge in that kind of cinema, it is not because we were not socially aware, it is not because the film maker was not educated so to say, it is purely because he realised and understood the climate in which he lived, the environment in which he lived. So accordingly, like the Pied Piper, he had to first play the music, in order to lead the mice to the sea. That's the only way in which I can put it.

I hope I have answered your questions. I don't think we can quite get through it in this way. So I'll leave it open to you. Meet some time and provoke me a little bit further. I might be able to make a more thorough job of the whole thing. Thank you.

DEVELOPMENT

'Accelerated' Mahaveli — massive problems

by Kumar David

It is now clear that the so-called accelerated Mahaveli development project has run into some massive technical and financial difficulties. Considering the scope of the whole project and the hopes that have been pinned on it these problems can only be described as catastrophic to national development. The time has come to draw up a balance sheet of the Mahaveli development project. This article only introduces the main points for discussion.

When the government announced its intention of accelerating the Mahaveli project so that the 30 year programme could be compacted into a 6 year period every sensible engineer in the country knew that this was technically impossible and a piece of technical hypocrisy for the purpose of political propaganda. The majority of the country's engineers however lacked the courage to say so openly and fearlessly. They were more concerned about not displeasing the government rather than their duty by the people to speak out the truth and keep the people informed of engineering realities and honest possibilities. Some engineering big names who had found political favour even went so far as to swear by the sun and the moon that the government's plans would be fulfilled and one million jobs found within six years.

Today the Mahaveli Programme has run into the following major problems.

(a) The Kotmale construction has been stalled. It is likely the dam axis will have to be moved at a cost of hundreds of millions of rupees and a delay of a year or more in construction time. A geological fault is suspected at the site.

Dr. Kumar David is Senior lecturer in Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya, and a Member of the Council, Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka. This personal viewpoint does not necessarily reflect the views of either of these organisations.

The consultants have still not O.K'ed a new site. Some engineers are asking the question whether the Kotmale dam can be built at all.

(b) An enormous amount has already been spent on the old site that is now to be discarded. Access roads, preliminary work on the tunnel and other works have already cost several millions. Contractors and foreign consultants who now know the situation are out to make as much money as possible in the confusion that has arisen. Tens of millions are being sucked out fast.

(c) Without Kotmale back-up reservoir most of the benefits of the Polgolla — Bowatenna Kalawewa diversion cannot be obtained. Hundreds of millions have already been spent on each of the two schemes. Peasants have already been settled in Kalawewa. Discarding Kotmale altogether is an unthinkable catastrophe. Delay or change costs hundreds of millions.

(d) The Maduru Oya dam axis is to be changed. Work is stopped. Due to the secrecy that shrouds all official and engineering reports the full facts about Maduru Oya are still not clear. Is it true that construction had started before design?

(e) Moragahakanda and Randenigala may have to be discarded for financial reasons. Costs of the projects already in hand (Victoria, Kotmale, Maduru Oya) have escalated so much that the funds that were earmarked for other projects have all to be diverted to meet these cost increases. Foolish financial plans and bungling and lack of foresight in respect of national and international rates of inflation is responsible for this.

(f) The Moragahakanda hydrological studies are all to be repeated. Planning is stuck because of this. This may be a "technical" gimmick to cover up for the lack of funds or for more sensitive reasons of race-politics.

(g) The proposed 220 kv transmission system that was to bring Mahaveli power down to the West Coast was mis-planned at Kotmale power station. It is now likely that Kotmale power station will after all be connected to the 220 kv side and the error thereby rectified. However with the future of Kotmale itself now in doubt the whole structure of the transmission system is thrown into confusion. Further more the whole question of long term transmission planning has not been even thought of.

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(h) There is also the controversial Rs. 275 million gas turbine contract early this year which certainly warrants a Parliamentary inquiry, in my opinion, considering all the issues raised in official, engineering and commercial circles and in the press.

Local and foreign consultants reviewing and re-reviewing each others work, contradicting each other and chopping and changing billion-rupee decisions, the Government broke, no additional foreign aid, and dropping schemes one by one. Fast bucks being made on all sides. Engineers and engineering departments overstretched, under pressure from all sides, without time to make sober and proper decisions. Costly unnecessary and wasteful rejection and repetition of 25 years of technical studies by inexperienced foreign consultants. At the time of writing (late February) one and only one scheme of the so-called Accelerated Mahaweli Programme (Victoria) is going ahead without a major crisis.

Who is to blame for all this? May be some engineers, indirectly. The blame squarely however falls on the shoulders of this government which mis-planned the scheme and mis-lead the country. Of course the 30 year period should have been accelerated, but that should have been worked out on a sober, rational, technical basis. But that's not how Mahaweli was expedited, it was just made into a political stunt.

A DISTANT VOICE

by Anna Akhmatova

*It's not true, you have no rivals:
For me you are no woman of this
earth*

*But the comforting light of the
winter sun*

*And the wild song of the land of
my birth.*

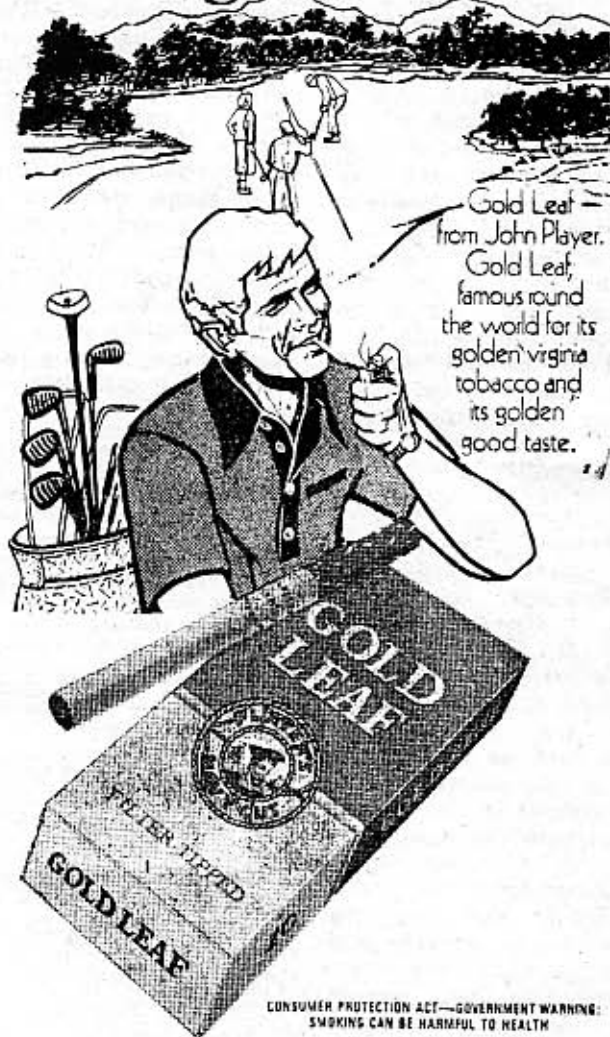
*When you die, I shall not grieve,
Nor cry, maddened, 'Arise from
the grave!'*

*I'll only know that moment that
the body*

*Cannot live without sun, nor the
spirit without song.*

Translated by
Reggie Siriwardena

Player's Gold Leaf for good taste.



Culture and Tamil awakening

by K. Kailasapathy

While the "Jaffna scholars" were making their presence felt in South India—lecturing, teaching, debating, editing and publishing—they were also witnessing the nascent stirrings of the cultural nationalism in Tamil Nadu. Although Navalar seems to have missed the impact of the publication of Bishop Caldwell's (1814–1891) **Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages** (1856, revised edition 1875) Tamotaram Pillai and others unmistakably show the influence of that work. I have elsewhere dealt with the subject and need not delve into it here. Suffice to say that by theorising about the antiquity and independence of the Dravidian Languages vis a vis Sanskrit and the Indo-Aryan Languages, Robert Caldwell "set in motion a train of ideas and movements whose repercussions and consequences went beyond the field of philology."

Of course Caldwell was not entirely alone in postulating a hoary and glorious history for the Tamil language. There were other European Missionaries who put forward the Dravidian case. But it was Caldwell's **Comparative Grammar** that summed it up all. Already in the lengthy and controversial prefaces to the critical editions of ancient Tamil classics brought out by Tamotaram Pillai-**Virasoliyam** (1887) and **Kalittokai** (1887) we hear echoes of Caldwell's assertions about Dravidian and Tamil. Not only the classical works—both literary and grammatical—but also the medium of those creations had become an object of veneration. The modern linguistic consciousness of the Tamils can be traced to this period. The patron saint of the movement was ironically enough a Christian missionary.

By about 1880s the Tamil elite both in South India and Sri Lanka had become quite enthused about

their language, culture and history. The landmark was of course the publication of a verse play **Manonmaniyam** (1891) by P. Sundaram Pillai (1855–1897) who was Professor of Philosophy at the Travancore University. In that celebrated work he had described Tamil as 'Goddess'. The language had been declared divine and thereby sacrosanct. These events were taking place in South-India with full participation and contribution of Sri Lanka Tamils. An indication of the growing awareness of language and culture was the commencement of the publication of two journals: **Siddhanta Deepika** 'The Light of Truth' (1897–1913), and **The Tamilian Antiquary** (1907–1914). A recent researcher's observation on two journals clinches the point.

"The two journals cover roughly two decades—the period of the flowering of Tamil Renaissance. This period represents an awakened interest of Tamil scholars in Tamil language and literature benignly guided by the flair and persuasive enthusiasm of the European scholar. These two journals have done yeoman service in creating in the minds of the Tamils an abiding interest in their Language and Literature, and in infusing a spirit of social confidence with regard to their literary and cultural heritage".

What is pertinent here is the fact that Tamil scholars of Sri Lanka actively participated in the publication of these journals. The **Siddhanta Deepika** was edited by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai (1864–1920) and the **Tamilian Antiquary** was edited by Pandit D. Savariroya Pillai (1854–1923). The former was a District Magistrate and the latter a lecturer at St. Joseph's College, Trichy. A perusal of the pages of volumes of these journals will demonstrate both the quantity and quality of the contributions by Sri Lankan Tamils: P. Arunachalam, P. Ramanathan, S. W. Coomaraswamy (1875–1936), A. Muthutamby Pillai (1858–1917), V. J. Tam-

by Pillai, T. Ponnambalam Pillai and a few others seem to have been regular contributors to these journals. Arunachalam's translations appeared under the initials P. A. Nallaswami Pillai was an ardent admirer of Navalar and cherished the writings of Sri Lankan Tamil scholars. Pandit Savariroya Pillai was encouraged by two well placed Tamils from Jaffna who held responsible posts: T. Ponnambalam Pillai was Commissioner of Excise in Travancore; His brother T. Chellappah Pillai was a Justice at Travancore. - T. P. Masilamani Pillai was the son of the former who also wrote articles in the **Tamilian Antiquary**. On his retirement and return to Sri Lanka T. Chellappah Pillai was elected President of Saiva Paripalana Sabha.

The case of Pandit Savariroyan brings us to another point. Although the cultural awakening began as a Hindu movement and was predominantly led by Saiva scholars its character changed over the years. The prestige accorded to Christian missionary scholars, (Caldwell, Percival, Bower, Pope, Ellis) and the endeavours of scholars like Savariroyan brought the Christians into the mainstream. Furthermore with the shifting of focus from religion to language the importance hitherto attached to Saivism became less significant. (In fact, the active role played by local Christian scholars both in India and Sri Lanka, from the time of Savariroya Pillai-L.D. Swamikannu Pillai (1865–1925), Fr. S. Gnanapiragasar (1875–1947), Dr. T. Isaac Tambyah (1867–1941) and Rev. Fr. X. S. Thaninayagam—in the cause of Tamil has, at times, led to the allegation by some Hindus that the Christians have infiltrated the Tamil cultural movement.)

The events mentioned above had without doubt their effect in Sri Lanka. The concern for the Tamil

language manifested in various ways. A number of societies and associations were formed for its protection and development. As may be expected Jaffna led the way. As early as 1898 a Tamil Academy was established in Jaffna by the efforts of T. Kailasapillai (1867-1939) nephew of Arumuga Navalar on whom had fallen the mantle of the great savant. It is interesting to note that Pandi Thurai Thevar (1867-1911), the Zamindar of Palavanantham, Ramnad District, founded the Madurai Tamil Sangam in 1901 inspired by the Jaffna Tamil Academy. This trend gathered momentum during the next few decades and a number of associations were formed. The Colombo Tamil Sangam was formed in 1942. Conferences and meetings were held to celebrate different aspects of Tamil language and literature; one such meeting was held at the Ridgeway Hall in Jaffna in 1922, presided over by Hon. A. Kanagasabai. This was the first major literary conference in Jaffna and to befit the occasion leading personalities from Madras were invited. Among them were Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar (1871-1947), K. Subramania Pillai (1889-1945) a staunch Tamil revivalist, P. V. Manicka Naicker (1871-1931), a language enthusiast and A. Madaviah (1874-1925) the novelist. Sir Vaithilingam Duraiswamy presided over the proceedings of the second day. T. A. Thuraiappa Pillai (1872-1929) who was the founder of Mahajana College and himself a poet and playwright took an active part in this conference. In the same year the Arya-Dravida Basha Development Society was inaugurated.

The pattern of development seen in the case of the Tamil Language was paralleled in the case of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, characterized as the indigenous religious thought of the Tamils. Following the early lead given by Navalar in restoring its prestige and strength numerous associations sprung in different parts to foster it. Reference has already been made to the Jaffna Saiva Paripalana Sabha. In South India the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam was founded in 1905. Hitherto the **Mutts** or Saiva monasteries were the

sole custodians of Saiva religious and philosophy. But now laymen considered it their bounden duty to preserve them, the Samajam became the association **par excellence** for the propagation of Saiva Siddhanta and several prominent Tamils from Sri Lanka took a leading part in its activities: distinguished Sri Lankans were often invited to deliver lectures at the Samajam and also preside over its Annual Sessions. J. M. Nallaswami was closely associated with the Samajam.

Sociologically speaking the linguistic and cultural awakening described above, was essentially that of the middle class Tamils with the upper middle class providing the leadership. The awakening which began in the religious sphere extended to the linguistic and literary fields. Basically it was a form of cultural self-assertion in the face of Colonial domination. The point is that this cultural consciousness was limited in scope and in effect designed to buttress the middle class values and aspirations and also provide that class with the necessary image for leadership.

In concrete terms the cultural activities were confined to a few conspicuous areas: being backward looking in its orientation, the middle class sought to revive and cultivate certain features of the Tamil culture that had become part of the established order in the old society. Insofar as language was concerned the zeal for **Sen-Thamil**, "Cultured Tamil" or "Classical Tamil" which for all practical purposes was moribund, (although Sir. P. Ramanatham and his son-in-law and political successor S. Natesan created a vogue for speaking in the classical style) was the basis for the founding of societies and the holding of conferences. **Bharata Natyam** and Carnatic Music were the two forms that came to be considered the necessary artistic acquirements for a cultured Tamil girl. Both were extolled as "Tamilian arts and achievements" and soon became the pre-occupation of middle class Tamils. **Bharata Natyam** in particular had been resuscitated in the early twenties by the efforts

of people like Bharata Iyer, Rukmani Devi Arundale (who soon founded the Kalakshetra, which has remained the outstanding Dance Academy in Madras) and G. Venkatachalam whose critical essays helped propagate the traditions and ideals of that dance form. During the 18th and 19th Centuries **Bharata Natyam** had become degraded, and called "nautch-dance" performed by courtesans and prostitutes.

While scholars and critics from G. Venkatachalam to the late professor V. Raghavam (1908-1979) contributed immensely to the resurgence of **Bharata Natyam**, it was perhaps, in the writings of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy that the dance form found its greatest champion. Two of the earliest monographs of Coomaraswamy were **The Mirror of Gesture** (1917) and **The Dance of Shiva** (1918) both of which have inspired almost all subsequent writers on **Bharata Natyam**. Likewise Carnatic music had been brought from the court and temple to the concert hall and along with the dance form acclaimed as divine arts. Thus we see that Tamil Language, **Bharata Natyam** and Carnatic Music were deified and thereby denied of experimentation and innovation.

It goes without saying that considerable affluence was the precondition for the cultivation of these arts and it was the upper classes that could afford it. As a result popular arts suffered and became even more debased and deprived of any support. It is therefore not surprising that until the late 50s and early 60s hardly any significant movement arose for studying and cherishing the popular arts or what is often described as "folk arts". This lack of interest in folk literature and arts was no doubt a reflection of the intrinsic class bias of the patrons of arts and culture. Needless to say the "ancient and divine arts" were carefully guarded against any political intrusions, especially of any ideas tinged with social reform or change. To put it differently, artistic form which are periodically revitalized by the absorption of radical ideas and giving expression to them, were

kept hermetically sealed by the upper middle class purely as status symbols and ethnic identities.

This was the nature of the linguistic and cultural consciousness of the Tamils till 1950s. The most sensitive Tamil scholars and creative writers like the late A. Periyathambi Pillai (1899-1979), S. Soma-sundara Pulavar (1878-1953), M. Nallathambi Pulavar (1896-1951) and Thuralappa Pillai always conceived Sinhala and Tamil as two eyes or two sisters or two companions and sang of a united happy home.

The post-independent political development began to change this picture. The disfranchisement of Tamils of Indian origin and the constant increase in Sinhalese seats in successive elections and other events increased the awareness of the Tamils as a national minority. It is not fortuitous that in 1952 the Tamil Cultural Society was formed in Colombo. Its programme included not only the propagation of the history and culture of the Tamils in Sri Lanka but also in other parts of the world.

Some aspects of the cultural consciousness at this period merit attention: although South India continued to be looked upon as the 'mainland' or as many Sri Lanka Tamils used to call it, their 'motherland', it was nevertheless gradually receding into the background. The past and present history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka were unavoidably becoming increasingly important and experimentally immediate. What ever common links and bonds there were, between the Tamils in Sri Lanka and South India, the two peoples were living under different Governments and facing different problems. The dialectical differences too were becoming more evident. Thus for the first time Sri Lanka Tamils began to manifest a keen interest in this land. No doubt the interest was mostly from the Tamils point of view: Questions such as when and from where did the Tamils come here? Are they autochthonous to the land? What is their relationship vis-a-vis the Sinhala people? What is their contribution to the culture and civilization of this country? These and other questions protruded to

the forefront in ever increasing frequency and intensity.

It is true that in the preceding decades Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam (1870-1940), Fr. Gnanapiragasar, A. Muthuthamby, K. Velupillai (1860-1944) and others had shown interest in the history of the Tamils. Their attempts were basically academic in character. But in the fifties, the historical writings were more than academic. There was an urgency involvement in the quests. Professor K. Kanapathi Pillai (1901-1967) published his historical play **Sankili** (1956) which he prefaced with a "history of Tamils in Sri Lanka". This was followed by C. S. Navaratnam's **Tamils and Ceylon** (1958), and K. Navaratnam's **Tamil Element in Ceylon Culture** (1959). Nor was the interest confined to history. K. Navaratnam (1898-1962) who was a devotee of Ananda Coomaraswamy and had popularized some of his books in Tamil, brought out in Tamil **The Development of Arts in Sri Lanka** (1954). This trend continued to grow with the voices becoming more shrill and the tone overtly polemical. Some of the academic writings of this period found an outlet in the journal **Tamil Culture** (1952-1966) which was being edited by a Sri Lankan — Xavier S. Thani Nayagam. It was printed and published in Madras. It carried academic articles like A. J. Wilson's "Cultural and Language Rights in the Multinational Society" (1953), Thani Nayagam's "Tamil Culture — its past, its present and its future with special reference to Ceylon" (1955), and also amateurish pieces like W. Balendra's "Trincomali Bronzes" (1953) and Gunasegaram's "Early Tamil Cultural Influences in South-East Asia" (1957). H. W. Tambiah published his **The Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Ceylon** (1954) probably responding to the prevalent milieu. A recent contribution to the subject is **Tamil Culture in Ceylon** by M. D. Raghavan. Generally speaking, the concept of Tamil Culture was given a wider significance and interpretation. C. Sivaratnam's **The Tamil in Early Ceylon** (1964) reflects this tendency. There were also plans for the economic reconstruction and development

of Tamil areas and World Tamil Unity. From this period the Tamil cultural movement becomes overtly political and begins to show up its class character and ideological leaning. And yet most of these writings were in English. Only after 1960s when Swabhasha graduates came out a start was made to write Academic matters in Tamil.

It is at this stage that for the first time the literary and cultural movement touches the traditionally oppressed sections of the Tamil people who had hitherto been beyond the pale. Both in South India and Sri Lanka, post-Independence problems created the conditions for the emergence of a band of writers who came from the traditionally oppressed sections of Tamil society, that is, the lower castes. Many of them were attracted by Marxism and communist organisations which provided them with a world view and also the confidence to struggle against exploitation and articulate their thoughts and feelings freely. As might be expected, their level of literary education was somewhat low. But they ushered in new experiences and visions into fiction, poetry and drama using hitherto unheard of dialects, idioms and expressions. They were indifferent to "correct" Tamil itself as taught by school teachers; pure Tamil was of no concern to them: they in fact openly despised it and ridiculed its proponents. To them linguistic restrictions or restraints were akin to social and political oppression and all such barriers had to be broken down. Harrison's general observation in a slightly different context seems applicable here:—

Where language differences tend to coincide with class distinctions language conflict is apt to coincide accordingly with the lines of social conflict, greatly increasing it. And if the language of the lower classes is spoken by them at a time when they increase in numbers, or when they gain a bigger share in political and economic power in the society, then the language quarrels will be part of a general process of their elevation in the society and of their gradual bid for increasing social power.

(Continued on page 21)

TAMIL DRAMA

Varied themes, but no theatre

by K. S. Sivakumaran

Fourteen plays entered the 1978 DRAMA FESTIVAL but one (**Emergency**) could not be staged for some 'censor' problem. While signs of potential dramatic talent were seen in most plays staged, it was unfortunate, however, that a good many plays, particularly those from the provinces, could not be termed 'drama'. Most plays showed a critical social awareness but they were conceived in melodramatic fashion to suit the Indian movie-like presentation.

I shall report briefly only themes presented so that readers could judge for themselves what direction Tamil drama in this country is taking right now. I have deliberately avoided commenting on individual performances and productions. Except for **Poruthathu Pothum**, **Kathalae Nee Vazhe Oru Malar Karuhiyathu** and **Oosiyum Noolum** (atleast thematically) all the other plays were at least fifteen to twenty years dated. A sense of drama and grasp of theatre is still lacking in most of the provincial plays.

Oosiyum Noolum (Needle and Thread): The working class should

Culture and . . .

(Continued from page 20)

The cultural nationalism of the Tamils is to day at the cross roads. It has two options before it. To tread the path of cultural isolation and chauvinism or to identify those features that are also common to the majority community and work out a democratic way of life. The choice would appear to be obvious. But to do that would also mean a national struggle by both communities obfuscating the veil of narrow ethnic interests and marching towards a social order in which there will be no exploitation of man by man.

join hands with the affluent who is righteous and eliminate intermediary working class leaders who capitalize on the suffering of his own men for his own gain.

Poruthathu Pothum (We've waited enough): A group of exploited fisher-folk get together as a last resort under the leadership of a courageous youth and start their own fishing venture thus isolating the *mudalali*.

Janaki Kalyanam (Marriage of Janaki): An educated village girl prefers a hardworking farmer to the richer urbanized cousin of hers for a husband.

Veattai (Hunting): Konn appu Bandara hunts for Rajasinghe and saves Kandy from the Portuguese.

Kaman Koothu (Cupid's Dance): Manmathan, God of Love is burnt by Lord Siva for having caused sexual stimulation in the Lord himself but is restored to life on the plea of his consort Rathi.

Un Kannil Neer Valinthal (When there's tears in your eyes): Sacrifice of an eye surgeon who lost his sexual potency in a laboratory mishap, to a patient and medical student who also lost her vision in the same mishap. The doctor takes his own life to do two things: to avoid GETTING MARRIED TO HIS COUSIN WHOM HE LOVES so that he will not ruin her life and give sight to the patient.

Dronar: The military guru of the Pandavas and Kauravars in the Mahabharata, uses his best student Arjuna after trying the others from the Kauravar brothers to defeat his one-time Royal friend, who has ignored him out of sheer arrogance.

Kathalae Nee Vazhi (Love Life): Based on the ideals of

Silapadikaram, a great Tamil epic, this play attempts to show that a king who realized belatedly that he had been unjust in trying to break-up a love affair between his sculptor and a courtesan whom he himself lusts for, takes his own life after knowing that the dancer really loved not him but the artist.

Oru Malar Karuhiyathu (A Burnt-Out Flower): A bride on her wedding day takes her own life before her Gandhian groom who leaves her in disgust after been told that she had a physical relationship with another. He turns to her later, admiring her honesty.

Thuyarathin Suvaduhal (Traces of Sorrow): An unruly and unscrupulous conductor in an estate ruins the lives of an estate family ultimately to be punished by the united struggle of the workers. The leader and son of the victimized family becomes the new conductor of the estate.

Alaihal (Waves): A fisher-wife turned middle-class woman kills her lover for having seduced her own daughter. She attempts to kill herself only to be saved by an old fisherman who had supported her as his own wife when the later lost her lover for a short time.

Payanam (Journey): An unemployed educated man with a family takes to crime to support his family only to be sent to the gallows for his crimes

Baktha Nanthanar: A depressed class worker out of his devotion to God convinces his Brahmin master that the love of God is universal and the Almighty could help even the poor and low-caste.

Most plays used song and dance completely out of proportions.

CINEMA

More about "Uthumaneni"

by H. A. Seneviratne

We sometimes see what is not and not what is. This is because we tend to equate our wish to reality even when they are far apart from each other. Is the large audience that viewed "Uthumaneni" indicative of this tendency? Or is it that the barrage of posters appealing to justice and also suggestive of the possibility of the film being banned that pulled this audience? Perhaps it was a combination of both these factors that led large crowds to view this film.

Unfortunately, not only ordinary film-goers but critics too appear to have come under this curious spell. For example, Mr. J. Uyangoda described "Uthumaneni" as 'something marvellous' (L. G. 01.03.1980)

I think this film represents the current trend created by social oppression and injustice where no film will be successful even at the box-office if the element of social protest is missing. The "makers of Uthumaneni" appear to have grasped this situation only in a superficial manner.

In fact a certain amount of social protest had been present even in many of the formula films in recent times. However, in fairness it must be stated that "Uthumaneni" is not a formula film. Nevertheless it deals with the seemingly shocking and awe-inspiring theme of rape and revenge. There should of course be no fetters or limitations, apart from the limitations of the laws of art, to the creativity of the artist.

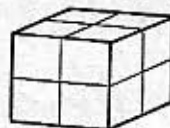
In other words the only limitation of art is, or rather should be, art itself. There is little that could be considered as genuine art in "Uthumaneni", in my opinion.

Does the situation as brought out in the film make the rape scene, which is the pivot on which the film turns, seem something that develops naturally out of that situation itself? After all it is his own cousin sister that the villain rapes. That is not all. He encourages and facilitates his stooges too to do the same thing. I feel that from this point onwards "Uthumaneni" fails to be convincing as regards its story and, therefore, as regards its proclaimed protest against injustice as well.

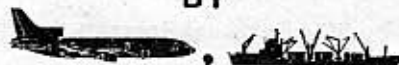
Then comes the question of punishment of the wrong-doer with which the makers of the film become pre-occupied in the second half of the film. This pre-occupation undermines the film's basic question of social protest as stressed by both critics as well as advertisers of the film. To make matters worse the problem of punishment is summarily settled by the elder brother of the raped girl by stabbing to death all the accused who raped his sister and got away with it.

The shoddy treatment of the subject matter of the film gives the audience a shocking experience. But the film does not move them emotionally. This is because the film is aesthetically poor. A work that is aesthetically poor cannot become rich in any other aspect, be it social protest or what have you. Is it surprising then, that the government sponsored Sinhala journal "Desathiya" so liberally allocated its columns for favourable comment of the film "Uthumaneni?"

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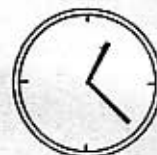
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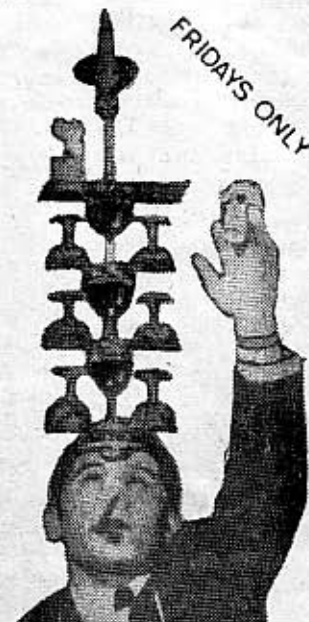
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BOOK REVIEW

History as it was

"Mao Zedong's Talks With Edgar Snow (1936)"

Mao Zedong's Talks With Edgar Snow (1936) (in Chinese) has recently been published by the People's Publishing House.

A record of the talks Comrade Mao Zedong had with Edgar Snow between June and October 1936, when the latter was visiting the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia revolutionary base areas, the book has five chapters: A Communist's Experiences, The Long March, On Resistance to Japanese Aggression, On the United Front and The Communist Party of China and World Affairs.

The book was edited by Wu Liping, who interpreted for Chairman Mao on these occasions. In the preface, Wu described the circumstances, which the talks took place, the historical background and contents of the talks.

He corrected some factual mistakes in that chapter entitled "A Communist's Experiences," for Comrade Mao Zedong had talked without notes. Wu also added some footnotes.

Because there were no official transcripts for some of the talks and other transcripts were later lost, the first two parts of the present edition were translated back into Chinese from Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* and last three from two English journals published at that time, *China Weekly Review* and *Amerasia*.

"A Communist's Experiences" is the most significant chapter as it contains the only existent biography of Comrade Mao Zedong. Earlier this Communist leader had stated his intention not to write an autobiography and he had seldom talked about his personal experiences even to his comrades-in-arms and friends. He agreed to tell his personal life history to Edgar Snow only after the latter's repeated requests.

"The Long March" is not in the form of a talk. It is based on Comrade Mao Zedong's

description of the Long March and incorporates material which Edgar Snow collected from other Chinese comrades.

The last three chapters record Comrade Mao Zedong's analysis of the domestic and international situation at the time and his exposition of the Communist Party's programme for unity in the resistance against Japanese aggression. He also predicted that a full-scale war with Japan was inevitable. Many of the ideas expressed in the talks were borne out by later developments.

— Courtesy Beijing Review

Some . . .

(Continued from page 9)

he embarked on a bloody purge of all political opposition. Yet it is Mr. Amin whom Mr. Carter now refers to as "the legal ruler of Afghanistan" who was overthrown by the Soviets, even though they had initially backed him.

It may make sense to emphasize the politically legitimate nature of the Amin regime which the Russians so ruthlessly destroyed last December. Yet President Amin was a brutal despot. He was no Alexander Dubcek — the reform-minded Czechoslovak leader thrown out by the Russians in 1968, at the same time the administration of Babrak Karmal has failed to win any form of popular support. Its ministers are not under direct orders from Soviet "advisers," as some reports would have it, but they are deeply divided over the future policy of the government, especially over the degree to which the Cabinet should enforce land reform and civil rights for women.

Several administrators — the governor of the besieged city of Jalalabad, for example — are not party members, and there is a growing belief among Afghan civil servants that if the revolution is to continue in any recognizable form, then it must be slowed down. Courtesy — Christian Science Monitor.

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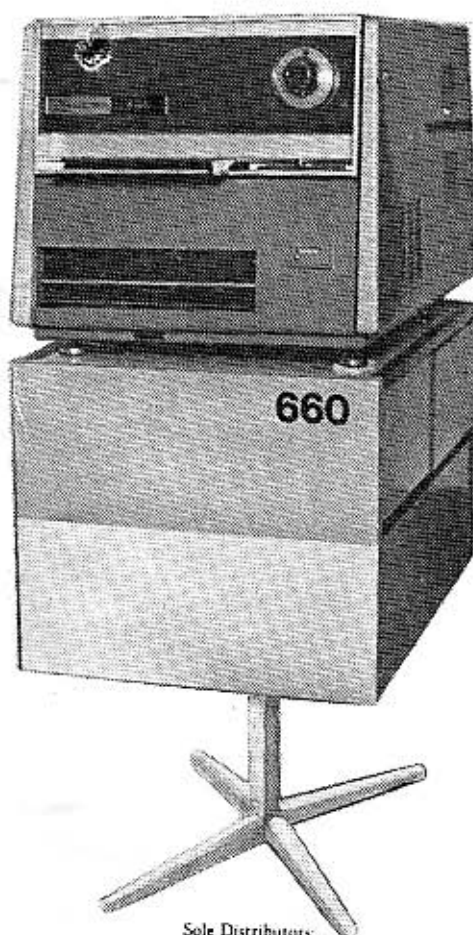
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