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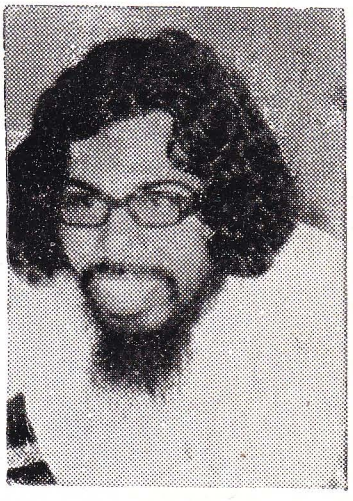
ROHANA DECLARES WAR



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Colvin : Devil's grandmother

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TRENDS + LETTERS

Sign of the Times?

Has a "rescue operation", here in Sri Lanka, failed too? Although one of the noisier election slogans of the UNP was the restoration of full press freedom, newspaper employees, including journalists, were inclined to breathe a sigh of relief or merely shrug their shoulders, when the UNP government took over the **Times**, *lock, stock and barrel.*

The reason for this reaction was plain enough. The **Times** *was broke. It had been broke for a long time and employees were long accustomed to getting their monthly salaries in two or three instalments. A blood transfution was desperately necessary to save an institution on the verge of collapse. But even in the new climate of private sector confidence no tycoon would have been ready to invest his money in such a hazardous enterprise. Only the government had the money. Nearly 3 years have gone by. Once again the* **Times** *seems to be in a state of gloom and doom. Circulation is poor, the printing is bad and the organisation is near chaotic. What is more, cash is a big problem. A report on the parlous condition of the* **Times**, *the L.G. learns, has been submitted to the highest authorities.*

A sign of the Times, observes a cynical Timesman is the unopened crate enjoying the sun and the monsoon showers near the porch. It contains a new press! Meanwhile the **Far Eastern Economic Review** *has published a report by its Colombo correspondent on the "timid state-controlled media" in Sri Lanka. The report gets its inspiration from the candid comments on media credibility made recently by the former press magnate and now roving ambassador Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe.*

Fun With Figures

"Sharp decline in unemployment among youth" announces a front page headline, quoting the Central Bank's annual report. The Central Bank's credibility may be slightly higher than that of the establishment press, although Dr. N. M. Perera once suggested that the CB's reports were as clumsily rigged as elections in the Philippines, Indonesia or Egypt. (Incidentally President J. R., once again excluded all the ASEAN countries from Third World democracies which he said were four in number — Sri Lanka, India, Costa Rica and Venezuela.)

Anyway the CB report says that unemployment has fallen from 24% in 1973 to 15% in 1978. With 21%, the urban sector is highest; the rural sector has 15% unemployment, while the estate sector is lowest with 5.4%.

The report however, makes this cautionary and self-protective note: "The non availability of regular and complete data is a major limitation to analyzing changes in employment in Sri Lanka."

So how reliable are these statistics? Figuring it out is half the fun.

TULF Trouble

The Labour party in Britain has the famed "TRIBUNE" group, a radical and articulate group which has greater influence on

(*Continued on page 2*)

Pro Constance Garnett

I read with interest and profit Mr. Reggie Siriwardene's article on the difficulties of translation, (LG–March 1st.). However, he seems to isolate one from the complex of operant factors that go to create an effect in literature, in original or in translation. For instance, what he has termed the loss of the second person pronoun in English translation of Russian literature does not necessarily cause a loss because it is counter-balanced by the practice of translator Constance Garnett in having the characters follow the Russian custom of addressing a person by name, including patronym (or is it matronym?) which creates for the non-Russian social sensibility just the right nuance of a social relationship that might be conveyed by the deferential use of the Russian pronoun:

"Bring in tea, and tell Seryosha that Alexey Alexandrovitch is here. Well, tell me, how have you been? Mihail Vassilievitch, you've not been to see me before." The nuance

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CONTENTS

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achieved by this method is part of a rhythmic context and each variation of form of address supports each other. Anna had just been "greeting Sludin, who was like one of the family, with a smile." (**Anna Karenina,** trans. Constance Garnett) On the other hand, a use of the deferential "thou", which is archaic to the English ear, would have had a disastrously ludicrous effect.

Perhaps with his more intimate knowledge of the Rassian language and literature Mr. Siriwardene can tell us whether there has been a nuance of a change in the Russian use of personal pronouns since aristocratic times, though not perhaps to the extent of the demotion to archaism of the English "thou" and "thee." Has the wide currency of "comrade" as a form of address had an influence on the Russian pronoun? I don't know.

Patrick Jayasuriya

Peradeniya

Tamil consciousness

The series of articles by Dr. K. Sivathamby published recently in the Lanka Guardian offer a long overdue academic assesment of the Tamils' political situation. There is one point however which Dr. Sivathamby has glossed over; that is the essentially pragmatic nature of Tamil leadership.

Dr. Sivathamby alleges that despite group rivalries the Tamils have displayed an overriding urge for national unity. In cultural terms, this may well be so, but politically speaking, this statement ignores several indications to the contrary. First, there are the results of the '52 election when the UNP scored victories throughout the Eastern Province and even won a seat in the peninsula, and more recently the UNP victory in the 1974 Mannar by-election and the post-77 defections from the TULF parliamentary ranks by Indian Tamil and Eastern Province Tamil members. This is not a transient phenomenon. Since the introduction of universal franchise in 1930 the Tamil leaders have shown a marked propensity to split ranks ,whenever a suitable opportunity arose.

In an age of arithmetical democracy, a 12% minority (20% if you add in the Indian Tamils) is neccessarily forced to choose between noble martyrdom and pusillanimous pragmatism. The former course is rightly considered to be self-defeating by the bourgeois, caste minded and essentially cautious vellala who throw up the national leaders of the Sri Lanka Tamil community. The Tamils have therefore adopted the line of most patronage. Only Chelvanayagam stood against this policy. When the Kandyans first elbowed their way into politics at the expense of the Indian Tamil voters, the Jaffna Tamils were the fitst to make overtures to them for a Kandyan-Tamil alliance against "low-country hegemony." It was only when this failed that the Sri Lanka Tamils accepted the '50-50' (actually 40-60) policy formulated by Indian Tamil leaders as a means of combating the Low-country-Kandyan rapprochement. However, the offer of a portfolio in the DS Senanayake cabinet destroyed this Tamil alliance. Abandoned by their Tamilian compatriots, the Indian Tamils were deprived of civic rights The complete rout of the Federal Party in the 52 elections was a resounding endorsement of this policy.

Although less ambiguous and mercurial than the Muslim Tamil element in their political zigzagging, the leaders of the Tamils, both the Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils, seek to maximise power and patronage through the existing system. Pragmatists to a man, they consider that the class and caste interests of their electors are most effectively protected by a capitalist government. It is no mere chance that Tamil national unity tends to increase when there is a collusion between Sinhalese chauvinist and socialist forces.

I do not wish to detract from the very sober and neat dissection which Dr. Sivathamby made, but I question the fact that the Tamils have ever really manifested the single-mindedness neccessary to an effective national movement. If their own leaders, who are after all drawn from a very narrow class and caste spectrum, are apparently so ready to abandon group loyalty how can the community as a whole be said to have developed a national consciousness?

Panadura **Dr. Jane Russell**

Pravus pater noster

You've got to be kidding. Trotsky did NOT say that Mussolini called Marx "the IMMORAL father of us all." If this is someone's Freudian slip it's not mine – I've checked the carbon copy of my article and it clearly has "immortal".

Colombo 3. **V. P. Vittachi**

Trends . . .

(*Continued from page 1*)

party thinking than its numbers would strictly warrant. Now it has a 'Militant' tendency, Trotskyist in persuasion and taking its name as usual from a newspaper.

Has the TULF leadership found a troublesome faction in the **SUTANTIRAN** *group? The FP paper has always been more outspoken than the FP leaders. And the* **SUTANTIRAN** *group has many, often covert, links with militant youth circles which in turn produce left-inclined journals like* **MANITHAN.**

Has the TULF started a purge of these radicals because the leadership is itself divided between hardliners and softliners vis-a-vis the government? The issue is a critical test because the TULF may soon have to make up its mind about Devolution.

Blue - and - red again

NEWS BACKGROUN

Blue-and-red flags were out again in the streets of Colombo on May Day. Some of these flags were flying from shops, small hotels and business establishments owned by known SLFP or LSSP sympathisers.

Blue and red were of course prominently together in the SLFP -LSSP procession which took many hours in making the journey from Havelock Town to Campbell Park.

The re-appearance of blue-and-red banners was an obvious illustration of the general mood among the rank-and-file of both parties. It was as if the old United Front had been revived. At the leadership level however, spokesmen from both parties may say that this was merely a joint May Day rally. They would also leave the future open. Joint action on this or that issue is clearly a strong possibility — especially campaigns on economic issues. But the rank-and-file believe that the post-1975 bitterness is over and a formal alliance would be announced sooner or later. This pressure from below is bound to affect decisions by the leadership.

"The real political battle will begin on May 7th" announced Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike the SLFP leader. May 7 was marked by two events — the keen by-election contest at Anamaduwa and Mrs. Bandaranaike's own appearance before the Presidential Commission of Inquiry investigating abuses of power by her 1970-77 government.

If the Commission's findings are adverse, parliament can by special resolution impose civic disabilities on her.

In case there was any doubt in the minds of the vast gathering at Campbell Park Mrs. Bandaranaike immediately explained that she was referring to what may happen after her case was over. She said that she will continue to lead the party and would never quit politics, whatever the consequences.

Some surprises

If May 7 was a day of decision as Mrs. Bandaranaike predicted, it did bring some surprises, pleasant or unpleasant, to many.

One of those who was "taken completely by surprise" (CDN p.l) was the Deputy Solicitor General, Mr. Sunil de Silva. He was addressing the Presidential Commission after Mrs. Bandaranaike had read out her statement in which she said she was withdrawing from its proceedings. She refused to be tried by a special tribunal selected "by my chief political opponent."

Her statement revealed the fine hand of her lawyer and legal advisers but the decision was manifestly a political one. All her responses, all tactical moves henceforth will be political.

It will depend on the Commission's report, the response of parliament and the consequences, if any, to her political career, as SLFP leader.

Belgrade bound

Always conscious of her International image and the perceived importance of international connections, Mrs. Bandaranaike left for Belgrade to attend Tito's funeral. She had done the same when she was Prime Minister — for Nehru and Nasser.

There were no 'passport dramas' at the Katunayake airport. Reporters found the SLFP leader given real V. I. P. treatment — on explicit instructions from the top, according to the airport authorities.

Anamaduwa

While Anamaduwa may explain why Sri Lanka's representation was at foreign minister level at Tito's funeral (a greater gathering of VVIP's than at the funerals of De Gaulle or Churchill, two war-time leaders) the news of the Anamaduwa result must have made depressing company for the Belgrade bound Mrs. Bandaranaike.

Explanations and excuses cnn follow a simple statistical assessment. The SLFP has to swallow an elephantine fact — the UNP has captured a rural constituency which the SLFP had not only held for more than 20 years but had successfully defended even against the UNP's 1977 blitzkreig.

A SLFP majority of 1083 has been converted to a UNP majority of 1787. True enough, the SLFP retained its 16,000 odd votes but is that any cause for comfort at a time when economic hardships, as the SLFP rightly points out, keep mounting?

The SLFP has increased its vote by 300 odd, a small fraction of the increase in the total votes polled.

By protecting its 16,000 vote base the SLFP has proved that its traditional support is intact. The JVP's poor performance is further evidence of how deep-rooted is the two party systems in electoral politics. Where was the JVP's much-vaunted rural youth support?

There were no bread-and-butter issues in the literal sense. At Anamaduwa it was a question of village tanks and disused tube wells, cowpea, kerosene (no electricity, and, of course jobs.

For the rest, it was voter psychology, cynical self-unrest or opportunism and the UNP's organisation machine. the machine that JR devoted so much of his time and energy to build 1973-77.

Scouts sent by J.R. and R.P. brought back "intelligence" reports on the electorate's mood. Then campaign chief Festus Perera and 75 MP's, Deputy Ministers etc moved in superbly organised formations, fanning out in a constituency where houses and clusters of huts are sometimes miles apart.

Three more years to go. There's more mileage to get from a government than from one more MP in a pitiful group of 7.

The UNP had every reason, in fact, to expect a majority of 3000-4000.

JVP: a turn to the class?

In the old days, they used to call him 'The Boss' or 'The Big Man' — a strangely American expression for a movement flaunting the impeccably indigenous banner of a 'Lanka Line'. Today, the short, slightly stocky and bespectacled Rohana Wijeweera is, more than ever before, the Big Man. He is not only the undisputed leader (de facto if not de jure) of the JVP, the country's numerically largest Left force, he is also the dominant single personality of the Left movement as a whole–a movement which has no dearth of colourful personalities.

As he surveyed the crowd before him — which the SUN of May 2nd estimated as being not less than that of the SLFP/LSSP/MEP joint rally — Mr. Wijeweera had good cause to feel a strong sense of achievement. His movement, as he told his audience, had been liquidated with "blood, iron and fire" in 1971 by the SLFP–led state. The SLFP leaders, (whom he termed the Bandaranaike –Ratwatte clan,) had been convinced that they had seen the last of the JVP. The old Left had thought so too. But in the jails, the task of reconstituting the JVP had taken place and now it was the main challenge to the UNP and SLFP. It had weakened the old Left so badly that the LSSP unable to stand on its own two feet, had staggered back into the arms of Sirima. The other left parties had their rally at the Hyde Park, sorely weakened because even their own supporters had crossed over to listen to Wijeweera. So when the JVP leader, from the heights of his multitiered stage (as tall as Adam's Peak remarked someone) assured his audience that their party had the strength to stand on its own two feet without leaning on the SLFP or UNP, he did sound quite convincing.

While the IGP had waved to the JVP procession and taken pictures from near the Liberty cinema, his officers were harassing the JVP. said Mr. Wijeweera. The J.V.P. should be given the same chance of winning power democratically, as any other party such as the SLFP or UNP had. However their democratic rights were being infringed upon by the C.I.D.

Major Otelo de Carvalho, a hero of the 1975 Portuguese Revolution, had told him in Lisbon, that the personnel of the old fascist regimes political police had appealed to be put into jail — as a measure for their own personal safety, since the masses were now meting out punishment to them. Similarly, Wijeweera urged the C.I.D and the bureaucracy to bear in mind that the country would not always be ruled by the UNP or the SLFP.

The JVP leader did not sound quite as convincing when he assured his audience that the SLFP would not win the 1983 elections, but his sense of committment certainly came through when he promised that, if the JVP were repressed again, it would emerge even stronger, just as the party had been successfully built up twice before, first in the 1960's and then again after the 1971 repression. Even if he were killed, the class upon which the JVP rested would regenerate the party once more. "He's correct", remarked a contemporary of Wijeweera who was listening to the speech. "So long as the petty bourgeois youth exists as a social stratum within this crisis ridden capitalism, they will always give birth to the JVP or its equivalent. This will continue for a while even after the revolution. After all, the SR's were bigger than the Bolsheviks. No bourgeois force can ever defeat, the JVP. Only a genuinely revolutionary Marxist–Leninist vanguard party of the working class, that is, a true Communist Party, can do that."

Waging War

The nitty–gritty of Wijeweera's speech came right at the end. Until then, it had been entertaining and perhaps educative (what with quotes from Voltaire and Herzen) but insubstantial. Towards the end however he announced that the JVP's prime task for the whole of the next year was to "wage war" on the trade union bureaucracies affiliated to the LSSP, CPSL, MEP, NSSP, etc etc. The JVP would carve through these T.U. organisations with the same ease that they swept the campuses, promised Wijeweera. In short, the JVP declared a one year 'war' on the Joint Trade Union Action Committee. "Is this combatting the union bureaucracy or declaring war on the organised working class movement?" was the query of a young CMU –er as he left the rain–drenched Town Hall.

JTUAC

While 90% of the enormous JVP demonstration comprised non –working class youth, and the Campbell park rally did include the LSSP, SLFP and MEP union members, the solid core of the organized urban working class marched under the JTUAC banner in a demonstration numbering between 13 and 15 thousand. "Though it was the smallest of the three formations quantitatively, it did comprise the most advanced, politically conscious sections of the working class — and after all, this is what May Day is all about" claimed a CPSL Politbureau member. The CPSL's was the largest contingent numbering a little over 6,000. The NSSP (Vasudeva) came a close second and was notable for its slogans calling for the recognition of the Right of Self–Determination for the Tamil people. The CMU (4,000) proved that it was the best organized single Trade Union in the country. A significant feature of the JTUAC demo were the presence of large numbers of women workers (garment workers, nurses etc) Interestingly, there were many slogans against the LSSP and JVP for their alleged 'tailism' vis–a–vis the SLFP and UNP respectively.

Repeating his performance of last year, Vasudeva gave the most intelligent and impressive May Day speech of 1980 with a plea for broad trade union unity (inclusive of the SLFP) and a higher, political unity of the left (minus the LSSP).

LSSP

The cartoonists were too cruel to Colvin. In a message directly addressed to the LSSP's erstwhile allies, the CP, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva reminded the CPSL of a celebrated Trostskyist dictum. In certain circumstances, Marxists, advised Trotsky, should be ready to form fronts not only with the devil but the devil's grandmother. (The CDN reporter was content with the "Devil's mother").

The impish devil in every cartoonist leapt for joy.

The Sunday Observer's Wijesoma saw Colvin getting the boot (or was it the aristocratic slipper?) from the U.F. walauwa (1975) with FDB, wearing his best satanic grin, looking on. In the next frame, (1980) a destitute Colvin, patched trousers and all, returns to the SLFP house.....the man with the horns, wears an unfriendly smile.

The ATHTHA cartoonist was not all that complicated, Sirima wore the horns to play the Devil's grandmother.

The coming together of the SLFP and LSSP certainly revived sagging spirits of the island's oldest party. The 1977 debacle when the giants of the past fell like nine-pins, almost all loosing their deposits, the death of N.M., the pitiful performance in the contest for Colombo municipality which had once flaunted red flags, and humiliation of Galle where the LSSP was beaten by the JVP had extracted a heavy price from the LSSP's self confidence. The favourite slogan of many veteran LSSP supporters was "the United Front will return to power in 1983".

In the multilateral debate within the Left prompted Vasudeva Nanayakkara at Hyde Park to remind the LSSP that a SLFP/LSSP United Front cannot win a two-thirds majority under the PR system. Therefore, he said a SLFP/LSSP Prime Minister will still be President J.R.'s prime minister. A high ranking LSSPer told the Lanka Guardian "we have not formed the United Front. We may do so. It all depends on the political conditions. We are not thinking of the results of the 1983 elections. We are wondering whether there will be an election in 1983. As the international political and economic situation worsens and our own economic problems are aggravated, this question will be a real one. In such a situation only mass

(*Continued on page 11*)

ON THE ROAD TO BELGRADE

by Mervyn de Silva

Addressing the Indian Parliament on his return from the Bandung conference, Mr. Nehru said: "Bandung proclaimed the political emergence in world affairs of over half the world's population ...." But he added that "it would be misreading of history to regard Bandung as though it was an isolated occurence and not part of a great movement of human history."

If Mr. Nehru was correct then, his evaluation made so soon after the conference seems even more correct now. Bandung, indeed, is a landmark. Yet, it is much more a part of a historical process.

Bandung was an Afro-Asian gathering; by definition, a regional or continental concept. This physical dimension reveals both its strength and its limitations. It is useful to note, for instance, that there never was a 'second Bandung' although there were several active and sustained efforts to convene another such meeting. But after the first nonaligned conference in Belgrade in 1961, these efforts slowly lost their momentum and Bandung receded inexorably into history, a history in which it has a significant place. The 'Bandung spirit' did not die. No it was gradually assimilated into a larger idea, a political factor as this quarter century has proved, of greater vitality and resilience. That force being non-alignment which moved across to and embraced Latin America and few nations of Europe.

The post-war world witnessed the end of colonialism, first of all in Asia. That is why Bandung, inspite of the presence of some African and Arab countries, had a strong Asian accent. Bandung marks a significant stage in the maturation of the political consciousness of those nations which freed from the imperialist yoke after many centuries, responded to their own compulsive need to assert this newly achieved independence.

In that sense, it was as much psychological as political. Understandly so. Colonialism had not only meant political domination and economic exploitation but the spoilation of the rich and ancient cultures of these conquered peoples.

It was a historical process because this consciousness was not confined to one or two or a handful of countries. On the contrary, it was a phenomenon common to almost every nation that had shared the colonial experience. In short, it was a 'group feeling', a **collective consciousness** which had already expressed itself in an informal Afro-Asian group at the United Nations. This group feeling, born out of a shared experience and fortified by a newly awakened sense of identity, gradually grasped the idea that it was also necessary to shape a collective will. Only a collective will would allow and promote collective action.

In part, it was, as I said, psychological: in part, it was also a predictable, even inescapable response to an elementary fact of contemporary history. Each of these nations, individually, was fundamentally 'weak'. Therefore, in a given world system where political power goes with economic and military strength, these nations could affirm their independence and assert their right to be heard only collectively. The mobilisation of the collective will was the only option, the only way to have their distinctive voice heard, if not heeded.

So Bandung was a natural extension of the Afro-Asian group at the U.N. These are plain historical facts and if they require reiteration, it is only because we are looking back 25 years, from the vantage point of a world in which such organisations and movements like the OAU, the nonaligned, the Group of 77 at UNCTAD and the UN itself, are so strongly influenced by this self-same spirit of collective action and unity.

Seen from this perspective, Bandung is rich in lessons that are even more meaningful in today's world.

It is common knowledge that the idea of a Bandung conference received formal blessings at the first Colombo conference of April 1954, a conference in which India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) participated.

In late 1953, Mr. Foster Dulles, on a visit to Pakistan, had described nonalignment (a word coined by Nehru) as "immoral". The very notion that the ex-colonial countries could conceive of an independent, collective voice in world affairs' earned the vicious hostility and contempt of the US and the American press.

Already the US was busy on a US-Pakistan military agreement, inspite of strong objections by India. At Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon, the US ambassadors of the region had met in secret and decided that before the Colombo conference, the US must isolate India by winning over the other four. Burma's UN ambassador told the Colombo meeting how he had turned down an offer of US aid because it was tied to another offer, a 'mutual security pact'. Ceylon was in a quandary. Driven by its own pressing domestic needs, Ceylon had signed a rubber-rice barter deal with China in defiance of the US-imposed embargo on the sale of strategic materials to communist China. But the pressure on the Ceylonese Prime Minister, the ultra-rightist Sir John Kotelawela, was intensified until the US succeeded in getting Sir John to launch an attack on the USSR at Bandung.

In today's context, the US-Pakistani move is extraordinarily thought provoking. The US treaty resulted in the growing isolation of Pakistan, one of the five sponsors of Bandung, from the progressive movement of the Poor World. Not all the Islamic summits nor Mr. Bhutto's mano-

euvres to sponsor a Third World Conference could rescue Pakistan from its self-imposed alienation. Only the collapse of CENTO gave Pakistan the opportunity of joining the nonaligned conference in Havana last year. But once again the shadow of the US falls over this country and we are left to wonder whether Pakistan's lately acquired nonalignment is genuine enough to withstand new pressures from old patrons.

Of course, Pakistan is no exception. The winning of allies and the construction of alliance-systems was part of the US general strategy of keeping the under-developed nations from acting in concert, from struggling for a new equitable international order, and from unifying their efforts to strengthen that struggle.

The **New York Times** hailed the Colombo communique because it showed, according to that newspaper, a healthy reaction against Communism and because Mr. Nehru had failed to impose India's desire to form a "neutralists block"!

In 1976, just before another Colombo conference, the 5th nonaligned summit, Professor Moynihan' one-time US Ambassador to India and the U.N., was warning his government that the "emerging bloc" of "Third World" nations was a serious threat to US interests.

So while the "new" nations were striving towards unity and a common policy of nonalignment and independence, the US was employing every possible strategem to establish military-political alliances and alignments. Surely it is significant that SEATO was created six months before the Bandung meeting.

In another critical area of the world, the Middle East, the Baghdad pact was signed, and the young Colonel Nasser of Egypt, who was a dominant personality at Bandung denounced it as an insidious attempt to disrupt the Arab League.

At first, the US and its allies, opposed the idea of an Afro-Asian conference. Several pro-US regimes (Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Philippines) gave the invitation to China as the main reason for their antagonism. But when the US discovered the current was too strong and running against it, there was sharp change of tactics. Suddenly most of these countries did a **volte face. US** then hoped, as the **New York Herald Tribune** observed that "America's friends will outnumber her enemies and they will defend the US when necessary."

Why? In his well-researched study **"AFRO-ASIA and NON-ALIGNMENT"** G. H. Jansen gave us the answer.

"It was in this debate on colonialism that the conference grappled with its real task and its real purpose....."

If the common colonial heritage was the historical foundation of the movement which made a formal announcement of its advent on the world scene at Bandung, the struggle against "colonialism in all its manifestations" (Mr. Krishna Menon's contribution) was its publicly declared manifesto. And it is precisely this fundamental fact which has made the movement's anti-imperialist character its central feature. And for that reason, the US and its allies, both outside and inside the movement have consistently laboured to dilute this character, divert the forward movement from its avowed aims and divide its ranks.

Today this movement's broad forces have indentified the various manifestations of colonialism in whatever guise it appears. Thus, the cry for a new international economic order; the clamour against the transnational corporations, the battle to end cultural colonialism and information imperialism.

While the West was right in identifying this resurgent force as an 'enemy', it had yet another reason to be doubly hostile to it. The socialist countries, led by the Soviet Union, had recognised the immense progressive potential of this burgeoning movement, and by word and deed, as its support for national liberation clearly demonstrated, supported its basic aims.

As author Jansen notes, one of the curious features of the Bandung meeting was that it was the Soviet Union which was the principal target of attack of the US and its allies, and not Communist China, although its participation had become a major controversy. Again, the west was right in recognising its main enemy, and potentially dangerous alliance between the exploited peoples of the "Third World" and the socialist camp. Jansen says that the US allies were talking about "colonialism" in the Baltic while debating "colonialism" at a conference held in the island of Java in the Sunda Sea!

One of the West's allies, Prince al-Hassan, Prime Minister of Yemen, on his way to the conference had said "We have not heard of Panchsheel.... (Five Principles)....We have never heard of China's entry into the UN."

Mr. Molotov and other Soviet spokesmen had openly declared support for Panchsheel, which included the cardinal tenet of peaceful co-existence. Marshal Voroshilov and the praesidium of the Central Asian republics of the USSR had sent messages of goodwill to Bandung, whereas the black Congressman, Adam Clayton Powell, the only unofficial American "observer" was reduced to distributing cigars to delegates as a gesture of the friendship of the American people, when President Eisenhower and the State Department rejected his suggestion that the US should send an official message.

China, outlawed from the UN by the US, identified itself with the forces of Bandung, and for a time it even assumed the role of a champion of the "Third World." It is a commonplace fact of history that it was the combined support of the nonaligned countries and the socialist camp, together with the pressure they exerted for nearly 20 years which finally led to the admission of China into the UN.

(Continued on page 23)

Iran

PERILOUS PATHS

Already quite clear, the connection between the US 'hostages drama' and the presidential campaign will become all too obvious as the rival aspirants, ceremonially annointed at the party conventions, advance into the final round.

Though Mr. Ohira has voiced some dark doubts on the question and Mr. Rajaratnam has lamented its lack of leadership, the US is a superpower. Thus, presidential preoccupations with electoral politics and popularity polls cannot possibly be parochial matters. They involve the world. And the world, particularly after the tragic farce in the Iranian desert, must bear this is mind. For peoples and governments in the Indian Ocean region, the invitation to the most sombre reflection, is all the more urgent.

The cock-eyed commando operation of "Charlie's Angels" (named after Colonel Charles Beckwith and, in the true American spirit, a popular TV programme!) may be greeted by America's enemies as another welcome blow to its plummeting prestige. But back in the US, this aggressive adventure, inspite of its disastrous outcome, has raised Mr. Carter's stock. Therein lies the danger. One by one, he has exhausted his "options." What will he be tempted to do next? The importance of that question cannot be over-stated.

Henry Brandon, one of the most knowledgeable of Washington correspondents, wrote: "There is always the danger that a man hurt, frustrated and extremely sensitive to the accusation of weakness and indecision, feels need to disprove his critics and to act vigorously from weakness."

Soon after the story of the abortive mission made the headlines, both Democratic party chairmen of the two foreign affairs committees of Congress, Senator Frank Church and Rep, Clement Zablocki argued that this act of aggression was a violation of the War Powers Act. Of course, that law has many convenient loopholes.

Double-cross

Western reactions were also marked by anger and dismay. Reporting from London to the IHT, Joseph Fitchett wrote: "Several of the European diplomats said that their governments would be incensed by the U. S. behaviour, which they described as verging on a double-cross of its allies.

"The Carter administration last week twisted our arm to impose sanctions on Iran with the threat of U.S. military action otherwise," a diplomat said, adding: "We did it, and then President Carter went ahead and did it anyway."

Severance of diplomatic relations, economic sanctions and other threats, and then secret operations. What next? A Haiphong-type mining of Iranian harbours **a la LBJ?** A full-scale naval blockade?

For the US public the hostages remain, understandably, a highly charged emotional affair. For the media, notably TV it is theatre on the grand scale. For lawyers and students of diplomacy, there is the inconclusive debate on international conventions and rules of conduct. The hostages were diplomats enjoying immunity. But, replies the Iranian leadership, they lost this privilege when they engaged in subversive activities as part of the apparatus supporting the Shah's corrupt and oppressive regime. The evidence, say the Iranian authorities, will be presented to the world.

But for people in most parts of the world, the media dramatisation of the hostages issue has converted the question to a simple human situation.

Will electoral pressures and propaganda promote the Carter administration to take even more perilous steps that would endanger peace in the area? In an unusual expression of identical views, India and Pakistan condemned the US operation and warned of its dangers to peace. In striking contrast, Sri Lanka's response was a study in equivocation.

In Washington, the resignation of Cyrus Vance, a modest and sensible man, heralded a victory for Dr. Brzezinski, the new cold warrior. His outspoken opinions at the start of the Iranian crisis are freely quoted by two distinguished US researchers in a new study entitled **"Carter and the Fall of the Shah: The Inside Story"**, published last month in The Washington Quarterly. The all-powerful National Security Adviser believed that "the nature of the Shah's regime was a distinctly secondary question, and that Iran was of such pre-eminent importance to American Middle East policy that the Shah should be encouraged to do whatever was necessary to preserve control of the country."

The Shah was the best servant of western interests. It was for this historical role that the Pahlevi dynastry was created by the British and then sustained for so long by the US. Those interests were both economic and strategic.

As the Ayatollah Khomeini sees it, these are the fundamental issues, raised by the anti-Shah movement. Islamic Revolution, popular uprising or whatever else the descriptive title, the movement's ideals remain the genuine economic and political independence of Iran. Hence the Ayatollah hailed the severance of diplomatic relations by the US as a happy symbol of the end of US dominance. Inspite of many internal conflicts and unpredictable eruptions, the spirit of the Iranian revolution is very much alive. Its ultimate success will be measured by the degree to which the Iranian people become the true masters of their destiny.

THE DON IS DEAD

The last survivor among the great personalities of World War 2 is no more. The death of the communist who by defying Stalin in 1948 turned into a symbolic figure of the 'cold war' follows the recent declaration of a second 'cold war'. The brave and brilliant anti-fascist partisan who became the maker of modern Yugoslavia has left a national sense which he had so totally dominated for four decades. Nonalignment's Don is dead.

After Tito, who? Tito himself made sure of the answer to that question. A collective leadership. But the answer to the equally familiar and more important question 'After Tito, what?' is not easy. For many, it is a troubling one. Nations have survived the passing away of their founding fathers and heroic father-figures — the Maos, the Nehrus, Nassers, Soekarnos.

In his recent work 'TITO's YUGOSLAVIA', Sir Duncan Wilson who served as British Ambassador both in Belgrade and Moscow observed: "It is Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union which are likely to be most affected when Tito is no longer at the helm...."

A more central issue, critical enough to influence Yugoslavia's external relations, is the nation's internal, federal structure which even the most sympathetic of analysts regard as a fragile fabric.

The Soviet Union, after Stalin's death, experimented with a 'collective leadership' too. But the mechanism which Tito has introduced suggests his own profoundly anxious awareness of stresses on a system which perhaps could work only when he himself was its strong centrepiece. The complex mechanism rests on a system of chairmanship by rotation. The rotation seeks to guarantee the fair distribution of power as between the six republics. There are two autonomous provinces too in an interesting, though somewhat

Josip Broz Tito

artificial, mosaic of national and cultural indentities.

The economic fact of evident unevenness of growth as between regions and the geopolitical existence of Yugoslavia as a whole could always intensify the strains inherent in this cultural diversity.

If nonalignment was Tito's claim to originality as the leader of a socialist state, 'self-management' was his novel contribution to socialist practice. Inspite of the large remittances of more than a million workers in the capitalist west, Yugoslavia's looser, more open, consumer-minded economy has done poorly in weathering the shocks of world inflation. As Hella Pick wrote in the **Guardian** (London).

"At a time of high inflation and unemployment, the industrially advanced northern republics of Yugoslavia resent the economic burden of the poorer south. But above all, it underlines Yugoslavia's dependence on foreign markets, on foreign sources of supply; and leads right back to the country's exposed geography, and uneasy relationship with the Soviet Union."

PRISON — AND EXILE

by G. B. Keerawella

Lenin returned to Russia on September 7, 1895. Lenin felt very acutely the disparity between the grandeur of the tasks that confronted the working-class of Russia and the lack of cohesion and the amateurish methods of the Social-Democratic organizations of that time. A workers 'Marxist party did not yet exist, On his return to Russia he took up his task with greater energy than ever. He visited the working-class districts nearly every day, conducting meetings and conferences, conversing with the workers and giving instructions to the members of the Democratic organizations. He amalgamated all the Marxist workers' circles then existing in St. Petersburg — there were about twenty of them — into one.

This became known as the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the working-class. He thus paved the way for the formation of the revolutionary Marxist party. Lenin based the activities of the League of Struggle on the principles of centralism and strict discipline. He considered that the League should become the basis of a party, and was very keen to link up the Social Democrats in the different towns of Russia. During the preceeding two years much had been done in this direction. This was to be achieved by means of a newspaper which would formulate the immediate objects, and ultimate aims of the struggle of the working-class. But Lenin was prevented from carrying out his plan at that time. On the night of December 8, 1895, the Tsarist police swooped down on the League and arrested a large number of its active members including Lenin.

The period of over two years that Lenin had spent in St. Petersburg was an extremely important one in his life. During this period he mixed with the workers, and this served him as a school of revolutionary activity and of revolutionary craftsmanship. Here, for the first time in Russia, he began to link up the Socialist movement with the general working-class movement and formed the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working-class, which was the embryo of the revolutionary party to base itself on the working-class movement.

Lenin spent 14 months in prison, but even here he continued his seething activity. Lenin succeeded in getting his letters and pamphlets out of jail by writing them in milk between the lines of the pages of books which he was allowed to receive from outside and return. On January 29, 1897, the sentence was pronounced on the League of Struggle case. Lenin was sentenced to three years exile in Eastern Siberia. He was ordered to spend his term of exile in the village of Shushenskoye, Veniseisk Gubernia. Early in May 1898, Krupskaya, who had also been arrested and convicted in connection with the League of Struggle case and had received permission to spend her exile with Lenin, arrived in Shushenskoye. Notwithstanding the difficulties involved, he succeeded in establishing connections with the Emancipation of Labour Group abroad and with the centres of revolutionary life in Russia, and to receive illegal literature. The correspondence which Lenin conducted with his relatives, with comrades in exile, with the Emancipation of Labour Group and with the Social Democrats in Russia was rather voluminous and served as an important means of maintaining contact, receiving information and giving instructions. His correspondence with Lengnik on philosophical questions is of special interest. Lengnik who in connection with the League of Struggle case serving a term of exile, had become infatuated with Kant and Hume. Lenin heard about this, and a lively correspondence between them ensued. Lengnik remarked "In his letters in reply to mine, Vladimir Ilyich ... very politely but firmly expressed his determined opposition to Hume's scepticism and Kant's idealism, and contrasted them with the stimulating philosophy of Marx and Engels" During the three years he spent in exile he wrote over thirty works, among which were: the Development of Capitalism in Russia, The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats, A Contribution to the Characterization of Economic Romanticism, The Heritage that We Renounce, Capitalism in Agriculture, The Protest of Russian Social-Democrats and the Draft of a Program for our Party.

During the last years of Lenin's exile important events occurred in the international Social-Democratic movement. Revisionism openly entered the arena. At the beginning of 1899, Bernstein's notorious book, "The Premises of Socialism", appeared in Germany. In June of that year, the French socialist Millerand entered the bourgeois government. Lenin wrote that he was alarmed by the fact that Plekhanou was not coming out strongly in opposition to the revision of the philosophy of Marxism by Bernstein, Struve and others, and urged that it was necessary to break the alliance between the revolutionary and the 'Legal' Marxists. The Revisionists' sorties against the Marxist philosophy induced Lenin to make a closer study of philosophy. In the summer of 1899 Krupskaya wrote a letter to Lenin's mother in which she said "Volodya is now intensely reading all sorts of philosophy, Holbach, Helvetius and so forth. I say in fun that he is becoming so impregnated with this philosophy that it will soon be dangerous to talk to him!"

In March 1898, the first congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was held in Minsk.

The congress annouced the formation of the party, but it failed to unite the scattered Marxist circles and organizations into one body.

On January 29, 1900, Lenin ended up his term of exile and left Shushenskoye fully determined to set to work at once to carry out his plan of building a Marxist party and of founding an all Russian Marxist newspaper.

The police prohibited Lenin from living in St. Petersburg and Moscow or in any of the industrial centres. He therefore chose Pskov as his place of residence. But on two occasions Lenin secretly went to St. Petersburg. On his second visit to that city he was arrested in the street. After keeping Lenin in custody for ten days, they released him. At these circumstances, on July 16, 1900 having laid the basis for the newspaper in Russia, he went abroad.

In August 1900, Lenin, Potressov, Pleknonov, Axlecod and Zasulich met in Corsier, near Geneva, to discuss to make arrangement to publish an all Russian political newspaper. The negotiations were extremely heated and the conference almost ended in a complete rupture between Lenin and Plekhanov and the abandonment of the project to start the newspaper "Iskra" immediately. With great difficulty an agreement was at last reached. It was decided to publish "Iskra" not in Switzerland, as Plekhanov had proposed but in Germany. Lenin left for Munich where the principal editors took up their quarters. The first number of the "Iskra" appeared on December 11, 1900.

"Iskra" was launched in a period when the revolutionary movement was growing all over the country. In the spring of 1901, political demonstrations took place in many of the large cities, In 1902 strikes began to be combined with demonstrations. In 1903 a mighty wave of mass political strikes swept the whole of south Russia. Influenced by the working-class movement, the peasants, too joined the struggle and in the spring of 1902, peasant disorders broke out in the Ukraine, in the Volga region and in Georgia.

Iskra No. 4, which came out in May 1901, contained Lenin's article "Where to Begin" in which he gave a rough outline of his for building the Marxist party. This article exarcised a profound impression on the Social-Democratic workers, Lenin said this article was only a rough outline of his plan, which he was elaborating in greater detail in a pamplet that he was preparing for the press. It appeared in March 1902. This was Lenin's brilliant work, "What Is To Be Done."

According to Lenin's plan, the party was to consist of two parts — a close circle of cadres of leading party workers, chiefly professional revolutionaries, and a broad network of local party organizations, with a large membership enjoying the sympathy and support of thousands of working people.

Practically all the time Lenin had to comrbat the opportunist waverings of the other members of the board. He found himself in conflict with Plekhanov. In the summer of 1901 disagreements arose over Lenin's article, "The Persecutors of the Semstvo and and the Hannibals of Liberalism". As was the case at their first meeting in 1895, serious differences between Lenin and Plekhanov were revealed on the fundamental question of tactics, namely the attitude to be adopted towards the liberal bourgeoisie. In January 1902 still more serious disagreements arose over the question of the party programme. Just when the controversy on the party programme was at its height, it it was decided to transfer the headquarters of Iskra to London. During the first few months in London the disagreements on the editorial board of "Iskra" became more acute than ever. The cause of the controversy was Lenin's article "The Agrarain Programme of Russian Social-Democracy".

Lenin was the author of the Iskra group's agrarian programme. April 1901, his article, "The Worker's Party and the Peasantry", appeared in Iskra. The keynote of this article was that the proletariat must be in the van of the struggle for freedom and win over to its side the peasantry. Lenin attached very great importance to the work of popularizing the Marxist programme among the masses of the peasants. In the spring of 1903 he wrote a pamphlet entitled **To the Rural Poor**.

The Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was opened on July 17, 1903. At first it sat in Brussels, but owing to the difficulties created by the Belgian police it was transferred to London.

To be continued

JVP . . .

(*Continued from page 5*)

opinion will influence the government — such opinion must have a United Leader".

Keeping a discreet distance from the LSSP leaders was Mr. Anil Moonesinghe, looking extremely self satisfied. He had good reason for this as the L.G. reported months ago ("The Anil factor") Mr. Moonesinghe had played a key role in the backstage moves which led to this tie-up. Anil has always been regarded as a future LSSP leader. N.M. in his last years, had said "Never, never" to a new alliance under Mrs. Bandaranaike. Will Anil wear some day the mantle of N.M. and Trotsky.

The sharing of power

by Neelam Tiruchelvam

The President decided on 2nd August, to appoint a Commission on democratic decentralization and devolution of power to the districts. In this communication he elaborated the policy imperatives which have influenced this decision. He emphasised the need to strengthen and broaden the democratic structure of government and the democratic rights of the people. He further added:

"(the) Goverment recognises the need for a larger measure of participation by the people in the administrative bodies dealing with economic development. Appreciating the advantages of democratic decentralization for accelerating development and promoting participatory democracy, the Government has decided to constitute a Presidential Commission to make recommendation regarding a scheme of devolution and decentralised administration."

The terms of reference point to an institutional framework the elements of which have been spelt out in broad outline. Other policy pronouncements and more specifically the decision of the Government dated November 13, 1979, provided further clarification of these matters. The Commission was required to work within this policy framework and to evolve the details of a scheme which would advance the ideals of accelerated development and participatory democracy. The Report signed by eight Commissioners on the 19th of February, does not adequately grasp the elements of this framework, or elaborate fully the basic concepts which relate to this exercise. It further fails to address some of the more important matters referred to in the terms of reference. This note which is submitted as a separate report endeavours to do so.

Report submitted by the TULF nominee

The introduction to the report signed by eight Commissioners states that this Commission was not appointed to or required to "examine the ethnic problems which have manifested themselves in the demand for separate State" and to make recommendations which are directed towards their resolution. On the contrary, the Commission is directed to devise a system of devolution and democratic decentralisation which would enable the people of twenty –four districts to define their development priorities, to energise the district administration and give impetus to the processes of social and economic transformation.

It is in this spirit that the work of the Commission has been approached as a bold experiment in participatory democracy designed to graft on to the existing system of representation 'a scheme of self–management by the people of the district.'

The Prime Minister stated in Parliament recently, 'there are various resources inherent in a respective district, a culture of each district, customs relevant to a district, a music relevant to a district. These are things which have been prevalent from time immemorial. There is even a difference in the language we speak in the respective districts'· (unofficial translation — vide page 937 Volume 8 (1) No. 5 of Hansard, 6th December, 1979). This statement recognises that endogenous development if it is to acquire full meaning should be rooted in the praxis of the people of a district. It presupposes the need for political and administrative structures which provide space for the expression of the collective creativity and cultural diversity of the peoples of different districts. The new institutions we envisage should be so fashioned as to release the creative potential of the people which have been locked in by administrative structures which have outlived their relevance.

We now proceed to examine some of the concepts which provide the building blocks for the new institutional structure that is recommended. In doing so we need to briefly review the recent evolution of political and administrative structures at the regional level. No doubt the District Minister scheme owes its antecedents to the system of district political authority, but the proposals set out herein represent a radical departure from the approach that is implicit in the political authority scheme. The District Political Authority scheme must be seen as a system of political mobilization rather than genuine devolution and decentralisation. It has been faulted for the concentration of decision making authority and power in a single individual, and for its lack of formal or informal accountability to the people — the intended beneficiaries of governmental programs.

There was no formal machinery to redress abuses of discretion or the arbitrary deprivation of section of the community of their equitable share to the benefits of development. The District Political Authority's capacity to act decisively was also impeded by the lack of clarity in the demarcation of his powers and responsibilities. The blurring of the lines of responsibility between the political and the bureaucratic heads of a district, lead to an encroachment by the former into the latter's sphere. The District Political Authority had no legal or constitutional status, and was no more than a projection into the periphery of the informal authority and influence of the office of the Prime Minister.

The Scheme that is envisaged by the terms of reference is not one of political mobilization, but one which calls for the deconcentration of power and the devolution of decision making authority to the regions. Instead of the concentration of power in a single individual, it calls for the creation of a corporate decision making body and a collectively accountable political executive.

The Development Council is a democratically constituted decision making body. In keeping with its democratic character it should be composed of the Members of Parliament elected for the district and a prescribed number of members elected at a General Election, for the purpose of such Council. The system of proportional representation will ensure that decision making within the Council reflects the interplay of diverse social forces and group interests in a district. There should be a Chairman elected by the Council. The District Minister would not be a member of the Council, but may be entitled to send messages or to address the Council on appropriate occasions. The interim arrangements may be based on the results of the 1977 General Elections to provide for diversity of political expression in the work of the Councils. It is stated that 'the price of democracy is eternal scrutiny'. An informed and alert Development Council could be an effective safeguard against arbitrary administration at the district level. The Council is the collective conscience of the district, directing, guiding and humanizing the developmental process so as to ensure that the benefits of accelerated development are equitably shared.

The Council would have to be clothed with legal personality and such statutory powers as would enable it wherever possible to augment the resources which would be assigned to it by the Government. These would include the power to mobilize resources through taxation and loans. There would be a need for a district fund to which all grants, revenue and income could be credited. The Council would need secondary law making powers for the formulation of the development plan and the establishment of a framework for its implementation.

The internal organisation of such Councils need not be defined in detail, recognising thereby the need for some variation and flexibility in the working of these institutions. The feasibility of organising programme committees to facilitate the review of projects and proposals in areas such as agriculture, food and industries, may be considered. The Council may also constitute *ad hoc* committees for meeting and reporting on problems which merit more immediate attention. Such committees could be directed to look into issues such as water management, rural electrification and alternate energy.

One of the difficult questions which faced the Commission related to the reconciliation of the roles, functions and responsibilities of the District Minister — (an appointee of the centre deriving his authority from the Executive President) and the Development Council (elected by and deriving its authority from the people of a district). This difficulty was compounded by the White Paper envisaging the assignments of similar, if not identical functions to both the District Minister and the Development Council. The White Paper, however, sought to resolve this difficulty by stipulating that the district minister should be one 'who enjoys the confidence of the majority of members of the Development Council of the District'.

There were two other solutions proposed. One proposal which is reflected in the report of the eight Commissioners was to make a District Minister the Chairman of the Council. To the extent, however, that the District Minister is viewed as an extension of the authority of the Centre the imposition of a nominated Chairman would have eroded the democratic character of Development Councils. It would have further exposed the scheme to the dangers of concentration of power and authority in a single individual and the excesses which have characterised previous attempts at political mobilization. The other solution relate to the exclusion of the District Minister from any involvement in the District Development Plan. He would have been confined to the Agency and co-ordinating functions in respect of the Central Government's activities within a district. This may have however posed problems of jurisdictional conflicts between the Council and the District Minister and impeded the effectiveness of both institutions. There was accordingly a need for a solution which may minimise the potential for conflict and reinforce the complementarities in the roles of the respective institutions. Such a solution is found in the institution of the Executive Committee.

This institution facilitates a clearer demarcation of responsibilities and powers between the Development Council on the one hand, and the Executive Committee on the other. The functions of plan formulation and project evaluation would belong to the Development Council, while those of implementation and execution would be those of the Executive Committee. The Development Council would be headed by the elected Chairman, while the Executive Committee would be headed by the District Minister. The proper co-ordination and harmonization of these responsibilities is achieved by the District Minister and the Chairman of the Council determining the composition and membership of such executive committees. Both the District Minister and the Chairman will need to be ex-officio members of such Committees.

The Chairman's responsibilities would include the tabling of the plan, the budget, subordinate legislation, fiscal measures and other resolutions of the Council. The District Minister would in addition to his other duties, also exercise an agency and co-ordinating function in respect of the centres activities in the districts, which do not form part of the district development plan.

(To be concluded)

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NICARAGUA (10)

The new Nicaragua : Independencia, Democracia, Y. Socialismo ?

by A Special Correspondent

Let us examine at least in outline, the prospects and problems of a transition to socialism in the new revolutionary Nicaragua.

At the level of the economy, the property of the Somoza family and its collaborators has been expropriated by the Revolution, thus shattering the material basis of Somoza-ism and carrying out a basic pledge contained in the Sandinista programme. Because of the concentration of property ownership in Somoza's Nicaragua, these expropriations and the abandonment of their holdings by fleeing Somozaists have resulted in a very significant portion of the country's economy being vested in the hands of the state. In fact the proportion of the economy that fell into the hands of the state as a consequence of the revolution's triumph is perhaps greater than the proportion of state ownership established in many socialist countries in the first years after the victory of those revolutions.

Still, a substantial — one may even say large — segment of the Nicaraguan economy remains in the hands of private enterprise. Of course this is the fraction of the propertied classes we have referred to (following the FSLN) as the non/anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, whose changing role and function throughout the revolutionary process has been adequately discussed in our series.

Having sketched out very roughly, and with utmost brevity, the contours of the economy of revolutionary Nicaragua at the present time, let us hasten to add that the **degree of state ownership is no sure yardstick or guarantee of the socialist trajectory of a country. Algeria** has a very high degree of state control over its economy, but the relations of production, and consequently the social relations, are those of capitalist exploitation. Burma is another example. Only revisionist propogandists could (and do) characterize Algeria and Burma as "countries following a path of socialist orientation." Only vulgar, mechanistic Marxists would base themselves on **the juridical forms of property ownership, rather than the real relations of production,** in characterizing a given socio-economic formation.

Just as the degree of state ownership in its formal juridical sense cannot be taken as the chief measure of judgement of the progressive orientation or otherwise of a given country, neither can the extent of private ownership in an immediately post-revolutionary context be taken as the key index of the depth and nature of that revolution. These errors can be characterized as **economistic** ones, since they betray the failure to grasp the fact that the central question in a revolution is that of state power; of which class or classes wield state power. The key question is that which concerns the class character of the state. In other words, **the central issue is located at the level of politics and in this sense 'politics is in command'** — though we must never take this as an absolute, as Maoism does, but rather take cognizance of the relative autonomy of the political instance within a social formation.

The Sandinistas refusal to expropriate the property of the anti-Somoza liberal bourgeoisie at the present stage and its insistence on according priority to the implementation of the previously agreed upon programme of national reconstruction, has resulted in the Trotskyist accusation that the "petty bourgeois FSLN is circumscribing the class struggle and defending capitalism." These Trotskyist critics forget that the victorious Bolsheviks did not commence widespread nationalizations until mid 1918, and that the final push against privately owned industry did not take place until the mid 1920's. In China, the first two five year plans after the revolution left substantial scope for private enterprise and it is only around 1958 that the roll back of the private sector was rapidly speeded up. The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, written in 1946, guaranteed "the rights of property and possession of Vietnamese citizens". The first four years following the setting up of the DRV in August 1945 was characterized by moderate reforms in the agrarian sector involving rent reduction and modest redistribution of land (belonging to unpatriotic landowners). The agrarian revolution commenced only in 1953 and as we know, the adventurist errors caused the following year resulted in the temporary demotion of Truong Chinh and President Ho Chi Minh's apology to the peasant masses. Anything between half to two thirds of Poland's farmland remains uncollectivized and while this goes a long way towards explaining the nationalistic — revisionist deviations in that country's policies, it certainly does not render Poland less socialistic than Algeria, where private ownership of land is relatively small.

Every victorious revolution must necessarily go through its own NEP phase explained Stalin in his debates with the opposition. Nicaragua is now in a similar phase, as the economic corollary of its present stage of transition which Humberto Ortega charac-

terizes as 'popular-democratic'. True, the Sandinists have sought, and are seeking, foreign economic assistance from all sources including the United States and this has caused slogans of "the revolution betrayed' (not again!) to be raised by Trotskyists. But Lenin pointed out that the competitive character and search for markets inherent in Capitalism would lead to "imperialists selling (us) the very rope with which we shall hang them." Lenin's writings and speeches in the 1920–23 period reveals the extent of the concessions he was willing to grant foreign investors and the criticisms levelled against him on this issue by the Workers Opposition make fascinating reading. The Vietnamese for their part demanded several billion dollars in war reparations from the US, while it formulated a Foreign Investors code in 1976 designed primarily at attracting Japanese collaboration for off-shore oil exploration.

So Commandante Jaime Wheelock, leader of FSLN's Proletarian Tendency and present Minister of Agrarian Reform, was stating a perfectly practicable proposition when he asserted at New York's Colombia University that they would "use imperialism's money **to build socialism**". Wheelock, a convinced Marxist and trenchant critic of Trotskyism explained that it was imperative to keep economic dislocations to a minimum, since such dislocations and scarcities would drive the intermediate strata from the camp of the revolution to that of the counter-revolution. This was the lesson he had drawn from his Chilean experience.

Let there be no misunderstanding. Socialism denotes the liquidation of all exploiting classes and this involves the eventual socialization of even small scale industry and retail trade. (In Cuba for instance, this latter task was accomplished in 1968) **The Sandinista leadership will have to come to grips with this at some time in the future.** When this will be, and whether it will proceed by way of a series of clashes leading to the forcible extirpation of the bourgeois class or whether it will take the path of 'the peaceful remoulding of the national bourgeoisie', are questions to which we can proffer no definite answer at the present time. The latter path, that of "peaceful remoulding" was one recommended by Mao and Ho Chi Minh while the idea itself derives from Marx who once spoke of the possibility that the victorious proletariat would proceed to "buy out" the bourgeoisie. The issue however will be decided not so much by policy guidelines, but by **the balance of social forces in the country.**

The building of a socialist economy will definitely involve restrictions on and then decisive measures against the economic interests of **even the most liberal, nationalist and democratic sectors of the bourgeois class**, but these socialist tasks lie someway ahead for Nicaragua. Lenin always admitted that different national situations and social contexts would inevitably give rise to an infinite variety of transitional forms towards socialism, though the essence would remain the same, i. e the dictatorship of the proletariat. This however has not always been grasped by Marxists and and too often only lip service has been paid to the concept of different national roads to socialism. The opposite, revisionistic, error has been ofcourse to forget that the essence remains **nothing but** the proletarian dictatorship. Revolutionary Nicaragua is now in a period of transition during which the socialist tasks are not yet placed on the immediate agenda of actuality. The specific concrete form of transition is shaped and stamped by Nicaragua's distinctive national characteristics and traditions.

The directions that revolutionary Nicaragua will take (the question of which will win — the socialist road or the capitalist road?) will be decided, as we stated earlier in this article, in the sphere of politics rather that of economics. The key question is not 'how much of the economy does the state control?' but rather 'who controls the state'.

In Nicaragua the problem of state power, the fundamental problem, was resolved in a revolutionary manner. The liquidation of the Somozaist repressive apparatus (the National Guard) constituted, together with the dissolution of the Somozaist economic empire, the very core of the Sandinists' programme which eventually won the adherence not only of the popular sectors, but the whole nation. The last minute pressures and diplomatic manoeuvres by the United States (and perhaps certain sections in the Andean Pact countries) were intended precisely to preserve the National Guard, the rubber stamp National Assembly and Somoza's 'Liberal' Party — the trial that constituted Somozaism's political apparatus of domination. This was rejected outright by the FSLN as well as the 5-person Revolutionary Junta as an attempt to maintain Somozaism without Somoza. (A similar attempt by the US during the Iranian revolution prompted Iman Khomeiny to denounce efforts to "keep the same donkey while changing only the saddle") Finally the National Guard was forcibly disintegrated in armed combat, While the liberal party has been dissolved and the old National Assembly abolished.

Thus, both the economic empire as well as the political basis of Somozaism have been liquidated in a revolutionary fashion. Furthermore, active in society, the economy and even in government, **the bourgeois state has been destroyed.** This is in marked contrast to the situation in contemporary Zimbabwe, where the neogtiated and the very mode of "internal decolonization" (elections) have resulted in the preservation, intact, of the repressive state apparatus personified by the living presence of Peter Walls.

This brings us to a distinction that needs to be made in the realm of politics, between the 'government' and the 'state'. Stalin alerted us to this distinction in 1924–'25 and again in the 1930's, when he described the

government as the upper stratum of the state apparatus, that stratum which is invoved in the process of day to day decision making. However the interests of the ruling class lie embedded in the structure of the State and while it is possible that the government may adopt policies which run contrary to the interests of the ruling class, this would give rise to a contradiction between the government and the state. In such a situation the state would come into play, and through this, the long term interests of the ruling class would assert their hegemony over the governments policies, bringing the latter into line or even dispensing with the government. After all this is what took place in Chile where the Unidad Popular **government** was overthrown by the **State apparatus.**

The point being made here is simply this. We have stated earlier that the shape of the new Nicaragua will be decided at the level of politics rather than economics. We can now go further and say that even in the realm of politics itself a distinction must be made between the government and the state and it is the latter that must be considered the decisive factor. This needs to be stressed because most Trotskyist groups as well as many Trotskysant / New Left academics in the metropoles have been carping and cavilling at the composition of the Revolutionary Junta, the Cabinet and the Council of State. Grumbling and muttering about the 'compromises' made by the Terceristas, these academics "deduct marks" from the Ortega brothers. What these commentators do not seem to appreciate fully, and what we are trying to stress here, is that the decisive factor is not the government (its composition and internal balance of forces) but rather **the politico-military force behind it, which is the de facto wielder of state power.** Thus, it is the Sandinista National Directorate, comprising the Field Commanders, that is the key element, lying as it does, at the core of the new political power in Nicaragua. The victorious revolutionary Sandinista army, with the National Directorate at its helm is consolidating itself and gathering in its hands the 'sole monopoly of legitimate violence'. (Weber, Trotsky) This is a political factor of the most fundamental strategic importance. Those spontaneists, syndicalists and Trotskyists who fertilize the 'Soviet model, criticize the FSLN moves to gradually disarm non-Sandinist or non-Sandinist led youth sectors. They are mistaken in their objections. After all, no less an authority on People's wars and People's armies than General Giap has pointed out clearly (following Lenin) that armed popular militias must be viewed as a temporary phenomenon bound up with a certain stage of the revolutionary process and that it is the revolutionary People's army that must be constituted as the regular army.

(To be continued)

"Sinhalisation" (2)

Migration or Cultural processes?

by Susantha Goonetillake

I have summarised above the available evidence as to literature, archaeology and epigraphy. It is now necessary to pose the fundamental question whether Sinhalisation occurred by migration or by cultural processes as was the case in Eastern India and the Deccan.

No hard evidence exists of a massive migration parallel to the actual migration of Aryans to the Indus Punjab origin. The alleged literary evidence in the pre-Devanampiyatissa stories can be easily explained as ideological implants. Even if migration did occur from Vanga Eastern India as is alleged by the Mahavamsa stories, such migration would be from a region, Eastern India, which was racially not Aryan and considered **mlechcha** only a few centuries before the event (Thapar pp. 152–192).

Further, in the Sri Lankan case Aryanisation and the Sinhala language did not accompany iron technology as in North India because iron technology (and irrigation) existed independent of the Sinhalisation process and in common with the South Indian megalithic system. The earliest evidence we have of a language that was to become Sinhalese is the Mauryan and Buddhism related script of the early period, which developed gradually in association with the monastries. The development of the Sinhala script language on the available evidence has therefore to be related to the introduction, growth and spread of Buddhism.

The sociological reasons for the introduction of Buddhism I have described in detail elsewhere (Goonatilake 1978) as being due to a classical process of cultural colonisation whereby Devanampiyatissa imported a cultural system to bolster the emerging state in Sri Lanka. A close scrutiny of the descriptions in the Mahavamsa Indicate that the relationship between Devanampiyatissa and Asoka was one of cultural tutelage and the introduction of Buddhism introduced during this period was absorbed selectively by the social structure so as to bolster it. This happened to such an extent that the monk orders that emerged were based also on existing stratification patterns (for example the earliest monastries Vessagiriya, Isurumuniya, Pabbatha Chetiya and Uttaragiri are based on casts identifications.) Buddhism was therefore an important element in the growth of the emerging state in Sri Lanka associated with the irrigation system.

Together with this legitimising religion came also the Asokan script whose language during the first few centuries was virtually indistinguishable from Prakrit. This language on available hard evidence was restricted to the monastries and those related with monastic establishments. There is no reliable evidence about the actual language of the people and in this absence we have to assume that the monastic language of Prakrit Sinhalese gradually spread to the population over a period of centuries, a process similar to the process of Sanskritisation which has been described by Sirinivas. By the 4th/5th centuries AD the Sinhala language had spread in the new milieu and found a new identity distinct from its Prakrit roots. (The emergence of Sinhala language with a separate identity probably led to the the translation into Pali of the sacred texts, an activity which occurred in the same period by writers such as Buddhagosa.

By the 5th century the Sinhala identity is virtually complete as indicated not only by the emergence of proto Sinhala but also by the emergence of the Mahavamsa as an ideological document with a strong ethnic identity. The above explanation suggests very strongly that Sinhalisation was a culturalisation process associated with the spread throughout the land of Buddhism and its consolidation. In short Sinhalisation came after and not before Buddhism.

Discussion

The above reinterpretation on the basis of recent archaeological finds, methodological advances — specially of a sociological kind with technology as a key variable — brings us to the traditional treatment of Sinhalisation by historians. Most of them have assumed the Mahavamsa story and have assumed a migration theory based on the essentially ideological and fictional part of the Mahavamsa. These historians include Geiger, Ellawela, Adhikaram, Paranavitana, in fact almost all the major writers.

Having made this control assumption most of these writers make secondary assumptions derived from the first which present data indicates are tenable. Thus most of them assume that irrigation was introduced by the Sinhalese which archaeology suggests was through the megalithic culture. Irrigation and wet rice cultivation implies the use of iron without which forests to give the flat land for wet rice cultivation could not be cleared. This means that the introduction of iron technology was necessary for irrigated rice cultivation;

iron and irrigation are both associated with the megalithic system. (The tank irrigation system that emerged in Sri Lanka can be considered to be qualitatively different from those of the riverine systems in the Gangetic plain.)

It should also be noted that even in the case of migration theories the more sophisticated views assume only a small stream of migrants (the Vijaya 700?) Thus "the vast majority of the people who today are, and were in the historical past, called Sinhalese, must be the descendants of the people of neolithic culture who adopted the language and ways of life of the people of Indo–Aryan civilization who immigrated to the Island from North India" (Paranavitana 1969 p10) Therefore even in the case of migration it is not the question of migration vs cultural colonisation that has to be posed, but cultural colonisation through a few Vijayan type migrants or cultural colonisation through Buddhism. The evidence points strongly to the latter although a small trickle of migrants as yet uncorrabora ted by hard evidence could also have occurred, the major Sinhalisation process however, would have taken place through the Buddhism connection.

If both Sinhalisation by small scale migration and by Buddhist development are essentially cultural processes, the question has also to be posed which of two avenues is a more effective agriculturisation processes. Sinhalisation by a few migrants or Sinhalisation through a legitimised cultural centre namely the temple? Clearly the latter process would be more effective because the cultural impact through a recognised state sponsored cultural–religious centre would be much more than a few diffused migrants having no cultural advantage over the inhabitants (like for example the use of iron or irrigation).

Sinhalisation as being essentially a cultural process associated with Buddhism it should be noted does not necessarily imply that the earlier ethnic identity of Sri Lankans was Dravidian. Although Sri Lankans in pre-historic times would be genetically related to those of South India it does not necessarily mean that their self identity extended to a Dravidian identity. If they were organised on tribal lines their identification would have been on this narrower social group.

Summary

The reinterpretation given here provides on the available evidence an explanatory system with greater power and rigour than the ideological explanations assumed under the Mahavamsa theory. It suggests strongly that Sinhalisation was fundamentally a cultural process associated with Buddhism and that migration even if it did take place, was of at minor kind, so as not to have left a significant trace in the archaeological data or in demographic terms on the population.

Jean Paul Sartre – philosopher dramatist

by Ranjit Goonewardena

Andre Malraux, Ignazio Silone and Victor Serge represented a generation of writers who were personally involved in the great historical movements of our time. The key figures of this generation incorporated the experiences drawn from their struggles into great works of modern fiction.

Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir belong to a different generation of 'writer philosophers'. Their central concern was philosophical rather than political. They probed the meaning of existence and worked out a philosophy of life. Creative literature provided an effective medium to convey their philosophical concepts and popularise their philosophical systems.

Sartre's creative work was preceded by a voluminous philosophical work titled **'Being and Nothingness'**. The central concepts in **'Being and Nothingness'** were transformed into artistic terms in his subsequent creative work.

Sartre's first play **'The Flies'** was based on the legend of Orestes. Sartre explained in 1943, that he wanted to show how a man could assume responsibility for his acts. Many critics have argued that this play deals with a political theme. It is true that Orestes liberates the people of Argos from the tyrannical rule of his uncle, Aegistheus. But unlike the characters of Malraux, Silone and Serge, he is not motivated by simple compassion for the oppressed or by a faith in ideological structure of beliefs. Orestes longs to commit some action which, even though it might be a crime, would give him the right to live in Argos and feel himself a part of the city:–

> "To oust Aegistheus. Ah . No, my good slave, you need not fear; the time for that is past. True, nothing could please me better than to grip that sanctimonious ruffian by the beard and drag him from my father's throne. But what purpose would it serve? These folk are no concern of mine. I have not seen one of their children come into the world, nor been present at their daughters' weddings; I don't share their remorse, I don't even know a single one of them by name. That bearded fellow was right; a King should share his subjects' memories. So we'll let them be, and begone on tiptoe. But, mind you, if there were something I could do, something to give me the freedom of the city; if, even by a crime, I could acquire their memories, their hopes and fears, and fill with these the void within me, yes, even if I had to kill my own mother."

Francis Jeanson, the famous French critic commenting on the play wrote, "I know that Sartre spoke as early as 1944 of the 'total responsibility' and the 'historical role' of each man at the very heart of his 'total solitude'. But if Orestes had really killed the usurper and his accomplice from a concern for his historic responsibilities, how is one to describe his withdrawal–his treason –when he chooses to run away from the very situation which he himself created; to wash his hands of it?"

Jeanson makes a valid point. Orestes cannot be regarded as a political hero because he has no social conscience. He avoids a direct confrontation with the complex realities of society; in which political engagement inevitably involves the committed hero.

The theme of his second play **'In Camera'** originates from the ideas expressed in **'Being and Nothingness'**. Sartre points out that "human relations are based on conflict". Man, he argued, constantly tries to build a false image of himself. An image which does not correspond to his true nature. Sartre used the term 'Bad Faith' to refer to this process of self delusion.

But man cannot see himself from outside therefore he needs the 'other'. The 'Look' is thus related to the concept of bad faith. The function of the other person, is to confirm or validate this false image.

But the appearance of a third person destroys a relationship based on mutual bad faith. Due to envy and jealousy a conflict and a rivalry develops between the other two, and the relationship either breaksdown or it undergoes an external change.

Garcin the central character of the play is guilty of 'bad faith'. He had to build an image of himself as a hero. But in fact he was a coward. When war was declared, he ran away and was caught at the frontier. He broke down at his execution and died a coward. But his whole life had been built on the idea that he was a hero. Garcin was, according to Sartre 'playing at' or pretending to be a hero.

The other characters in the play Estelle, Inez are also guilty of 'bad faith' or self deception. Hence there is a rivalry between the two to win over Garcin. The 'look' or consciousness of Garcin is indispensable to them to maintain their self delusion. Garcin too, needs them. But due to the conflict between the two, his true self if finally exposed:

> **Garcin:**— Listen! Each man has an aim in life, a leading motive that's so, isn't it? Well, I didn't give a damn for wealth, or for love. I aimed at being a real man. A tough, as they say. I staked everything on the same horse Can one possibly be a coward when one's deliberately courted danger at every turn? And can one judge a life by a single action?
>
> **Inez:**— Why not? For thirty years you dreamt you were a hero, and condoned a thousand petty lapses-because a hero of course can do no wrong. An easy method, obviously. Then a day came when you were up against it, the red light of real danger-and you took the train to Mexico.
>
> **Garcin:**— I 'dreamt' you say. It was no dream. When I chose the hardest path, I made my choice deliberately. A man is what he wills himself to be.
>
> **Inez:**— Prove it. Prove it was no dream. It's what one does, and nothing else, that shows the stuff one's made of.

(*Continued on page 21*)

A POLITICAL MURDER

BOOK REVIEW

"Famous Criminal Cases of Sri Lanka (3) — the Assassination of Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike" by A. C. Alles.

"Insurgency — 1971", now in its third edition, established the author's reputation as a skilled practitioner in the exciting, if limited, area which he chose to cover as a specialist writer. This, his latest work, is in fact the third in a series which enjoys the general litle of "Famous Criminal Cases".

Author Alles made his debut in this field with The Wilpattu Murder. Now he grapples with material far more formidable and challenging.

Once allowance is made for the vast difference between the power and impact of an American president and a Ceylonese premier, the Bandaranaike assassination may well be described as our own Kennedy case. Like the shooting in Dallas, the echoes of the killing in Colombo will reverberate through political conversation and debate. The truth is that the murder of a leader makes history (for many, 1956 was a kind of 'Camelot') is rarely a straightforward criminal act or private deed.

The killer himself may have a simple motive. He may act with cold calculation or be impelled by some strange, twisted passion. On most occasions, however, he is the chosen instrument of others who have their own reasons to plot the death of a very important man. Greed, thwarted ambitions and thirst for power then become the breeding ground for conspiracy.

Who was for instance Reverend Buddharakkita? Rusputin or Richelieu or Capo Mafioso with delusions of grandeur?

And who were the men around him who believed that Bandaranaike owed them large favours, such as collosal government contracts, for the support they had extended to the politician and his party?

Besides money, and kick-backs, pomp and glory, there was inevitably questions of politics — in this case, the politics of a diverse, uneasy coalition of "communalists", "progressives", "leftists" and "rightists", to use the somewhat loose labels familiar in the vocabulary of those times. Finally, the character of the victim himself, an inspiring leader of that exciting, "transitional period" (Bandaranaike's own favoured phrase) but not a strong one; a prime minister trying desperately to balance the contending forces, and moving from one compromise to another.

Author Alles is deeply conscious of the "politics" of this murder. It was no "act committed on the spur of the moment.... but the culmination of a deep-laid and carefully planned conspiracy...."

It was a desire to go beyond the Supreme Court trial and search for the "politics" of this conspiracy that the SLFP government of 1960 appointed an international commission. Though the inquiry was disappointingly inconclusive to those who had hoped for new material and politically charged revelations, the author has rightly devoted his last chapter to a brief summary of the Commission's work.

The student of politics will find no new insights here. The author is content with giving the political setting of the event rather than in exploring the political questions which the murder inescapably prompts. In fairness to him, it should be noted that he does not claim to offer a political study. A lawyer by profession, the author served the government as a Solicitor-General and then as a Judge of the Supreme Court. It is this cast of mind which determines his general approach. Since that is his avowed purpose, the book makes extremely interesting reading, and may prove as popular with the general reader as his earlier work on the insurgency.

— V. j.

Jean Paul . . .

(*Continued from page 20*)

Garcin:— I died too soon. I wasn't allowed time to .. to do my deeds.

Inez:— One always dies too soon-or too late. And yet one's whole life is complete at that moment, with a line drawn neatly under it, ready for the summing up. You are-your life, and nothing else."

'Altona' which I think is his most complex and mature play deals with various strategies of 'bad faith' or self deception. Frantz Gerlach is guilty of torturing a group of innocent peasants during the war. He refuses to face his conscience and admit the nature of his crime. He tries to escape from his own conscience. He invents various excuses.

The play is a brilliant study of the nature of the human conscience and the various forms of self deception used by man to escape his conscience and his real self.

Sartre's penetrating analysis of human behaviour has earned him a reputation as a major dramatist. His work on psycho-analysis has caused radical and fundamental changes in the field of modern psychiatry. Radical psychiatrists like Ronald Laing, David Cooper and Raymond Esterson were heavily influenced by Sartre's methodology. This school of radical psychiatrists has permanently changed our understanding of human behaviour by destructuring conventional psychiatry and restructuring it, in treating so-called 'madness' with compassion, empathy and intense humanity. Sartre's reputation as one of the greatest figures of our time rests on his extensive work as a philosopher and as a very original and penetrating thinker. ●

A Soviet critic of Dostoevsky

by Reggie Siriwardena

LITERATURE

Dostoevsky, so long under a cloud during the Stalin era, is today recognised in the Soviet Union as the great novelist he was. His approaching death-centenary in 1981 has been heralded not only by the massive scholarly enterprise of the 30-volume Academy of Sciences edition of his **Complete works** but also by a number of critical studies which has come from Soviet publishing houses. One of the most significant of these — M. Bakhtin's **Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,** of which a new edition appeared last year — is actually a reprint of a book which was first published in 1929 but became taboo shortly after.

Bakhtin was one of a group of young Soviet critics in the 'twenties who developed a more intelligent and fruitful Marxist approach to literary criticism than that of the later Stalinist school. One member of Bakhtin's group, V. N. Voloshinov, devoted a chapter of his main work, **Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,** to an examination of the Marxist theory of 'basis and superstructures'. Voloshinov argued against the tendency to derive literary tendencies mechanically from the economic base (e. g. 'the gentry class degenerates, hence the "superfluous man" in literature'). **Marxism and the Philosophy of Language** also fell foul of Stalinist orthodoxy and disappeared from sight in the 'thirties, as did its author.

Another member of the Bakhtin group, P. N. Medvedev, criticised the practice of interpreting and judging works of literature by the ideological content which could be abstracted from them (the artistic elements being treated merely as a sweetening of ideological pill). He emphasised that creative literature had its own specificity which could not be reduced to other forms of ideological expression. As he said:

'Literature enters into the milieu of ideological activity as one of its autonomous branches, occuping a special place in it as a set of distinctively organized verbal productions with structures of a kind specific and peculiar to such productions alone....In its content, literature reflects the ideological purview, i. e. other non-artistic (ethical, cognitive, etc.) ideological formations. But in reflecting these other signs, literature itself creates new forms, new signs of ideological communication; and these signs — works of literature — become a functioning part of the surrounding social reality. At the same time as reflecting something outside of themselves, works of literature constitute in and of themselves phenomena of the ideological milieu with autonomous value and distinctive character. Their functionality does not amount merely to the auxiliary-technical role of reflecting other ideologies. They have an autonomous ideological role and a type of refraction of socio-economic existence entirely their own.'

What Medvedev states in general theoretical terms is enforced in relation to particular works of literature by Bakhtin in his study of Dostoevsky — a writer who, more than any other of the great Russians, has been a controversial figure in Marxist eyes because of his reactionary political beliefs. It seems worthwhile to draw attention to Bakhtin's work because for too many Sri Lankan readers Marxist literary criticism is still synonymous with the crudely reductive theories of 'socialist realism'. Bakhtin was 'rehabilitated' during the post-Stalin thaw, and his book has again been available in the Soviet Union since 1963; it is frequently cited in the Academy edition of Dostoevsky. An American edition in English translation appeared in 1973, but I haven't seen this, and my quotations from the book are rendered from the Russian text of the 1979 edition.

In a preface first written for the 1963 edition, Bakhtin clearly distinguished his approach from that of the Stalinist critics by an allusive reference to the latter:

'The literature about Dostoevsky has been predominantly devoted to the ideological problematic of his creative work. The transient acuteness of this problematic has concealed the deeper and more enduring structural elements of his artistic vision. It has often been almost completely forgotten that Dostoevsky was above all an artist (true, of a special kind) and not a philosopher or a publicist.'

Bakhtin's claim for Dostoevsky is that he was 'one of the greatest innovators in the sphere of artistic form.' He distinguishes Dostoevsky's originality by calling him 'the creator of the polyphonic novel,' and he finds this polypohonic quality in the independent life of his characters:

'Dostoevsky, like Goethe's Prometheus, creates not submissive slaves (as Zeus does) but free beings, capable of standing up side by side with their creator, of disagreeing with him, and even of revolting against him. The multitude of independent and disparate voices and consciousnesses, the genuine polyphony of voices, each given their full value, is indeed the fundamental distinguishing quality of Dostoevsky's novels.'

It follows from Bakhtin's characterisation of Dostovesky's novels that to read them in the same fashion as we would his expression of his ideology in his propagandist or polemical works

would be a serious error. Bakhtin demonstrates that the ideas that Dostoevsky believed in as a thinker undergo a metamorphosis when they enter the world of his imaginative fiction:

'In fact, the ideas of Dostoevsky the thinker, entering into his polyphonic novel, change the form of their existence, are transformed into the artistic images of ideas: they combine in an inseparable unity with the images of people (Sonya, Myshkin, Zosima), are liberated from their monologic self-enclosed finality..and enter into the great dialogue of the novel on completely equal terms with other images of ideas (the ideas of Raskolnikov, Ivan Karamazov and others).. Dostoevsky the artist always gains the victory over Dostoevsky the publicist.'

Related to the independent life of Dostoevsky's characters, Bakhtin finds, is their 'incompleteness' — the fact that they do not appear before us as creations fully defined and limited by the author, but as beings containing within themselves the possibility of unfolding unexpected and hidden aspects of their existence:

'All of them feel keenly their inner incompleteness, their capacity, as it were, to grow afresh from within and render untrue any externalising and finalising definition of them. As long as a man is still alive, he lives by virtue of the fact that he is still incomplete and has still not spoken his last word..A man never coincides with himself. To him one cannot apply the law of identity: A is A.'

In this connection, Bakhtin quotes a remark from one of Dostoevsky's notebooks:

'To discover with full realism man in man..I am called a psychologist: this is untrue, I am only a realist in the highest sense, i.e. I depict all the depths of the human soul.'

Bakhtin points out that Dostoevsky's rejection of the term 'psychologist' for himself — a rejection that is at first sight surprising — must be related to the narrow and simplifying view of man offered by the psychology of his time. In reacting against this psychology Dostoevsky was also reacting against 'the impersonalisation of man, of human relations and of all human values under capitalism.' Bakhtin goes on:

'Dostoevsky, it is true, did not understand with full clarity the deep economic roots of impersonalisation; he nowhere, as far as we know, used the term itself; but it is precisely this term which better than any other expresses the profound significance of his struggle for man. Dostoevsky with great perspicacity was able to see the penetration of that impersonalising devaluation of man into all the pores of contemporary life and into the very foundations of human thought.'

On the road . . .

(*Continued from page 7*)

But as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Bandung, the headlines in the press expose the many bitter ironies of China's present policies. After Defence Secretary Harold Brown's visit, the US has decided to sell military equipment to China. It has already made China a 'most favoured nation' in the matter of trade. And China herself prepares to welcome Gen. Pinochet, leader of the fascist junta, placed in power by the openly admitted US conspiracy of de-stabilisation of the Allende regime!

Hitchcock: a craftsman's cinema

AS I LIKE IT

Touchstone

I am old enough to have grown up in adolescence with Alfred Hitchock's British films of the 'thirties, and to have formed some of my first responses to good cinema on them. In those days Hitchcock was not yet a cult-object, and what I responded to in his films as a school boy was basically what I have continued to enjoy in them ever since — his intrusion of the bizarre and the terrifying into the even tenor of everyday life, his juxtaposition of the macabre and the comic, and the meticulous craft which accentuated to a maximum the tension and the shock-value of his films. My first intuitive appreciation of the power of a skillful cut probably came from that moment in **The Thirty-nine Steps** when, as the charwoman finding the dead body in the hero's flat opens her mouth to scream, Hitchcock cuts immediately to the whistle of the train carrying the hero to Scotland.

Hitchcock was, of course, the consummate craftsman, with every effect carefully planned and premeditated (he once said that when the script was written, the film had been made: it was only necessary to get it down on celluloid). This doesn't mean that he was never guilty of failure. I think he went through two bad patches in his film-making life: one in the 'forties, with overblown and pretentious films like **Spellbound** (dreams by Dali) and empty exercises in technical ingenuity like the manipulation of the continuous take in **Rope.** He recovered from that decline to produce two of his best works in the 'fifties — **Strangers on a Train** and **Rear Window.** The other bad period, to my mind, was in the 'sixties, with **The Birds, Marnie** and **Torn Curtain,** but he rebounded with **Frenzy** a return to his original English setting and to his best manner.

The inflation of Hitchcock into not just a great film-craftsman but a great film-artist by the French critics of **Cahiers du Cinema** was, I think, unfortunate. It has fathered a body of criticism which claims to find protentous symbolic and metaphysical meanings in his thrillers (e.g. **The Birds** as an allegory of the Last Judgement) which are both imaginary and irrelevant. One can enjoy Hitchcock abundantly on his own level without needing to elevate him to a status that his work can't sustain. His films, at their best, were perfect within their chosen limits, but these limits are evident when one compares them with the work of Claude Chabrol. The French film-maker clearly learnt a great deal from Hitchcock, but made the thriller a vehicle for the deeper exploration of character and human relations. **The Butcher,** for instance, begins as a whodunit, but develops into a study of the torment of a man with a homicidal obsession, for whom Chabrol succeeds by the end of the film in engaging completely the sympathies of his audience. That is a dimension which was as much beyond Hitchcock's reach as it was outside his ambitions.

Legal language

Section 7 (2) of a new Bill to regulate and control the manufacture, importation, sale and distribution of food reads as follows: 'No person shall manufacture, prepare, store or sell any food unless he is the holder of a licence authorizing him to manufacture, prepare, store, sell or distribute any food otherwise than in accordance with the terms and conditions of such licence.'

As written and punctuated, this means that a person may manufacture, prepare, store or sell food only if he holds a licence authorising him to carry out these operations in a manner contrary to the terms and conditions of the licence! The Sinhala text of the section, on the other hand, is prefectly correct and unambiguous.

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