LANKA
GUARDIAN

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– a postmortem

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– grim inevitable ?

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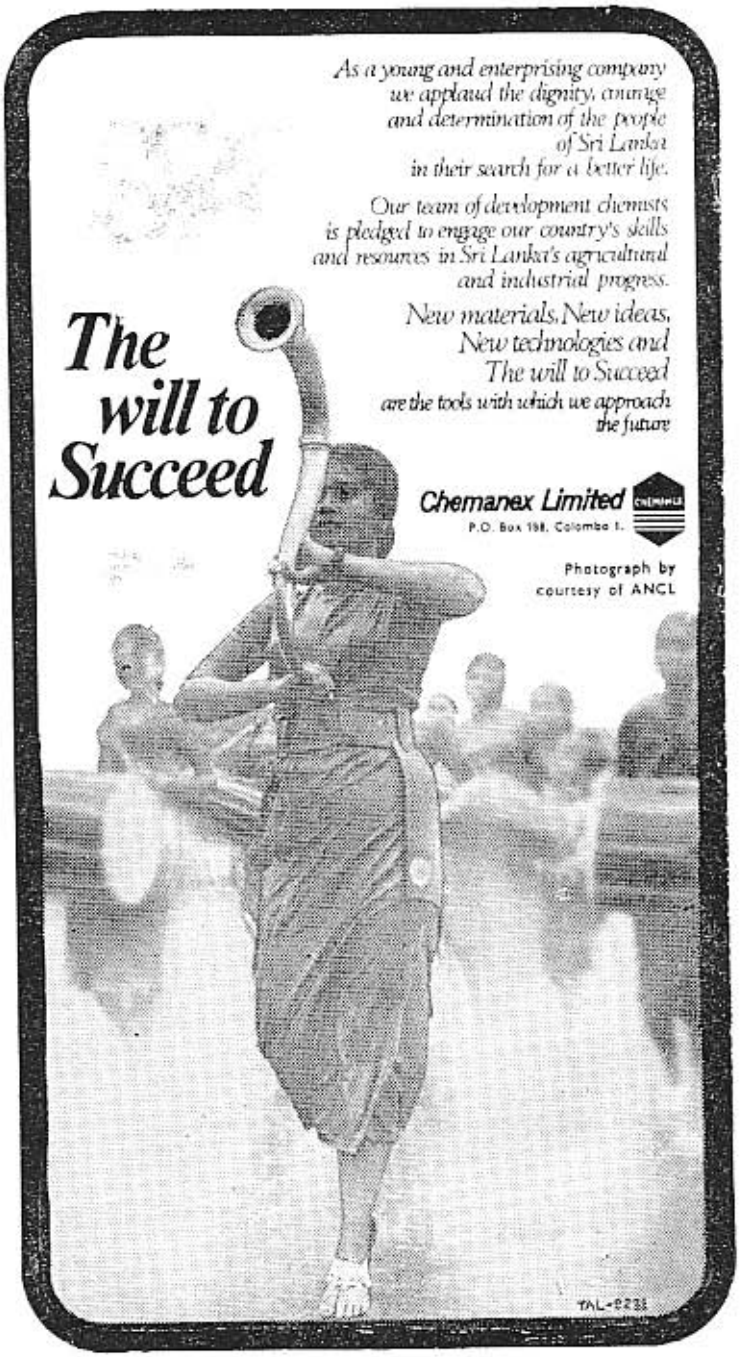
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TRENDS + LETTERS

Inflation, Devaluation

News trickling through from Washington place current inflation in Sri Lanka (March-on-March) at 42%. The authoritative source that is cited is the World Bank.

If this report is correct (and Western diplomats here accept the figure) then there seems to be a big gap between the guru and his protege, our own Central Bank. In its recent report it gave the '79 figure as 20%. The estimate for the current year was only 30%.

While inflation remains the government's nagging worry, its economists are equally concerned about the unprecedented trade deficit last year — a record 7,289 million rupees. Import prices went up by 52% and import volume by 23%. Export prices saw a 9% increase while export volumes rose only by 1%. Devaluation is once again the main talking point in business circles. But given the nature of our major exports where prices are largely manupulated by cartels, can devaluation make any impression? Besides it will only enhance imported inflation. While a decision will be made only after the Paris Aid Group Meeting in July, the government's dilemma is obviously a painful one.

Indian Investment

Atavistic fears of domination by our giant neighbour and latter-day anxieties over resurgent Tamil nationalism in Madras nourished the once popular slogan of "Indian expansionism". After the India-China war, the Maoists made it one of their most strident slogans. In their eyes, Bangladesh and Sikkim seem to give strength to this anti-Indian cry.

In the last few years "Indian expansionism" has faded out, or got itself drowned by the noisier clamour about "superpower hegemonism". For the latest slogans we shall probably have to wait the return of Mr. Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake and family from Peking, where he is probably explaining why he could not get himself even a low grade post in the SLFP executive. But the old slogan acquires a new meaning with the report that the Industrial Development Bank of India has given a loan of 100 million rupees to the National Development Bank of Sri Lanka. The money is small but its significance may be quite large. The loan will cover Sri Lanka's purchases of Indian goods, mainly engineering goods and machinery. Many joint ventures, combining Indian technology and Sri Lankan raw material (rubber) are on the cards.

Most of the investment from Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore etc constitutes nomadic capital — hit-and-run adventurers or vultures really. Indian investment, from a long term point of view could be more serious and deep-ranging.

Ghosts Return

With a high powered Sri Lanka delegation (two Moslem leaders and the ACBC President) participating in the international conference in Teheran, anti-US feeling in this region is running high. Journalists in Colombo were hardly surprised therefore to find the picture of Mr. Mossadegh leading a list of Asian personalities prominently displayed in a poster they all received recently. The Iranian Prime Minister who nationalised the foreign oil companies was ousted in a CIA sponsored coup in 1954. The Shah who had fled to Italy returned in triumph. The CIA of course is the favourite target not only of Third world nationalists and liberals but also of the best Western newspapers, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, and Le Monde.

This really is a family portrait of victims; an odd family but nonetheless a very impressive one. With Mossadegh are Ngo Dinh Diem, Mugibur Rahman, Park Chung Hee, Z. A. Bhutto and N. M. Tarakki.

(*Continued on page 2*)

Tito — a postscript.

The death of Tito has been made use of by the Trotskyites and all manner of bourgeois apologists to let loose another, venomous anti-Stalin hysteria. It is not my purpose to examine in detail the falsity of the claims made on behalf of Tito. My aim now is to contradict the historical falsities contained in most of the eulogies heaped on Tito.

(1) Tito is not the last survivor from among the military leaders of the Second World War. Still living is Enver Hoxha, leader of the Albanian partisans who played such a valiant role in World War II and liberated Albania from the Italian and German

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Trends . . .

Human Rights

The Civil Rights Movement may be more bark than bite, although a prominent SLFP minister once insinuated that a leading CRM personality had CIA connections! However, the CRM has played a useful watchdog role both during the previous regime and now. It has been fair in its criticism and generous in its praise. The CRM has commended the government for allowing the so-called "Tiger Law" to lapse. This follows the government's decision to sign the international convenant on civil and political rights. But it has urged the government to review other undemocratic laws in the light of its obligations under this convenant.

Letters . . .

fascists without a single foreign soldier entering Albania.

(2) It is not true that Yugoslavia was liberated without the assistance of the Soviet Red Army. The latter marched through Yugoslavia on its way to Berlin and liberated a part of Yugoslavia. Not only that. Albanian partisans liberated a part of Yugoslavia which was populated by Albanians – the region known as Kossava.

(3) It is not true that Tito defied Stalin. He was expelled by Stalin from the Cominform. The reason for this action was not only idelogical deviations of Tito but also the fact that Soviet Intelligence had discovered that Tito was an agent of the Western imperialist powers.

It must be mentioned here that the Yugoslav Communist Party had ideological differences with the Comintern—even before Tito—and had been condemned by it. Tito was to rehabilitate the greatest deviationist, Gorkich, the former general secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

(4) The reason why Tito was able to play an 'independent' role was simply due to the aid with which he was bolstered up by the western imperialists. By 1978 Yugoslavia had received as loans over 11 billion dollars. From the USA alone it had received over 7 billion dollars in credits. "The crutches supplied by Western capital have kept this system on its feet as a model of the preservation of the capitalist order under pseudo-socialist labels". The so-called "self-administration" is a Yugoslav and foreign capitalist joint administration.

(Continued on page 21)

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PROTEST DAY and AFTERMATH

NEWS BACKGROUND

It was the Kandasamy Memorial meeting on June 5th. For the TU leaders who came together on the New Town Hall platform, the first (unwritten) item on the agenda was pre-determined — a quick post-mortem on the 'Day of Protest'. The brisk comparison of notes was given an added urgency by the death of Mr. Somapala, a CP trade unionist, that afternoon. A sad but obvious coincidence gave birth to a ready parallel. Somapala — another Kandasamy? One more TU martyr?

Kandasamy it is true, was shot dead by the police. On occassions of this kind in the past, the police have been accused by opposition parties, TU's, civil rights organisations and student associations of callous indifference or blatant partisanship and even collusion. But this time not even those opposition speakers who levelled serious charges against members and supporters of the UNP aimed their fire on the police. In fact, some Trade Union activists say that the police, in some places maintained a studied detachment. Were the police unsure about the law? Were pickets and demonstrations illegal? Were demonstrations banned? How then was a counter-demonstration mounted?

In the face of opposition accusations the Prime Minister promised an impartial investigation into Somapala's death. At this writing, the judicial inquiry is still on.

TU ASSESSMENT

After the Kandasamy meeting was over, the leading organisers retired to the CFTU Hqrs. for a more thoroughgoing assessment. In public the TU leaders who launched the campaign may not admit this fact but they were all pleasantly surprised by the response of the organised working class. Since May Day, when the opposition parties and their affiliated TU's gave a public exhibition of disunity rather than unity, the JTUAC organisers had been working feverishly. But they were all keeping their fingers crossed. They all haboured a secret, dispiriting suspicion that the response at the work place would be lukewarm. On the night of June 5th, they were not cock-a-hoop but the general satisfaction was cheerfully shared by every organisation, big and small.

"If only the protest demonstration had followed a general call by all the opposition parties, at a political level, the government would have got a ruder shock" said a veteran union leader. Mr. Shanmugathasan had in fact pushed that line hard....and failed, primarily because the LSSP, and if that matters the MEP, had preferred to march behind the SLFP and thus break the hard won working class unity represented by the JTUAC. Surprisingly the Maoist Shan's line was supported by the CPSL (a development worth watching) but this pressure could not move the SLFP-LSSP to agree to a general call at the political level. "The LSSP is trying to walk on two legs", commented another unionist using a Maoist phrase. He meant that the LSSP wants to strengthen political (electoral) ties with the SLFP while not getting itself isolated in the JTUAC, the working class base. Incidentally the LSSP's Dr. Colvin R. de Silva was the first to issue a statement saluting "these bold fighters for democratic rights and freedom." The men who gathered at the CFTU had yet another cause for good cheer. "Damn good" said one middle class union leader "the JVP was completely isolated and exposed."

OTHER ESTIMATES

The JSS in an official statement described the protest as a "damp squib". The state controlled media was not that bold or naive. It made a laborious attempt to show that the pro-government supporters "outnumbered" the protestors.

Ironically, the independent **"Weekend"** used the very same word in its estimate of numerical strengh. Its political commentator wrote: "It is worth mentioning that despite the fact that the ruling UNP's trade union the Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya (JSS) has the single largest membership for a trade union in the country in many workplaces it was certainly outnumbered."

With the exception of the CTB, in every other key factory, depot, installation or workplace, the pro-UNP demonstrators were much less in number. This was clear to any reporter who had eyes to see-whether in the Fort, down Union Place, in Ratmalana or Kolonnawa. What is more the protest day scored a success in many towns outside Colombo, notably Jaffna, as the **Virakesari** impartially reported. In Jaffna the Tamil trade unions and the radical youth could not have been held back even if the TULF leadership wanted to do so. (And there are some TULF front-rankers who wish to curb such "activism", causing new strains within the TULF leadership).

MORALE AND MUSCLE

Numbers do matter of course. But numbers are not always as important as morale, militancy and, for whatever purpose it may be used, muscle. The JSS, it is publicly claimed by persons of the highest authority, has the largest membership. While Mr. Thondaman may contest this claim, what matters more is whether this is only a "paper claim". A TU organiser with 30 years experience in this tough trade, remarked "if Mrs. B was the boss today, Alavi Moulana would say that the SLITUF has the biggest membership and he may be right....on paper". Most workers in this country are not "card carrying" members of trade unions. If they did they would behave like a wealthy tourist and carry in his wallet, an American

Express card, a Bank of America card and a Diner's Club card. A card which confirms membership in the union affiliated to the governing party is a "must". In a tight economic situation where employment is the pressure-point, this is simply political insurance. It is also an expression of prevailing worker psychology, of a self-protective cynicism and opportunism. It is part also of the general state of mind of the voter, especially between elections.

POLITICS AND TU's.

When a government, particularly a strong government, is installed the numbers of the government controlled TU's membership, automatically swell. Not all of them are honestly pro-UNP or pro-SRLP. Their heart and loyalty lie elsewhere. This is purely "protection", in the old Chicago patois. The rest, with the exception of toughened militants, lie low. In reality, they are the vast majority but in the prevailing political climate, it is better to be safe than to be sorry. In the factory, workplace and canteen the trade union boss (of the ruling party) and his minions (most of them quick-change artists) strut about the place, unchallenged. They can walk into the room of the chairman or the general manager and if necessary get the minister on the phone. Their very presence is intimidating. This gives them the first insidious injection of power; in truth an illusion of power.

This feeling travels upwards to the higher political levels and there the politicians too are infected with the same self-gratifying sense of security for all the internal communication channels bear only one message-"all is well".

But as the years go by, the economic situation changes and with it the political environment, and slowly the mood of the organised working class.

PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE

In our issue of August 15th 1978 there appeared a report headlined **"TU's study violence".** The JTUAC had gathered a great deal of material on the incidence of violence in the trade union field.

** Bank employees on strike were assaulted in broad daylight in Colombo. The assailants were identified as harbour workers.

** CBEU strikers were also assaulted in Kurunegala, Galle, Pillyandala and Chilaw.

** At Kelaniya CMU members were assaulted by "local thugs" The State controlled press acquired the habit of describing them as "unidentified thugs". However, when Vidyalankara students elected pro-opposition candidates to the student's council "these thugs" now appeared in the press in the guise of "irate villagers" or "angry passers-by", although no explanation was given for their sudden and collective indignation.

** In Puttalam Cement Corporation workers were assaulted.

** Pickets protesting against the White Paper and employment were broken up and Unionists mauled at the Tyre Corporation, State Hardware, Paranthan Chemicals and Port Cargo.

** On a single afternoon protestors were assaulted at the RGO the Dept. of Immigration, the National Paper Corporation, the CPC.

** At Moratuwa, a member of the UNP branch, Mrs. Evelyne Peiris, a genuinely angry eye witness wrote to Sri Kotha protesting against CMU members being beaten up near the Petroleum Corporation office

All this was in 1978. There have been many other incidents of the same type, the most widely publicised was the vicious attack on two well known SLFP and LSSP figures, Mr. Alavi Maoulana and Mr. Sarath Navanna in the heart of the city in broad daylight.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE

Industrial peace is the earnest wish of every administration. What is often described as Trade Union discipline often amounts to "taming" the Unions. Such taming can be done through strict laws and also by other means. Frequently these other means prove effective, upto a point. But if there's a worker back-lash, then such means prove dangerously counter-producive because there is continuing unrest in the factory and the work place. Efficiency drops and with it production. This does great damage to the government's overall economic performance. In the end, the political damage is incalculable.

INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

"The SLFP leadership was never averse to using strong-arm tactics against opponents. Some of their younger MPs led goon-squads, beating up opponents, Tamil plantation workers etc." observed a Leftist Trade Union organiser. "But most of the time it was in their "safe areas" in the provinces or in pocket boroughs where they produced what the UNP wittily termed the Attanagalla doctrine, a victim of which was the present health minister" he added.

"But in the city" he continued "SLFPers were unable or unwilling to fight it out with organised workers. Here, the SLFP preferred the not-so subtle use of the State apparatus, the police and even the army, as we saw in the railway strike of 1976 leading up to the general strike".

The UNP has been using "two tactics", the State machinery and its own trade union arm, an organisation which bears the singluarly unfortunate and suggestive initials, JSS. When the JSS was getting too cocky and, in effect, a disruptive factor in many State organisations, no less a person than President J. R. himself had to warn its members to discipline themselves. But the JSS, a strong arm of the Party, cannot be amputated by the party itself. One of the major JSS battle-fronts has been the CTB and recent decision to create two ministries, with one minister, could indicate that JSS has scored a victory. In fact the opposition press has described it as a major victory for Mr. Mathew, the JSS boss.

With the new constitution, we have seen a stronger and a clearer concept of the State (as different

(Continued on page 14)

LIBERIA

Birth of a nation ?

FOREIGN NEWS

The recent coup against President Binaisa of Uganda seems to have had the blessings of neighbouring Tanzania's President Nyerere whose army helped to overthrow the hated Idi Amin. Whether Uganda will see a Zimbabwe-type election under Commonwealth supervision is still in doubt. While Uganda very much in the news during the last monstrous years of Idi Amin has once again made the headlines, not much is known of what's going on in Liberia, except for the odd item about an attempted coup and more executions.

Those who try to make **political** sense of the sudden, seemingly bizarre events of mid-April are soon confronted by a plain, inescapable fact. Even by the exotic standards of **African** politics, (where coups, assassinations, and other upheavals seem an acceptable part of ordinary political life) Liberia has always been a strange case. To adapt a phrase from Winston Churchill, Liberia is an enigma wrapped in a stupendons historical aberration.

Liberia was Africa's first independent republic — as long ago as 1847. It came into being, under American sponsorship, and therefore owes its existence to the United States — more precisely to an organisation known as the Colonisation Society. Yet, (and here is a **massive** eccentricity) Liberia never knew of a **white** foreign presence and therefore was never **'colonised'**, in the conventional sense.

True enough, Liberia, the independent republic, was created by settlers — but they were NOT **white** settlers, as in the case of the Afrikaaners in South Africa today' or white Rhodesians in what is now Zimbabwe/or European Jews in what was Arab Palestine.

The settlers who created "modern" Liberia were blacks — freed black slaves brought from America. The American is taken to the United States to become a Negro slave in the deep American south; then he is set free, and brought **back** to Africa by various American Christian societies, moved by what one American writer has called 'the early twinges of the American conscience against the institution of slavery." The freed slaves now become settlers, creators of an independent state, and in that sense, masters of a new nation — surely a weird deviation if not inversion of history.

This unusual historical experience was to shape Liberia's unique social structure, and eventually its curious political development — the end of which, the April coup, led by a young Master Sergeant, may perhaps have signalled,

If the freed slave-settlers, (like the migrant Jews), become masters of a new nation, they became masters also of the native population, — as the Jews would say, of the sabras. Here in Liberia, the **black** settler holding both economic and political power, emerged as the master of the indigenous African.

At the last census, Liberia, which is about twice the size of Sri Lanka, had a population of 1,000,000 and the settlers have never numbered more than 10%.

The black settlers of American ancestry, (and their descendents) soon emerged as the dominant group in Liberia and matured gradually into a well-entrenched oligargy which had close links with the American south. As a recent article pointed out, even today many an educated Liberian speaks with a Southern American drawl.

Liberia, establised under American auspices, was certainly no American **colony.** Yet it has often been described as America's step-child.

The traditional ties between the ruling settlers elite, and the United States were strengthened in the economic sphere. The symbol of this special relationship is the fact the national currency of Liberia (independent for 130 old years, and along with Ethiopia, the first African states to become UN members,) is the **American** dollar.

Rubber, the country's major exchange, earner, is virtually a monopoly of Firestone, which has a 99 year lease on about one million acres. Bethlehem Steel, the huge US combine, has an equally large say over Liberia's rich iron ore deposits.

The Liberian flag is used by nearly 20 of the world's shipping fleet and most oil companies use tankers that fly the Liberian flag. But the effective control of the Liberian shipping business is in the hand of the International Trust company of Washington.

Inspite of these stong, wide-ranging links between Liberia's closely-knit oligarchy and the US, the absence of a colonial ruler or abrasive alien presence, may explain why Liberian politics did not follow the customary course of nationalist agitatic anti-colonial struggle, even when the process of de-colonisation had assumed an accelerated form in the Africa of the nineteen sixties. Clearly the main source of conflict was more **internal,** than external — the long-standing unresolved problem of an abnormal social stratification, and the attendant questions of educational advancement and social mobility, of the sharing of the political and economic power.

Literacy is always a reliable index. Among the settlers of American ancestry (10% of the Liberian population) literacy was nearly 100%, while only 15% of the rest, (the indigenous Liberian) could read and write.

If this meant a monopoly of the higher civil service jobs for the minority, the same was true of political power. Elections were held, but the franchise went with **property** qualifications. It is

significant that the question of universal franchise was inscribed on the parliamentary agenda a month before the coup.

Until the coup last month, Liberia was ruled by a party founded as far back as 1869. The **very name** of the party demonstrates once again the quaint idiosyncrasies of Liberian politics. In the last quarter of the 20th century, Africa's first independent republic was ruled by a political party styling its self **"The True Whig Party"**. It's leader, William R. Tolbert, (who was executed immediately after the coup) assumed office in 1971 on the death of President William V. S. Tubman who had ruled the country for 28 long years. — a fact which explains why Liberia was known as Africa's most stable nation. Yet, the True Whig party was completely dominated by the Americans-Liberians with the native Liberians having less than a dozen members in the parliament.

The first serious signs of trouble came exactly one year before the coup. On April 14th, last year 40 demonstrators were shot dead when riots broke out in Monrovia against increased food prices, mainly rice, the staple diet. The leaders of the opposition Progressive Alliance were arrested and charged with treason. The most prominent of them was Mr. Gabriel Bachus Mathews, the founder of the People's Progressive Party. He was released in July just before President Tolbert hosted the last OAU summit. He was re-arrested in March for calling a general strike.

Mr. Mathews who describes himself as an African socialist, is Liberia's new foreign minister. He has urged a more equitable distribution of national resources free education and health care, and an end to rampant corruption in high places. Meanwhile the coup leader has already raised the salaries of middle-grade public servants, and of the armed forces and police.

The new regime was quick to reassure Washington that Liberia's relations with the US will remain friendly. The United States has no bases in Liberia but the Omega Communications and Monitoring Site is regarded as highly important to the Western defence system in Atlantic.

The main questions then are internal. To what extent is this a **serious** challenge to the old oligarchy and to the traditional structures of power in Liberia? To what extent is the 27 year old Master Sergeant a creature of the deep-rooted social conflicts in his country? How far-reaching will be the changes his Military Command Council initiates — or, will be allowed to initiate? And will such changes lead to a radical re-structuring of the absurdly anachronistic Liberian polity. In short, will Liberia, Africa's first independent republic, **re-enter** history to become truly **African?**

Anniversary

HO CHI MINH

Ho Chi Minch who was born on May 19th 1890, in the village of Kim-Lien in Nghe — A province of central Vietnam, was not only the father of the modern Vietnamese nation, but also a great Marxist-Leninist. In restrospect we may well say that Ho Chi Minh was the greatest Marxist-Leninist revolutionary leader to appear in the East. Indeed, he may be said to have been the most outstanding Marxist-Leninist leader to have emerged in the entire 'colonial world.'

Taking as his guide to action, the theoretical positions on the problems of national liberation in the Colonial East worked out by the Third International (Comintern) of which himself was an important member, Ho Chi Minh correctly applied the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to the complex problems of the Vietnamese revolution. He correctly grasped and resolved the main problems of anti-imperialist revolution in a colonial setting such as the problems of the leading role of the working class and its party, the problem of creating a broad anti-imperialist united front and the problems of armed insurrection. (A few years back, New Left Books, London, reissued the the standard Comintern handbook on 'Armed Insurrection', co-authored by Ho Chi Minh). In particular, Ho Chi Minh correctly comprehended and resolved problems concerning the alliance of the working class with the broad peasant masses and the hegemony of the working class within this alliance. Closely related to this was his unremitting stress on the working class character of the Party. Intimately linked to this understanding, was his proper grasp of the relationship between patriotism and proletarian internationalism. It is Ho Chi Minh's worthy successor Le Duan who has most correctly conceptualized the fundamental strategic problem of articulating national liberation and socialist revolution in 'peripheral' societies.

In the light of the serious errors, deviations and distortions in the foreign and domestic policies of certain ruling Communist parties, particularly in Asia, we see more clearly and appreciate more fully, the great contributions made by the late Ho Chi Minh to the treasure house of Marxist-Leninist theory and experience.

J.

PAKISTAN

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General Zia's continuing battle with the Bhuttos is only the most obvious sign of how desperate his situation is. His power-base has withered so badly that it seems only a matter of time before he is ousted from the post he grabbed. The only question is the manner of his exit.

He has played his last card — the Islamic conference. But in playing this card he has exposed his hand. The way he prepared for and conducted the conference has also confirmed what I stated in my first contribution to this journal (**"Playing with Fire" L.G. March 15th**) Commenting on the military-bureacratic clique which Zia's utterly unpopular regime afloat I wrote, "Fundamentally, all hold views that compel Pakistan to play a subordinate, if not servile, role in US-China geo-strategy. But there those who think that China is the more reliable friend and patron. There is a common ground between these two lines of thinking. Get arms and money from US, while working closely with the Chinese in their regional strategy. Unfortunately, this means Pakistan is pushed into a confrontation with the Afghanistan, and therefore with the Soviet Union."

Diplomats here who studied the contents of a memorandum circulated by Pakistan to all the prospective participants of the conference found no difficulty in detecting the real authors of this memorandum which was offered as a draft of the final conference resolution.

The memorandum tried to concentrate all the attention of the conference on a single issue — "the Afghan problem" and a "solution" for it. It was also a direct attack on Afghanistan and the Soviet Union and its tone was so undiplomatic in its hostility that the memo even embarrassed Islamic governments which did not agree with Kabul or Moscow.

Besides this there were no references at all to the Iranian situation, or to the Shah or to the flagrant violation of Iranian sovereignty by the recent American military adventure.

Diplomats also observed the absence of any reference to the Palestinian question, Israel's new "settlements and the whole betrayal of the Arab cause by the Camp David treaty signed by Carter, Sadat and Begin.

"This memo was made in Washington" remarked a visiting Arab professor in the course of a discussion of current issues in the Islamic world with several Pakistani colleagues. He added; "After Iran the US helped by China is using every possible strategem and device, political and propogandist, to turn the Islamic community and its growing political conciousness, against the Soviet Union by exploiting the Afghanistan situation",

General Zia's actual proposals constituted an attempt at open interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. But he was badly rebuffed. The conference not only came out strongly on behalf of PLO but condemned Sadat. Sadat has not only provided a home for the fugitive Shah but allowed his territory to be used for US planes in the operation in Iran. Not only Bhutto supporters but the entire Pakistani intelligentsia now recognise Sadat as America's substitute for the Shah.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Towards Asian perspectives

by Thomas Abraham

Although international affairs is often taken to mean inter-state relations and the principles that govern their relationship, I think it would be more accurate to say that international relations is really the study of international society, which would include the entire range of behaviour in the international environment.

The traditional perspective of inter-state relations was determined by the rise of nation state in Europe and the relationship between sovereign states was taken to be the basis for the study of international relations. International Law also goes back to the conditions that prevailed in Europe and it is true to say that this system of law and related legal concepts were essentially meant to govern political systems which evolved in Europe. And yet we must not forget that there were many worlds outside the Chirstian world of Europe, which even at that time had developed into highly organized societies with strong political, economic and social inter-locking relationships. we must not also forget that from the first century A. D. there were great advances in science amongst the non-European world, and it is only much later that Europe gained an overwhelming advantage, which has persisted to our time. Our part of the world did not lag behind as the ancient civilisation of Sri Lanka testifies.

The industrial revolution and the growth of an industrially organised society, first in Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, and then in other parts of Europe, enabled Europe not only to physically conquer large areas of the globe but also to impose in one way or the other, a system of law and administration closely approximating to the systems in the Metropolitan country.

From the address delivered by the High Commissioner for India, Mr. Thomas Abraham, at the Convocation of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies on May 14, 1980.

It is this historical factor which has conditioned the thinking of our Asian world and today, we are engaged in the quest for modernisation. A view has been put forward that modernisation essentially involves the replacement of traditional authority, whether religious or familial, by a single national political authority which functions rationally and legally. We have also sought to borrow, buy or adapt the technology of European society in order to increase our productivity in the economic sphere and to improve the quality of life.

In the post-world war there have emerged more than 150 nation states whether within the United Nations' system or otherwise. Simultaneously the growth of scientific technology has advanced by such leaps and bounds as to create a wholly new situation unprecedented in human history It is possible now to talk of the world as a global village in which actions in any part of the world have reactions of varying intensity in other parts of the world. What is more, the world today is dominated by two super whose actions and reactions affect every one of us. What is happening in Afghanistan and Iran is the most recent example of the situation.

Both your country and mine find their origin in a common civilisation which has been called the Indic civilisation, Sri Lanka and India share a common inheritance of religious and cultural values. With the intrusion of various European powers, a new chapter began, and ended with the supremacy of Britain which left us both bound to a colonial economy and a surface acceptance of western cultural values. It is a debatable point whether the absence of this veneer of western values on a thin elite would have made a difference in the long run to the political future of our countries: perhaps we may not have had as smooth a transition into independence guided by constitutional systems based on the western model, and administered by people whose essential beliefs would not be totally at variance within the earlier colonial frame work. Be that as it may, the fact remains that with the passage of time, a generation of leaders has either withered away, or have been cut down by physical force, leaving few of the elders in command. And even these few have recognised the claims of the new generation, who have been reared entirely on home grown soil.

But the impact of the technologically advanced west has been so over-powering, and the quest for modernisation within our countries so urgent, that even this generation has had to acquire linguistic and other skills from the western world, not only for self advancement but also for national advancement. And it is here that wise men from older civilisations like our own, or the Islamic civilisation have thought it imperative, either in modulated voices or in harsh overtones, to caution their people against the wholesale acceptance of western value systems.

Even here in Sri Lanka it is considered normal to drink a Coke to quench one's thirst, but considered exotic to drink tambili. The voices that one hears in Sri Lanka about the influx of tourists posing a threat to your traditional cultural values is a reflection of a larger anxiety.

But we have to grasp that technology is itself a strand of cultural radiation that induces change in all that it touches.

The technology that has emerged in the west was evolved out of the industrial revolution and fashioned in temperate climates, in consonance with their social fabric and suitable to their needs. To transplant that system into a different environment, and expect the same results would be unwise and the degree of dissatisfaction amongst the aid-givers in the west, and the domestic resentment within those countries, against these so called "give-away" programmes is evidence of this disillusionment.

This is not to argue in favour of the wholesale rejection of imported technology. On the contrary, we have to recognise that we in the non-western world are sorely lacking in both the equipment and the skills which make for self reliance. But there are large fields where technology has to be adapted with a view to making it appropriate to economic needs and social conditions. In evolving an appropriate technology a major role has to be played by the innovative ideas generated within the social fabric, because development itself is a complex process and while the massive import of technological hardware may give the impression of modernity, the fact remains that beneath this facade lies a hollow base which will sooner or later reduce these symbols to barren hulks. It does not matter whether one calls it "appropriate", or "low cost" or "intermediate" technology, but the central focus should be to evolve and innovate within the social structure. Indeed, it can be argued that self-reliance is impossible without innovation and adaptation. It would gladden me if we in India who have some considerable experience in this field could exchange views with you. It is no secret that Gandhiji believed that if the villages perish, India perishes, and that Rabindranath Tagore established a "Shilpa Bhavan" where artisans were trained in more productive techniques, adapted to Indian needs. Those early attempts have been developed and strengthened and in some cases have established links with the intermediate Technology Development Group in London.

Of late, there is yet another concern very relevent to industrial society, that is increasingly gaining the focus of attention in our part of the world. It is the anxiety about our polluted environment. There is no doubt that today, even in a place as idyllic and beautiul as the Maldive Islands, one cannot fail to see the bobbing, empty cans of Coca-Cola floating away as debris into the Indian ocean. Nor is there any doubt that the toxic wastes of an industrial, high consumer society are jeopardising the ecological balance of our earth; not indeed is there any doubt that the growth of population in our part of the world is eating into natural pastures so that vario us species are endangered to the point of extinction. But to transplant these concerns wholesale, and implant them into our frame-work thoughtlessly would be to commit the same mistake as grafting capital intensive technology to a labour intensive society.

"Our media are largely conditioned by the news values of the west, and while it cannot be denied that events such as Watergate leading to the resignation from office of an American President are of first rate importance, one wonders whether the disorganised life styles of Pop music stars or the sexual mores of that civilisation have to be featured with prominence as worthy of our emulation. And even more insidious is the fact that events in the non-western world are filtered through the lens of the west before they are refracted for public consumption. Some fifty years ago, the phrase for an Asian Leader was 'Naked Fakir'—today the phrase is 'Mad Mullah'".

Such an approach pre-supposes that the non-western world has never felt deeply about these questions but has been indifferent to them. But as my Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi pointed out at Stockholm at the U. N. Conference on Environment in 1972, and I qutoe: Through-out India, edicts carved on rocks and iron pillars are reminders that 22 Centuries ago, the Emperor Asoka defined a King's duty as not merely to protect citizens and punish wrong doers, but also to preserve animal life and forest trees.

Quite obviously, science is not the same thing as technology. It has been said that science is the systematic knowledge of nature, and whether the impulse to study nature came from the desire to know God and His design for the world, or whether it was merely to seek enlightenment as to the "why" of things, from his earliest days, Man has had a curious and inquisitive mind.

Today, we in Asia look to the west for scientific knowledge. Yet, it was not always so, as recently as 1000 A. D., Europe was an area of darkness compared to the scientific advances made by then in the Islamic world, the Sinic world, and an Indic world. In India, Arya Bhatta, Varahamira and Bhaskara made solid contributions in the field of Mathematics while Charaka and Susruta were pre-eminent in the fields of Medicine and Surgery. It is well known that China was an advanced country with a technology which included the Seismograph, the mechanical clock and various types of equipment for hydraulic engineering, but all these advances were left far behind by Europe which over took the science and technology of an earlier Asian period, and today Europe is so vastly superior in these fields that we in Asia must learn from the west.

Our intellectual environment is thus heavily oriented towards the West, and our patterns of thought and our view of the world is angled to a western perspective. In the field of international relations which is the special subject of interest to the students of this institute, it may be of interest to note that even before India became free, the concept of looking at international affairs through our own eyes and not through the eyes of one power bloc or the other, had been accepted as a fundamental postnlate of Indian foreign policy.

U. S. - CHINA (2)

America's four options

by Dr. Harry Harding

The events since normalization of U.S.-China relations add up to a U.S.-China policy that goes far beyond "Normalization," in even the broadest definition of the term. The question, of course, is whether this is what the United States wants. What the Administration has not yet fully articulated — but what is a crucial component of American foreign policy — is the long-term relationship that the United states seeks to create with China in the 1980's. An assessment of this relationship depends not only on bilateral considerations, but also on the regional and global contexts in which American policy toward China must be placed.

The United States faces four fundamental options in this regard. They are not however, mutually exclusive.

The four Options, in increasing order of friendliness, are to treat China:

1. As a potential adversary. Because of remaining differences in social systems, ideologies, and national interests, the United States could choose to have only a cool and distant relationship with China, avoiding any assistance to Chinese economic development, let alone any military cooperation with Beijing. China would, under this option, be subject to the same restraints on trade that are imposed by the United States on the Soviet Union.

2. As a diplomatic colleague. Because of china's growing role in Asia and in international forums, the United States might seeks actively to draw China into contructive dialogue in global and regional issues. The two would not always expect to agree, but they might hope to narrow their differences so that solutions might be reached.

3. As an economic partner. Because a prosperous and modern China is more likely to act in ways that parallel American interests than is a China that remains poor and backward, the United States might decide to provide substantial assistance, both material and technical, to the development of China's civilian economy.

4. As a military ally (or quasi-ally). Because American and Chinese strategic interestt have come increasingly to coincide, especially vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, the United States might decide to forge a closer military relationship with China. This might involve the transfer of intelligence, military technology, or arms to Beijing. It might also involve the coordination of policy, in ways ranging from "parallel actions" in third areas, to joint military exercises, or even to a formal Sino-American alliance.

American post-normalization China policy has clearly been a combination of Options (2) and (3), with increasing movement in the direction of Option (4). Is this what the United States wants? what might be the most appropriate mix of these four Options?

First, it is wise that the United States has moved beyond normalization, and beyond the "cool and correct" relationship with China described in Option (1). Chinese and American interests in Asia now do parallel each a other in enough ways to warrant relatively close relationship between Washington and Beijing, despite the differences in social systems and national goals. Both countries seek to prevent Soviet hegemony over Asia as a whole, or Vietnamese domination over South-East Asia. To this end, they agree on the desirability of a Japan that is secure and confident, a United States that remains actively involved in Asian affairs, and an association of South-East Asian nations that is prosperous and stable.

Moveover, to treat China as a potential adversary might become a self-fullfilling prophecy. It would remove China's incentives to reduce its differences with the United States where the possibility of conflict still exists, as in Korea and Taiwan. Even more, it would increase Beijing's incentive to reach some kind of accomodation with the Soviet Union. To be sure, the United States can do nothing to guarantee that a conflict with China will be avoided, or to prevent a Sino-Soviet rapprochment. But the United States can act in ways that reduce the possibility that either development will occur.

Not can there be much disagreement with the proposition that China should be treated, under Option (2), as a major diplomatic colleague. Indeed, this is perhaps the least controversial of all the Options under consideration here. It is already clear that a whole series of regional and global issues — from the situation in Korea to the international energy crisis — cannot be resolved without China's participation and support. And China's stake in, and influence over, such matters will only increase in the decade ahead, as China develops its economy and modernizes its armed forces.

For the remaining Options, the balance sheet is much more mixed. As a result, Options (3) and (4) deservesomewhat fuller consideration.

There are, for example, some arguments that can be raised against actually assisting even the civilian modernization of China. Some concern the future role that Beijing might play once its economy is more highly developed. It may be, for example, that Chinese goods would come to compete with American manufactures or, in the more immediate future, with the exports of some of our Asian allies. It may also be that a more modern China

would be a more Assertive China, and might act in ways that do not always parallel American interests.

While these dangers may be real, there is relatively little that the United States could do to prevent them. As Dwight H. Perkins of Harvard University has recently argued, China is likely to develop its industrial plant rapidly in the 1980's whether or not the United States chooses to help. What China is unable to purchase from American suppliers can be obtained elsewhere with relative ease. A policy of partnership is more likely to enable the United States to resolve, through negotiation, whatever economic and diplomatic problems emerge, than is a policy of economic aloofness.

Nonetheless, there are grounds for caution in devising the specific tactics with which the United States attempts to assist in China's modernization. One of the lessons of the past hundred years has been that China and the West — and perhaps China and the United States in particular — have tended to form an explosive "pupil-missionary" relationship. The relationship operates in cyclical fashion, first pulling the two sides together, and then driving them apart.

The problem with this "pupil-missionary" relationship is that it is inherently unstable, largely because both parties enter it with unrealisable expectations. The Chinese "pupil" expects panaceas, but finds that the "solutions" offered by the foreigner often provide one-sided benefits and are poorly suited to Chinese conditions. The American "missionary" expects gratitude, but finds that the reaction is more often ambivalence, uncertainly, and even anger. Both sides feel betrayed. And a relationship once characterized by eagerness and euphoria now throws the two sides apart with great force.

Thus it is vital that, to the greatest extent possible, American assistance be appropriate to Chinese conditions, that it be within China's ability to absorb, that it be offered in a spirit of friendship and respect, and that the distribution of benefits be be just and equitable. The Chinese, for their part, must be open to change, yet able to choose foreign technology selectively and to adapt it to their own conditions.

Finally, let us consider the desirability of a more extensive U.S. military-strategic relationship with china — probably the most controversial of the four Options facing the United States. Those who favour such an option essentially make three arguments: First, that China is military weak, and is eager to purchase miltary equipment and technology from the West; Second, that Chinese and Western interests are now essentially equivalent, and that Western military aid to China is therefore fully justified; and Third, that Western assistance to China would help create a strong counterweight to an aggressive and expansionist Soviet Union.

Such an argument is largely erroneous. A closer military relationship with China would, at this point at least, be premature. This is because the additional benefits of such relationship are uncertain, while the risks are considerable.

First, a strong case can be made that the United States has already reaped whatever benefits are likely to follow from a strategic relationship with China. The Sino-Soviet dispute has already forced Moscow to deploy substantial portions of its land, air, and strategic forces along its frontier with China, and in Mongolia. The improvement of Sino-American relations since the late 1960's has already reduced the probability of American involvement in a war in Asia. Further U.S. military cooperation with China would reinforce these benefits, but would not significantly increase them.

This calculus might be different if China were so weak as to encourage a Soviet attack across its frontier. But the Sino-Soviet military balance, while unequal, is nonetheless relatively stable. A recent Pentagon study, leaked to the **'New York Times'** reportedly indicated that China already has the capability to deny the Soviet Union any "desive victory" in a conventional war. Nor do the Chinese appear to fear, or expect, a Soviet attack.

(To be concluded)

Islamic movement

The test in Islamabad

Contrary to the general impression given by the western news agencies which covered the Islamic conference in Islamabad (the second of its kind in six months), the speephes and the resolutions marked a major defeat for the US, reports David Housego, Asia Editor of the **Financial Times.** In an article headlined **"Soviet Union wins the popularity test in Islamabad",** he wrote: "Western diplomats tended to see it as a gauge of the strength of U. S. and Soviet influence in the Middle East and South-West Asia.

According to that view, the scorecard has been "firmly in the Russians' favour."

Giving two reasons for this result, Housego observes "the Gulf States and Pakistan have come to share a common view that the US is either unwilling or unable to challenge the Soviet Union in South West Asia. For Pakistan, the front-line state for Afghanistan, the failure to extract from the US the funds or guarantees which it considered necessary for its security has meant it feels it can no longer confront its neighbour."

The second reason was given by no less a person than Prince Bin Faisal, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, a staunch US ally. Pointing to the forcible occupation of Arab lands by Israel for so many years, Prince Bin Faisal remarked: "there will also be limits to US influence in the Middle-East until the US defines the limits of its commitment to Israel."

SOUTH ASIA — SMALL NATIONS (2)

POWER CENTRES

by Godfrey Gunatilleke

There is another dimension to the forms of cooperation within the region. First, the exercise which was undertaken was intended to examine specifically the rationale for cooperation among the small countries in the emerging configuration of power in the region. This cannot however imply that the cooperation among the small nations has to be developed in opposition to the emerging power centres. What is envisaged and what is required is a framework of regional cooperation which includes the big powers in positive and equitable relations with the small powers. Within such a framework the forms of cooperation among small nations become a decisive factor. On the other hand, the close linkages between the small developing countries and the major developing powers are of fundamental importance for the process of development in the region as a whole. The paper prepared for the South Asian region emphasises that the "process of cultural change and reinvigoration of static societies has depended throughout history on their interaction with developed centres". If one substitutes for developed centres "major growth centres", one would have to assign a central place to the role of India and China in the social and economic transformation of the developing nations in the region. The concept of collective self-reliance becomes meaninful and dynamic only within such a context. If one is to consider collective self-reliance at subregional level, then cooperation within the South Asian and South -East Asian regions as a whole in which the economic in this area exploit to the full the interdependencies and complementarities of development, would become extremely important. This then requires, for example, that small countries of the South Asian region enter into cooperative economic relations with India and promote wide-ranging programmes for economic cooperation in the region as a whole. The major developing powers have a crucial role to play in the whole process in which the countries of the South enhance their bargaining power with the industrialised North, reduce their dependence on the North, and expand and intensify their horizontal linkages within the developing world itself. Therefore what is important in the context of the present study is the way in which the complexities of the relationship between the small nations and the massive centres of growing power within developing Asia are going to be resolved in achieving the multiple objectives of reducing North-South dependence on the one hand, and creating a new set of equitable relations among developing countries on the other.

In the case of China and the South-East Asian nations, several other factors enter into the situation and render the pattern of relations more complicated. First, China's own strategy of development and the ideological frame which governs it, favours a policy which is inward looking and directed towards self-reliance. If this is accepted, it would seem that the growth of China would not result in outward looking thrusts and efforts at the penetration of economies of other countries. If this was so, it would follow that the relationships in the South-East Asian region are not likely to lead to the major problems arising from economic penetration and dominance of a big power. Within the Socialist bloc itself Vietnam is enacting its own version of "small nation" autonomy which was observed in the case of Yugoslavia after the Second world War. In the strategic checks, balances and countervailing power that emerge from such a situation, the pattern in South-East Asia may favour conditions which enable small nations to establish links among themselves to enhance their own capacity for autonomous decision-making and development. The nature of the problems in the region is likely to remain more specifically political and related primarily to that of evolving a set of relationships which promotes the co-existence of different socio-economic systems and enables the processes of internal change to work themselves out within such a framework of co-existence and non-intervention.

The studies briefly examine the economic, political and cultural foundations of cooperation among small nations. The study on South-East Asian countries strongly emphasised the impediments to cooperation resulting from the internal structures of power in these countries. It is argued that the ruling elites would have little interest in strengthening the ties of regional cooperation. The pattern of development promoted by them is highly dependent upon foreign investment and the consequent linkages with the capitlist centres of the industrialised world. Such a pattern reinforces and promotes vertical linkages with the North which would militate against regional cooperation. Therefore it has been argued that without fundamental structural changes in these societies, it is not possible to expect these countries to pursue development strategies which could become the basis of an effective programme of regional cooperation. This line of a great deal of discussion at at the meeting. First, a contrary point of view contended that it would not be correct to regard internal structural changes as being an indispensable precondition for any form of regional cooperation. The two processes will take place simultaneously, each interacting with the other and thereby both facilitating the process of internal change as well as fostering and stregthening

regional cooperation. Second, the meeting drew attention to new roles which multinational enterprise might play in the region within the existing system. With the growth of internal markets, multinational enterprises themselves may plan investments and expansion of facilities in a manner which establishes links between the economies of the region and creates the economic base for greater exchange and interdependence. This develop-itself may not be in the national interests and may not contribute to the forms of interdependence and regional cooperation which are in the long-term interests of these countries. Nevertheless, it is an aspect which needs to be considered, particularly as this type of multinational activity is different from the conventional pattern which establishes and expands the North-South links.

The consultations dealt with some of the cultural dimensions of the problems of cooperation. In South Asia underlying the diversity there are important cultural affinities. The northern states of India would have more in common culturally and linguistically with Pakistan and Bangladesh than with the southern states. The linguistic and ethnic diversity of India itself imparts to India a non-monolithic character which is a positive factor in regional cooperation. The subcontinent also shows many institutional features in the governmental as well as commercial structures derived from British systems. The geography of religion in the region also makes an interesting pattern. While in India the majority religion is overwhelmingly Hinduism, the majority of the population in the small nations is Muslim or Islamic. This group incluees Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh ane Maldives. Buddhists come second with Burma and Sri Lanka. The Hindu population which is lerst in number among the small nations is in Nepal and Bhutan. On the other hand, there is a considerable minority of Muslims in India. The subcontinent has been scarred by deep religious conflicts which have been one of the main sources of division and hostility in the post-colonial period. But on the other hand, political developments which led to the independence of Bangladesh have introduced new alliances into the situation which have cut across the religious boundaries. This mosaic of cultural and religious affinities and conflicts in the region would undoubtedly have some influence on the pattern of relationships and grouping of countries in the region. The cultural and religious factors point to possible forms of communication which transcend national limits and reach deeper levels of collective consciousness in the region. For example, it is in the region which includes parts of Nepal and West Bengal that Buddha lived and preached his doctrine. It is visited by pilgrims from all over the Buddhist world and evokes the same deep veneration as the other birthplaces of great religions. In South-East Asia the religious and cultural diversity has a somewhat different pattern with the Musilm culture playing an important role, Islam being the religion of the majority in some countries and of a significant minority in others. Another interesting feature is the Chinese ethnic groups in a number of South-East Asian countries occupying important positions and often playing leading roles in the economy. This again could produce informal links of a type which can influence the relations of countries in the region. Therefore the cultural aspects and their bearing on forms of cooperation among the small nations, as well as the relations between these nations and the big powers in the region, would need to be examined more closely.

The discussions at the meeting briefly examined the potential for economic cooperation. The studies had not examined in any depth the economic base for cooperation among small nations. It was agreed that this would be done in the next phase of the work. As regards the ASEAN nations, although progress has been slow, high-level negotiations are being undertaken to create the necessary framework of policies in order to accelerate economic cooperation, it is difficult to predict at this stage the pace at which such cooperation would expand. The prospects however appear to be satisfactory if we take into account the relatively rapid expansion of economies in this region which have the effect of creating markets and expanding demand, all of which can become the basis for a dynamic programme of economic cooperation. In South-East Asian and East Asia among the small nations themselves there is a significant structure of technology and know-how — e. g. Singapore and Korea — which can become an important factor in promoting technological self-reliance among the smaller nations. The small nations in South-East Asia likewise have rich natural endowments which can bring them together for collective strategies of economic development. These countries also have among them controlling shares of the world market in several primary commodities — e. g. tin, natural rubber, coconut oil, plam oil. Taken together, it has a surplus In food; its resources of energy and other minerals are quiet substantial. South Asia, on the other hand, has been considered the hard core of world poverty; its rates of growth have been low, its per capita income is among the lowest in the world, it is considered to be relatively poor in regard to natural endowments. The history of internal conflicts within the region has militated against effective action for regional cooperation. The small nations in the South Asian region, with the exception of Iran, do not have the resources which are in any way comparable to those of the small nations in the South-East Asian region. The economic disparities between the small nations of South Asia and the growing centre of power — India — are indeed very large. In comparison, the South-East Asian region in relation to China is better situated.

(To be continued)

Protest Day...

(*Continued from page 4*)

from government and party) emerge. Of course these skeletal ideas have to grow and acquire flesh and blood. But already one can see the outlines of two serious dilemmas–the economic (taming the unions, industrial unrest, fall in production and efficiency) and the political (State power and the Party apparatus).

THE FUNERAL

In sum, then, the JTUAC leaders under-estimated rank-and-file morale, while the JSS over-estimated its strength, and by so doing may have misled the ultimate decision-makers in the matter of tactics.

The death of Mr. Somapala overshadowed the fact that about 40 others were injured, some seriously. The result could be a rise in trade union militancy and a stiffening of morale. The massive show of solidarity on Monday afternoon when thousands and thousands walked out from their offices is surely evidence of this.

Pressure from below may also force the opposition parties to come together atleast on major issues. A grievously fragmented opposition has so far been the UNP's greatest asset. Already talks have begun at a political level between the SLFP, LSSP, MEP and CPC. Soon the CPSL, NSSP and the RMP may join the talks. It is said that overtures have been made to the TULF too. The common platform will be living costs and democratic rights.

The shrewd leaders of the UNP made every effort to see that the opposition did not get itself a martyr. The shooting of student Weerasuriya was one of the last nails in the SLFP coffin. Every party, including the UNP capitalised on this event. The death of Somapala may start a train of events both in the trade union and political field which neither the UNP nor the JSS foresaw.

SLFP — preparatory moves

The first item on the SLFP's next election manifesto will be a pledge to restore the civic rights of all those deprived of those by the present regime. Since the next general election is in 1983, the resolution passed by the all-island executive committee of the party may be considered a bit premature. But not if the circumstances in which this and other party moves were made are known and understood.

For some strange reason the daily press, including the usually enterprising **'SUN'**, did not report these matters which were surely of more than passing political interest. First the urgency.

On her return from Belgrade, Mrs. B. called a meeting of the P. B. to explain why she had read out a statement before the Presidential Commission and then said she was withdrawing from the proceedings. Soon afterwards the all-island committee was summoned.

"Pah!" snorted a party big-wig of the past "most of the fellows didn't know what it was all about....!". But this could be a jaundiced view because the one-time stalwart failed to get a place in any of the decision-making bodies.

Anyway, the 250-to-300 members who gathered at the party headquarters listened patiently to a long-winded account by Mr. T. B. Illangaratne of the SLFP since its inception, and the many storms the party had to weather.

Second, the content of the resolutions passed. Ending his speech on a stirring note, Mr. Illangaratne moved a resolution which re-affirmed the Committee's "fullest confidence in their leader's ability to lead the party and the People forward in their just struggle against all forms of oppression and intimidation."

The all-island Committee also pledged support to Mrs. B. on "the courageous stand she has taken against all attempts to eliminate her from the political scene."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Maitripala Senanayake the party's newly elected Deputy President, who then initiated the move to inscribe as item No. 1 in the next manifesto a pledge about all those deprived of their civic rights.

When the news appeared in the SLFP's daily paper **"DINAKARA"**, a clique of front-rank UNP'ers, discussing the report informally, agreed that it was best to ignore the matter entirely. But one of the bright young sparks — a 'rising star" in Sri Kotha — mapped out a propoganda line: "Why should Mrs. B. get the party to re-affirm its confidence, unless she has some doubts about it?"

But Mrs. B. knows that what matters is not what the UNP would like SLFP'ers to feel but what they really feel about the future.

These decisions indicate that Mrs. B. is preparing herself and the party to face up to the grim inevitable.

If she loses her civic rights and is no longer an M. P., can she continue to function effectively as party leader, participating fully in all public activities of the party? The moment the question is raised the long shadow of Mrs. Indira Gandhi falls on the inner-party discussion. (Mrs. B. met the Indian leader in Belgrade). "As the law stands" a leading lawyer-politician told the **L. G.** "she cannot do a Mrs. Gandhi because she will not be able to contest a seat if she loses her rights, but she can certainly carry on as party president.... that's entirely an SLFP matter.. ..of course, these days, laws are as unpredictable as the monsoon weather....."

LENIN BIOGRAPHY (3)

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

by G. B. Keerawella

The significant feature of the second congress of the R. S. D. L. P was the break up of the party into two sections, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. There were some fundamental reasons for the difference of opinion between the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, and the Mensheviks, led by Martov. The difference of opinion centred on what form the party should take. Lenin said that the membership of the party was open to all those who accepted the party programme, rendered the party financial assistance and belonged to one of the party organisations. This formula conceived of the part as a tightly-knit organised party. But Martov, backed by Axelrod and others, opposed Lanin's line. Martov's formulation regarding membership provided for the acceptance of the programme and, the rendering of financial support to the party, but did not make membership of a definite party organisation obligatory. This interpretation of the party membership conceived of the party as a diffuse and amorphous mass. Lenin's group, since it had a majority of the followers, was called the Bolsheviks, and the other group was called the Mensheviks, because it had the support of a smaller number. However, after a comparatively short time, the Mensheviks were able to gain control over the more important party apparatus, such as the party organ-ISKRA.

After capturing the party organ, ISKRA, the Mensheviks launched a campaign against the Bolsheviks and particularly against Lenin. In these circumstances, Menshevik opportunism on questions of organisation had to be exposed and a comprehensive exposition of the theoretical basis of the organisational principles of the Bolsheviks had to be given. In order to do this task Lenin began writing his WORK, "One Step Forward Two Steps Back" in January 1904. It appeared on May 6, 1904.

In the summer of 1904 when the Mensheviks succeeded in capturing the Central Committee, the situation in the party was extremely strained. Thus Menshevik gained control of all central bodies of the party. Now it was necessary to convene another congress of the party in order to settle the account with the Mensheviks. In July 1904, a conference of 22 Bolshevik delegates was held in Switzerland under Lenin's direction. The conference issued an appeal addressed "To the Party" which became the Bolshevik platform tor the convocation of the third congress. At the end of December 1904 the first number of the new Bolshevik newspaper 'Vperyod' (Forward) appeared under Lenin's editorialship.

After the Blood Sunday incident revolution broke out in Russia in January 1905. Long before theevents in St. Petersburg, Lenin foresaw the revolutionary storm. In the first issue of 'Vperyod' Lenin's artitled entitled 'The Aristocracy and the Proletariat' referred not to the impending revolution, but to the revolution which had already started in Russia. In February 1905, his article 'New Tasks and New Forces' appeared. In his article Lenin formulated the main strategical slogan of the Bolsheviks in the Bourgeois -democratic revolution.

The third congress was opened in London. It was a Bolshevik congress for the Mensheviks kept away and held their own conference in Geneva. The line adopted by the Bolshevik congress was the very antithesis of the Menshevik tactic of supporting the liberal bourgeoisie as leader in the bourgeois revolution. Lenin gave a brilliant exposition of Bolshevik tactics in his extremely important work, "Two tactics of Social-Democratic Revolution", which appeared in July 1905. It was also a severe critique of Menshevik tactics. Here he explains the fundamental difference between the Bolshevik and Meushevik conceptions of the character, the driving forces, the prospects of the revolution, and of the functions and aims of the proletariat. Meanwhile, the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants began to assume a sharply defined political character. The political strikes of the workers roused the whole country. The tsarist government took measures to suppress the workers and peasants, but at the same time it adopted a policy, of inciting the different nationalities against each other and promising to set up a representative rody etc. Lenin, who was in Geneva, closely watched the developments of ongoing revolution and he directed all the activities of the Bolsheviks. His slogans of armed insurrection, formation of revolutionary army and a provisional revolutionary government were a clear formulation of the Bolshevik party's aims, and of its methods of achieving them.

In early November 1905, Lenin arrived in St. Petersburg with the tide of revolution. On his arrival in St. Petersburg, Lenin attended a meeting of the Bolshevik section of the editorial board of the legal daily newspaper 'Novaya zhizn'. Later Lenin attended a meeting of the central committee of the party. Lenin took control of 'Novoya Zhizn'. His first article for that paper appeared on November 10, entitled 'Re

–organisation of the Party' in which he called for a radical reorganization of party work to suit the changed conditions. Two days later his second article appeared, entitled 'The Proletariat and the Peasantry' in which he formulated the aims of the working class and the peasantry in the revolution.

At the beginning of December 1905 Lenin went to Finland to attend the first Bolshevik conference. At this conference Lenin delivered two reports, one on the current situation and the other on agrarian question.

While the conference was in progress, the armed insurrection took place in Moscow. The conference at once brought its proceedings to a close and the delegates dispersed to take part in the insurrection.

The December insurrection sustained defeat. The revolutionary tide gradually receded. Lenin summed up the experience of the October and December battles in his well-known work 'The victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' 'Party' which was written in March 1906.

At the Finland conference, the Bolsheviks in compliance with the demands of the workers for United Leadership in the mass struggle, adopted a resolution in favour of restoring party unity and offered to convene a unity congress with the Mensheviks. In preparation for the congress Lenin wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Revision of the Agrarian Programme of the Workers 'Party' in which he formulated and explained the demand for the confiscation of the estates of landlords and the nationalisations of all the land. Before leaving for Stockholm where the congress was to be held, Lenin called a conference of the Bolshevik delegates in St. Petersburg.

Even though this congress was called the Unity cougress the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks each kept to their own views and retained their separate organisations. After the congress Lenin returned to St. Petersburg. He lived there until January 1907.

The fifth congress of the R. S. D. L. P was held in London in April and May 1907. At this congress Lenin delivered a report on the party's attitude towards bourgeois parties. The resolution adopted by the congress on this report contained a Bolshevik appraisal of all these parties and formulated the Bolshevik tactics towards them. The fifth congress marked an important victory for the Bolsheviks.

In August 1907 Lenin went to Stuttgart to attend the International Socialist Congress. From Stuttgart he returned to Kuokkola, in Finland. As this place became increasingly unsafe the Bolshevik central body decided that Lenin must leave Russia. But it was not an easy matter to get out of Finland. Lenin crossed the ice at night to an island in the Gulf to board the ship there. This was the beginning of the second period of exile.

Comparatively, Lenin's second period of exile was much more trying than the first. In the first period of exile he lived in an atmosphere of impending revolution. But the situation during the early years of the second period of exile was completely different. The revolution had sustained defeat and reaction was rampant.

(To be continued)

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Anniversary

Ignasio Silone – The humanist rebel

by Ranjit Goonewardene

Born in May 1900, in a poor Italian village called Pescina, Silone was involved by the age of fourteen in political activity in defence of the oppressed pesantry. He records his early experiences with the poor peasants in an autobiographical story called 'Polukuska'.

The experiences he records show a sensitive, intelligent young boy responding spontaneously against injustice and a keen social awareness which is indeed rare for a boy of fourteen.

His rebellion against the social order in his powerty striken village came out of sharp observation and a warm hearted instinctive love for the oppressed. it was not the kind of rebellion which is actuated by an ideology or a pre-concieved belief: this probably explains the simple, direct and honest manner he treated the theme of social and political injustice in his novels.

His passionate identification with the poor peasants gave him the material for his great novels. 'Fontamara', 'Bread and Wine', 'Secret of Luca', 'Handful of Blackberries', and for his short stories 'Journey of Paris', 'Painful Return', 'Visit to a Prison'.

Silone also wrote two plays, 'And He did Hide Himself' and 'The Story of a Humble Christian', which was his last creative work. Silone's instinctive rebellion against political repression and his preparedness to fight against it is shown in the struggle against Mussolini's Facist regime. His writing and his actions have shown that incorporated these values into his life style. It is for this reason that Albert Camus referred to him as 'one of the greatest among us'.

The term commitment or engagement is now quite fashionable. This term was formulated and made known by Sartre and Camus. These writers argue that a writer cannot withdraw into and ivory tower or a private world of his own. Modern society has intensified its pressures on the individual. A writer, therefore by necessity, has to respond to the pressures of his age and be actively engaged against forces which threaten and destroy the liberty, freedom and dignity of man. But in Sartre's writing I find a good deal of wordy, often rhetorical proclamations on the concept of engagement. They are highly intellectual and also abstract statements.

Sartre fails to realise this idea in terms of lived, felt and shared experience. Furthermore, his famous statement 'Hell is other people' precludes the possibility of an involvement in the human condition. In the 'Plague', Camus does realize the ideal of engagement through the character of Dr Rieux, yet one feels that there is a distance between Rieux and the victims of the plague. The character of Rieux moves at the level of a symbol rather than a fully conceived character.

But in Silone there is a kind of simple, spontaneous involvement which is very different from Sartre and Camus. The peasants of 'Fontamara' are terrorised by the Facist regime. But through the use of humour, Silone shows that tyranny cannot destroy the inner strength and the irrepressible forces inherent in life.

"So it is continued for days and months. In the end Fontamara got used to moonlight again. A century had elapsed between the moonlight era, and the electric era, a century which included the age of oil and that of petrol, but on evening was sufficient to plunge us back from electric light to the light of the moon."

Pietro Spina, the central character of Bread and Wine is looked upon as a dangerous political criminal. His friends abandoned him. Pietro's former school-mate Dr Nancia Sacca, is summoned to the sick bed of Pietro: "He has nothing to lose. He is alone. I have a family. Our political ideas are not the same." the Dr said. "This is not a matter of political ideas,' Cardile said 'He is a dying man. They made me learn a catechism by heart when I was a boy. The catechism says: Works of mercy are these: to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to pilgrims, and to sucour the sick. The catechism does not say to succour the sick who are of the same way of thinking as you. All the catechism says is to succour the sick. But in those days the church was for the people and not for the government. But perhaps they have changed the catechism now, too." Pietro thus never loses faith in life because there are simple men and women who are prepared to protect him and make him feel that he too has human dignity. Again, Silone shows that life can survive in the face of naked terror and the absolute brutalisation of society.

Andrea, the central character of 'Secret of Lucca' is determined to prove the innocence of his old friend Lucca. Lucca is a criminal in the eyes of the public. He is condemned to life impresonment because he refuses to involve the girl he loved in a public scandal. Lucca is prepared to suffer incarceration.

(*Continued on page 20*)

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Something splendid for God

by Jayantha Somasundaram

Robert Runcie recently assumed office as 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Church of England. In an age when ecumenism is the watchword, in a society that is secular, the memories that the 'enthronement' involve are largely obscured. And yet the historic drama that saw the birth of the Anglican Church is significant even in our day, not because of the theological hairsplitting, or the church-state conflict that it recalls; but because of its exposition of human nature. It laid bare issues that were more than spiritual or political-issues that are central to our comprehension of ourselves as humans.

Sixteenth century England is our stage and the regal figure adorning it is King Henry VIII. The King advancing in years is anxious for his kingdom because he has no male heir. Catherine his Spanish queen was originally the wife of his elder brother Arthur. But an obliging Pope had permitted Henry to marry his brother's widow.

Now England returns to the Pope asking for a divorce — for state reasons — in order that he might marry Anne Boleyn, who just might give him a male heir. But the Pope could not oblige Henry a second time, since Queen Catherine's Spanish nephew had the Pope at the wrong end of a sword.

It was onto this explosive stage that Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, stepped. More was a scholar who corresponded with the finest minds of his day. He was a thinker who was respected throughout Europe; an apostle of the New Learning. "God made the angels to show him splendour — as he made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity," he said. "But man he made to serve him wittily, in the tangle of his mind."

War on the Pope

The politicians and priests of England prepared the way for King Henry to get what he wanted. Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy making Henry, head of the church in England. The King who had been given the title: Defender of the Faith by the Pope in appreciation of his book **A Defence of the Seven Sacraments,** now appointed Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. The Anglican Church then granted him his divorce and married him to Anne. "I will have Anne," the King had said, "even if it splits the universe in two like an apple;"

Parliament passed the Act of Succession making Queen Anne's children heirs to the throne of England.

"This isn't 'reformation', this is war against the Church!" explained More, "Our King has declared war on the Pope — because the Pope will not declare that our Queen is not his wife."

Yet the rest of the King's officers and advisors afforded no opposition. Some like the Duke of Norfolk, Earl-Marshal of England, were More's friends, others like Thomas Cromwell, Secretary to the King's Council, were More's enemies. But the King valued More's endorsement above all.

"Because you are honest," he explained to More, "What's more you're known to be honest. There are those like Norfolk who follow me because I wear the crown, and there are those like Cromwell who follow me because they are jackalls with sharp teeth and I am their lion, and there is a mass that follows me because it follows anything that moves."

The King proceeded to make Anglican Church his intruments; Thomas More resigned as chancellor: but yet no male heir was born. Seeking further justify himself, the king had attached a rider to the Act of Succession.

This was an oath of alliegence to the offspring of Queen Anne, and an endorsement of the machinations of King, Parliament and the Anglican Church. Because he refused to take the oath More was confined to prision and his family rendered destitute.

His daughter Margaret visits him in prison to pursuade him to take the oath: 'God more regards the thoughts of the heart than the words of the mouth', or so you've always told me. Then say the words of oath and in your heart think otherwise.

"What is an oath but words we say to God," he corrects her. "When a man takes an oath he's holding his own self in his hands. And if he opens his fingers — then he needn't hope to find himself again."

Finally Sir Thomas More is brought to trial. Here he is framed by a false witness and condemned to death. In his statement from the dock he explains why he did not take the oath.

"The indictment is granted in an Act of Parliament which is directly repugnant to the Law of God and His holy Church, the supreme government of which no temporal person may by any law presume to take upon him. This was granted by the mouth of our Saviour to St. Peter and the Bishops of Rome whilst he lived and was personally present here on earth. It is therefore insufficient in law to charge any Christian to obey it.

"Nevertheless, it is not for the supremacy that you have sought my blood — but because I would not bend to the marriage!"

At his decapitation Sir Thomas could reassure his executioner: Be not afraid of your office. You send me to God.

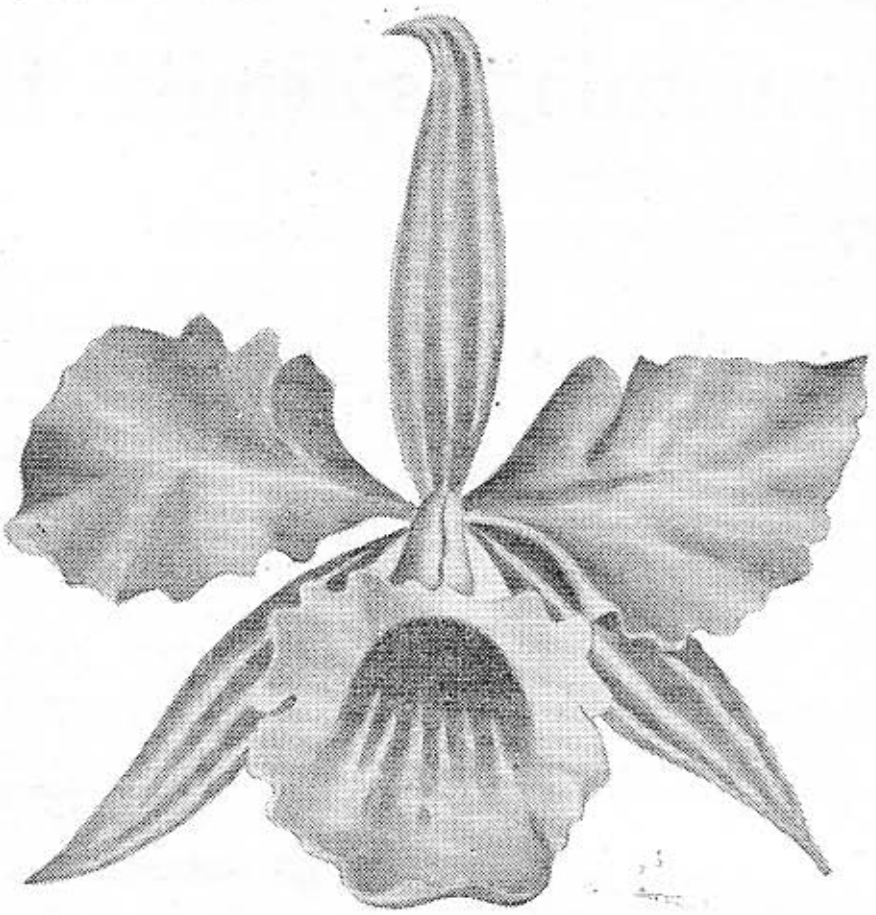
And yet no male heir was born to Queen Anne. They call her Anne of a thousand days — at the end of it she too was beheaded. Thomas Cromwell was found guilty of treason and executed. Five years later Archbishop Cranmer was burned alive at the stake. The Duke of Norfolk should have been executed for high treason but his warrant was not signed as the King died of syphilis the night before.

Ignasio Silone . . .

(*Continued from page 17*)

Through the characters of Lucca and Andrea, Silone shows that involvement in another's condition demands an exacting sacrifice. A famous American critic, R. W. B. Lewis, rightly called this novel 'the best image of sacrificial human heroism that contemporary fiction offers.'

I wish to end this tribute to one of the greatest novelist of the century with a quotation from his play 'And He Did Hide Himself': "I can tell you this: the little I know, I did not learn at the University; I learnt it in the company of men like you. And if my life has a purpose, I found it through contact with men like you. My whole being has now come to need that contact as vitally as my lungs need air. I am also convinced, however, that this free and voluntary way of standing by each other in danger is most necessary for you too. No one can completely be a man if he is all alone, or in unwilling company, because brotherhood is a sacred truth of man. That has come to be a forbidden fruit in this country of ours nowadays; the other that's being imposed is based on utter contempt for man. But if you maime a man by depriving him of brotherhood, he becomes a tree without fruits or branches, a sterile plant. A people of despised, distrustful, humiliated men and women is a pestilent swamp. Cowardice, envy, suspicion, selfishness and treachery flourish in it as mosquitoes do in swamps. Either we re-discover the brotherhood or we perish."



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Letters . . .

(*Continued from page 2*)

(5) In "socialist" Yugoslavia, there are over one million unemployed. Over 1.3 million economic immigrants are selling their labour power in Federal Germany, Belgium, France etc. Under the Yugoslav model of "socialism", land has not been nationalised. After 35 years of "socialism", land is still privately owned in Yugoslavia.

(6) I do not want to expatiate on Tito's non-alignment. No communist can be non-aligned. It is sheer hypocrisy — as has been proved by Castro's support for Soviet aggression in Afghanistan.

Nothing can change my opinion that Tito was a renegade.

N. Sanmugathasan
Colombo 3.

Vittachi and Trotsky

It figures that V. P. Vittachi, conservative critic of social welfare, scourge of university students (c.f. debate with E. H. de Alwis on Higher Education in early issues of L. G.) UNP intellectual (a contradiction in terms?) and prominent contributor to the UNP 'JOURNAL' should.

(a) equate Hitler and Stalin ('c.f. 'Cannibalism: Black Or White")

(b) consider Trotsky to have possessed "brilliant empirical perspicacity" and "a sure grasp of the trend of forces and events of his day" **(L. G. May Ist 1980)**

Vittachi claims to speak with the "benefit of hindsight". Here we are celebrating the 35th anniversary of the victory over Hitlerite fascism and no version of the history of that period that I have read tells me that Trotsky had anything to do with it, while Ho Chi Minh, for one, assures us that "Owing to the enormous forces of the Red Army and the Soviet people, and Stalin's correct strategy, in May 1945 Germany was crushed and in August 1945 Japan surrendered. The democratic camp won complete victory."

Chintaka

T. V. Programmes

We have had one year of Television. The recent splash in the newspapers commemorating this event showed good public relations. The line-up of programmes to be telecast in the near futute has nothing to do with Sri Lanka or Sri Lankan culture.

The biggest hurdle is the language barrier. All the programmes are in English except for a few produced by the Films division. The novelty of Television has worn off and the blank faces of the viewers is a clear indication of the language barrier. People do not understand what they see and Television has failed to reach the masses. As it is, Television is something for the microscopic minority.

Another weekly programme shows a typical family and it's way of life. But this too is foreign. Life is not Sri Lankan.

There is a wealth of material which can be gathered from the cartoons and stories from our newspapers which can be joined together to create a typical Sri Lankan Family and its way of life. Many tourists come here to see our dances and listen to our music.

The competent authority will come out with excuses. He will say that the buildings and studios are under construction and nothing can be done. A cultural programme needs only a stage and the S. L. B. C. has suitable sound stages where they conduct programmes for invitees.

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Uthumaneni — The critics and the crisis in the Sinhala cinema

by W. Jayasiri

There is a village: a village boutique: a temple: a poor family: a rich family: the Police: the Courts. The poor family consists of 'dharmishtas', full to the brin with every righteous attribute; they would never sin, not even in their dreams; they live quietly, minding their own business. In the rich family you find people who spend every minute in doing wrong; they are corrupt, decadent, barbarous-in short, 'adharmishtas'. The Police and the Courts are, as always, partisan institutions that oppress the weak. The temple is the domain of a priest who preaches the value of doing good. This formula would suffice not for one film but for literally thousands!

It was Sirisena Wimalaweera's film 'PODI PUTHA' that took the first step towards directing the Sinhala film away from the superficial features of the South Indian cinema-songs, dances, fights, love scenes, the hero/heroine/villain triangle, romancing in flower laden parks etc. — that had attended it at birth, and on to a new path. Yet this film too was based on the South Indian cinematic style and technique.

Lester James Pieris' 'REKAWA', made in 1956, can be referred to as the coronation of the Sinhala film. Even though this film too was stylistically close to the South Indian tradition, it was full of outdoor locations, away from the artificialities of studio shooting and contained a few charcters who breathed the air of genuine Sri Lanka pastorality into the film. 'REKAWA' is especially remarkable for its departure from the crudity and unrealistic style of the Sinhala cinema up to this time, as well as for its independent theme and cinematic form. Sinhala film critics, overwhlemed by 'REKAWA' then began to hail, as true works of art, films which contained characters that glorified the splendours of rural living, or else that were full of good and righteousness, disregarding the films in their totality. The village, the paddy field, the thatched hut, the bullock cart, the 'thovil' — all became features that signalled the 'art' film.

Films such as 'SAAMA', 'KURULU BADDA', 'SIKURU THARUWA', 'HULAWALI', 'DEVIYANI OBA KOHIDA' and 'SARUNGALE' can be seen as the victims of such unfounded critical acclaim. Caught in between the rupees and cents of the film 'mudalalis, and the harrassment caused by films that abandon the average cinema-goer in a world of love that triumphantly espouses prince to gypsy with never a care in the world, in the true South Indian style, and emerging unshaken above the obstacles placed in their path by the censorship practices of the bourgeois state, we can proudly and unhesitatingly record films such as 'GAMPERALIYA', NIDHANAYA', PARASATHU MAL', 'SATH SAMUDURA'. 'THUNG MAN HANDIYA', HANTANE KATHAWA', AHAS GAWWA', 'WELIKATHARA'. HAARA LAKSAYA', BAMBARU AVITH', 'PALANGETIYO' and 'KANCHANA' as highwater points in the history of the Sinhala cinema.

The intermediate films that deceived our critics over the last decade were also an obstacle on this journey towards a truly meaningful Sri Lanka cinema. Rootless and alienated films such as 'GEHENU LAMAI', 'DUHULU MALAK', 'SIKURULIYA', and 'APEKSHA' were seen as valuable works of art according to their criteria and understanding of film criticism. These film critics did not bother to examine these films in depth; if they had, they would have discovered that the cloying sentimentality and immaturity of the South Indian cinema, which dulled the minds and the intellect of viewers, was very evident in these 'intermediate' films as well. The most significant stumbling block of all, however, was the bourgeois government's policy regarding censorship. It fettered those artistes who sought the growth of an adult Sinhala cinema.

According to Marxism, the supreme achievement of the human intellect up to date, what is proclaimed in each era is the ideology of those in power. Be it in a work of art, a piece of legislation or a religious observance, it is the will of the ruling group or class that prevails. In these cirumstances, the role of the artiste is to utilise his medium of expression, within the limitations of that medium and taking due advantage of its various developments, to reflect and reproduce the reality of the driving forces behind the existing social formation. In a more modern and complex sense, art is not a reflection of reality; rather, it is the reality of what is reflected.

Contrary to the opinion of those critics who hail 'UTHUMANENI' as a masterpiece or 'realistic cinema', 'reality' is not something which is hiding somewhere, in a drain, an almirah or under the surface of this earth, waiting to be discovered, waiting to be exposed. Reality is intangible; we can not touch it, we cannot see it. It is forever changing. It is the people who decide what reality is; it is the ruler, the politican, the sociologist, the historian. It is the forces of production that prevail in every society that govern reality, not the artiste. The artiste is one who, falteringly, follows reality. He uses his medium to comprehend and reproduce a mere drop of what he comprehends.

The reality of modern Sri Lanka is not, as 'UTHUMANENI' tries to say, the paucity of 'good' people; it is not the lack of honest policemen good landlords or tradition bound priests. In short, it is not a problem regarding humanitarianism, or the lack of it. It is, in truth, the terrifying result of the collapse of the bankrupt capitalist economic

system. In order to protect and preserve the capitalist economy and entrepreneurs, draconian laws are imposed which repress the workers, the peasants, the toiling masses of this country. This is our reality. The armed forces are being strengthened. The penal system is being modernised. Struggles for liberation are being suppressed. The victories achieved by people through years of struggle are being snatched away from them, one by one.

Each person views this reality in accordance with the manner which is most advantageous to him, or her, class. Yet, the true artiste does not reproduce reality merely to wreak vengeance or express a personal protest. He sees it as a concept common to all, the heritage of all. This is the truth. It is both bitter and hard. The artiste who sees this bitterness and hardnessis filled with sympathy, and records this sympathy through his medium. Realistic cinema was born through such a situation. The artiste does not become a social reformer or a person who exposes society's ills. That is not the task of the artiste. The artiste can become a combatant in the mass struggle only if he participates in a truly revolutionary movement that is closely linked to the people. He cannot continue to produce propagandist art as a mere individual. It would be a complete falsehood if someone were to say that this is possible. He would only be someone totally ignorant of the existing social system or the relations of production. Propagandist art serves, not the ends of art, but the ends of the ideology or commodity it promotes. An artiste can only serve the cause of art as an artiste.

Why do some critics see 'UTHUMANENI' as realistic cinema? Is it because it exposes the partisan nature of the law and the injustice of the powerful? It is not the artiste who created corruption. It is that capitalist system that has done so — the capitalist system and its offshoot, the repressive legislation that rulers and entrepreneurs use in order to swell their coffers. 'UTHUMANENI' may expose corruption and revenge. Yet it cannot eradicate, or even loosen, the hold of these evils on our society. It is not the artiste but the people who come forward under a truly revolutionary leadership who will actually expose, and give lasting solutions to, the problems created by the capitalist system. The artiste can participate in the people's struggle by using his medium as a weapon in this struggle. And this can be done by wedding the developments and techniques of the artistic media to the art of propaganda.

'UTHUMANENI' has totally forgotten all the cinematic techniques that we have developed and systematically used, so far. It has no night, no day. The scenes are not related to one another. The shots are without form, without direction. There is no rhythm in the editing. There is no control of the lighting. Even if one forgets, for a moment, the extremely sentimental and unreal stream of incidents in the film, why do these critics not consider it as a film, in its totality? Who do they not question the lack of elementary knowledge of film-making that is displayed in this film?

No doubt we can go through many incredible and even wierd experiences in our everyday lives. Yet how can a work of art, something that is especially created, contain incidents that are unreal and incredible? A creative work should be logical. The incidents should be linked to one another. Since the prosecuting counsel in the film lays bare all the unnatural events in a most intelligent manner, we do not need to repeat it here.

Not one of the above factors is the major reason why UTHUMANENI', which has received accolades from various deluded critics, becomes a principal stumbling block for all those artistes who are engaged in the arduous struggle and search for a meaningful cinema. 'UTHUMANENI' is a singular attempt to tighten the hold of the South Indian style of film-making on the Sinhala cinema once again, in a most dangerous and covert manner. Even in India today, the traditional South Indian cinema is facing challenges on all sides. Yet, in the main, for example in the films of M. G. Ramachandran, there is no day, no night. The poor are brave and honourable. The rich are mean and despicable. The hero quietly stands at the centre of these two forces; ultimately, he takes the side of the weak and destroys the mighty. The films, which are the only form of entertainment for a population that spends its days in a desperate struggle for survival, are full of sentimental and extremely immature themes. The weaknesses of the viewers and the tragedy of their lives, lead them to identify with such themes. Ultimately, it is not Baby Mahattaya or his cohorts who emerge triumphant; the real victors are the film's producers and all those who get a share of the film's takings.

Why is it that those critics who praise 'UTHUMANENI' because it has no fights, songs and dances, do not see this crisis within the film? Don't they see that the hard-won triumphs of those few artistes who struggle for a relevant Sri Lankam cinema are in danger of being submerged by this wave which is giving new life to the seeds of South Indian cinema within the Sinhala cinema? By re-introducing, with a vengeance, the South Indian tradition, loaded with an extremely dishonest and corrupting sense of values, films like 'UTHUMANENI' destroy at one blow what we have tried to nurture with great difficulty over a long period. Why are the critics silent?

This is indeed a rallying call for every honest artiste. To try to rejuvenate a dying tradition is to place obstacles in the path of social progress. This is why it is so dangerous. At a time when every artistic medium is facing a critical point in its struggle for survival, this crisis in the cinema, which is the foremost media of

(Continued on page 24)

Cinderella of the cinema

AS I LIKE IT

Touchstone

The State Film Corporation has given Sunil Ariyaratne's new film, **Siribo Aiyya,** special publicity as the Sri Lankan entry for the Berlin Film Festival, but one glance at the centres where it is being released reveals the plight to which the Sinhala film has been reduced. One good result of the cutting off of American films under the last regime (whatever the deprivation to sophisticated filmgoers) was that the better cinemas were compelled part of the time to show Sinhala films. This brought with it the benefits that the Sinhala filmgoer was able for the fiirst time to see at least a few films of higher quality under proper conditions of projection and sound reproduction and in air-conditioned comfort and enjoy the facilities of booking which are unavailable in the normal circuit cinemas for Sinhala films. These attractions, coupled with the dearth of foreign films, also drew some Westernised middle-class filmgoers to the Sinhala film, and some of them discovered, to their surprise, that they could even enjoy it.

Now Cinderella is back in the kitchen. The national film has once more been relegated to the flea-pits to make way for **Star Wars, Exorcist II** and **Jaws.**

In the flood of critical praise that **Siribo Aiyya** has received, I havan't noticed that much attention has been devoted to what I think is the most significant feature of film — the fact that the hero's relationship with the mudalali's wife at the **gaala** is treated with an absence of moralistic disapproval, an understanding of the quality of such an undemanding and unpossessive sexual relationship which shows a maturity of treatment thats has been rare in the Sinhala cinema. It also brought out the fact that Geeta Kumarasinghe, given the opportunity, can be a very good actress indeed.

Contempt of court

A few years ago an editor of the **Ceylon Daily News** got six months' jail for an article which was held to be disrespectful of judges. Recently in Britain a judgement of Lord Denning in the Court of Appeal which ruled that journalists could be legally required to disclose their sources of information drew a storm of criticism in the British Press. The London **Observer** headed its article criticising the judgement: WHY DENNING IS AN ASS?

Clerihew

I offer this original clerihew to addicts of the form:

Galileo Galilei
Was imprisioned ad majorem
gloriam Dei.

Bruno's was a different story:
He was burned for God's
greater glory.

Uthumaneni . . .

(*Continued from page 23*)

communication, opens the door to directors with no creative ability, to artistes with no taste, to businessmen who only seek to fatten their purses! One final point to make to all those who hail 'UTHUMANENI' as a fitting opening to a new decade-remember well that you commenced the Eighties with a film that pushed genuine Sinhala cinema further back into a gloomy dungeon and sounded a death knell for those few artists who fight for an independent cinematic tradition, a film that gave a new lease of life to the most dangerous and harmful features of the South Indian cinema in our films. We will have cause to remember this, with regret.

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