

Special Report : POLITICS OF PROTEST

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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**Anagarika Dharmapala**

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## **MARXIST or RACIST ?**

**Reggie Siriwardena and Carlo Fonseka**  
**on Gunadasa Amarasekera's new book**

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**Anatomy of a strike**

— Jayantha Somasunderam

**State schools and religion**

— J. Francis Perera

**Lenin biography**

— G. P. Keerawella

**State and class**

— Chintaka replies to Shan

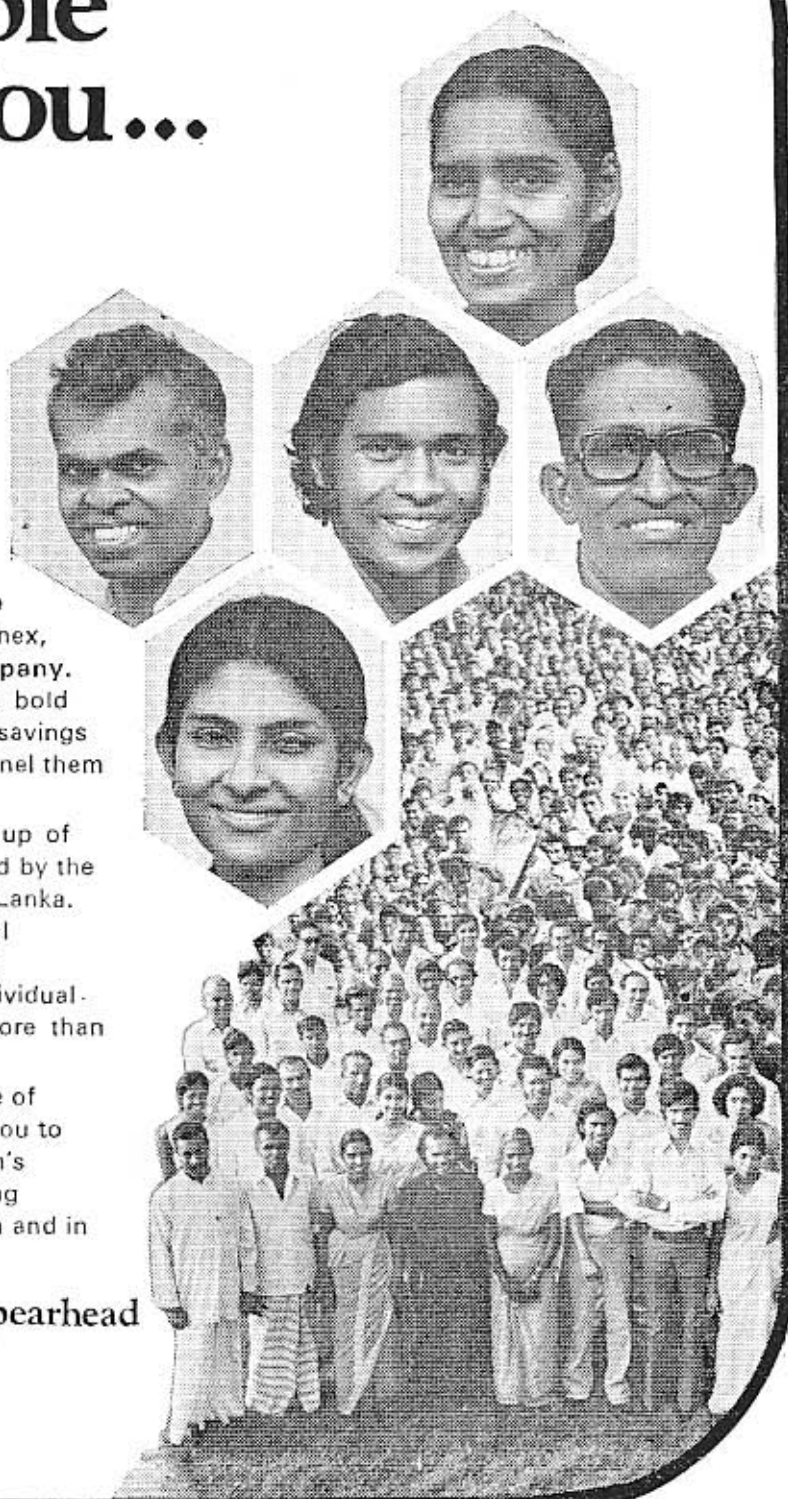
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## IN CHORUS

When the government's Sunday Sisters (the Observer and the Times) and its independent-minded second cousin, the WEEKEND, raise the same question in slightly different tones, restrained regret, troubled misgivings and open censure, the thoughtful reader must perforce mark well what is being said.

No shot was fired. Cheers all round. And then... "However, it is regrettable that the security network was not tight enough...." (SO Editorial).

"It was agreed that the incidents should never have been permitted to occur" (SO lead story)

Having announced a "probe on violence", the WEEKEND (P.1) spoke of a "breakdown in the security arrangements".

The TIMES, a prominent feature of the city skyline, headlined its anxious concern: "FORT AREA SECURITY—WHY THE DELAY?".

## IMF, IBRD

The UNP's roving ambassador, Esmond Wickremesinghe and the WEEKEND's Migara are both well-informed observers; equally well-informed, it might even be suggested by other observers. Apropos the recent Aid Group meeting in Paris, where the Finance Minister "exploded in anger", the recent remarks of these two observers (one at a seminar, and the other in print) confirm the view shared by many top-ranking UNP'ers that Sri Lanka should not accept the dictates of these all-powerful sisters.

Does this mean "expensive commercial financing" i. e. borrowing from foreign banks at high interest rates? Or can we turn hopefully to Kuwait and OPEC? What would happen then to that famous petition and the ceaseless anti-OPEC propaganda in the state-run press?

The other option is to follow their advice and slow down the development program, and make drastic cuts in "over-ambitious" projects—Mahavelli, the housing and urban development projects, Jayewardenepura etc.

Now that the Minister is back, the debate will begin in earnest.

## TULF SILENCE

In terms of its stated aims and ideals, the DDC is an historic experiment in participatory democracy. From the time of Regional Councils and the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam pact, and the UNP-FP agreement, its politics were somewhat different. The Tamils were offered a 'reasonable say in running their own affairs'.

While the TULF nominee, Dr. N. Tiruchelvam, had his say—a separate report on behalf of a "separatist" party, the TULF has so far maintained a studied silence on the Bill presented in the NSA. It will have its say next week.

Incidentally, Dr. A. J. Wilson, was singled out for praise in parliament. But has he had his say? His views on DDC's have not yet seen the light of day, although he was a member of the Tennekoon Commission. If he had no dissentient opinions, does it mean that he endorses the main report?

(Continued on page 5)

## Energy Crisis

I beg humble pardon from Dr. Costain de Vos (L. G. of 1st August) for my rash objections to the airconditioning of the backside of secretaries. I would have thought that airconditioning was not really the answer, but I bow to his more experienced judgement. We make these slips, being used as we are to fresh air and fifty watt electric fans instead of thousand watt air-conditioners that cool and recirculate our own exhalations.

As for the Electricity Boards futile attempts to commence power cuts at the time they were logically necessary, I must refer Dr. de Vos to a centre page protest that appeared in the 'Daily News' somewhere in April or May under the heading 'Are Power Cuts really necessary'.

U. Karunatilake

## Bad Times

I read with concern your recent reference to the parlous condition of the 'Times' finances despite a massive attempt by this Government to revive the institution.

The steady decline of this once mighty organisation, the

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pride of this country's Fourth Estate, really began in the late 60's. The process was accelerated by the inexperienced and discredited SLFP troika from 1975-1977 and now it lies fallen—a helpless wreck of a mighty giant.

The old vintage qualities of the 'Times' are no more.

Journalistic standards are very poor, circulation pathetically low and enthusiasm almost non-existent. It is therefore not surprising that in the last decade over 25 journalists have left in search of greener pastures.

Mercifully the present Government has in the interests of the employees tried to give a new lease of life to the decrepit 'Times'.

But with the 'brain drain' continuing and the obvious lack of interest reflected in the papers, one finds it difficult to resist the conclusion that the 'writing is on the wall' for the 'Times'.

#### Disillusioned Timesman

#### "Unkind" and "Vulgar"

Mr. J. Uyangoda, who once said that "Uthumaneni" was "something marvellous" (L.G. 1.3.80) now says it has "limitations" (L.G. 15.7.80). He now even says that director Gamini Fonseka may not have exposed what he calls religious passivity and pacifism, "consciously and deliberately" (ibid). Readers will note that earlier he said: "in 'Uthumaneni' Gamini Fonseka has found himself (L.G. 1.3.80). This is not just to deride or, in Mr. Uyangoda's own words, to be unkind or vulgar. I quite appreciate that the young critic is feeling his way laboriously through a process of trial and error.

But one has to be a little careful in dealing with facts,

for what one should defend ultimately is not 'Uthumaneni' or anything else but truth itself. The young critic, perhaps roused by criticism which he finds difficult to invalidate, cries out in a negative fashion, without showing a single instance or an iota of proof, that I have been "unkind or vulgar" in regard to Dharmasena Pathiraga's "Bambaru Avith" could he please tell the readers as to when, where and how I have been unkind or vulgar to "Bambaru Avith"?

H. A. Seneviratne

#### "Star Wars", Commercialism and Culture

The next change in the programme of a "Big city" cinema is the academy award winning film 'Star Wars'. Already one of the leading newspapers in the country has begun to serialize the story of the film, quite apart from the normal half or quarter page commercial advertisements that appear. All this is well and good as it is in the name of culture. The impact of the western technological culture on the not so affluent, poor lifestyles of the majority of those that live in this country is another question. The immediate problem is to find an answer to the question as to why there is such a hula-balloo about a science fiction film that won some academy awards. After all, another film which won a number of the same awards "One flew over the Cuckoo's Nest" went without much fanfare. Is it because the latter portrayed 'the grim side of this dominant culture and its social institutions'?

At least some answers to these questions could be found when we examine the backdrop in which the movie "Star Wars" finds its entry into Sri Lanka. A year or two ago, during the time this film was

screened in the U.S., a Sri Lankan friend of mine, living there came over here for a holiday with his family. His two sons had with them a wide variety of "Star Wars" toys; doll miniatures of "Star Wars" characters, "Star Wars" radios, "Star Wars" electronic games, "Star Wars" spaceship toys, etc. My friend's reaction to the curious inquiry made by me was that he had to spend over US \$ 200 for these "Star Wars" toys and that it was a cult in-itself such as the "Jaws", "Planet of the Apes", "Barbie Doll" and "Sesame Street" cults.

While the film made a hit on the cultural arena, the toy makers got busy manufacturing millions of toys and together with their counterparts in the mass-communications area, created the most amazing cashing—in on the fantasy world in the minds of children, once dominated by Alice-in-Wonderland, Red Riding Hood, Aladdin, etc. The vast amounts of resources and energy that went into the production of these toys, could have been resources and energy that would have fed millions of hungry people. That, however, is another story.

Now that the film has come to Sri Lanka, and, imports are free, one begins to wonder whether the stage is not being set for the left-overs of the "Star Wars" cult toys to be displayed in shopwindows and on the pavements in the city. In terms of the hard borrowed foreign exchange spending, the amount spent on "Star Wars" toys may be only 0.000001 per cent of the total import bill. The point to note is, what impact the importation of such cults will have on the minds of the children of this country and on our society in general, as these "toy" replicas of the high-bred technological culture, find its way to the fantasy world, first of the affluent

(Continued on page 11)

# Strikes, satyagraha and violence

**A** word about satyagraha; the word itself. In the first instance, it is an act of defiance against authority, whatever its identifiable form. Secondly, its symbolic significance is far more important than any tangible consequences. The mode of protest and defiance is "moral" and "spiritual" force and it is public.

Of course it was a very special product of the Gandhian genius, initially tested in South Africa and then on a history-making mass scale in British India. The technique is interesting because it is used by a manifestly "weak" force, with of course a just cause, to confront and confound a much superior foe.

It is the pacifist's classic counter-move and "demo" to achieve a moral psychological victory when pitted against an "enemy" equipped with weapons other than moral force. Since it is founded on the concept of "non-violence", the assumption is that the satyagrahi will not be tempted into counter-violence by his enemy or by provocateurs. If force is used, he submits to it and demonstrates not only his own moral quality, but that his cause is righteous.

In Kandy, the SUN reported, several hundred satyagrahis gathered at the Pattini Devale after they were refused access to the Dalada Maligawa premises. A fairly sizeable crowd, it was also reported, watched the peaceful "demo". The police dispersed both the "sit-in" demonstrators as well as the crowd. No incidents.

If the spectators received the 'message' of the satyagrahis and they took it back to their homes so that a fair section of the Kandy public would have discussed

the issues involved in the strike, its basic causes, the government's response etc, then the satyagraha has served its intended purpose.

## Strike Satyagraha

Colombo was something else altogether. The two hours that shook part of the capital and the violence which gripped the city are now common knowledge here. The news even spread to every major capital of the world.

The satyagraha was in support of a general strike which started "officially" on July 18th. Leading Opposition figures still insist that this strike was "the least unpopular" in union history. The general sympathy of the public was with the strikers, they argue, because the vast majority of the people share the self-same hardship and bear the identical grievances, albeit silently. For this reason, it is also observed, the lower ranks of the services, were not "tough" or "brutal", familiar charges in the past.

Pro-UNP observers dismiss the claims of "popular" or "least unpopular" strike with a sneer. Some who are prepared to consider the claim seriously, offer an interesting explanation. Low-level public hostility does not spring from a sense of shared grievance but from the fact that the strike was a failure. No essential service was disrupted. As a result, the public went about its normal business. Paradoxically, the strike was "least unpopular" by virtue of its manifest failure.

Yet, complaints about delays, snags and snarls in some departments, the provincial kachcheris, the Colombo municipality etc, are far from few. Though the administration in some sectors may be over-staffed, our colonial

bureaucratic structure still makes the clerk (the subject clerk or the man who knows Form 40 from Form 42B) a VIP from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Poor Planning

"Spontaneous combustion" was the description given by a Leftist leader (L. G. Aug. 1st) for the railway strike and its aftermath. If the general strike was poorly planned, the same applied to the satyagraha.

First of all, it was ill suited to the mood of several thousand workers who having lost their jobs won the 'concession' of getting their own back-wages. They had moved from frustration to anger, bitterness to desperation.

The pressure came from below. "Do something", the strikers told the unions and the unions pressed the party bosses. It is in this "do something...anything...." state of mind that the final decision was taken, and this too, with all the abrasive inter-party differences, internal differences, and varied views on tactics, each party's self-interest, and the relative political gains, if any, for the future.

In such conditions, all but the best planned satyagraha is bound to make a poor impact. What's worse, any provocation can spark off a riot. While the government evidently feels that there were "agitators" within the ranks of the satyagrahis who were hell-bent, there is another view which claims that bottles, tins and sundry missiles descended from the skies in the Fort area when the satyagrahis were being dispersed with 'minimum force'. If thorough and impartial, investigation initiated by the Defence

Ministry may it be able to establish the accuracy of contrary claims.

The veteran union leader N. Sanmugathasan remembers a Hyde Park meeting in 1958, just before the race riots. That rally too was held during a general strike. Everything went off peacefully. Even the police were moving off as the meeting approached its end. Then stones fell on a section of the crowd at the Hyde Park. The workers went berserk. Every shop window in Union Place was smashed. Nobody knew who threw the stones. An organised gang? Looters or mischief makers stirring the communal cauldron? Trouble in the Pettah (and not the Fort) often has links with the underworld or with thugs waiting for a charged racial situation.

#### Mrs. B.

On the face of it, satyagraha is an Indian inspiration. But is the "inspiration" as sinister as some pro-UNP analysts hold. They go so far as to suggest that it was a Delhi decision to push Mrs. B. "up-front" in view of the uncertainty of her immediate political future. Throughout these months (before she was actually summoned by the Commission) Mrs. B. has been preoccupied with party re-organisation — itself, a pre-planned fall-back position if she has lost her civic rights.

The satyagraha has propelled her right back into the limelight. While her Indian visit and Delhi press conference provoked an NSA exchange, the SLFP's erstwhile allies who are returning to the fold, have observed 'the new militancy' in Mrs. B's political style.

Naturally, this opinion is not shared by the JVP and its sympathisers who preferred to sit on the sidelines than join the sit-in. As a direct result, the strains between the JVP leadership and the only important union with which it had links, the Ceylon Teachers Union, reached breaking point last week. (The L. G. commented on these emerging conflicts many months ago).

For good reasons, Mrs. B is the JVP's bete noire and JVP does

get a bit paranoid about the Bandaranaiques. These feelings are generously reciprocated. The **Di-nakara**, thus chortled over the fact Rohana had been jettisoned by his newly acquired brother-in-law, H. N. Fernando, the CTU's dynamic leader.

The JVP, for its part, chuckles over what it regards as the melancholy fate of the LSSP and other left parties. A senior don, proud of his pro-JVP sentiments said:

"As a feudal matriarch, Mrs. B has a gut-hate of the working class...and her record of strike-breaking is unsurpassed even by the UNP...now the so-called Left leaders have made her the leader of the gathering working class movement and anti-government oppositional forces...Once again, she is using the Left parties and not the other way about.."

#### UNP Confusion

The JVP which is so nice to the UNP ignores an ironic fact. It is the mainstream media which reflects UNP thinking that has given Mrs. B. this place.

Judging by reports and commentaries, the UNP was in several minds about who was the main culprit. The press was soft on 'respectable' LSSP, advised the "democratic" SLFP not to fall prey to Marxist mischief-makers, and isolated the CP and Left extremists (Vasu) as its top targets.

Both Mrs. B. and Dr. de Silva have dissociated their respective parties from the violence of August 8. However, the press on Sunday went for Mrs. B., with the Satyagraha in a jeep' picture and sarcastic story. That this was the 'new line' was clear when I.T.N. put out a telecast which began like a short movie, title and all. Once more it was "satyagraha in a jeep" and the same picture of Mrs. B.

#### UNP line

The government's case has been well-publicised. To sum up:

(i) an attempt to topple the government (ii) an attempted come-back by frustrated politicians (iii) disruptive efforts by extremists (iv) an attempt to scare away foreign investors. Serious-minded

observers, including UNP'ers, should also reflect on the points urged by the TU's and the Opposition: (a) The primary cause is economic — the cost of living which has increased geometrically while wages have advanced in arithmetical progression. (b) Protest is a defensive action against an assault on living standards (c) Economics become politics because the protest is a criticism of policies because the the government is the biggest employer. (d) Since the March convention of TU's, agitation started slowly on 23 demands. It was targeted for August/September when there was spontaneous combustion at Ratmalana. Even JSS sympathisers were involved. (e) Large degree of participation by white colour/clerical workers. Something new. It shows the relative deprivation of even the so-called lower-middle class. (f) High degree of militancy in some provinces where the Left had been electorally weakened. (g) Sympathetic support of TULF suggesting that it is entering Opposition mainstream. (h) New level of unity-in-action by opposition parties.

● Thuggery, goon squads, street clashes between rival groups, attacks on picket lines, students, etc have been on the increase in the last 2-3 years (Kelaniya, Heywood, Moratuwa, Bank clerks demo etc). **Migara** in the WEEKEND writes about 'hit-squads'. In what is called street-guerilla tactics in other countries, the assumption is that 'guts and gabs' alone are no match for strong, organised force.

In other places, such tendencies and phenomena are studied for signs of extra-parliamentary activism and union (labour) militancy.

● Finally, what impact if any has this on world opinion and business confidence? An astute President Jayawardene wove into his speech at the Commonwealth Education Ministers Conference a direct answer. Agreeing with Secretary-General Ramphal about Sri Lanka's vibrant democracy, he said that the violence which lasted a few hours was confined to half a square mile in an island of 25,000 sq miles.



# Varsity admissions

**M**iss Niranthi Ruwini Perera made history last week by becoming the first person to obtain redress from the Supreme Court in a matter of fundamental rights under the procedure made available by the 1978 Constitution. The University Grants Commission's 7.2:2.8 ratio for University admissions in respect of the April and August 1979 A-level exams was struck down by the bench of three judges (Justices Sharvananda, Ismail and Weeraratne) as a violation of equality before the law.

The two exams were held on two different syllabuses as a result of the educational counter-revolution which has taken place since 1977. Although attempts had been made by the Ministry of Education and conservative dons to discredit the HNCE syllabuses (adopted under the last government) as inferior, the UGC did not take this position before the Supreme Court, conceding instead that 'no one can say which was the superior and which was the inferior, though the two syllabuses were not the same.' Hopefully, this should end the stigma cast on students who took the August exam as 'less qualified'.

However, the Supreme Court judgment, based as it was on the principle of equality of rights, has set many people thinking about the question of the validity of the district quota for University admissions. Mr. H. L. de Silva, counsel for Miss Perera, submitted that this quota too was illegal, but did not seek to argue this since it was unnecessary for his purpose. Nor did the Court rule on this issue, which was not before it, though it did say in the course of its judgment, 'In view of the fact that there is a larger number of candidates than places available in the Universities, the object being to secure the best possible material for admission to the Universities, merit is the only fair and satisfactory basis of selection.'

There seemed to be some confusion in the Government's

statement, read in Parliament on August 7 by Mr. Vincent Perera, explaining the new basis of admission after the Supreme Court's judgment. The statement referred to '30 per cent of the available places in respect of each examination' (merit category), and used the same phrase (emphasised here) in connection with the 55 per cent district quota and the 15 per cent for underdeveloped areas. However, the Supreme Court judgment clearly directed the UGC to make admissions from 'an integrated and consolidated list of candidates' from both examinations, so there can be no question of 'available places in respect of each examination'.

## Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

### SYMBOLS and STONES

*A shop window or show case is a tempting target for any angry man ready to hurl a brick. But are targets of violence, particularly political violence, symbolic?*

When Sadat really opened the door, Egypt became an IMF 'show case' in the Arab world. A few years later, workers and students, protesting against subsidy cuts and escalating prices, ran riot in the streets of Cairo. In the capital's outskirts, their chief target were the casinos, the tourist resorts.

At the start of the Iranian upheaval, the targets were US banks, the Texaco building, the ubiquitous Cadillac, and restaurants specialising in Kentucky Fried Chicken!

Of course, the Cadillac is scarce in Colombo. In the days of the United Front and C. R. A. (Convertible Rupee Account) the big Benz was the banner of the mudalali and the new "CRAPitalist". Is the black Peugeot the totem of the new bureaucracy?

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RATMALANA.

*Dozens of Chileans, many of them students, were banished this year for three-month periods to remote towns and desolate villages. Some of these places are in the arid north, others in the cold of the extreme south. A banished Santiago drama student, Alejandro GOIC, was dropped off by officials in a square in Freirina, a small town he had never heard of before and where he knew nobody. His father later wrote to the Minister of the Interior: 'Until now it had been for me a name in an obscure corner of my homeland. From now on.....it will be a place built into my experiences and memories .....Thanks to you I will know Freirina.'*

# Banishment in Chile

**A** decree promulgated in Chile on 6 February 1980—Decree Law 3168—gives the Minister of the Interior powers to order people to be detained for up to five days and then to have them sent to live in remote areas for terms of internal exile (*relegacion*) of up to three months for disturbing or attempting to disturb public order; there is no right of appeal against any such order.

The decree gives the government powers under the present state of emergency which it would have normally only under a stage of siege.

Arrests under Decree Law 3168 do not fall under the control of the Contraloria General de la Republica, the public body that oversees state administrative procedures.

Justifying the decree, the Minister of the Interior said it would avoid having to use the more drastic measure of expelling "offenders" from Chile.

The new decree was applied to people who demonstrated peacefully on 8 March 1980, International Women's Day, when hundreds took to the streets for a rally organized by the woman's section of the Coordinadora Nacional Sindical (CNS), the National Trade Union Coordinating Body.

Government permission for the march had been refused because of the alleged "political intention" of the rally.

### Police arrests

Peaceful demonstrations took place in Santiago, where police

arrested more than 100 people, Valparaiso, where 26 people were arrested, and Concepcion.

Those arrested are reported to have been interrogated and held incommunicado for five days by the Central Nacional de Informaciones (CNI), National Centre of Information, the security service which replaced the DINA.

On 13 March the Minister of the Interior announced that by order of President PINOCHET 12 of those detained were to be banished for three months to remote villages, most of them in the far north or south of Chile.

They were referred to as "repeated offenders."

The others were released "under observation." They face banishment if detained again after taking part in any kind of protest.

Towards the end of March the Minister announced that five of those "under observation" were to be banished as a result of "new evidence."

Hundreds of people were arrested all over the country around 1 May; 37 of them were banished. (This year, unlike last, there were no public demonstrations to commemorate International Labour Day. Cardinal Raul SILVA Henriques cancelled a Mass which was to have been held in Santiago's cathedral, following warnings from people close to the government of violent clashes which might result in deaths. The government denied having asked for the Mass to be suspended.)

On 12 June 98 students, mostly from Santiago's State Technical

University, were arrested in a restaurant in the centre of the city where they were taking part in a musical evening in solidarity with students who had been expelled from the university earlier in the year.

The arrests were made by uniformed police led by CNI members, who accused the students of holding a political meeting in contravention of the Law of State Security.

A week later the Minister of the Interior announced that 22 of the students would be banished for three months to villages in the far south. The others were released after a warning.

### Appeal to government

AI considers that people restricted under Decree Law 3168 are prisoners of conscience and has appealed to the government to set them free.

Please send courteously worded letters asking for the immediate and unconditional release of all people restricted under Decree Law 3168, to: Senor Sergio Fernandez Fernandez, Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Edificio Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

For reasons beyond our control, the publication of this issue has been delayed. There will be no September 1 issue. The next issue will be on September 15.



# Anatomy of a strike

by Jayantha Somasundaram

Sri Lanka's organised working class has an instinctive distrust of J. R. Jayewardene. And ever since he assumed office in July 1977, there were moves among the unions to unite in order to meet the challenges that were to come. Whilst such unity seemed logical to the ranks, the leaders, particularly the political leaders, had reservations about united activity that would undermine their individual or party interests. The record of Rohana Wijeweera and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna bears this out.

Ultimately the base won over the apex, and on March 8th and 9th 1980, a massive convention of 4,000 trade union delegates met in Colombo. They placed on the future agenda a set of demands that included a wage increase of Rs. 300 and called for a day of national protest to register these demands. (See L.G. April 1st)

With much procrastination on the part of their leaders, the trade unions finally observed June 5th as the Day of National Protest. Until that date, whenever the opposition made any kind of protest, it was standard fare for them to be subjected to violent reprisals. The Bank Employees Union and the Kelaniya University students were the first casualties in 1978. But on June 5th, this tactic backfired. Somapala who died in the melee was to become a martyr whose funeral on the 9th became an even bigger protest event.

When the trade union leaders had called a token strike on September 28th 1978, so lukewarm was the response that the leaders themselves hastily shelved it. But that was nineteen seventy eight.

On July 7th the workers at the Railway's Ratmalana Workshop downed tools in protest against the alleged victimisation of fourteen colleagues who had been active on June 5th. At Ratmalana

the UNP controlled Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya was also out on strike. The strike at Ratmalana galvanised the Joint Trade Union Action Committee which met on the 9th to clinically study the situation. Whilst their discussions were going on, the strike spread to the Railway running sheds at Maradana and Maligawatte. Whilst locomotives, powersets and carriages are repaired at Ratmalana, their daily maintenance is carried out at Maradana and Maligawatte. By the 10th the strike had spread throughout the Railways, into the provinces as well.

The JTUAC which met on Friday the 11th was presented with a *fait accompli*. Not only was the strike spreading rapidly, paralysing a vital national service, but the workers themselves were now advancing a comprehensive set of demands, crucial among them the Rs. 300 wage increase. The JTUAC thereupon decided to call a general strike during the week July 14th to 21st, and a public rally at Hyde Park on the 18th.

The strike broke out of the Railways on Monday morning itself. Workers of the Government United Federation of Labour at the Civil Medical Stores walked out on the 14th. The workers at the Government Factory Kollonnawa followed them on the 15th. Next came the Government Press where even the JSS downed tools on the 16th. The Government Clerical Service Union came out on the 17th and the Samastha Lanka Rajaya Lipikaruwa Sangamaya the next day.

Although the public rally was banned, restive workers converged on Hyde Park that evening, quite prepared to defy the ban. Riot Police armed with tear gas grenades cordoned off the Park and anxious trade union leaders packed the workers off. The workers had already defied the

Essential Services Act and had broken the law by striking, they seemed to have little compunction about breaking another law. This was the crucial turning point.

The strike now spread to the State Corporation and mercantile sectors. Bata, Tobacco Company and Walkers went on strike on the 18th. The Milk Board came out on Monday the 21st and Lever Brothers on the 22nd. The opposition claims that by then 140,000 workers in all parts of the Island were on strike.

The strike which was initiated by workers and picked up in other work places by workers, themselves was retarded by the political leaders.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party regarded the strike as a means to embarrass and weaken the Government in preparation for the 1983 General Election. They had no wish to see a spontaneous strike cripple or topple the Government in a situation where they did not become the obvious alternative government.

According to some critics, the Communist Party could see only one beneficiary in the event of a successful strike — the SLFP. And in a situation where they had no working arrangement or power sharing agreement with the SLFP, the CP had no reason to encourage the strike beyond certain bounds. This however, may be altogether too harsh an indictment.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party was severely restricted by its Parliamentary perspective. Thus it could not co-exist with a spontaneous workers confrontation which might burst the bounds of parliamentary politics. But like the SLFP it welcomed and encouraged the strike within certain limits, if it could help weaken the UNP and put the SLFP-LSSP back in parliament.

With the exception of the Lanka Guru Sangamaya, the JVP kept aloof from the strike. The MEP which has unions at Kosgama, in the Sugar Corporation and in the harbour, did not strike. Sanmugathasan's Ceylon Trade Union Federation with a sizeable following in the Cinema Industry did not strike. Bala Tampoe's Ceylon Mercantile Union also did not strike.

The unions affiliated to the United Federation of Labour, identified with Vasudeva Nanayakkara and the Nava Sama Samaja Party such as their Commercial and Industrial Workers Union in the private sector and the Government Clerical Service Union in the public sector, played an important role in the strike.

On July 24th, word came through to the GCSU that the Government intended to acquire their building in Colombo. It didn't require much imagination

to give credence to this, following as it did, the Essential Services Act, the outlawed strikes, the Emergency Powers, the Press Censorship and the freezing of trade union bank accounts. A siege mentality gripped the GCSU and the NSSP who resolved to defend the building to the last. The leaders of opposition were informed and a night-through vigil began.

A series of confrontations which began with the death of Sompala on June 5th, was prevented from escalating still further with the lives of a few more martyrs. The take-over of the G. C. S. U. was not carried out and the situation was defused, although gradually.

On July 31st the Leader of the Opposition conveyed to the JIUAC the willingness of the Government to negotiate terms under which the strike could be called off and workers return.

## The Supreme Court Decision

**T**he decision given by the Supreme Court last Monday, regarding the admission of a student to the University, has evoked considerable interest throughout the country.

In the first place, by quashing the decision of the University Grants Commission about admission of students on a ratio basis the Supreme Court has knocked the bottom off the present system of recruitment.

Despite the obvious inconveniences likely to be caused in view of the ongoing recruitment, the Government will no doubt heed the wise ruling of the Supreme Court that merit is the only fair and satisfactory basis of selection for admission to Universities:

Quite apart from the immediate redress visualised in terms of the ruling, it also creates a climate for further reflection about the entire system. "The

different formulae of standardisation and recruitment on a ratio basis has, over the years, continued to heighten the anxiety and uncertainty about prospects of higher education. Ensuring equality of opportunity in education will be the most convincing witness to democracy in the eyes of today's youth. As mentioned in the judgement of the Supreme Court: "In these days it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of education. Such an opportunity where the State undertakes to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. The Constitution enjoins the organs of Government to secure and advance and not deny this fundamental right of equality of treatment."

— "Catholic Messenger"

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# Shah - Sadat - US connection

FOREIGN  
NEWS

It was in Egypt that the Shah found his last sanctuary. It was in Egypt that he was buried. It was Egypt's Anwar Sadat who offered to take on the Shah's role as Washington's regional policeman. It was in Egypt that the plot to betray the Palestinian and Arab cause through an Egyptian-Israeli treaty was hatched. It was with Egypt's help that the abortive US "rescue" operation was mounted.

And now, it was in Cairo, reports Anony Terry of the **Sunday Times** (London) that Princess Ashraf, the Shah's twin sister, met Field Marshal Oveisi, the man known as the "butcher of Teheran". At this secret meeting, writes correspondent Terry, the Princess pledged a large part of her personal wealth (1000 million dollars is a rough estimate) at the hands of the Iranian "Junta" in exile to finance a coup in Teheran.

This Shah-Sadat-US connection was exposed by yet another discovery of its sinister links with the counter-revolution in Afghanistan. The Iranian authorities have banned an Afghan emigre organisation called "The Jamiate islami ye Afghanistan" and several of its leading figures detained and questioned.

Quoting official sources, the Iranian press has reported that investigations led to the seizure of documents which revealed not only a direct American connection but the involvement of the organised crime, including narcotics, smuggling arms, robberies and political murders. The chain led to Pakistan too. Spotlighting the fact that the American material

and moral assistance was extended in order to dictate "the political line" of the organisation, the Iranian press, including the radio, has urged inquiries into similar organisations. The newspaper "Jomhuri Islami", for instance, said that many Afghan emigre groups were financed and controlled by the US, and Egypt.

In an interpretative comment on the decision to ban the 'Jamiate Islami ye Afghanistan', an influential

## N - TREATY

### Stricter sanctions

A few days before the Geneva conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty opened, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made the categorical statement that India had reliable information on Pakistani preparedness to join the Nuclear Club.

The attention of US politicians, the media and the public may be centred on the coming Presidential race, but for the rest of the world the arms race touches on the more fundamental and far-reaching issues of peace and security. These cannot be safeguarded by human hopes and desire alone. A recognition of realities is an equally important imperative.

If the Helsinki Accords accepted the geo-political realities of post-war Europe, Salt-2 recognised the fact of strategic parity.

Under the pressures of 'hawkish' politicians and vested interests in the Industrial-Military Complex, a weak-willed Carter administration

Iranian, columnist said that it suggested "a realistic re-appraisal" by Iran of its general attitude to the Afghanistan situation. The Foreign Minister and other knowledgeable advisers of the Revolutionary Council were increasingly convinced of the poor prospects of the anti-government movement in Afghanistan and the adverse consequences to Iran of continued Iranian support to it.

suspended the ratification of Salt-2 just as it retreated on its own policy of embargo on Pakistan. Its new arms aid helps release Pakistani funds which can be put to other, more dangerous purposes such as the setting up as Congressman Lester Wolff recently described a 'nuclear bomb factory'.

There are many more developments which strengthens the case for stricter observance of the Treaty and for sanctions against violators:

(i) The US ignores the near-readiness of two of its key allies, Israel and South Africa, to join the Club.

(ii) Countries on the brink of capability can develop nuclear detonating fuses (Argentina, Brazil, Pakistan) while others like Israel and South Africa may already have such devices.



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## Letters . . .

(Continued from page 2)

children, and then spillover everywhere. How do we then, plan to fulfil their aspirations to participate in Wars between Stars when the simple problems of bread and parippu cannot be solved satisfactorily.

**"SRIYAN"**

### Tell it as it is

May I urge all those who are less than enthusiastic about the "achievements" of the UNP government in the last three years to read, study and digest Mr. N. Sanmugathasan's article 'A Gloomy Picture' (L. G. August 1) as a model of how not to write anti-government propaganda. "The crisis that has overcome Sri Lanka is part and parcel of the economic crisis that has engulfed the entire capitalist world"

asserts Mr. S. At the same time he holds that it is a result of three years of UNP misrule. If both these positions are equally and simultaneously tenable a word in explanation would be useful. Mr. S does not supply it. The Sri Lanka rupee is floating. But Mr. S has information that the World Bank is demanding "further devaluation". If both these positions are equally and simultaneously tenable then the World Bank is asking that the rupee be artificially pegged **below** its true free-market value. Why the World Bank should find it necessary to make such an absurd demand would appear to require an explanatory word. Mr. S does not supply the word.

A result of three years of UNP misrule is that Sri Lanka is going to import tea, claims Mr. S. He can only be referring to the proposal to import

cheap teas from countries producing lower quality teas for blending for re-export to markets hitherto not reached by high quality Sri Lanka teas. This proposal may be a good one or a bad one but how is it the **result** of UNP misrule? Here again an explanation would be helpful. Mr. S does not give one.

Every reader can discover for himself many more examples in Mr. S's article. If I were JR I would put Mr. S on the Information Department payroll as a government propagandist. Many more articles like this one and people will be flocking to support the UNP government. When will those who strive to win our hearts and minds realise that the best way is to tell the unvarnished truth?

**Dr. Costain de Vos**

Kollupitya

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# The NSSP and popular frontism

by Shanta de Alwis

**T**he principled stand that the NSSP has taken on the formation of programmatic blocs with bourgeois parties (popular frontism) ever since its inception as a tiny tendency (Vama samasamajya) within the LSSP, is one of its outstanding features. The tendency began and developed as an oppositional current fighting the opportunistic coalition politics of the leaders of the LSSP. Its *raison d'être* was its consistent struggle for the independent program of the working class revolutionary party. This implied, as a corollary, its total opposition to making programmatic concessions of any kind to any bourgeois party, and the forming of parliamentarist alliances and coalition governments, with such a party.

This of course is in accordance with the classic Leninist position, further developed by Trotsky in the post-Leninist period, in opposition to the criminal betrayal of countless working class struggles and revolutionary opportunities by the Stalinist, through their popular frontist policies. The leadership of the LSSP accused us of being dogmatists unable to understand the changed situation in the post-war period, and the progressive qualities of parties such as the SLFP which can be "pushed towards socialism". By patiently explaining the issues involved to the advanced workers who were politically organised in the LSSP, by showing them how our analysis of coalition politics and the blind alley down which the old leadership was leading them. Corresponded to their actual experience, we were able to win the majority of active members of the party to our position and enable us to emerge as a separate party with a significant Trade Union base. None of the pseudo-Trotskyist grouplets whose opposition to the opportunism of the LSSP

leaders was confined to words and premature splits, have been able to win any mass base in the working class. The leadership of the LSSP could quite safely ignore them and their antics.

Today these gentleman of the pseudo-Trotskyist seats together with various Stalinist and neo-Stalinist "Groupscules" and one-man parties try to avert their frustrations by making a profound prediction that the NSSP is most probably going to make an alliance with the SLFP; and why, oh why would this come about? Because the "founder and the leading theoretician of the party Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne" has an ambiguous formulation of the character of the SLFP identifying the SLFP as bourgeois he goes on to qualify it as populist—thus undoubtedly leaving the door open for a future coalition! The wishful thinking of the sects on the fringe of the Left movement is substituted for an analysis of reality.

What is the actual position? Quite obviously it follows from the class-character of the SLFP that any kind of programmatic bloc is completely ruled out. As I pointed out earlier, the NSSP was born precisely in the struggle against such class collaboration. How can such a party, (even if the leadership subjectively wished it) possibly advocate such collaboration? The party would not merely split it would disintegrate! Our enemies even if they doubt the subjective intentions and honesty of the leadership of the NSSP, could at least credit them with the intelligence to realize that. Only a political imbecile could make the prognosis that the NSSP will fall within the SLFP ambit and that too by next May Day!

Apparently it is necessary to insure oneself against the possi-

bility of future coalition politics with the SLFP by defining the SLFP as the "alternative party of the bourgeois" and stopping at that. Any further analysis is too dangerous! This is typical of the attitude of the sects which want to insulate themselves from any mass activity by covering themselves with ultra left phrases. If the SLFP is the alternative party of the bourgeois (and it is!) are we not to explain why such an alternative is necessary? Do we not recognise the real differences (in the past) between the UNP and SLFP policies (although both were bourgeois)?

Do we not even explain the fact that the Left formed a coalition with the SLFP and even in other parts of the underdeveloped world with SLFP type parties) rather than with the UNP? It is a poor Marxist indeed who failed to understand the objective reasons for this major disaster of our times.

The UNP was the classical party of the comprador landlord elite with a perspective of continuing the old economic ties with imperialism, while the SLFP represented, in the last analysis, the interests of the embryonic industrial bourgeois. The latter adopted for state capitalist policies, under the cover of pseudo-socialist and nationalist rhetoric. The expansion of the state sector was seen as a means of satisfying its mass base by the creation of (largely unproductive) jobs. Of course the failure of state capitalism in the past period leaves the present SLFP, if it were in power today, no alternative but to try out policies similar to those of the present government. In fact this is the famous "right turn" that the SLFP took in 1975, which led to the expulsion of the LSSP from the government.



The SLFP's past populist policies however determine the present illusions and aspirations of its petty bourgeois mass base. This is why it is important to understand its history. It also means that **united actions** on specific anti-UNP issues will be a tactic of winning over the petty bourgeois masses around the SLFP to the working class banner. The recent very successful protest day was an instance where this tactic was put into practice. In such situations where it is necessary to arouse the broad masses into action under the leadership of the working class, it is tactically correct to call for the support of the bourgeois opposition parties, the SLFP and the TULF. Ofcourse the support that the leadership of such parties give will be purely verbal, (as was the case on June 5th and in

the preparations for it) but even that support gives those who actively lead the mass struggles an opportunity to approach the district level leaders and rank and file activists of these parties. Even if the bourgeois leaders refuse to support actions of the working class, after having been asked to do so, the working class organisations would then be in a position to show up these leaders to the rank and filers who desire to participate in a struggle against the UNP regime.

Stalinists have traditionally held that the bourgeois democratic revolution in an underdeveloped country can be accomplished through alliances (i. e. programmatic ones, including coalition governments) with the "progressive national bourgeoisie". This is the famous two stage theory which justified incredible betrayals, including the disastrous alliance with the SLFP in our own country.

This was a fundamental issue on which Trotskyism separated itself clearly from Stalinism and in fact those who claimed to be Trotskyists—the LSSP leaders—had a much more difficult time justifying their actions theoretically, than the CP leaders. That was in fact a factor in the development of the NSSP. Today we hear that the local Stalinists are reevaluating the past in an appropriately self-critical mood and superficially they seem to have moved close to the Trotskyist positions. Words however are cheap and they alone cannot wipe out a whole series of historic betrayals. The workers will judge them by their actions.

Finally, as for those neo-Stalinist journalists and academic pseudo-Trotskyists who pontificate on the doings of the workers parties, criticize their "ambiguous theoretical formulations" etc, from the fringe of the workers movement; they and their unsolicited advice will be rejected by the workers with the contempt they deserve.

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# ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

by Reggie Siriwardena

The reader who is startled by the question posed in the title of Dr. Gunadasa Amarasekera's pamphlet, **Anagarika Dharmapala Marxvadhee dha?** (Was Anagarika Dharmapala Marxist?) will be relieved to learn from the opening page that he isn't posing it seriously: the title, borrowed from a reviewer of one of Dr. Amarasekera's earlier books, is a piece of shock-tactics that is no doubt good sales-promotion. However, Dr. Amarasekera doesn't find it necessary to ask another question, much more pertinent than that so provocatively displayed on his cover. Was Anagarika Dharmapala racist? Dr. Amarasekera is so unaware of the reality of this issue that in claiming for the Anagarika the status of a leader who sought not only national liberation but also the creation of a 'socialist society' in Sri Lanka, he accepts without demur the idea of a call for 'liberation' addressed exclusively to Sinhala Buddhists. That, clearly, in Dr. Amarasekera's eyes, is how things should be.

However, the case for answering affirmatively the question I have posed rests on evidence a good deal more substantial than simply the ethnic and religious character of the base that the Anagarika sought for his movement. In the course of his pamphlet Dr. Amarasekera refers to Dr. Kumari Jayawardena as one of the few scholars who has understood Anagarika Dharmapala's aims correctly, and quotes from her **Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon**. I think it a fair criticism of Dr. Jayawardena's book that, in spite of the invaluable research material it incorporates, its evaluation of the nationalist movement in the period

it covers is, if I may say so, equivocal. But I should like to recommend to Dr. Amarasekera a study of Dr. Jayawardena's paper, **Nationalism, Revivalist Movements and Ethnic Consciousness in Sri Lanka**, read at a Social Scientists' Association seminar earlier this year, and representing Dr. Jayawardena's more recent and more mature after-thoughts on the subject. In that paper Dr. Jayawardena brings out the Anagarika's strong animus against the minority communities who were non-Sinhala and non-Buddhist. He described Tamils and Muslims, equally with Europeans, as 'infidels of degraded race'. Another utterance of the Anagarika that Dr. Jayawardena quotes reads: 'Look at the Administration Report of the General Manager of Railways... Tamils, Cochins and Hambankarayas are employed in large numbers to the prejudice of the people of the island—sons of the soil, who contribute the largest share.' There is no doubt that in the Anagarika's thinking the 'people of the island' and 'sons of the soil' meant exclusively Sinhalese, and especially Sinhalese Buddhists. Dr. Amarasekera himself quotes one of his demands that the State should be a Buddhist State and that the Governor, the Colonial Secretary and all other high officials should be Buddhists—the same kind of demand that racists and chauvinists have made and continue to make down to the present day.

Dr. Amarasekera's own quotations from the Anagarika's speeches and writings also bring out the fact that he shared and propagated the Aryan racial myth which has been one of the principal symbols of Sinhala chauvinism. The Anagarika referred to 'our innate Aryan nature' and 'kinship' with the Aryan races in the Ganges valley. The significance of this myth was not only that it bolstered Sinhala racial pride by evoking the

chosen 'Aryan race' of which the Sinhalese were assumed to be a part, but also that it drew a sharp dividing line between 'Aryan Sinhalese' and Dravidians—in short, that it was anti-South Indian and anti-Tamil.

All this goes to prove that when the Sinhala racist politicians of today resuscitate the image of Anagarika Dharmapala and echo his slogan 'Sinhala yanee nagitiv' (Sinhalese, arise!) they are not (as Sevaka Yohan Devananda claimed in an exchange with me some time ago in the **LG**) perverting his thought but recognising in him their true ancestor. But it is important not only to characterise the Anagarika's racist ideology but also to identify the class interests it served. Dr. Amarasekera rejects the characterisation of Anagarika Dharmapala by some Marxists as one who 'dedicated his services to building a national bourgeoisie and who was an agent of that class.' I don't think a Marxist characterisation of the Anagarika's role need be as simplified as that. To say that any thinker or leader served the interests of a particular class is not necessarily to say that he was conscious of doing so, still less that he was hired or commanded by that class. All that is necessary is to identify what class interests his thought and action objectively served and what class outlook his ideology reflected. Even the question of a leader's sincerity and honesty, on which Dr. Amarasekera lays so much stress (for him the Anagarika's political failure was due to the fact that the movement he began was grabbed from him by self-seeking and power-hungry politicians) is for the purpose of characterising his class position, irrelevant. And haven't there been other racist propagandists who seriously believed in the virtues of the nostrum they were peddling? Who is there

(Continued on page 16)

# A AND MARXIST THOUGHT

by Carlo Fonseka

**E**xasperated by the theoretical aberrations of certain self-styled French "Marxists", Karl Marx once went so far as to declare: "As for me, I am not a Marxist."

The title of Gunadasa Amarasekera's latest critical essay poses the provocative question: Was Anagarika Dharmapala Marxist? His answer is that the Anagarika was really a committed political reformer who understood in his bones the enormous ideological potential of Buddhism as a vehicle for social change in Sri Lanka, and that, in no sense was he Marxist. A pity, implies Dr. Amarasekera, for in addition to his intuitive grasp of the ideological potential of Buddhism had he acquired the technique of "comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" he might have died a less disillusioned man. Few people know, as Dr. Amarasekera reveals, that in the end the Anagarika who set out to lay the foundation of a genuine Buddhist society in this country became so fed up that when he breathed his last in India his last wish was to be reborn in India.

From the Anagarika's failure Dr. Amarasekera infers that as an ideological weapon for social change Buddhist social philosophy unbuttressed by Marxist economic insights will not work in the world of modern economics. On the other hand, from his observation that Marxist thinking has hitherto not penetrated significantly into the Sinhalese consciousness Dr. Amarasekera infers that Marxist economic theory ungrounded in the Buddhist historical ethos unique to our people is unlikely to get a chance to exert its salutary influence on their economic well-being. Take it or leave it!

Dr. Amarasekera's essay is loosely-reasoned but it grips one's interest by a quality of canny intuition which pervades it. He

is known to fame as an accomplished novelist, and to me his essay has a grace and delicacy which are totally lacking in much sociological writing of our time.

Dr. Amarasekera's serious aim in writing this essay seems to be to contribute to a dialogue leading to the evolution of a social philosophy for our country which shall be all of one piece.

Starting from the premise that Sinhalese culture is essentially a Buddhist culture and that the ideal society as adumbrated by the Buddha is collectivist (i. e. socialist) he avers that the bedrock of our social philosophy could and should be Buddhistic. The Sinhalese lap up Buddhism with mother's milk and the idea of a "dharma Buddha rajaya" strikes an immediate cord of sympathy in their consciousness. According to Dr. Amarasekera, the Anagarika realised this and set to work against the imperialists at a time when the sun never set on their empire. It was unrealistic to attempt to wage a physical war against them. What was required above all was an ideological war, a battle for the mind. So with unerring instinct the Anagarika concentrated his fire on the Bible, Jesus Christ, beef and alcohol, not because he was a religious fanatic but because he knew what touched the heart and moved the mind of the unanglicized Sinhalese masses. But of course imperialism cannot be effectively fought by lambasting "para suddhas" blackguarding beef-eaters and inveighing against alcohol. And so the fire he set ablaze gradually burnt itself out. To fight imperialism you have to understand its real nature and what better hypothesis is there for understanding imperialism than the Marxist? The first clear exposition of that hypothesis to the masses of this country came from Dr. N. M. Perera and his colleagues. History records that Dr. N. M. Perera returned to Sri Lanka from studies abroad the

year the Anagarika died. History moves at its own pace. Today the imperialists have gone, but not imperialism, and the dharma Buddha rajaya remains an unfulfilled Sinhalese dream.

How to make that dream come true? That is the principal issue of our time asserts Dr. Amarasekera. Nor does he equivocate in his prescription. Buddhism and Marxism must enter the Sinhalese consciousness. That is the only way to render unto God the things that are God's, and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

But, you will ask, can Buddhism and Marxism both inhabit the same mind? Some 25 years ago President Jayewardene, for one, put his fertile mind to the matter and answered with a firm no. For his part Dr. Amarasekera has the temerity to ask: Why not? Intellectual daring is one attribute Dr. Amarasekera has been endowed with in full measure. It is evident in this essay. Karl Marx, Max Weber, Dr. G. G. Mendis, Professor Walpola Rahula all get their share of critical comment. For example, Professor Walpola Rahula, who expounds Buddhism merely as a means of personal salvation ought to know better than that innuendos Dr. Amarasekera.

Somewhere towards the end of his essay Dr. Amarasekera argues that Mr. SWRD Bandaranaike was the political beneficiary of the liberation movement initiated by Anagarika Dharmapala. He then indulges the speculation that Mr. Bandaranaike intuitively understood that Marxist economic insights should of necessity have a place in the scheme of things in modern Sri Lanka and that he invited the Marxists to collaborate with him to build a just society for all of us to live in. The Marxists, however, avows Dr. Amarasekera, failed to respond because, for all their intellectual brilliance, they were not rooted in their own tradition and

(Continued on page 16)



by Reggie . . . (Contd. from P. 14)

to say, for instance, that Professor F. R. Jayasuriya is not 'sincere'?

Dr. Amarasekera defends the Anagarika's choice of 'constitutional struggle' as one which was right in fighting a mighty empire on which the sun never set. Yet, at the same time, not only in immense India but even in small Ireland there were leaders who confronted that same empire with other means. It does not occur to Dr. Amarasekera that the Anagarika's verbal rhetoric against imperialism, coupled with his racial and religious chauvinism, reflected the character of the class he served — a belated and weak embryonic bourgeoisie (in fact, hardly more than a small trading and handicraft petty bourgeoisie) who did not have the capacity to lead a genuine mass struggle against imperialism, whose economic interests brought them much more into conflict with Tamil and Muslim traders than with imperialism, and whose backwardness and impotence found an appropriate image in their retrogressive, narrow and stunted ideology.

It is perfectly correct, therefore, for Dr. Amarasekera to see S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike as the heir of Dharmapala: it was in fact that same petty bourgeoisie aspiring to be a national bourgeoisie who found their leader in the incongruous figure of Bandaranaike. When Dr. Amarasekera presents S. W. R. D. as a tragic figure who, like Dharmapala, fell a victim to the machinations of the bourgeoisie, I am reminded of Thomas Paine's answer to Burke's elegy on Marie Antoinette: 'Burke pitted the plumage, but forgot the dying bird'. What was the real tragedy — the fate of Bandaranaike or that of the masses he had deluded with a racism masquerading as socialism?

Dr. Amarasekera ends his pamphlet with a grandiose vision of an assimilation of Marxist economic and political thinking into the Buddhist philosophy which will not only fulfil the Anagarika's aims but will also be 'the third interpretation of Marxism in our century' (the other two being presumably the Soviet and the Chinese), which can point the

way forward to socialism not only for Sri Lanka but also for India, Burma and other countries of this region. To me it seems that, whether Dr. Amarasekera is conscious of it or not (as I said, all that matters is the interests a writer objectively serves), he has instead produced the perfect ideology for a burgeoning new SLFP-LSSP alliance. It is not inappropriate that the chief promoter of this alliance should be a scion of the Anagarika's family. A friend once told me that when he visited Mr. Anil Moonesinghe's office at the time the latter was Chairman of the CTB, he found on one wall a portrait of Anagarika Dharmapala, on another photographs of Mr. & Mrs. Bandaranaike, and on the desk a picture of Trotsky! Just such as that Dr. Amarasekera recommends!

by Carlo . . . (Contd. from P. 15)

culture. This charge, of course, ignores the chronology of events of our recent history. One of the founders of the Marxist Movement in this country in fact collaborated with Mr. Bandaranaike and when he attempted in a modest way to translate some of his Marxist economic theory into practice he was summarily dismissed and not long afterwards Mr. Bandaranaike was liquidated by the forces of big capital.

Dr. Amarasekera's essay is an attempt to examine the historical relationship between the two complementary ideological mainstreams of the struggle against imperialist domination in this country: one led by Anagarika Dharmapala inspired by the Buddhist cultural heritage; the other led by Dr. N. M. Perera and his contemporaries inspired by Marxist economic theory. Neither reached the goals they set themselves. But political, economic and social change in post independence Sri Lanka in the past, as in the present has never escaped the victor of the two ideological mainstreams initiated by them. And Dr. Amarasekera appears to believe that in the future it is the dialectical interaction between these two ideological mainstreams that will lead to the synthesis of a social philosophy to regenerate our society.

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# State schools and religious instruction

by S. Francis Perera

POINT OF  
VIEW

Sri Lanka has the enviable distinction of being one of the few countries in South East Asia with an avowedly secular constitution. Secularism, according to Montesqueue's classic definition, is "the absence of favour or hostility" in a state's attitude to religion. Our Constitution guarantees to every citizen the right to subscribe to a faith of his choice or to abstain from so doing. It will, however, be argued that ours is a secularism with a difference, and that unlike In-say-Mexico or Albania, religion is not frowned upon. Rather, it will be further argued, that with the active concurrence of our leaders the State encourages the practice of religion. It behoves us to examine the teaching of religion in State Schools in the light of the foregoing facts.

In Sri Lanka the teaching of religion is an integral feature of the school curriculum. It is compulsory at the primary and secondary school levels—i.e. from grade 1 to 10. Schools are expected to have instructors in all faiths represented by substantial numbers of pupils. In case there is a shortage of such instructors those qualified to handle other subjects—secular ones—may improvise. For instance, at a certain leading school, Buddhism is being taught by a physics graduate for lack of a teacher trained to handle the subject.

Nearly all state schools maintain a majority of pupils from one faith or other. It is the policy of the state to perpetuate the denominational ratios existing at the time these schools were taken over from private control. In some state schools religious instruction to children of all faiths represented therein is not provided—again due to lack of instructors. It is then the practice to induce those children denied

instruction in their own faiths, to follow classes in one of the faiths for which instruction has been provided. In several leading schools in Colombo, for instance, Sindhi children of the Hindu persuasion study Christianity because no Hindu instructors (in English) have been provided. In such instances it is clear that the child satisfies departmental requirements, but acquires no Spiritual edification....

Having presented, I hope, an unembellished account, of the real state of affairs in state schools as far as religious instruction is concerned, I wish to state that **the teaching of religion at these schools is contrary to the liberal spirit.** It is a negation of the cherished ideal of secularism. The encouragement of religious devotion may be a good thing, but the State is hardly the institution to engage itself in it. There is no knowing where a State which arrogates upon itself the task of instilling religious awakening in children, may end. The salutary lesson to be learnt from history is that state patronage to religion in the long run is detrimental to both institutions—the state as well as religion.

The training of Jannasaries in the Ottoman Turkish Empire is a case in point. It was the practice of the Turkish Sultans to relieve their Christian subjects of a certain number of their sons in early childhood. In what might be called cloistered academies these boys forcibly converted to Islam were subjected to a rigorous training, the ingredients of which were religion and the martial arts. This super spartan training turned them into dehumanized warriors who rendered unquestioned obedience to unscrupulous Sultans. In time to come the Jannasaries formed the main prop of corrupt Turkish rule!

Modern liberal education stands for the critical analysis of facts and principles. In fact, it aims at whetting the child's critical faculty. He is free to question, even what is patently self-evident. To modern educationists the child is not a computer which will lie quiescent while it is being fed with facts. The good teacher must show immense patience in helping the child to form healthy opinions and to come to rational conclusions. On the other hand religion presents dogmas said to be based on revelation which must not be questioned. The child is thus faced with the dilemma of accepting what appears to be two versions of truth—one in the critical spirit and the other with mute submission. The psychological strain which the feat entails must be serious.

There is no proof that in childhood—which is a formative period—religion appeals to the mind. (It does not, however, mean that the child's mind cannot be manipulated to absorb religious beliefs). On the contrary the juvenile mind is most receptive to studies which answer the why and wherefore of things. The use of compulsion in the teaching of religion may cause the mummification of the child's critical faculty. The child will, moreover, learn to adopt a Uriah Heapish attitude to life.

In this context it is well to remember that Buddhism and certain Christian denominations are opposed to compulsory religious teaching and training. The Buddha went to the length of admonishing his would be followers not to accept even his own teachings if in their opinion they did not stand to the test of reason. The Baptist mission is opposed to children being baptized unless it is preceded by voluntary acceptance of Christian teaching.

கொழும்பு தமிழ்ச் செய்தி

There is in our country an ever-growing section of the population consisting of deists, sceptics, agnostics and atheists. It would not be wrong to lump them up under the common term of 'free-thinkers.' They are by no means queer. In fact they belong to all walks of life and are people of unimpeachable integrity. They only differ from the rest of the community in that they do not subscribe to orthodox faiths. No doubt these free-thinkers would like to have their children instructed in the philosophy of free thought. But no provision has been made in the state schools for such instructions. Perhaps such a demand on the part of these parents would be looked upon as a piece of unwarranted effrontery offered to "conventional morality."

Arguing as I do that religious instruction must be excluded from State schools, I do not however advocate the introduction of free thought to these schools.

All I wish to point out is that a grave injustice has been perpetrated on the children of free-thinking parents. But this is only a part of their tale of woe. Religious instruction being compulsory, free-thinkers—undoubtedly with reluctance—permit their children to submit to what must be to them an indignity. Society, I am afraid is like the bullying vicar in Samuel Butler's 'The way of all flesh', wanting to persecute those whose morality it does not understand. The authorities, it is hoped, will take note that a considerable section of the tax payers are being subjected to unfair treatment.

What I object to is the compulsory teaching of religion and the state having to meet the expense of such teaching in schools under its control. The study of religion may be made optional as it was before the new educational scheme came in to operation in 1972. Institutionalized faiths in this country are affluent. Surely it is

nothing but fair that they relieve the state of expenditure the latter can ill-afford.

Religious instruction may be given to the children at their respective places of worship. Schools may close early to enable children to attend religious instruction at these places—if their parents so desire. It is quite common in socialist countries like Poland and Hungary as well as in some federal states of the U. S. for religious instructions to be confined to places of worship.

My scheme is far from utopian and, what is more, it is a reform long over due. It involves no conflict as between state and religion. While rendering unto Caesar and organized religion their just deserts, the scheme will help keep the precincts of the latter free from the desecrating intrusion of temporal rule.

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# Has capitalism been restored in the USSR?

A rejoinder to  
N. Sanmugathan  
by Chintaka

**B**ad form to tell untruths, particularly when they are important ones. Mr. N. Sanmugathan implies that Stalin rejected the view that classes and class struggles continue to exist even after the socialist revolution. Shan also states that I too reject this correct Marxist-Leninist thesis.

All this however amounts to a complete mis-representation of facts. Indeed, Comrade Shan must be reminded that the Chinese Communist Party once accused Stalin of precisely the opposite error! In their article 'On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' released in 1956, the Chinese leaders endorsed in all essentials the Khrushchevite revisionist denunciation of Stalin giving it however, a more ideological form. This incidentally was the first tangible evidence that Maoism sprang from the same class roots as Khrushchevism and was a 'left' variant of the latter, which is something that Enver Hoxha has come to realise belatedly. The point is, that in this essay the Chinese leaders joined Khrushchev in accusing Stalin of holding the view that the class struggle sharpens after the socialist revolution. Obviously this was a view the Chinese rejected then.

Interestingly enough this is the **exact opposite** of the criticism that the self-same Chinese leaders were to level against Stalin in the period of the Cultural Revolution and after, that is, when 'Mao Tse-Tung Thought' was in full bloom. In this period they accused Stalin of de-emphasizing, if not forgetting, altogether, the question of class struggle under socialism. (e.g. 'On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism'). This is the same criticism that Shan obliquely levels at Stalin today. First and foremost therefore, I request Comrade Shan to make up his mind concerning the Chinese

leaders' position in '56, and if perchance he repudiates the views contained in 'On the Historical Experience', comrade Shan, who claims to have defended Stalin for so long, should proceed to tell us why he has remained silent for so long concerning this initial Maoist denunciation of Stalin. Comrade Shan must decide on which of the two contradictory Maoist critiques of Stalin he agrees with.

The fact however remains that both these criticisms are distortions of Stalin's position and are therefore false. What then was the correct Marxist-Leninist, (i.e., Stalinist) position on the question of class struggle and socialist construction? Very briefly it is as follows:

Antagonistic classes and class struggles exist in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. In this period there is the possibility of capitalist restoration, and it is the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat to prevent such a regression.

It is an altogether different matter once socialism has been built in the main. Socialist society, which is distinct from Communist society because distribution proceeds according to work and not according to need, is characterized by an absence of antagonistic classes. Therefore, after socialism has been built, and exploiting classes have been eradicated, there are class contradictions but no longer class antagonisms, and consequently, no possibility of capitalist restoration owing to internal reasons. Classes do exist (another distinction between Socialism and Communism), but these are not hostile towards each other. Class struggle has to be waged against bourgeois influences and espionage emanating from the external capitalist environment. This explains why the socialist state does not wither

away even when there are no longer any antagonistic classes internally, but rather, grows in strength.

From 1936 this was the situation that existed in the USSR. Socialism had been built in the main and capitalist restoration was possible only by means of external intervention. After the smashing of the Nazis and the emergence of a socialist camp following the second world war, the changed world balance of forces rendered highly problematical the prospect even of an externally imposed restoration of capitalism.

It is certainly true that the possibility of capitalist restoration exists so long as the former ruling classes exist even in remnant form, since these remnants would doubtless have support from without. When Stalin referred to the worsening of the class struggle after the seizure of power and in proportion to the gains made by socialism, he refers concretely to the kulaks and in general to the last (and all the more violent) convulsions of the dying classes. What comrade Shan must do is to show us how capitalism can be restored once the exploiting classes have **completely died out** or have been **fully liquidated**? Once the economic basis of the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, where are the material prerequisites for the restoration of capitalism? Pointing to small (petty-commodity) production alone is simply not good enough, since, as Stalin points out in his masterly 'Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR', small production existed even in the Roman Empire without giving rise to capitalism!

Slave society contained within itself the material contradictions which gave birth to the feudal mode of production. Feudalism in turn gave rise to capitalism and

the inherent, irreconcilable contradictions of the capitalist mode of production gives birth to socialism. Comrade Shan must now enlighten us as to whether the Socialist socio-economic formation contains within its womb any such material contradictions which engender capitalism. Another point to be recalled is that capitalism is a lower socio-historical species.

Comrade Shan informs us with something of a flourish that it is not possible to confiscate the reactionary ideas in the minds of certain individuals under socialism. At best this argument is irrelevant. Let me illustrate by means of a simple example: The fact that J. R. Jayewardene cannot confiscate the extremely revolutionary ideas contained in comrade Shan's skull does not mean that a socialist (or New Democratic) revolution can take place so long as the capitalist state remains intact. The converse is equally true, if not truer. Bourgeois thinking may persist, but capitalism cannot be restored unless and until the socialist state is **smashed**, since material force must be overthrown by material force and at a certain stage of the struggle for power the weapon of criticism must be superseded by the critique of arms. Palace coups and "taking the fortress from within" can result only in a shift of power from one class fraction to another, but not in a total change in the class character of the state and a total overturn of property relations. (The inability to understand this was the basic mistake of the wretched **Janavegaya** clique). Neither the overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie nor of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be effected by palace coups and changes of personnel from the top down. On the other hand, the Hungarian counter revolution of 1956 provides us with a classic example of what I have been trying to say about attempts to overthrow proletarian power and restore capitalism. Nothing even remotely similar recurred in the USSR.

As for the Khrushchevite economic reforms, and also these introduced by Kosygin, any recent

Western study of the USSR will reveal to Comrade Shan that very few of those measures were actually implemented. Those that were, ran into so much difficulty that they were abandoned, leading to an even greater degree of centralization in the Soviet economy! The reforms failed precisely because they ran counter to the objective economic laws of socialism. The CPSU's denunciation of Krushchev's 'subjectivism' at the 1965 plenum is significant because it is precisely this subjectivism that led Khrushchev to flout the economic laws of socialism uncovered by Stalin. (This was another in common between the voluntarist Mao and Khrushchev—they both disregarded Stalin's contribution as set out in 'Economic Problems' and paid the price) The main point is that whatever Khrushchev's subjective opinions and wishes, he could not overthrow the objective laws of socialist economy, just as he could not change the class character of the Soviet state simply by referring to it as the 'state of the whole people'. (Likewise Dr. Clovin R. de Silva's 'socialist' constitution could not alter the capitalist nature of the Lankan state). Incidentally the new Soviet Constitution (the Brezhnev Constitution) clarifies and modifies the term 'state of the whole people' in such a way as to bring it very much closer to Stalin's notion of 'state of the working people'.

Returning to the specific economic phenomena that Comrade Shan draws attention to, it is clear that the small agricultural plots are peripheral to the Soviet economy and in no way constitute the dominant relations of production. Apart from these small private plots, which themselves cannot be sold or rented, no individual or group of individuals can own, sell or rent means of production in the USSR. Furthermore, there is no right of inheritance of private property. Whoever heard of a bourgeois class which dies out in a single generation like Mayflies? Thus, two fundamental characteristics of a capitalist economy are missing in the Soviet Union.

According to Comrade Shan "foreign monopolies like Fiat were allowed to invest capital, exploit Soviet labour and take away profits." This would go down well as an afterdinner joke at a gathering of US corporation heads, for they are fully aware of the utter fallacy of this statement. As the Report submitted by the **Joint Economic Commission (JEC)** to the **United States Congress** in 1974 states, Soviet laws require that the State retains full ownership of the means of production (except some small agricultural plots) so this prevents equity participation." The JEC Report goes on to make clear that foreign firms operate in the USSR on a "purely contractual basis" and are restricted to a "strictly non-proprietary role". Most of the contracts take the form of turn-key projects, so called because the foreign firm constructs a fully fledged plant, hands the key so to speak over to the Soviet state, collects its fee and goes back home. Another contractual form is that of the barter agreement where the foreign firm is paid back in the form of produce, over a certain period. This is an exchange of equal values and involves no exploitation.

"Material incentives for increased production was introduced" wails Comrade Shan. The fact of the matter however is that material incentives existed during the times of both Lenin and Stalin. What after all was the Stakhanovite method? Material incentives and wage disparities are bound to exist in the Socialist phase. **What is most important is whether or not wage disparities are being reduced.** We turn once more to the Joint Economic Commission's Report to the US Congress, this time in 1973. It states:

"Since 1965, per capita real disposable income has risen by 6.2% annually.... Under Brezhnev's leadership the average level of living in the USSR has risen yearly by amounts that most westerners would consider exceptional. Diets have improved—more meat any other quality food and fewer starches are on the nations table.

Consumer durables are found in more homes and are more available in stores. Russian dress has improved and the contrast with foreign clothing is less discernible. **Wage differentials have narrowed, with the lowest paid workers getting more increases than intellectuals**" (my emphasis).

What this proves is that in contrast to capitalist societies, there is a constantly rising standard of living of the broad masses in place of either absolute or relative pamperization. Material incentives have not caused income inequalities to widen. The tendency is in the opposite direction. Comrade Shan should get his facts straight.

Coming to the question of Trotsky, Comrade Shan not only does **not** make a clear differentiation between his (Mao's) theory of World Revolution and Trotsky's 'theory' of Permanent Revolution, he also does Trotsky enormous service by misrepresenting the 'theory' of Permanent Revolution! According to Shan "Trotsky's theory postulated that the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia would evolve into a Socialist revolution...." Quite plainly, this is absurd, because if that were indeed Trotsky's view, then Trotsky would be a Leninist and we would have little quarrel with him! The fact is that far from sharing the Leninist perspective of uninterrupted revolution by stages, whereupon the bourgeois democratic revolution would grow over, would evolve, would be transformed at a determinate stage, into a socialist revolution, Trotsky held that the democratic revolution would place in power **the proletariat alone**, which would from the start, from the very earliest stages of its rule, abolish bourgeois property relations. In his '1905' Trotsky explicitly invoked Lassalle who held the view that 'no struggle in Europe can be successful unless, from the start it declares itself to be purely socialist.' Trotsky's was thus a mechanical one-stage scheme.

Shan gets half marks however for his accurate rendition of the allied aspect of Trotsky's 'theory' of P. R. (I for one would prefer

to talk in terms of Trotskyist ideology rather than theory, since 'theory' is scientific while Trotskyism is not. Trotskyism is a manifestation of false consciousness and is therefore 'ideological.' In it "men and their circumstance appear upside down, as in a camera obscura") P.R., as Shan correctly says, held that Socialist revolution in Russia could be safeguarded only in the arena of international revolution. Shan next goes on to do something absolutely hilarious. He sets out the Maoist 'theory' of World Revolution which we find is no different from the Trotskyist view which Shan purports to reject! Shan says that "if the latter (i.e., the final victory of the world revolution) is delayed and socialist countries are forced to exist in a world where imperialist countries dominate the possibility exists of imperialism corrupting socialism—as has already happened." It may be that I am very dense but I simply cannot see any significant difference between this statement and the Trotskyist interpretation of **may be embarrassed, for different reasons, to be reminded of this, but it is a fact that Lev Davidovich himself had dropped heavy hints of a possible restoration of capitalism in the USSR and the crystallization of the bureaucracy into a bourgeois ruling class.** Burnham, Schatman and a letterly Tony Cliff have only made explicit that which was implicit in 'The Revolution Betrayed'. The pamphlets of Yao Wen-Yuan and Chang Chung Chiao, which comprise the most detailed exposition of the Maoist view of capitalist restoration in the USSR, are an extension of the Trotskyist account. Only the chronology is different.

Stalin, for his part, envisaged the possibility of a transition **from socialism to Communism in one country**, particularly in in one as large as the Soviet Union and he argued that the State would survive even in the period of Communism, if Capitalist encirclement is not liquidated. This view originates in his report to the 18th Congress (1939), but was clearly formulated in 1946. It is

quite contrary to the Trotskyist-Maoist position.

I am glad that my remarks have served the purpose of forcing Comrade Shan to make an implicit choice between Stalin and Maoism, at least on the crucial issue of socialist construction. Shan claims to have defended Stalin for a long time. Seniority however, is no guarantee against opportunism—as Katsky and Plekhanov have proven. Furthermore, Comrade Shan's failure to discern and defend Stalin's theoretical contributions to the development of Marxism-Leninism in the new historical conditions (as Le Duan and Enver Hoxha are doing) would go a long way in explaining his political failure and the emergence of the JVP challenging, however crudely, the tenets of ossified Maoism, which, though relevant to colonial and semi-colonial countries, have virtually no relevance to neocolonial capitalist socio-economic formations. If Shan's defence of Stalin had not been limited to the latter's historical role but had also extended to his outstanding contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory, then comrade Shan would have been able to comprehend phenomena that he is still unable to, namely, the changed character of the national bourgeoisie and consequently, the changed 'stage of the revolution' in the post WW II period. It is in place of this recognition of **Stalin as theoretician**, do we find the elevation of Mao as the continuator of Marxism-Leninism, leading to the creation of the ideological construct 'Mao tse Tung Thought.' With 'defenders' like Mao and N. Sanmugathasan, Stalin hardly needs enemies! It is no wonder that the reversal of de-Stalinization has proved, and is proving, easier in the USSR than in China. This is due to two reasons—firstly the economic basis of socialism is much stronger in the USSR than in the PRC (which has not yet built socialism and therefore still faces a possibility of capitalist restoration). Secondly, de-Stabil-

(Continued on page 23)



# How the Western press works

by Ian Jack (on the Olympics — Sunday Times, London 27.7.80)

**WE** WERE seated one night last week at the bar of the Peking Hotel, Moscow, and smoking a particularly foul type of Cuban cigarette. My American companion asked the barman if he stocked something milder, maybe a Russian brand. The barman said no. On the other hand, he had this excellent Chinese Variety: Golden Pine, manufactured at the Wuhan cigarette factory. Or we could try one from his own packet: Marlborough, made under licence in the Soviet Union.

This information made by companion laugh in a knowing and cynical way. He said: "China and the States are supposed to be practically at war with these guys—and here we are selling them cigarettes." It just went to show: President Carter's boycott of the Moscow Olympics was a phoney and he—Stave Mason, sports fan, of Portland, Oregon—was right to ignore it. He said he'd begun ringing up the White House as soon as he heard a boycott was likely. He knew he had to come to Moscow when one day a voice answered with the words "Boycott Desk." In Mason's words: "A whole department... I suddenly realised I was paying taxes to pay guys to ruin my vacation."

Marson wears a red, white and blue baseball cap. He is one of about 900 Americans who are in Moscow for the games, fewer than a tenth of the number originally booked. They have each paid \$2,400 for the trip, and their reasons for being in Russia seems to be a mixture of curiosity, Olympian fanaticism and thrift; a post boycott cancellation would have cost them several hundred dollars.

They are gathered, many of them, in the Peking Hotel, whose name and decor date from the days of Stalin and Sino-Soviet friendship. It is a lofty and forbidding block

embellished with turrets and pinacles; and the Americans pad through its silent halls circumspectly, in sneakers.

That night, after an afternoon spent watching hefty women from eastern Europe putting the shot, they went padding towards the dining room. A band of three youths with electric guitars played western pop, but there were few diners and no dancers.

I took a seat recently vacated by the most visible American in Moscow, Roland Stewart, a born-again Christian who stands outside the Olympic press centre most days and strives to catch attention with rainbow-striped wig and T-shirt emblazoned with the words "Jesus saves." Other Americans wear national regalia—one sports writer, for example, is said to sport a T-shirt declaring "I'm a KGB agent" and others again have made their views known discreetly.

A young woman tourist told me she had recently shouted "dirty commies" through her hotel window. But that was into the empty Moscow streets at four in the morning after a night on the vodka. Stewart remains the only American who, so far, can be said to have mounted some kind of public demonstration.

His dining companions are quieter. In fact they behave in a very unAmerican way. They have come prepared for the worst—greasy soup, no bathplugs, small microphones trucked into the flower pot—and are pleasantly surprised to find little of this, or at least little that is visible. They complain neither about the food nor the coffee. Like many western visitors to the games, both tourists and media people, they have become reflective and wary of judgment.

From one man: "Sure security is heavy, but you expect that at Olympic after Munich." From another: "Have you seen anybody

with a gun since we got here? In Montreal they ALL had guns."

Like most of us, they realise that these games, like all recent Olympics, have been used by the host country as an expensive exercise in public relations. Like most of us, they suspect that everyday life for the Soviet citizen has been cloaked in a heavy disguise. But, again like most of us, they have found it difficult to ascertain the average Soviet citizen's views. Barriers of language and suspicion are not easily breached, especially when citizens have been told on television and in the press that many of us are CIA agents.

Moscow itself is hardly awash with night spots, after you have seen the Bolshoi. But then again, it is hardly the ghastly place you read about back home. One point on which there is mutual agreement: the Russians have tried hard.

Hotels, especially those occupied by the 5,000 press, radio and TV people, have been well stocked with Siberian Salmon Finnish vodka, Moroccan oranges, French brandy. Telephones and the metro are free to journalists. The operator at the English-language exchange answers: "This is the Moscow telephone service listening to you very attentively."

The Metro has, temporarily, announcements in English too—"Mind the doors." To describe it is to sound like great Aunt Mildred's account of Mussolini's well-timed trains or Bernard Shaw's version of Stalin, and the whole show has put the western media in a difficult dilemma—as, presumably, it was meant to.

The western media has not always resolved this dilemma convincingly. Take for example, the Olympic opening ceremony: magnificent, if you like that kind of thing. Bill Ward, the head of the operations in Moscow for

Europe's Olympic coverage, says it was the most spectacular he has seen since he began covering the games 32 years ago. Yet, viewers in western Europe saw only a fraction of the three hour ceremony, chiefly the most formal and boring part; frustrated producers saw good pictures go to waste.

Soviet newspapers told their readers last week that the curtailed coverage in the West was part of a plot to discredit the games which elsewhere had helped to "dissipate anti-Soviet prejudice." And in a way, of course, they are right. Many British sports reporters in Moscow moaned long and bitterly last week that their London offices were requiring them to doctor copy to suit the needs of pro-boycott editorial lines. Take out reference to gorgeous Georgian gymnasts, insert descriptions of troops in serried ranks,

Angry words passed up and down the line to Fleet Street and, for that matter, across the bars of Moscow. Earlier last week I was distressed to hear a sports writer from The Times (gorgeous gymnasts) tell a feature writer from the Daily Mail (stone-faced troops in serried ranks) that his piece "made him puke". Thus also with the small affray in Red Square, when an Italian demonstrating in favour of gay rights was seized and deported, and several photographers had their film snatched by plain-clothes police. "I have never been so scared in my life," the Sun photographer told Sun readers. Others said they had witnessed worse at the Notting Hill carnivals.

No doubt this kind of disclosure will serve only as further evidence to the Soviet people that the columns of Western newspapers are controlled by hard-faced capitalists. Already, comrade Vladimir Popov, vice-president of the games' organising committee, is trying to prove that Western governments are hindering favourable reporting of the games by interfering with telex and telephone calls. So far he has not met with great success. At a press conference last week, he solicited complaints and received

mild one from my colleague on The Sunday Times sports pages, Norman Harris.

Harris said he had waited eight hours for a connection to London. Some days later, he got a call from the Ministry of Communications. It had been a fault at the Soviet end. The operator responsible, Harris was alarmed to hear, had been punished and instructed to be more polite and attentive in future.

The Russians try too hard. I am grateful for my free cuddly -doll version of the Olympic mascot, Mischa the bear, but it was a mistake to invite me on the tour of the VI Lenin Collective Vegetable Farm.

And it was an even greater mistake for comrade Popov to solicit applause from his daily press conference for the first Vietnamese in space, Hero of Socialist Labour, Pham Tuan.

All weeks, Popov has been encouraging us to distinguish politics from sport, which is what the foolish Americans have refused to do, and now he wants us to salute comrade Tuan.

The boycott, it may be remembered, had three original aims: to signify western displeasure at the invasion of Afghanistan; to persuade the Soviet Union to withdraw; and to inform the Soviet people that their government had contravened international law and human rights. The first was a success, the second a failure. The third is more difficult to quantify, but few in Moscow think it has worked.

True, Brezhnev has stayed away on holiday on the Black Sea coast, apart from his brief appearance at the opening ceremony, and this might be interpreted as

some kind of victory for the west. But, in the words of a television director here: "The Russians are seeing their athletes win gold after gold; they're hearing their national anthem; they're getting what they want."

In the stands of the Lenin Stadium last week, we watched the Italian winner of the 20-kilometre walk being awarded his gold medal I pointed out to Steve Masod, in his American baseball cap, that the tune we were hearing was the Olympic hymn rather than the Italian national anthem.

"Oh really," he said.

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## Has capitalism . . .

*(Continued from page 21)*

zation in China took a much more fully worked out ideological form, manifested in Mao tse Tung Thought, which proved more durable (until recently) than its variant Khrushchevism. A re-Stalinization would necessitate a through critique of Mao Thought.

A word about the politics of isolation. It is one thing to be isolated from the petty bourgeois political formations. It is altogether another thing to be isolated materially and morally from the proletarian vanguards in power in countries that embrace a third of the world's population. It is this latter that is Comrade Shan's predicament i.e. total estrangement from all the victorious revolutions ranging from Hanoi to Managua. And by the way, I for one, do not consider Comrade Shan to be 'isolated' any longer from the SLFP....

In conclusion I beseech Comrade Shan to abandon his evasive guerrilla tactics, which as Gramsci says are applicable in warfare but unsuited to debate, and reply my central questions concerning Chinese foreign policy and Mao's personal responsibility for its re-orientation, which were raised in L. G. May 1st 1980.

# 'Parithyagaya' — Who sacrifices what and to whom?

That the practise of asking for, and giving, a dowry for a girl on her marriage is equivalent to the act of actually selling her, has long been recognised by progressives, even liberals, all over the world. Thus, when, in a country like Sri Lanka, where the dowry system prevails even today, a film is advertised as being 'anti-dowry', it naturally generates a certain amount of interest in the committed film-goer. This is what happened with 'Parithyagaya', the film by H. D. Premaratna which is now being screened in Colombo. 'Dowry banned!', blared out the pre-release posters; the radio advertisements too spoke of the inequity and inhumanity of the dowry system. And so many of us who had long felt the need to agitate against the practice of dowry giving rushed to see 'Parithyaga', hoping to find it an expression of condemnation of a system that treats women as mere objects to be bought and sold at the behest of their elders. But what did we find?

'Parithyagaya' sets out to tell a story about two young girls, sisters who are growing up in a village in Sri Lanka. They are poor (?) and fatherless. The boyfriend of the elder girl, a school teacher, has a mother who demands Rs. 10,000/- as a dowry, as her just due for having brought him up and educated him thus far. The girl's family does not have this sum. Disaster beckons. The younger sister's boyfriend comes to the rescue; he steals tools from the automobile workshop where he works and thus collects the money for his intended sister-in-law's dowry. The wedding takes place, the giving of the dowry being the most significant part of the entire ceremony. The bridal couple leave, as the Police

turn up to arrest the younger boy. It is he who becomes the sacrifice — 'parithyaga'.

Being apparently overcome by the opportunity to show off the natural beauty of Sri Lanka in colour, the director seems to have concentrated his efforts on making an eye-catching film, 'sacrificing' relevance to superficiality. Thus, it is really quite difficult to figure out who is poor and who not, since all the houses are equally dazzling in coats of fresh white-wash and all the actors equally glamorous in bright new clothes. The house of the two girls is very large, by village standards, and substantially furnished. They possess a vegetable plot that looks as if it could furnish the entire city with its vegetable needs single-handed. The girls dress fashionably and, all in all, their poverty is restricted to the mere telling of it.

This is not to say that the film does not have its positive features. It is, for the most part, restrained — performances, music, direction — all. It is only in a few scenes like, for example, the first visit of the school teacher's mother to the girl's home, where it deteriorates to the point of being excessive. In the style common to most Sinhala films of today. But let's get down to the nitty-gritty — Dowry.

Nowhere in the film is there a condemnation of the dowry system. In fact, the entire film could be taken to be full of apologies for it. The mealy-mouthed hypocrisy of the school master, who protests that he

doesn't want the money, it's his mother; his argument to the younger boy that may be, really, it's his mother's due return on the investment she made on his education; the younger boy's sympathy for him and the efforts of the entire family to collect the sum of Rs. 10,000/-; all point to the fact that the dowry is some invincible demon that has to be appeased. Dowry becomes a problem to the characters in the film only because they do not have the money to pay it with. If they could afford to, they would cough up the whole sum unquestioningly. As it is, poverty-stricken though they may be, they are prepared to go to great lengths in order to fulfill this dastardly commitment. And at no point does any one of the characters, young or old, question the principle — the morality — of reducing a personal relationship to cash terms. And even though the teacher's mother's asking for, and getting, a dowry is caricatured all along, it is scarcely a comment strong enough to overcome the silent and passive acquiescence of the four members of the younger generation to this social anomaly.

May be Premaratna started off with a correct awareness of the situation and genuinely wanted to make a film about the injustice and inhumanity of the dowry system. Unfortunately for him, by not creating at least one character who could confront the pro-dowry coterie with some strength of character and thereby balance the two points of view, he has 'sacrificed' an excellent theme to the altar of superficial beauty and mediocrity.

— Sunila Abeysekera



# Foundations laid for the Bolshevik Party

by G. B. Keerawella

Lenin closely watched the processes going on in the international working class movement. In his articles he showed how opportunism was growing in the Second International. He waged an implacable struggle against this opportunist and revisionist tendency. Lenin pointed out clearly that this deviation emanated mainly from the petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers of the working class movement and from the "aristocracy of labour", the upper stratum of the working class which had been bribed by the bourgeoisie. At the meetings of the International Socialist Bureau, Lenin fought for a revolutionary line, criticized Kautsky's revisionist policy, supported the Dutch Left Social-Democrats, and defended Rosa Luxemburg when she was attacked by the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party. In August 1910 Lenin attended The Copenhagen Congress of the Second International. In its proceedings he took an active part and during the congress he called a conference of the left wing delegates for the purpose of organising the revolutionary sector in the international working class movement.

In the summer of 1911 Lenin opened a party school in Longjumeau, near Paris, where he lectured to the workers on political economy, and the theory and practice of socialism. Under the new circumstances, Lenin now strongly emphasized that it was impossible for the Bolshevik and the Mensheviks to remain in one party any longer. The situation demanded complete rupture with the Mensheviks. To fulfil this aim Lenin succeeded in getting a meeting of the central committee called and a decision carried in favour of convening a party conference. This conference was held in Prague, in January, 1912. Lenin personally directed its proceedings and delivered the

main reports. This conference expelled the Mensheviks from the Party and laid the foundations of the Party of a new type, the Party of Leninism, the Bolshevik Party.

This Prague conference was held at the time when the working class movement in Russia was beginning to revive. A great fillip had been given the movement by the tragedy in the Lena goldfield. "The Lena shootings served as the stimulus which transformed the revolutionary temper of the masses into the revolutionary upsurge of the masses". In this situation it became increasingly difficult to direct Pravda (Bolshevik Legal Daily), and growing working class movement from Paris. Then Lenin left for Cracow on June 19, 1912 and stayed there until the world war broke out in 1914. During this period he devoted his attention to Pravda. Nearly every day he wrote articles for Pravda and these articles were of immense service in guiding the party and the working class movement in developing their socialist consciousness.

At the end of 1912 a joint conference of the central committee and the Party officials was arranged. The proceedings of the conference were directed by Lenin. He drafted and edited the resolutions and formulated the Party's tactics in the period of the revolutionary revival. In this situation it was urgent need to popularize the party's fundamental slogans, i.e. a democratic republic, confiscation of all the landlord estates, and an 8-hour working day. This conference showed that the Bolshevik party had grown and gained strength.

In the middle of 1913 Lenin began to work on the national question. Among the numerous articles Lenin has written "critical remarks on the National

Question" (1913) and "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (Feb 1914) were very important. Here Lenin furiously attacked the Black Hundreds', Great Russian jingoism, and national oppression pursued by the tsarist government. In his articles he made it quite clear that the right of nations to self-determination means the right of subject nations to secede and form independent states.

The two years Lenin stayed at Cracow was very important. These two years saw the mighty revival of the working class movement and the rapid growth of the Bolshevik Party.

When the first world war broke out Lenin was in Poronino, Galicia. On August 8, 1914 he was arrested by the Austrian police, but was released on August 19. Lenin got permission to leave Austria for neutral Switzerland.

Just after he arrived in Berne Lenin addressed a meeting of the group of Bolsheviks on the party's attitude towards the war. In this statement, "Thesis on the War" Lenin answered the basic questions on the war, viz, the character of the war and task of the working class during the war. In another article entitled "The War and Russian Social Democracy", he urged "Transform the imperialist war into civil war, into war against the bourgeoisie and landlords! Instead of social-chauvinist policy of defending the bourgeoisie fatherland, defeat your own imperialist government."

In February 1915, Lenin conducted a conference of the Bolshevik group abroad in Berne. At this conference Lenin delivered a report entitled "The War and the Task of the Party." The war situation created new and urgent problems to the Party cadres. Lenin provided solutions for these problems in an article entitled "A Few Thesis" published in

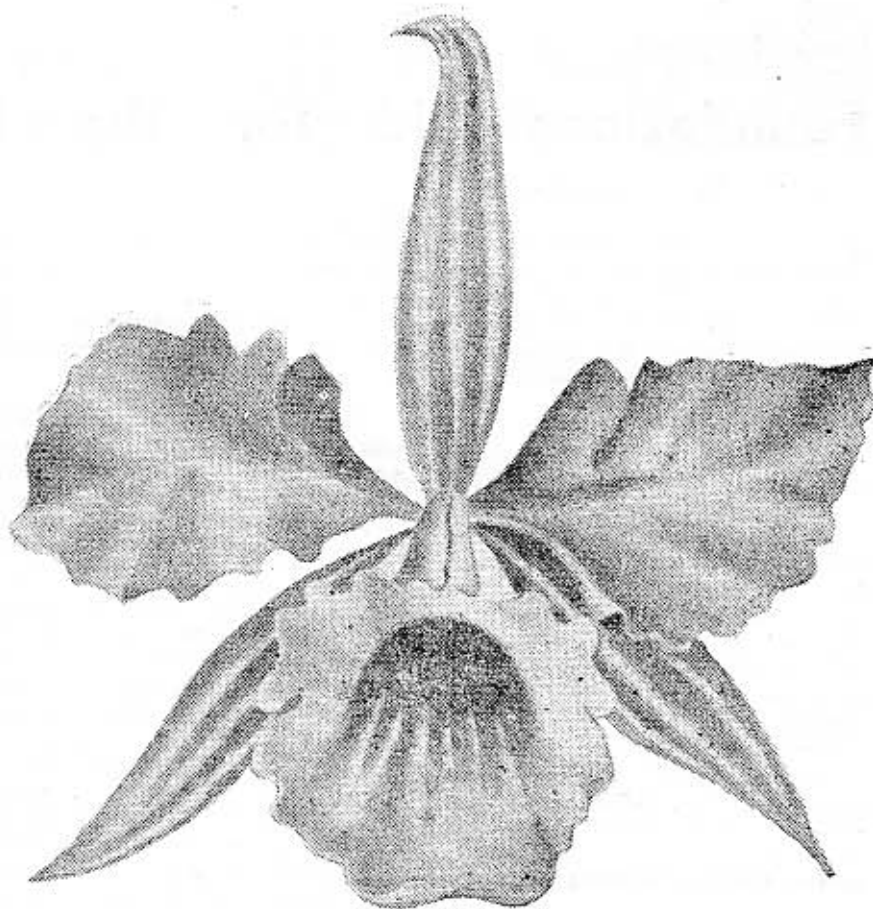
Sotsial-Demokrat in the autumn of 1915. There he formulated the task of the Party and defined its tactics and slogans in the struggle for the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia and for its conversion into the Socialist revolution. At the same time (1914-15) he resumed his studies of the works of Hegel, Aristotle and Feuerbach. These excerpts, and his commentaries on them, constitute Lenin's famous Philosophical Notebook.

Lenin brought his mind to bear upon the whole gamut of complex problems which arose with the new historical era of imperialism. The product of this was Lenin's famous book **'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism'**. Marx analysed the foundations of capitalism in **Capital**. Lenin was the first to make a thorough and all-embracing Marxist analysis of Imperialism, the highest and last stage in the development of capitalism. In an Article on **"The United States of Europe Slogan"** in August 1915 he wrote that the Imperialist war had created a revolutionary situation. The question of the proletarian revolution and of the proletariat capturing power was on the order of the day.

Now Lenin's activities were directed towards preparing the working class and its party ideologically and organizationally for the fight for the socialist revolution. Lenin carefully collected and brought to light all that Marx and Engels has written on the State. Lenin purged the tenets of Marxism of their opportunist distortions and elaborated them in the light of the new experiences and the new conditions of the class struggle. The fruit of this effort was his great work **'The State and Revolution'**.

On January 22, 1917 Lenin delivered a lecture at a meeting of young workers in Zurich on the 1905 Revolution. He said "The present grave-like stillness in Europe must not deceive us. Europe is charged with revolution." In March the revolution broke out in Russia—the weakest link in the imperialist chain!

(Continued on page 28)



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# God can do it again

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Church at the end of the Twentieth Century* by Francis A. Schaeffer. Published by Inter-Varsity Press.

*Jesus Rediscovered* by Malcolm Muggeridge. Published by Fontana Books.

After experimenting with welfarism for the best part of thirty years, we in Sri Lanka have called it quits and moved into full-blooded capitalism. We saw that welfarism failed both in its ideals and its efficacy. On the other hand many Western thinkers will tell us that capitalism has failed over there and they are now trying to tinker about with welfarism. Britain's post-war experience with the Labour Party epitomises this trend.

Yet basically, all of this is juggling around with various 'brands' of materialism. Materialism when it is individualistic is called capitalism, when it is compassionate it is called welfarism and when it is altruistic it is called socialism. We seem lost in the labyrinth of materialism, smothered really by the culture of our day—things not people.

When reviewing Muggeridge's book *Jesus: The man who lives*, Edward Carpenter in *The New Statesman*, remarked that "Muggeridge as usual writes like an angel." But if we were to stop short at the lucidity of the language and the humour of the polemics we would be missing the kernel of what this profound writer of our age is trying to tell us in the twilight of his earthly existence. Muggeridge is passionate in his conviction that there can and must be liberation from the materialist trap into which modern man has fallen. "The only ultimate disaster that can befall us is to feel ourselves to be at home here on earth."

### On the run

The ongoing attack on the establishment that characterises

our political life is not an attack on materialism or its values. It is often a shallow game of musical chairs which brings deliverance to few and peace to none. "If there is one thing more unedifying than a ruling class in a position of dominance, it is a ruling class like ours on the run."

Muggeridge is vitriolic in his indictment of the churches. Clerical christianity he dismisses as "a folding screen behind which the christian evades the real strenuousness of being a christian."

At eighty he writes "I am conscious of having being ruled by buffoons, taught by idiots, preached at by hypocrites and preyed upon by charlatans in the guise of advertisers." He characterises journalism, a profession he excelled at as something that "permits one to be a power-voyeur, peering through key holes at the antics of the great, and deriving therefrom little spasm of obscene excitement."

Behind the cynicism and the scathing pen is a mind that is clear and penetrating, seeing beyond the horizon of this earthly kingdom. And instead of the cancer of materialism, the virus of possession and the intoxication of power, we can only find God and ourselves if we "worship defeat, not victory; failure, not success; surrender, not defiance; deprivation not satiety; weakness not strength. We are to lose our lives in order to keep them; to die in order to live."

From the vantage point of the BBC, seeing the world going to pieces around him, Muggeridge may be excused for his sense of despair. Francis Schaeffer whom I would characterise as the most significant philosopher of the second half of our century, is observing the world from his retreat L'Abri, in Switzerland.

### Bed rock

He identifies the two major currents in our age as the "Establishment Right" and the

"New Left". John Kenneth Galbraith in *The New Industrial State* advocates this answer to the chaos around us an academic and scientific elite plus the state. Plato's philosopher kings return.

At the other end of the spectrum is the New Left to which Herbert Marcuse gave leadership—it too gives us an authoritarian elite. But neither of these polarities have absolute values—they merely respond empirically to the crises of our times.

On the other hand the Evangelical Christian, emphasises Dr. Schaeffer, has a solid bed rock of absolute values. To him ethics are not a function of situations. They are seminal to his ideology.

If the Church is prepared to take its stand upon absolute values then it will survive whilst the transitory currents of today ebb away. But that requires revolutionary determination—a commitment to truth and holiness.

"To young people who want a revolution, I would say this: You cannot be a revolutionary simply by letting your hair grow and growing a beard.

"To be a real revolutionary you must become involved in a real revolution—a revolution in which you are pitted against everybody who has turned away from God and his propositional revelation to men, against even the users of the God-words, a revolution in which we may again hope to see good results not only in individuals going to heaven but in Christ who is Lord becoming Lord in fact in this culture of ours to give us even in this fallen world something of both truth and beauty."

— J. S.



# Madness and the family

AS I  
LIKE IT

Touchstone

I was one of those film-goers who thought the technical skill of **Gehenu Lamai** didn't make up for its idealisation of the submissive heroine who sacrifices her happiness on the altar of family and class. It is pleasant, therefore, to be able to report that Sumitra Peries's new film, **Ganga Addara**, is a great advance on her first venture. Even as a piece of film-making **Ganga Addara** is tighter, the narrative is well structured, and the beauty of the photography contrasts poignantly with its tragic theme. But above all, **Ganga Addara** is a much more meaningful film than **Gehenu Lamai**. Though Vasanthi Chathurani is again the passive victim, there is no equivocation here about the attitude we are to adopt towards the family domination which drives her to madness and destruction.

**Ganga Addara** is, of course, not **Family Life**, but it would be irrational to expect anything as uncompromising as Ken Loach's film at this stage of our industry. Moreover, in making such comparisons, we must remember that **Family Life** is the kind of film that is seen, even in Britain, only by minority audiences. **Ganga Addara** in a sense, is more significant because, like all our films, it is made for mass audiences and to be screened in the ordinary circuits, and has therefore a potentially greater value in influencing popular thinking. Indeed, in making the first Sinhala film which brings out the essential relation between madness and family domination, Sumithra Peries has made a very significant contribution to our cinema.

A few reservations: I didn't find a single performance in the film outstanding (even Vasanthi Chathurani's I wouldn't grade at more than a B-plus). I didn't think a doctor who had read Freud etc. would be as inept in declaring his love for a mental pa-

tient who had recently recovered as Vijaya Kumaratunga was made to be. And not a criticism this, but a suggestion: I don't complain about the heroine of **Ganga Addara** being a submissive victim because this was made plausible in terms of period and milieu, but I hope Mrs. Peries in her third film will make use of her undoubted directorial talents to explore the more active and rebellious world of young Sri Lankan womanhood today.

## Catharsis

Mr. J. Uyangoda is wrong. In criticising **Uthumaneni** as promoting dangerous illusions, I wasn't demanding that it should 'draw attention to the collapse of the bankrupt capitalist system.' I entirely agree with Reggie Siriwardena's observation that Mr. Uyangoda recommends to me that an artist is not obliged to serve on a platter the resolution of the social conflicts he presents.

But, without asking for ready-made answers, are we precluded from judging a film by the impact it is directed towards making on its audience? It seems to me that in the 'Social Problem' films made within the commercial formula—whether here or in Bombay or in Hollywood—there are two broad types. One is the kind of film where in the last reel, everything is solved by the intervention of chance, a Good Samaritan or a change of heart on the part of the villain, and hero and heroine live happily ever after. The second is the kind of film where the hero avenges himself bloodily on his persecutors and enemies, and often perishes in doing so. Superficially, the first has a happy ending and the second seems to be tragic. But both types are essentially akin, because both effect an emotional catharsis in the audience which serves to reinforce the social order: both bring the audience a kind of satisfaction and re-assurance in guaranteeing that

always, in some way, the poor and good triumph (either substantially or morally) over the rich and wicked. Isn't the popularity of **Uthumaneni** due to the fact that the audience walks away feeling 'bloody good those bastards got it in the end!'

## Lenin...

(Continued from page 26)

Lenin analysed the revolutionary events in Russia in his "**Letters from Afar**". He regarded the Provisional Government as a bourgeois imperialist government and described the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies as a workers government in embryo. The overthrow of the autocracy was the first stage of the revolution. The Party's task was to accelerate the conversion of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a Socialist Revolution.

In this situation Lenin was impatient to return to Russia to take direct part in the revolutionary events. He decided to return to Russia via Germany on leaving Switzerland. Lenin wrote "**A Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers**". On the morning of April 14, Lenin arrived in Stockholm and on the evening of the same day he left for Russia.

Lenin's first meeting with the workers took place at Byelo-Ostrev station, on April 16. On April 16, Lenin arrived in Petrograd. Now the leader of the revolution took his place at the helm. On April 1917 he addressed a meeting of the leading Party workers in the Taurida Palace on the subject of war and revolution. Later he read the thesis of his address at the meeting of the Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates to the All-Russian Conference of Soviets. These were the famous '**April Thesis**'.

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