

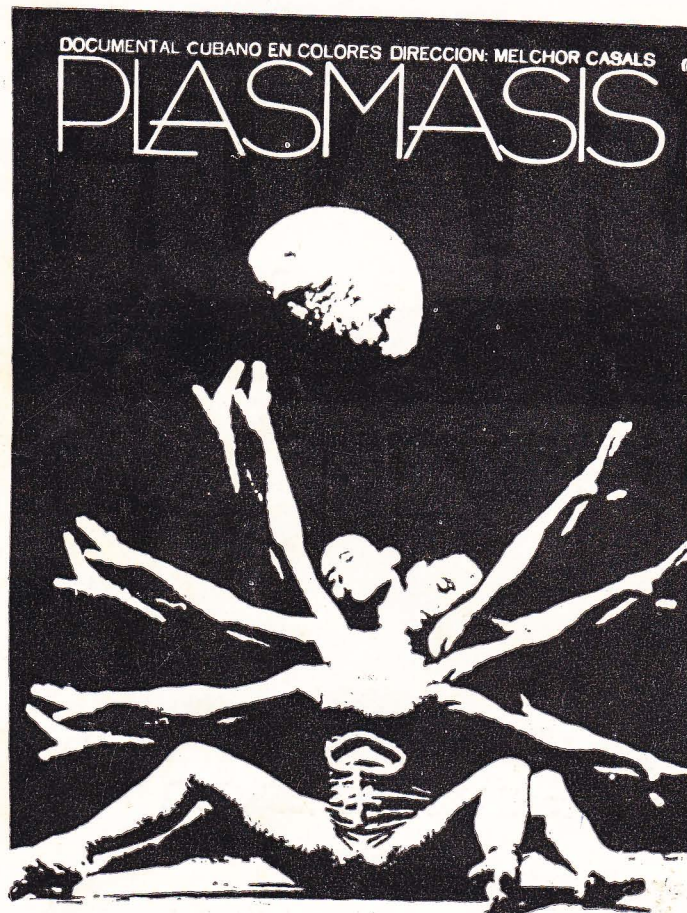
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JULIOELOY 74

A DECADE OF CUBAN CINEMA

— *Laleen Jayamanne*

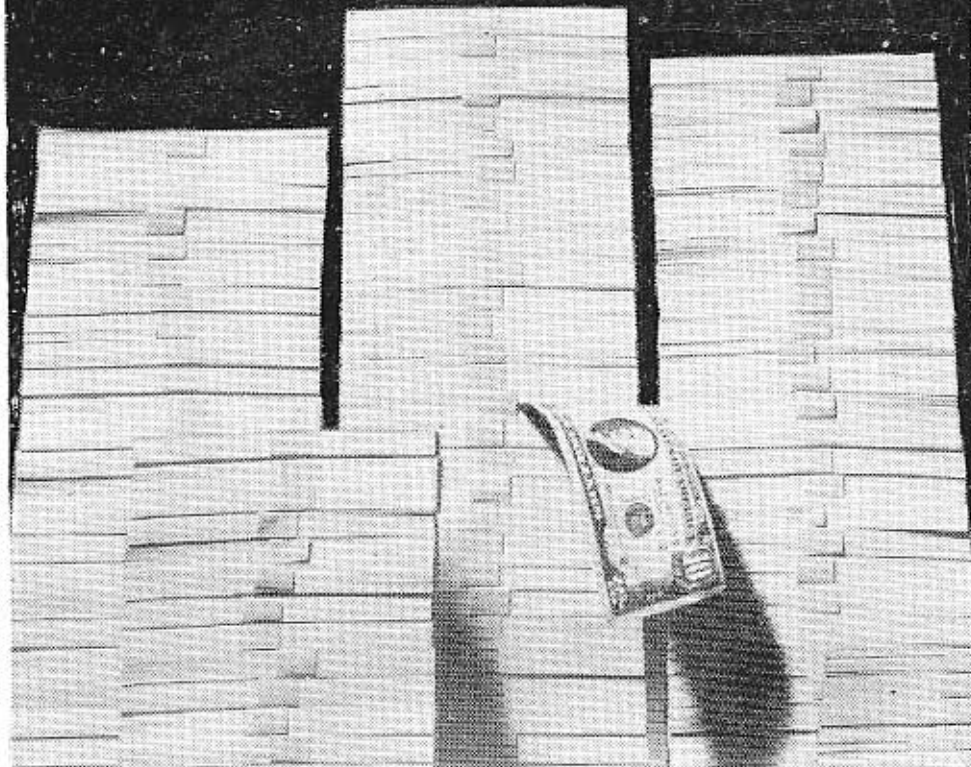
POLITICS TODAY

- * **UNP** : End of Euphoria
- * **SLFP** : Trouble at the Top
- * **CP** : Restive Radicals
- * **JVP** : Tangled ideological roots

ALSO:

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- Tobacco workers — Gail Omvedt
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ROHANA TAKES A HAND

While the SLFP and the old Left continue to charge the JVP of a 'tactical understanding' (unwritten) with the UNP, Rohana Wijeweera in fact has been content to play a game of solitaire, so to say, ever since President JR pardoned the jailed leaders of the once proscribed JVP. He has resisted the temptation to sit at the big table of national politics and play poker with the veterans.

A fortnight ago, however, he threw himself into the thick of the crisis (mainly economic) now confronting the UNP and the escalating conflict (entirely political and personal) in the SLFP. At the Hyde Park rally he tore into the so-called Singapore model of development, lambasted Lee Kuan Yew, exposed what he called the Lee-Upali connection and the Upali connection with both the UNP and SLFP "family leadership".

In his own distinctive oratorical style, accompanied of course by platform pyrotechnics he hammered the Bandaranaike-Ratwatte clan and called on the "non-inheritors" in the SLFP to have the "guts" to rid the party of "the cobwebs of feudalism".

Says a Vidyodaya don with JVP sympathies: "Rohana may not have any natural allies but he has natural enemies. He knows that next time, Mrs. B. will put him inside and keep the key in her handbag".

It is interesting that he picked on Upali who is not even an MP. But it is no secret that Upali is the pet target of a powerful faction in the UNP and this group is also fiercely anti-Sirima.

SACEP

So, 8 South Asian nations have formed SACEP with a Secretariat in Colombo. Though this co-operative endeavour is limited to environment, it is undoubtedly the first practical step to the broader move for a South Asian forum. An initiative of Bangladesh President Ziaur Rah-

man, it was enthusiastically endorsed by President JR who offered Colombo as a venue for the first meeting. It will take place in April at senior officials level.

Overcoming its initial reluctance, India has supported the move. Bangladesh Foreign Minister recently spoke of this 'forum' as another ASEAN. But that's much too premature. It may even be slightly utopian although there are some areas where fruitful co-operation is possible.

BALL GAME

Foreign Minister Hameed, whom at least one Arab news paper presents as Abdul Qader (as in Qadafi) Sha al-Hameed (as in Hafeez al-Assad), called the Palestinian issue 'the football' of the big powers. Is this not true of the Tamil issue too?

The UNP role in 1957-8 and the SLFP role in 1965-66 are facts of history. When the UNP proposed Development Councils, prominent SLFP'ers started their favourite musical pastime.....beating the communal drum, and blood-curdling oaths were taken in Kandy by old warriors of the Sinhala-Buddhist cause.

And now the SLFP has had some joint meetings, along with many other parties, in which the TULF participated. The UNP now wants to know whether the SLFP has conceded Eelam!

Martin Bormann

The article: "Is Martin Bormann Dead?" by Jayantha Somasundaram, (L. G., January 15th and February 1st) has provoked the Ambassador of FRG into a pathetic, feverish retort.

He has cited the merits and achievements of Willy Brandt and deliriously speaks of anti-Communism to side-track the issue. The character of a society cannot be judged merely by the history of one individual: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate or not.

Does the Ambassador deny the fact that monopoly capital in the form of Krupps Thyssens and other huge companies were the main source for the emergence of fascism in Germany in the thirties?

Does he deny that these powerful forces are now encouraged and patronised to the hilt by the present ruling groups even under the SDP.

Will he deny that militarism and aggressive alliances are given wider currency under the rule of SDP? Has not the same party approved the deployment of Nuclear warheads in Europe by America which endangers peace?

(Continued on page 24)

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GROPING IN THE DARK

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Current crisis. Power failure. Energy shortage. What with 4 hour power-cuts and more extensive cuts predicted, political columnists and correspondents in the mainstream media can be excused for not resisting the temptation of facile puns.

Past the midway mark in its parliamentary term, the most powerful government we have had is projecting an image of being powerless, of running out of energy and of groping in the dark for solutions to the economic problems which now threaten to overwhelm it. The mainstream media placed the entire blame for our economic discontents on imported inflation — at best, a half truth. With even less reason it is been argued that fickle and unkindly rain gods are responsible for the present power shortage. In fact the problem has very much to do with economic policy.

In the early 70's our own experts predicted a "power crisis" at the end of the decade. The U.F's Minister of Irrigation and Power presented a cabinet paper on this subject and in the follow-up action sounded the World Bank and the ADB for aid. Since these two agencies were supporting other projects, the UF government concluded in February 1975 an agreement with the Soviet Union for the construction of the Samanelawewa Power Project. When completed it would have generated 120 mega-watts of power — an annual firm production of 398 million kilo-watt hours, while secondary energy averaging approximately 30 million kilo-watt hours annually would also have become available.

Appreciating the urgency of the situation and the impending crisis a top level team of Sri Lankan experts, led by professor. K. K. Y. W. Perera, urged the new (UNP) government to give the project the highest priority. Their report was submitted to the government on 5/9/77.

When this same situation arose last year, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, the former Minister of Irrigation and Power, stated in a challenging letter to the press: "Had this scheme been accelerated as had been recommended by this Government's own team of experts, (September 1977) which it appointed after it came into power, the country would have had an adequate power supply by 1980, and this unfortunate situation need not have arisen. Further, there would have been no need to rush desperately to purchase gas turbines at colossal prices which has now given room for certain rumours."

Why was the Samanelawewa Project abandoned? Since Soviet troops had not entered Afghanistan that particular argument could hardly have been adduced to please or placate NATO or Sri Kotha's Singaporean, South Korean friends. And yet at phenomenal cost, gas turbines were ordered. Last week the CEB was pleading with the Treasury to use the grace period to pay for these turbines under the French line of credit. Accusing the government of lack of foresight, lack of planning and gross inefficiency, Mr. M. Senanayake also underlined a new factor which aggravated the situation, i. e. the Free Trade Zone, liberalized imports and what is generally known as our Singaporean model of growth. (An article in this journal by U. Karunatilake examined the integral link between this new pattern of growth and power consumption).

But all this was part of the post-election euphoria. the naive conviction that aid would keep flowing in, and we would not be called upon some day to obey the "laws" inherent in such courses of action. The IMF and the World Bank are now telling us what those laws are as the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel recedes steadily from the grand vision of our policy planners.

SLFP — A matter of recognition

When the 118 member Working Committee of the SLFP meets on March 20th, an interpretation of the Parliamentary Elections Act No. 1 of 1981 which was certified on 22nd January but was "proclaimed" only on February 16th and its legal and political consequences for the party will dominate the day's discussion.

As reported in the L. G. Feb. 15, Mrs. Bandaranaike, the party president, will come armed with legal opinions from several lawyers, notably her chief defence counsel in the more controversial cases she has recently been involved. The view taken by her is that she can function until parliament is dissolved. After that the new disabilities imposed on her on Oct. 17 prevent her from canvassing votes, acting as an agent for a candidate or in any way participating in an election.

Sources close to Mrs. Bandaranaike say that she may announce that she will leave the country for the duration i. e. between nomination and election day.

An equally powerful battery of lawyers has submitted however that the law, as it stands, is arguable, and only the courts can finally decide on the correct interpretation — that is, parliament's intention. Arguing thus, they observe that the SLFP will run serious risks, if the courts rule against the opinion held by Mrs. B's legal advisers. The risk is regarded by the opposing school of thought as more serious than before because political parties have been given three months (May 16th) to apply for "recognition". One of the requirements is that party must submit its list of office-bearers to the Elections Commissioner who grants recognition.

UNP economics — the end of euphoria

Dolefully, an SLFP veteran now in retirement pronounced "the party is finished". Riven by factional strife, the SLFP has still to emerge from its condition of prolonged crisis.

For the UNP too 'the party is over', meaning its good times and spending spree.

A fortnight ago, Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, who in the first years of the UNP regime had shared much of its bouyant hopes of spectacular growth, decided to tell it as it really is. Time was certainly running out, what with the IMF and World Bank teams preparing their final evaluation reports.

The government is truly caught in the crunch. An episode in his recent money-raising tour of seven nations is symptomatic of the situation.

Bonn has picked up the Randenigala project for aid — up to 400 million D-mark. (The economic return on this, according to the World Bank experts, is far higher than some of the associated Mahaveli projects). There's a catch, though. The IBRD wants the UNP to slow down its pace of growth, and IMF, in a supporting role but with a firmer voice, demands that less money is pumped into an "over-heated economy" because inflation has become a nagging anxiety.

So the Finance Minister would like the 400 million D-mark kept in reserve for 1982-83. That places the aid-giver in a spot. The ruling SPD in West Germany, which is facing economic problems of its own, plans to make some budget cuts this year. How then is it to keep aid for one country, Sri Lanka, in reserve? The German MP's are going to howl in protest.

But if this government starts cutting down expenditure and postponing ('re-phasing' is the

euphemistic term) our Ministers and MP's are bound to yell too. After all, the UNP won its massive majority on two issues: jobs and prices. Prices have soared. Some jobs have been given but this has made only a dent in the staggering problem.

But "stricter financial discipline" is the IMF/IBRD prescription. And without IMF payments support, the UNP hasn't a hope in hell to meet the frightening difficulties that will be caused this year by trade deficit, the balance of payments, and the continued depreciation of the rupee which Sri Kotha once boasted would be "one of the strongest currencies in the world"!

Mr. de Mel had one other option — borrowing from the foreign banks. This was his main concern in London. But it didn't work, as he doubtless anticipated. When the IMF 'suspends' relations with a country, the bad word and a chill wind blows through the banking world, and the "outcast" (Sri Lanka) finds itself not-so "credit-worthy".

Using the International Gem Auction as the platform for his melancholy message to the nation (which includes of course his ministerial colleagues and fellow MP's), the Finance Minister said that our trade deficit will be about 20,000 million rupees — exports earning only half of the 40,000 million to be spent on imports, mainly oil, fertiliser, flour and sugar.

The same sad symmetry marks the government's accounts — estimated revenue 14,000 million rupees, expenditure double that.

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The Left's pro-SLFP move — and CP dilemmas

The dominant trend within the Left Movement today is clearly that of a renewed drift or lurch towards the SLFP a la 1964. And this drift seems to be an inexorable one. The predicament of the CPSL is a good indicator.

The United Front coalition government of May 1970 was a product of a 20 year long campaign by the CPSL for the formation of a United Front against the UNP. This was based on a resolution adopted by the CP's fourth Congress held in Matara in 1950. This resolution did however stress the leading role of the working class within the United Front. The formation of the United Left Front in 1963 was a triumph for the CP's efforts. But in 1963 when the LSSP split the ULF for 3 portfolios, the CP too fell into crisis and agitated for a role in the SLFP-Left government, thereby departing from its conception of the United Front as envisaged in 1950.

In 1968 the CP entered the United Front with the SLFP and LSSP for the purpose of defeating the UNP at the General Election. In doing so the CP in fact accepted the leadership of the SLFP. The next step in this process was the CP's participation in the SLFP-Left cabinet of 1970.

Two positions emerged within the CPSL leadership during its self-critical phase 1978-1980. The party's new General Secretary K. P. Silva held that it was correct to have formed an electoral front with the SLFP and LSSP to defeat the UNP government at the 1970 elections, but it was a mistake to have entered the coalition given the unfavourable balance of forces prevailing at the time (see L. G. Vol 3 No. 3). The CPSL's radicals led by Jayatilleke Silva were however of the view that the party's position in 1968 was more basic an error than its subsequent

participation in the coalition government. For them 1968 marked a fundamental departure in practice from the 1950 resolution.

What the CPSL arrived at its 10th and 11th congresses was a heavily veiled compromise. In a sense there was a return to the original stand of 1950 i. e. a United Front led by the working class, with the proviso that this front was to be achieved not by mere electoral pacts with other parties but by united actions in mass struggles. In some aspects the 11th congress (1980) went beyond the 1950 resolution in that it put forward for the first time in the CPSL history the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this sense the 11th congress line was a throw-back to the hard (Stalinist-Zhdanovist) Cominform line of the party's 3rd congress held in Atureliya in 1948 under the leadership of Harry Abeygunawardena.

The compromise meant that varied interpretations of the party's strategy and tactics was possible. The old soft-liners and the powerful centre group fell back on the line of the 10th (1978) Congress which permitted electoral agreement and United actions with the SLFP. They utilized the broader formula of the unity of 'Left and Democratic forces' and gradually included the SLFP in the latter category. They preferred to use the weaker slogan of the 'path of Socialist orientation' rather than the twin formulae of the 'socialist road' and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' which were deployed by the party radicals. The radical line was presented by Jayatilleke Silva in a 4 part series in the *Aththa* which was subsequently issued as a booklet under the title '**Towards a New Leadership**'. It was backed up by analysis of Sri Lanka capitalism by P. Wimalaratne (a pen-name) published in the CPSL Youth League newspaper. In fact it is this news-

paper that became the most accurate reflector of the radical interpretation of the party's general line.

The National Protest Day of June 5th, the failure of the General Strike, the question of Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights, and finally the Kalawana by-election saw the ascendancy of the centre group, the revival of the fortunes of the soft liners, a bloc between the two and a steady retreat by the radicals. The centrist interpretation of the congressional line became the definitive one. At a recent central committee session held to discuss arrangements for May Day, the party took up the position that united actions with the SLFP at leadership level as well as electoral agreement with the party are now seen as not merely permissible but desirable. The CP's defence of Mrs. B. over the issue of her civic rights had been a clear signal that they had modified, in practice their hardline. The party still draws the line at entering a government programme with the SLFP. But as far as the radicals are concerned real deviation in practice from the 11th Congress line has taken place.

Jayatilleke Silva an alumnus of Moscow's party school, member of the CP politburo and head of its educational bureau has resigned in protest. In a short explanatory note he sets out his reasons for joining the CP and says that those causes can no longer be fruitfully fought for within the confines of the party. Criticising the leadership for disregarding this party's self-criticism and departing from the line of the 11th Congress, he calls for a discussion on these questions.

How much support will Jayatilleke Silva muster? He has 'loyalists', especially in the youth league and among District Secretaries. Their response will determine how serious the new challenge will prove, in the party.

The West's counter-attack

Mervyn de Silva

Before Havana, the US Press beagerly assisted by Peking publicists faithfully playing their self-elected role of Washington's Little Sri Echo (last week Foreign Minister Hua was berating Moscow for allegedly sending arms to El Salvador!) mounted a virulent propaganda campaign which in effect challenged Cuba's credentials as a Nonaligned nation. When this campaign reached its climax at a preparatory meeting in Belgrade, the basic Western aim became abundantly clear to have the Havana Summit postponed or to have a new venue.

Though this manoeuvre failed, the campaign did not cease. With the help of some Nonaligned members, notably Egypt and Singapore, the West sought to promote an ideological attack on Cuba at the Havana Summit itself. It had chosen as *casus belli* Castro's remark that the Soviet Union was "the natural ally" of the Third World. In the nonaligned context, the phrase made its first public appearance at Algiers in 1973. It was Castro's reply to the new Chinese Theory of "three worlds", with the super-powers as the first world. At Algiers where the clarion call for the NIEO was sounded, economics was the dominant theme. In challenging the Chinese theory which sought to equate the two super-power and their respective relationships with the underdeveloped countries, Castro asked where were the multi-nationals owned by the Soviet Union? Where were the coal and copper mines, the oil fields and the plantations and the banks owned by the Soviet Union in the Third World?

If the "natural ally" remark was the issue, the champion chosen by the West and its supporters within the NAM to fight it out with Castro at Havana was the highly respected patriarch of the movement, Tito of Yugoslavia. For many

good reasons, Tito refused to play the disruptive role assigned to him. The post-Summit response of the West and the pro-West group within the NAM was marked by disappointment, dejection and anger. Afghanistan was to change that.

A socialist country led by a Communist Party, Cuba has the closest fraternal relations with the Soviet Union. There are dozens of nonaligned countries which have equally close and sometimes closer political, economic and even military links with the United States. The governing class in those countries have readily opened their economies to systematic exploitation by the multi-nationals. But the western press and the members of our own intelligentsia who, parrot-like, repeat its sentiments never ask about the nonaligned credentials of those countries. Consider Singapore the new darling of the western media.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba, the non-aligned Chairman, and its physical distance from West Asia and the Indian Ocean which had become the main area of US military activity after the Iranian revolution, gave the US an excellent opportunity to use the Afghanistan issue for a new propaganda offensive.

Of course this offensive from outside had ready support from inside the movement from those governments which are basically pro-west. The attack on Cuba was also part of a generalised attack on the radicals within the movement, notably Vietnam. There the issue was Kampuchea. On Afghanistan, the instrument of the West was the Islamic Group. On Kampuchea, it was Asean. Afghanistan/Kampuchea; Islamic Group/Asean; Cuba/Vietnam. The issue, the weapon, and the immediate target.

Once one perceives this underlying pattern, then the ultimate objective becomes much clearer. The real target of course is the Soviet Union. A large section of the membership of the NAM has been mobilised in order to serve the interests of the west in their struggle against the Soviet Union. Naturally the US has the willing assistance of Britain, France, West Germany, their media, economic and diplomatic influence, and of course Peking falls dutifully into line.

This is how one must grasp the politics of the Delhi meeting, i. e. its widest significance in terms of the global power struggle. But what of each issue? When you study the final document and the statement on each issue carefully, it would be seen that the western victory, though far from hollow, was much less substantial than what the "Hurrah! hurrah!" squads of the western media have led many to believe. Just one example. The western press has written, and now everybody religiously repeats, that the Nonaligned Ministers Conference have called for the "withdrawal of Soviet troops" from Afghanistan. This is simply not true. They have called for "a political settlement on the withdrawal of foreign troops". Now everybody knows that the foreign troops alluded to are Soviet troops. Why then is there no mention of Soviet troops? This is the rhetoric of diplomacy coming to terms with the realities of power.

(Next: The issues)

THE IMPATIENT PROFESSOR AND THE PEACE PROCESS

Sleepy and exhausted after a long hop from Mexico city to New Delhi, Boutros Ghali, Egypt's foreign minister, exuded charm and self-assurance as he greeted us in his suite at the Ashok hotel. But when he starts to talk, especially about the current Middle East affairs he is much more the professor, slightly impatient with the antics of fellow Arabs, a noisy bunch of undergraduates obviously unversed in the sinuous skills of diplomacy. (in the course of the discussion, he used the word 'sophistication' five times, hinting gently that Egypt's coarse traducers were, also, untouched by this virtue of Egyptian culture).

What had taken him just before the conference to Latin America? To canvas support on the 'suspension' issue? No, he said firmly.

"It was to keep the Palestinian issue alive...we have to keep hammering at it...otherwise, world opinion and global diplomacy have a habit of moving quickly to the latest crisis and ignoring far more important unresolved questions...we have succeeded in getting the Europeans to recognise the issue, to grasp its dimensions that is, to realise that it is a key problem in the complex middle east... a middle east where they have very vital interests... for decades, the Israelis have had their way but recently the Europeans have opened their eyes to the Palestinian question...we want to do that in Latin America too"

Mr. Ghali's choice of 'openers' for our conversation came as a surprise. Palestine, one would have thought, was an issue to avoid when the PLO and the entire Arab League accuses Egypt of abandoning

the Palestinians and betraying their just and noble cause. Again, the gentle smile but this time decidedly cynical.

"Traitors ? Look who went to war with Israel from 1948 onwards who lost their soldiers in round after round... who spent millions and millions of dollars on this single cause... Egypt...we did so that's history we are not saying that we have solved it we are not claiming that our solution is the best solution but this is our contribution now if anyone can do better...if anyone can get a better solution, a quicker solution, through war with Israel, let him try it... take Iraq, they are the people who call us traitors surely they could have attacked Israel instead of attacking Iran?"

"But by signing a treaty with Israel, you have divided Arab ranks....."

Now the professorial air. "Since 1948, the birth of the state of Israel, there have been 37 inter-Arab disputes, border troubles, minor skirmishes, clashes and so on and this had nothing to do with Israel. Right now, the Syrian army is staring at the Jordanian army and both are mobilised for war...Why?"

"You will admit, surely, that your solution, that is your agreement with Israel, on Palestinian self-rule or autonomy has failed...the Israelis have"

"That's correct the process which was advancing, slowly I admit, has now being halted by Israeli obduracy that's another reason why we are concentrating so much on

keeping the Palestine issue before the world but we do so according to the realities of the situation...that is diplomacy...what we did when we linked our agreement on the evacuation of occupied lands etcetera with the Palestinian problem was to open the door for the Palestinians...to start the process going...to get the Israelis to recognise that the issue existed, that the Palestinians had rights, and that this must be discussed with them...now this has been stalled".

"If one grants that there was some hope of Israel concessions, (and many people will not grant this) do you think that the impediment to progress as you in Egypt see it is Israeli politics, specifically the Begin government, and the current political - economic crisis?"

"That's rather a complicated matter but I will say this that it is difficult to talk to Mr. Begin on this question because his whole philosophy, his whole outlook, will not permit a recognition of realities and necessities....."

"And Mr. Shimon Peres...?"

"Things would be easier . ?"

"Is it correct you have given a base to the US, at Ras Banas ?"

"I categorically deny that we have given any base .."

"Facilities?"

"Well, we have the sovereign right to grant facilities to anybody and we exercise it but we do so in a way that does not restrict our sovereignty....." — M. de S

CAMP DAVID : NOT 'OPEN DOOR' BUT OPEN LICENCE

The cuddly teddy bear figure of Ambassador Terzi, the PLO spokesman at the UN, is now a familiar sight at any international conference. Ever since the international news magazines splashed his picture when his 'secret pow-wow' with U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young put the outspoken Andy Young into trouble with the Jewish lobby and the State Dept., Mr. Terzi is easily spotted in any conference corridor. The PLO is always news, anyway. As a result, it is a lucky pressman who can pin him down to a formal interview. Besides, he prefers the full-dress press conference or the lecture where the audience is bigger. Naturally, it serves his cause better.

These are random notes from conversations over a cup of strong Darjeeling tea at the Ashok hotel lounge or at a table shared at breakfast.

Q: "Mr. Terzi, the Egyptians argue that they never claimed for the Camp David agreement a complete or quick solution to the Palestinian problem... rather they say it is a peace process that will be long, hard fought out battle down the line with an Israel which has proved for 30 years the most stubborn and unyielding of enemies... they say, they have only opened a door for the Palestinians."

A: "Yes, I agree that the Egyptians opened a door... the door was not opened for us... the door was opened for the Israelis, and what has taken place since then confirms our view... the Israelis, encouraged by the Egyptian capitulation, that is the capitulation of the biggest Arab country, intensified the oppre-

ssion of the Palestinian Arabs... they passed new laws, they expelled Arab Mayors, they tried to murder them, they seized their lands and created new settlements, they proclaimed to the world that Jerusalem was their eternal capital... do I need to go through all their criminal and barbarous acts... this is known to the international community, including their use of torture... from where did they suddenly get this moral audacity... Camp David gave it to them..."

Q: "When you charge Egypt with treachery are you not implicitly denying the Egyptian regime the sovereign right of any nation to enter into treaties in its own interests as it perceives such interests?"

A: "Good question, and it needs two answers. First, is it in the interests of the Egyptian people? Nasser was made a much better offer by Israel — return of the lands for an end to the state of belligerence. Nasser refused because he said that his basic dispute with Israel was that it had usurped the rights of the Palestinians, robbed them of their lands and homes, turned them into refugees. As long as that grave wrong remained, Nasser said, Egypt could not stop treating Israel as an enemy. Sadat has sold out for nothing and normalised relations with Israel... all he has got is US patronage. He has sold out his own people. Now for the second answer. Yes, a nation can sign a treaty with another but it cannot sign a treaty which also betrays the interests of a third nation. In this instance, the interests of the Palestinian nation. That was part of the deal"

Q: "Is that the reason why you demand the suspension or expulsion of Egypt? Egypt regards this as a gross insult and injustice because it was a champion of the Arab and Palestinian cause, and secondly it is a founder member of the nonaligned movement".

A: "My reply to that is very simple. Yes, Egypt was a leading force in the Arab world and a loyal advocate of our cause but that was the Egypt of Nasser. not the Egypt of Sadat.

"I did not know that there are different categories of membership — founding fathers and others. For us, there are only two kinds — those who adhere by the principles of the movement and do so by word and act, and those who claim to and violate these principles in practice. Every single nonaligned conference, not to mention the UN, has taken a clear stand on Israel. Egypt forgets the lands robbed by Israel from fellow Arab states, ignores the monstrous injustice done to us Palestinians, and signs a pact with racist Israel, in defiance of all that the movement stands for. What is more, it signs this agreement in the presence and under the aegis of a superpower. Further, it has a military aspect to it as the recent joint exercises between the USA and Egypt proved. So it is not a bilateral pact; it is a tripartite agreement. It is not only a pact with our common Zionist enemy, but a pact with one of the superpowers. It is not only a political or diplomatic deal but a military agreement too. What kind of nonalignment is that? Genuine nonalignment...? Ha! Ha!"

— M. de S

Why Iran is not alone

Shortly after the Delhi meeting, Iran sent five diplomatic missions to about 30 Third World countries. One such delegation, led by Dr. Mohammed Banki, visited Sri Lanka, Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. Dr. Banki is the political adviser to Mr. Bezhad Nabavi, Minister of State and Prime Minister Rajai's principal aide. Mr. Nabavi who was Iran's chief negotiator on the US hostages issue, is de facto Foreign Minister, and in that capacity, led Iran's delegation to the Delhi conference.

Iran flatly refused to engage in any "peace talks" with Iraq and all attempts at mediation by others (the Islamic group, the non-aligned etc) have so far failed.

Were these missions a sign of Iran's diplomatic isolation? That was my first question to Dr. Banki. Shirt-sleeves rolled up, the bearded Dr. Banki, looking every inch a student rebel rather than a senior official, spoke with great feeling and frankness. The following are excerpts from two conversations:

"No, we are not isolated. Far from it. Wherever there are oppressed people, we have sympathizers... they may not know much about our revolution, but they know one thing — that we overthrew one of the most vicious, despotic and powerful rulers in the world... and when I say 'we', I mean the people of Iran... this everybody saw and that is why the oppressed people of the world are with us and of course we have made many friends among certain governments and countries... Algeria, the Palestinian movement, the brave revolutionary people of Nicaragua and Cuba... in Libya and Syria... and we think in India and Sri Lanka too... but it is our duty to explain the character of our revolution, our ideals, and what we did and what we are trying to do... that is our duty and that's why we have undertaken these visits".

"Your Minister, Mr. Nabavi, told the conference that Iran will not negotiate with Iraq unless Iraqi

troops withdraw from your lands... but isn't this territory disputed?"

A: Iraq claims that some little territory is theirs but first of all the Algiers agreement which is cited provides for the settlement of such disputes... but more important, the land their army occupies has nothing to do with these so-called disputed areas... it has been Iranian territory throughout history... nobody disputes that... we say that Iraq must vacate every inch of land it has taken... the aggressor must withdraw from the land he has taken... that is our standard, the standard that our revolution maintains... we will not sacrifice our principles"

Q: "Iran has been accused of trying to export its Islamic revolution... especially to the neighbouring countries..."

A: "Yes, the charge is known to us... it is the deliberate distortion of the western press... part of the campaign that the United States is still conducting against the Iranian revolution... but let me explain about the Islamic revolution and what is called exporting the revolution... In this time and age, ideas cannot be confined behind boundaries... The Shah had the most repressive system, the most powerful secret police but he could not stop progressive ideas, socialist and even Marxist ideas from spreading in Iran... we are not trying to physically export the revolution in the sense that we want to interfere in the affairs of other countries, but if what the Iranian people did to the Shah frightens King Hussein or some sheik, what can we do?"

Q: "What about your media... the radio, TV etc?"

A: "True, our television which can be seen in the Gulf states, shows the palaces of the Shah, the hovels of the poor, the homes of the rich foreigners, how he lived, how they lived etc... If that is a message... then it is the message of our revolution... if it affects other people... that is, if they

take a lesson from us, then we are not exporting revolution... they may be importing it!!"

Q: "But you have made special appeals to the Moslems... particularly to the Shias...?"

A: "No.. no... don't talk about these sects... this is part of the western propaganda plan, and part of their plot to divide the Islamic world... In fact, just before the Islamic summit, Kissinger himself discussed it with King Hussein, the Saudis, King Hassan etc... to try to split the Shias and Sunnis and start trouble that way... they were pleased that some success had been achieved in Syria... so they wanted to extend the plot... but we understand that Pakistan was against it, and warned them of the consequences... When we spread the ideas of the Islamic revolution it is to defend ourselves, to see that our revolution is not isolated, that people in other countries will understand what we did, and that their solidarity will be our strength against our enemies who are still conspiring against us"

Q: "Which particular enemy do you have in mind...?"

A: "The US imperialists, of course, and their allies, the Zionists, mainly and some others in our part of the world... the US conspiracy goes on... inside our country and outside..."

Q: "But the hostages issue was resolved... and relations between Iran and the US..."

A: "There are no relations..."

Q: "You claimed that the hostages were taken to expose to the world what the US and the Shah had done..."

A: "What the US under cover of diplomacy had done and was still doing..."

Q: "But no such exposure... I mean in the form of a trial took place..."

A: "Our government had to make a choice... to release them on our basic terms... a pledge

not to interfere in Iran's affairs, the assets and so on and the trial... the government took the first choice... but the facts that we gathered from the inquiries and interrogations were placed before the members of the Iranian parliament, and these documents, four documents so far, will be made available to the public"

Q: "The hostages have accused you of ill-treatment and in some instances, of torture..."

A: Torture... torture..." (Dr. Banki breaks into derisive laughter.) "Torture is something most of us have known and lived with for years... we do not practice it on other human beings... Prime Minister Rajai gave the correct reply in New York when he pulled out his shoes and socks and showed toes without nails... He said" "this is what your government taught SAVAK to do to us".... Of course, the American press and TV did not report that..."

Q: "Can you say that the reports of serious differences at the highest levels of your government and between various political groups are also distortions or fabrications of the western media? After all, the Ayatollah Khomeini himself has had to intervene...."

A: "My friend, I'll be frank with you... we have nothing to hide... I know that you have studied our revolution... so you must know how it came about... so many different forces with so many different ideas and beliefs came together... take the leading personalities... the Imam Khomeini was preaching from abroad... Prime Minister Rajai was in jail... Mister Nabavi who is an electrical engineer... he too was in jail... for 8 years... President Bani Sadar was writing articles and making speeches in Paris... many were in Iran... others were scattered all over the world, including the United States where I was a graduate student at Missouri University for many years.

And many of us, from the Mujaheddin and Fedayeen... I was with the Mujhaheddin... also came to appreciate the ideals of the Islamic revolution as proclaimed by Imam Khomeini... so the unity was

forged... unity between the people and the intelligentsia... but on what foundation... just three ideas to overthrow the Shah, the leadership of Imam Khomeini and the restoration of the independence of Iran... but each group, each individual must have had ideas about what to do afterwards... how to smash the Shah's apparatus... what sort of constitution and governmental set-up... what to do with the banks... on foreign trade... our institutions to nationalise, what to destroy... what new institutions to create... what was the pace at which we should do and so on. So differences were bound to arise, and have arisen. Recently, the Imam Khomeini listened to both sides, listened very attentively and very impartially, and he pronounced that there were differences but these were minor differences which can be sorted out... so we have confidence and we have courage..."

"What about the Leftist demonstration very recently in Teheran which was attacked by Islamic Party supporters?"

A: "That was unfortunate. The Fedayeen, the Mujahdeen, the Tudeh and other Left organisations have their own social base and following, though small. They all supported us in the revolution when we used the ideas of Imam Khomeini to mobilise the masses. Now the Imam Khomeini has said that these organisations should be allowed to function freely and without harassment, as long as they respect the fundamental principles of our revolution."

"Do you have special problems with the Pro-Soviet Tudeh Party?"

"The Tudeh has existed in Iran for a long time. We have told the Soviet Union not to interfere in our internal matters and so far we have no serious problems with Moscow. That is why we regard the US as our enemy (the Imam Khomeini calls it "the great satan" although the US is far away and the Soviet Union is a neighbour. The US is still conspiring inside our country along with old Shah supporters, former Savak agents and trying to stir up trouble in places like Kurdistan".

— M. de S



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Devadasis and Tobacco workers

FOREIGN
NEWS

Gail Omvedt

"Your union will split! Your union will split!" A woman, suddenly possessed, screams out in the middle of a crowded conference. The goddess has spoken! For a moment there is a pause, but then the gathered participants recapture their mood of anger and enthusiasm, and as woman after woman comes forward to speak one central theme emerges in all their tales of woe.

"We must stop giving girls to Yelamma!"

The conference is one of Devadasis, or as they are known locally, **jogtins**, women who have been dedicated from the time they were small girls to the service of the goddess Yelamma, and who thereafter end up serving as a kind of divinely sanctioned prostitutes. It is being held in the small town of Nipani on the Karnataka-Maharashtra border, the biggest center of tobacco production in India as well as a central town in the wide rural region from which impoverished and superstition-ridden low caste families make pilgrimages to Yelamma and vow their daughters to protect the family from disaster, to insure the birth of a son, to stave off illness.

And the wrath of the goddess is falling on the "union" because it is the newly organized tobacco workers of Nipani, almost all women, who have played the major role in organizing this conference which is part of a growing movement to stop the Devadasi custom. In a country in which unions are often accused of being mere organizations of a privileged section of workers who fight only for bonus and higher wages and ignore larger social issues, the struggle of these tobacco workers is noteworthy in many ways.

Practically the entire bidi industry of India depends on tobacco grown and processed in the Nipani region

The trade yields crores of rupees in excess duties to the government and fabulous wealth to a small section of tobacco merchants. In Nipani itself, a town of about 45,000, there are about 2500 workers employed in making bidis and another 7000 working in the tobacco processing factories.

Almost all these workers are women, and to walk through the town, into the small huts where the bidis are rolled or through factories choking with the fumes of the pressed and sorted tobacco leaves, is to realize how much it is a women's town and how much these tobacco profits are built on women's labour. In the factories especially the conditions seem those of early industrialization: women working from 9 a. m. to midnight or later with only minimal breaks, with no face masks to protect themselves from the deadening tobacco particles in the air, and with no protection at all from petty tyranny and sexual harassment until they began their struggle to organize last year.

"We've had a bidi workers' union for about four years", says Subash Joshi, a young lecturer who is one of the main organizers. "We've had successful struggles for bonus and maternity benefits, and although the owners continually refuse to give work to women who are known union members, we still have a solid core of about 500 permanent members." Bidi-making is a putting-out industry, and it is very easy for the owners to tyrannize the workers individually by rejecting the bidis of those who are thought to be troublesome, or by simply refusing to give them enough leaves and other materials for making the bidis.

Still, the processing factories proved much more difficult to organize. These work on a seasonal basis, and many of the workers

are women from poor or landless village families. During the season the normal work schedule has been to run in from their villages to make the 9 a. m. deadline, of ten eating as they ran, then working a "day shift" of 8-9 hours, and then a second "night shift" which frequently lasted until 1 or 2 a.m. Only then would these women be free to go home for their cooking and sleeping; for the village women this meant walking one to five miles home at night, and for all of them it meant an additional hour or two of cooking and finishing up their inevitable shift of house work.

Revolt against this exploitation finally began last March when several women who returned late to one factory after lunch were not taken back. This would have meant a loss of at least a day's pay and perhaps much more, until they could "please the boss" sufficiently to regain their work. This time, though, all the women in the factory spontaneously walked out. After some time they sent for Subhash Joshi. "I warned them that if they joined the union they would have to face every kind of harassment and pressure. They said, 'We're ready.' Then they met all the women after work that day, when they finished their shift at midnight. On the second day 80 factories were closed in Nipani and seven thousand women were out on the streets!"

A contract was signed quite quickly in which the women won their main demands: recognition of the union, no victimization, three days strike pay, and, most important, a guaranteed 8-hour work day for a wage of five rupees which most of them had been earning earlier only by working 12-16 hours a day. The initial victory had been won, and the jubilant women went back to work.

But after this the owners' offensive began. By shifting some of the production to the villages, where they could still get cheaper labour, they were able to counter the union in Nipani by closing down factories, either permanently or intermittently. Similarly relentlessly rising prices forced many women to continue to work a night shift. Several struggles began to take place which included workers' occupation of factories and gheraos or threatened gheraos of the owners. In October–November, one of these in which the women were occupying the closed-down Sambar factory, resulted in a crisis and ironically this came only a few days after the union had won its second major victory, the award of the first small Diwali bonus to the worker.

On November 9 cases were levied against 34 workers and seven union activists and a vacate order was served. "We left the factory and sat in the streets, waiting for the owner to come and close his factory. He stayed away until November 13 and then came with a hundred police. The women accosted him as he came out of the factory and the police lathi-charged them. As the women fell, the police simply grabbed the owner and put him in their jeep. But the women were so furious that they chased the jeep all the way to the police station and they were tear-gassed. They dispersed, but while they were trying to wash the tear-gas out of their eyes the police charged and beat them again."

As a result of this, several women were hospitalized, section 144 was levied (preventing gatherings of more than 5 people), and the union leaders who had gone to the police station for negotiation were suddenly arrested and taken to the Magistrate in the taluka town miles away. During the three days they were held there as wide-scale rioting in Nipani, including stone-throwing and burning of buses, often by the bitter unemployed sons of the workers who began to vent their anger at the entire establishment. A "peace committee" led to the opening of the factories, but the workers and

union activists are still facing many legal cases.

Women crowd into small rooms of the old, stone Nipani houses, sitting in the semi-darkness of kerosene lamps as they speak bitterly about the struggles. "The police always take the owners' side. We organize — they lathi-charge us. The goondas beat us up — they leave the goondas alone!"

A union activist says, "Some of the women are saying that they should go and beat up the owners. What do you think?" A worker activist, ceaselessly rolling bidis under the flickering kerosene light as she speaks, says, "Why don't we take out a 'dindi'?" To them, a "dindi" simply means a big march to the center of power, and they are thinking of going to Chikurdi, the taluka town where all the labour commission and court work goes on.

Discussions go on, the meetings go on, strikes go on — currently the workers in the Devchang Shah factory, owned by the biggest tobacco baron in town who has also given his name to the college in which Subhash Joshi teaches, are out on strike. Such struggles never really end, and they frequently take complex forms: currently some of the students of Devchand College, merchants' sons mostly, are demanding the removal of Joshi on the grounds that he "defamed" the students by protesting against rowdy behavior at a recent student gathering.

But perhaps the most noteworthy of correlated struggles is that against the Devadasi custom. In a way it has been natural for the union to take this up, since the custom is so widely prevalent in this area that Devadasis can be seen everywhere on the streets of Nipani and many in fact are workers in the tobacco factories. For the girls dedicated to the goddess are not necessarily prostitutes; though they are considered "sacred" and are supposed to be sexually accessible to any man who asks them, in fact most of them try to lead relatively normal lives and often fall into actual prostitution for the same reason as any woman: economic hardship.

Also, union organizing in Nipani has never been undertaken in a social vacuum. Its origins go back to 1973 when a group of Dalit Panthers was formed and a "one-village one-well" campaign was taken up in nearby villages. It was young activists from this movement who turned to organizing the tobacco industry, and in fact it was a coalition of militant dalits and young socialists who helped the women workers to build up their union. Today the secretary is a socialist, the president is a local RPI leader, and the union is affiliated with the Belgaum districts CPI bidi union.

Some of these activists were involved in the first recent effort to organize Devadasis (agitation against the custom goes back to the 1930s) when a conference was held at Gudhinglaz in Kolhapur district during the Emergency in 1975. Some leading social workers were in jail then, and the conference met with only limited response.

Then on June 15, 1980, after the first wave of organizing of tobacco workers had won its initial victories, a second conference was held in Nipani itself. This time, not only did the Devadasi factory workers themselves turn out, but other women workers also took the initiative in calling the *jogtins* they knew from their own villages. And so over 600 women were present, and not even the threats of the goddess against the union could dampen their enthusiasm.

Just as the workers are only beginning their struggle, so the fight against the goddess also has a long way to go. The custom is deeprooted in the poverty and religious traditions of the people and almost all the rural and urban public as well as the *jogtins* themselves continue to believe in the custom — to believe that if they cut their hair, which is allowed to grow without ever washing or combing until it forms a thick mat, they will fall sick. Many people in fact believe that dedicating a girl to the goddess is not a matter of any individual choice, but rather, "the goddess comes, the girl knows."

(Continued on page 24)

US: Jam tomorrow, but no bread today

Chakravarthi Raghavan

GENEVA

The package of economic measures President Reagan announced are unlikely to be enforced in full and even if they are, will not tackle America's or the world's basic economic ills, economic observers here feel.

Even the markets have been very cautious, preferring to see the details of the US administrations' plans.

In effect, Mr. Reagan is promising the US public and the rest of the world that there will be jam tomorrow, as there was jam yesterday. In the meanwhile he is asking people to live on the hope that his schemes will work, and practice austerity by denying themselves bread.

Whatever their impact on the US domestic economy, the measures will worsen the situation for developing countries, especially those seeking accommodation within the existing world economic system and increased official aid.

Though Reagan's promise to abide by past commitments to Multi-lateral institutions (such as the World Bank's soft lending affiliate the IDA) blunts the axe Budget Director David Stockman was wielding around the foreign aid allocations three weeks ago, new commitments will suffer, and bilateral aid, projects will surely be cut.

This is expected to further encourage many developing countries to think harder about collective self reliance, and measures they themselves should take, since there will be little enough help from Washington.

The Reagan package is based on 'supply side' theories that inflation, unemployment, or lack of economic growth are all caused by peoples expectations of inflation, and that the American productive apparatus is not functioning only because of excessive government regulation.

On this premise, if people accept Reagan's confident assertions that

his policies will free the economy and move it forward again, people will work harder, save more, and invest more to produce more.

In effect it is an attempt to go back to Adam Smith and his Wealth of Nations', the theory that the wealth of nations increases when governments do not interfere, but allow the profit motive to inspire people to invest and produce more.

Smith did not approve of joint stock companies, which he felt interfered with the individual's profit motivation and the economy's efficiency. Many observers feel that the world's economic ills today cannot be divorced from the rise of giant transnational corporations.

Freeing companies from regulations and allowing them to make large profits does not necessarily lead to their investing in the production of scarce goods that benefit the people. This has been illustrated by the oil companies, which have put significant amounts of their 'windfall' profits not into exploration for more oil, but into more profitable areas such as refining (of which there is surplus capacity) or buying up smaller, non-oil firms.

The success of the US Government's package depends, Reagan insisted, on the measures being implemented as a whole. Very few observers expect this to happen, but if the package is only partially implemented, and fails, the 'Supply Sider's can be expected to blame the failure not on their theories, but on their half hearted application. Mr Reagan's package includes five to seven per cent real increases in the military budget, massive public expenditure cuts in order to balance the budget in three years, and tax cuts every year for the next few years.

Observers argue that this cannot work without an 'Inflation Tax', using continued inflation to push peoples incomes into higher tax brackets to produce more revenues. Yet Reagan is promising to halve inflation in two years.

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Neither past experience, nor econometric models suggest that this is possible, but Reagan is asking America to take a leap into the dark with him, trusting that they can 'think inflation down'—that if they expect it to fall it will.

Beyond expressing 'confidence in the system that has not failed US' and the assertion that 'human' technological and natural resources have not broken down', President Reagan's speech gave no clues as to how US industry's productivity is to be increased.

But in the meanwhile, if everyone believes what Mr Reagan promises, the dollar will be strengthened, and create problems for the weaker European economies. Even if oil prices, reflecting stronger values, do not go up, energy costs in Europe could be expected to increase.

The Reagan package promises economic growth, and hence more jobs, increased exports, of which Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige is confident.

He points out that US exports did better in 1980 than before, but apparently ignores the fact that a stronger dollar will make US exports increasingly unattractive.

And with gloomy predictions for growth in Europe and other-Industrialised countries, the only expanding markets for US Exports will be in the Third World.

Yet developing countries cannot buy more unless they earn more from their exports, and at the moment, with high interest rates they are having to sell more just to service their debts.

And if the US cuts its aid, which really is a trade-promotion device, and interest rates are kept high by supply side theorists and practitioners in the USA, would the third World be able to buy more, merely by the US Congress listening to Baldrige and legalising more export cartels in the USA? (IPS)

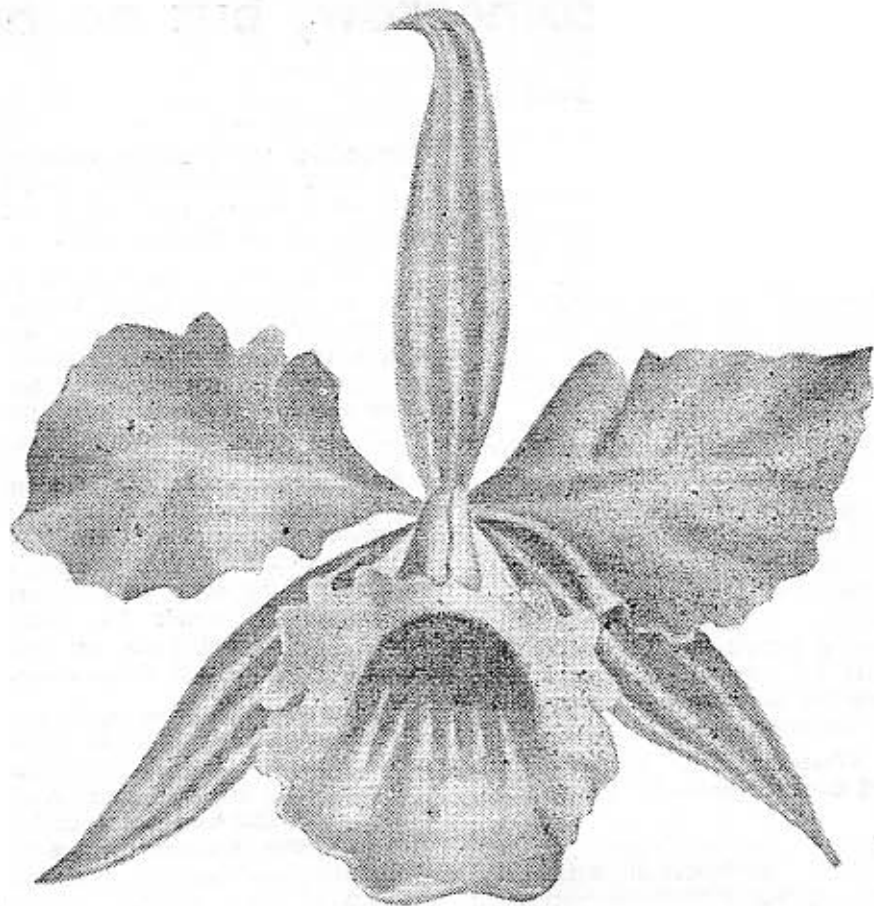
PAKISTAN

“Death to Zia” and “Hold elections”, the two main slogans shouted by student demonstrators in Multan, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi have a grim irony. The target was Bhutto’s executioner who took office swearing to his people that he would hold free elections in four months. That was nearly four years ago.

In the course of two weeks or less, Zia’s hated regime had to bring out armed militia, Pathan tribesmen and truckloads of soldiers patrolling the towns in vehicles mounted with machine guns. Barricades were put up in the streets and pitched battles took place. Lawyers are boycotting courts, bank clerks and workers came out on strike, and trouble even erupted in distant Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan where it took five divisions of the Pakistan army to quell an insurrection seven years ago. All that the powerful dictator could do was to arrest people, detain political ‘suspects’ order his army to shoot more... and of course keep poor Miss Bhutto under heavy guard.

The opposition parties have now formed a common front. They have a very simple demand — end martial law and hold elections.

General Zia and his besieged junta know what this would mean — their instant exit from the political scene. Hence his answer that Pakistan can “ill afford to hold elections at this time”. The ostensible reason is ‘the external threat’. The truth is that Zia and the Punjabi bureaucratic military clique which supports him need this pretext (a) to justify the internal repression and prolongation of martial law and (b) to re-arm Pakistan and thus increase tension on the Indian border and create trouble for Afghanistan. In this way, he perpetuates his autocratic rule and pleases his patrons in Washington and Peking.



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Smoking in the Third World

Dr R. W. Crossette Thambiah

Sri Lanka is in the Third World. It is not a rich industrialised country (first world) nor is it a Socialist country (Second World) All countries that do not fall into the above two categories are lumped together as the Third World and naturally contain a hotch-potch of countries. Some (like Sri Lanka) have an ancient civilisation and developed languages while others do not. The only common factor binding them all is that they are industrially underdeveloped and the mass of the people are so poor that millions in them are malnourished.

It is in this context that I wish to consider the problem of smoking in the Third World. More than fifteen years ago the world became aware that smoking cigarettes considerably increased the risk of lung cancer and heart disease. In the First World people took the warning and smoking has decreased there. For example, twenty five years ago more than 50 per cent of U. S. adults used to smoke. Today only about 32 per cent do. Does this mean that less cigarettes are puffed in the world? Actually, the world's people last year puffed more cigarettes than ever before! How did this happen?

The tobacco trade, like trade in many other commodities, is in the hands of multi nationals. The tobacco industry is in the hands of seven multi nationals, four based in the U. S. A. two in England and one in South Africa and they have carved out global spheres of influence. The Ceylon Tobacco Co. belongs to the biggest of the "big seven," the British — American Tobacco Co. Ltd., which sells 300 brands of Cigarettes in 180 countries through more than 50 subsidiaries of affiliates.

These multi nationals make so much money that they acquire the muscle to influence government policy. When the "big seven" found their sales dropping in the rich industrialised countries, they aimed their weapons at a new target, the largely untapped Third World, where over two thirds of the world's people live. This was a

criminal thing to do. The British Medical Journal warned "There is a real danger of this deadly habit being exported to the younger countries of Africa and Asia. The Western World has a responsibility to see that this is not done".

Unfortunately this and other equally responsible warnings did not stop the multi nationals from exporting these hazards to health to the poor, ignorant people of the Third World. It is done in the most ruthless way, using every advertising facility and reaching areas which even the land rover cannot reach, using the bicycles, donkey and even the camel.

The governments of Third World countries, struggling to develop and starving for foreign currency to buy needed equipment are unable to resist the temptation of taking the foreign currency the multi nationals pay as taxes. It is a vicious cycle which Third World governments have to face. By permitting the unrestricted flow of cigarettes they are exposing their people to the risk of increased cancer and other deadly diseases which will cost the state increased morbidity and mortality.

This is specially so as the cigarette manufacturers use double standards. The cigarettes they make to be sold in the USA and to the US armed forces must carry a warning on each packet. But American brands sold internationally on air planes, ships or in foreign countries need not carry a health warning. What is much more serious is that cigarettes manufactured abroad and/or licensed by U.S. companies are more lethal than their look alikes in the US itself. In a recent test such prestigious cigarettes like Marlboro Kent and Chesterfield averaged 17.5mg tar within US borders but 31.75 mg, tar in the Philippines. I am told we do not have the set up in Sri Lanka to determine the tar content of cigarettes made and sold here. The importance of ascertaining tar content is that higher the tar content the greater the risk of addiction.

We in the Third World must begin to ask ourselves what damage smoking is doing to our people.

Unfortunately reliable morbidly and mortality information is not available in most Third World countries.

With regard to the effects of smoking it is particularly difficult as it takes upward of 20 years for the smoking damage to be clearly identified. However WHO reported last year, "In some developing countries the epidemic of smoking related disease is already of such magnitude as to rival even infectious disease or malnutrition as a public health problem".

It is clear that the people of Sri Lanka must be made aware of the hazards of smoking. The reluctance of governments to take hard steps against a sure source of valuable foreign currency is understandable. It is left to us, who know the hazard of smoking to bring this information to the knowledge of every adult in Sri Lanka. That is a duty we owe to them. Once we have done that, it will be left to the individual to smoke, knowing the risk he is exposing himself to.

The majority of the population in Third World countries live in rural areas. A good many of the urban workers continue to live outside the town, returning to their homes in their villages daily or for the week-end. It is easy to see how the smoking habit can spread into the rural areas. This may also serve as a guide as to how the knowledge of the dangers of smoking can be spread in the rural areas.

I am a great believer in working in small groups. A few concerned people can get together and plan to work a small unit to meet the adults and explain to them the perils of smoking. Propaganda material like leaflets, posters and pictures can be shown. Schools, Temple premises and the like can be used. Once the movement starts it will grow, because everybody will see it is for their good.

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(Issued by the Ministry of Plan Implementation)

JVP's IDEOLOGY

Q: The April 5th anniversary issue of Ginisiluwa this year (1980) identifies the right deviation and crises of the world communist movement as dating from 1963. You have previously also expressed broad agreement with the Chinese CP's positions in 1963. Now this is a view that many marxists would find acceptable. However in your party's self criticism ('Our Past') as well as your essay 'Proletarian Internationalism or Opportunism?' you have said that a massive deviation took place and a degeneration began with Stalin's assumption of power while Lenin was on his death bed. You have also said that Kruschew's 20th CPSU congress had a positive effect in that it shed light on the nature of Stalinism. Now isn't this a contradictory and confusing chronology or periodization of the history of the world communist movement? Then again you have stated that the error of the Chinese CP was in exporting the concept of New Democratic revolution to neocolonialist capitalist countries. But elsewhere (ie. your speech to the CJC) you clearly reject the validity of two stage revolution even in the colonial and semicolonial context. Can you please clarify?

A: In sum, the allegation you place before me here is that our party's comprehension concerning the chronology or periodization of the history of the world Communist movement is obscure. Is that right? I do not propose to dwell on how rich our party's awareness is regarding the matter in question for, in your eyes, that may amount to self praise, but your accusation is most unjust and incorrect, let me tell you. We firmly believe that it was Stalin's assumption of control when Lenin was on the brink of death, that induced enormous recession and deviation on the part of the world communist movement. We do not have anything ambiguous about that. In fact, you appear to have taken the wrong end of

the stick when you make as to say that we have broken with it.

To make our party's position still clearer I wish to state that we reject once and for all the parochial theory of two stage revolution since it deliberately contributes to the prolongation of bourgeois domination in any part of the world. Further, you seem to be of opinion that in accordance with our party 'the export' of the concept of New Democratic Revolution to neocolonial — capitalist countries is the only mistake the Chinese Communist Party has ever made. This is not a true understanding of the situation either. We state quite positively that, the said 'export' is just one in a lengthy series of errors committed by it. The reason for most of the wrong-doings of the Chinese Communist party is however, the Stalinist nature prevailing within it.

Q: You have stated that you are opposed to Stalinism, Maoism as well as Trotskyism. However, You reject the concepts of Socialism in One country, anti-imperialist United Front, Anti-fascist Popular Front, New Democracy, People's Democracy, and uninterrupted revolution by stages. You denounce Stalinism as post-Lenin Menshevism and have said that Stalinism is more dangerous (than Trotskyism) since it wields state power. (Niyamuwa Sept 25th) You also praise the position of the Left Opposition. It has been said that your critique of Stalin and the Comintern derives largely and directly from Trotsky's writings such as 'The Revolution Betrayed' 'The Five years of the Comintern' 'The Third International After Lenin' and other Trotskyist publications such as ISR, Inprecor Fourth International. You also deploy such Trotskyist categories as 'degenerated worker's state' 'anti bureaucratic political revolution' 'Bonapartism' etc. Furthermore you lean on the Trotskyist analysis of revolution in what you call the

Part 3 of the exclusive interview of the JVP deals with the party's ideological and theoretical position. The first two parts focussed on the JVP's views on the contemporary domestic political scene. The fourth and final part will take up questions on the JVP's foreign policy. The interview with Lionel Bopage, the JVP's acting General Secretary, was conducted by Dayan Jayatilaka.

backward capitalist countries. Therefore would it not be correct to say that you accept in all essentials the Trotskyist theory of permanent Revolution? T. Andradi once challenged you to prove that main planks of your theoretical platform have not been expropriated from Leon Trotsky. Not only have you failed to take up this challenge, but you have also not made any theoretical critique of Trotskyism in sharp contrast to your lengthy diatribes against Stalinism. How do you explain this?

A: As we all know, Lenin himself denounced the concepts of Socialism In One Country, anti-imperialist united fronts with bourgeois parties, New Democracy etc: Just because he rejected all these thoroughly infertile political concepts can one possibly catapult him into Trotskyite bracket? As far as our party is concerned we all strictly adhere to the Leninist principles on the world revolution solely because they are, to the core, scientific and practicable in all times.

Surely, this does not mean that we do away with these Leninist concepts as and when they coincide with those of Stalinism, Trotskyism or any other 'ism'. To us it is the genuineness of the ideology that matters most of all.

There have been sporadic statements to the effect that our critique of Stalin and Comintern derives largely and directly from Trotsky's writings, I quite agree. But there is hardly any truth in these extremely spurious statements. The Stalinists and Trotskyists strain every muscle of theirs to publicise this misrelation with a purpose behind it. It is obvious that the drowning Stalinists tend to voice this sort of bogus

utterances when their attempts to evade us suddenly fail. On the part of the so called 'Trotskyites' they who are to the hilt, high and dry, and have nothing around to lean on hurl at us calumnious speeches of the above nature so as to gain some strength to be in the limelight.

It is totally incorrect to say that we are in agreement with the Trotskyite theory of permanent revolution in all essentials: in this regard we believe only Leninist theory of world revolution and nothing else.

Furthermore, I emphasize that we are prepared to face whatever challenge placed before us. Each and every member of our party is able to take up any challenge raised by any 'expert theoretician' of the so called left. We really mean what we say; and we never leave a gap between our sayings and doings. People of Sri Lanka already know this and will be more acutely aware of it in the time to come. Those two-tongued 'expert' of the treacherous petty-bourgeoisie who have been wilfully submerging themselves in the marsh of dogmatics throughout their accursed political careers fear that our party's pragmatics would disturb and, by and by, root out their transparently sluggish existence. Therefore, all they want today is to procrastinate that to the maximum possible extent. Their challenges too are strategically arranged to achieve this purpose. Those who know them and their disgraceful past will never consider their 'challenges' to be worthwhile taking up. In our case, we do not wish, not in the least, to let them waste our precious time with their well-meant fabrications.

Moreover, the majority of those who brand themselves as Trotskyites in present Sri Lanka, are Stalinists beneath their Trotskyite dress. Therefore, it has been the duty of our criticism to turn on Stalinism often with a view to enhancing the awareness of the masses. But this, in no wise, means that we have not made theoretical criticism of Trotskyism. We have done it enough in the past. We are doing it right now and will continue to do it in

the years to follow. Why? Because we consider it to be yet another enemy of genuine Socialism and this should be quite adequate to make you realize that we have no special soft spot for Trotskyism as you exclaim in your question.

Q: You frequently speak of the problems of revolution in backward capitalist countries. Does this not imply that you accept the Trotskyist analysis of imperialism which forms the basis of the theory of Permanent Revolution? Does this also not imply a reflection on your part of the neo Marxian thinking on Peripheral capitalism, Dependency and Underdevelopment (Frank, Samir Amin et al) which after all is a theoretico-academic response to, or explanation of, the political practice of contemporary revolutionary struggles in Latin America and the neo-colonial world?

A: It is by no means justifiable for you to say that we rely on the theory of permanent Revolution when we contemplate the problems of revolution in the backward capitalist countries. Even the greatest teachers of the working class, Marx, Engels and Lenin, themselves spoke a great deal of the same sort of problems arising in the underdeveloped, backward capitalist lands. Are they to be branded as Trotskyists just because they did so?

We do not comply with any concept regardless whether it is neo Marxian or otherwise, which derives its theoretico-academic essence merely from the doings of imperialism. We absorb the positive, progressive, theoretico-academic response to the political practice of contemporary revolutionary struggles in Latin America, Africa, Asia and, on the whole, in the countries of the neo-colonial world, not just as a part, but as the ones that form a complete process stretching along the history of the world revolutionary movement.

Q: The JVP seems to have refreshingly undogmatic views on the character and potential role of the youth and students movements. Could you summarize your views on this issue?

A: You see, not only in considering the character and potential role of the youth and student movements but also in performing every other doing of our party the views and concepts of ours have been refreshingly undogmatic. There has been—and still there is—many a group of the so-called left considering the youth and student movements to be petty-bourgeois. In the world proletarian movement, we know, there were certain countries that treated the youth and student movements as petty-bourgeois but that was according to the prevalent socio-economic context of each particular country. This however does not mean that it has to be necessarily so at all historic junctures of class struggle. Further, it is not on the basis of class criticism but of age and mode of action that the youth and students are thus categorised.

The youth and students of this country are no doubt connected to the existing relations of capitalist production in numerous ways. It is true that all social strata existent within the present bourgeois set up carry with them bourgeois consciousness. But, today, the vast majority of the youth and students of the country which belongs to the oppressed layers of the society rightly realizes the futility pervading their inaccessible bourgeois aspirations. The objective conditions are so ripe and spurring now that it is quite possible to switch their bourgeois consciousness to proletarian.

Still in the early stage of life though, the youth and students of the oppressed families do encounter grave socio-economic problems. As long as the situation in Sri Lanka is concerned they are evidently among the most critically burdened. problems surround them everywhere they go and the circumstances compel them to look for some solution. They acutely feel their bondage and vivaciously step forward to free their class. They are most confident that they have the power within themselves to endure any hardship, to undergo any suffering until their treasured class lays its robust hands on emancipation. To all those who estimate (under estimate to be precise) that we are a party of the youth we give a big 'how-right-you-are!' We are

a party of the youth, there is is simply no question about that. Why? We strictly maintain that it is the ardent young proletarians who will **most** determindly come to the forefront of the struggle and thus **most** unyieldingly shoulder the task of transforming the bourgeois society into a socialist one.

Q: Comrade Upatissa Gama-nayake, in a public lecture on October 8th 1977, discribed Com-mandante Ernesto Che Guevara as a great proletarian revolutionary internationalist. This is doubtless correct. However, Fidel Castro has drawn attention to the impor-tance of Che's ideas. In this respect it is fairly clear that on many central questions, the JVP's theoretical positions are contray to the political thought and ideas of Che Guevara. (e. g. the question of Stalin, of Socialism in One Country of the world communist movement, uninterrupted revolution by stages etc.) In other words are you not making the same, attempt as the Trotskyists (e. g. the American SWP) to 'adopt' Che Guevara while rejecting his ideas? Furthermore is it not correct that you are doing the same thing concerning the Nicara-guan FSLN and the Salvadoran Farobundo Marti FPL i. e. invoking their names while rejecting their line?

A: Well, it is true that there have been several instances where our theoretical positions have been somewhat contrary to the political thought and ideas of Comrage Che. Yet, let me clarify straightaway, it certainly isn't a case of 'adopting' Che and 'rejecting' his ideas, as you try in your question to depict. Com. Che Guevara is in many ways precious to us as well as to the world proletarian revolutionary movement. His uncompromising attitude towards capitalism and imperialism, his lavish contribution to the socialist revolution in backward capitalist countries — especially those in Latin America — the spirit of internationa-lism that kept throbbing in his heart till his death, his devotion to socialism etc. etc. will keep reverberating in the ears of many a generation to come. We as a proletarian revolutionary movement, gather with zest the positive content

of Com. Che and —reject all negative aspects. The most accurate way of 'adopting' a hero, We believe, is imbibing the positive characteristics that lived within him. Following in his footpaths blindly can only ruin his heroism. Com. Che Guevara himself was not a blind follower of anybody.

In fact, it is the same thing that we have to say about the Nicaraguan FSLN and the Salvadoran Farabudo Marti FPL. They have been exemplarily fighting the Latin American imperialism and American beastliness for the last so many years and attained remarkable achievements now and then. We derive whatever applicable from them and lend our unconditional support to their efforts. Their struggle against military juntas and U. S. Imperialism is part of our struggle too. It has to be so with every genuine proletarian inter-nationalist movement. In sum, if any proletarian revolutionary move-ment in any part of the world truly struggles against imperialism and or capitalism we consider its members to be our own comrades cambating alongside us for a com-mon cause.

Your essay 'Opportunism or Proletarian internationalism' as well as your party newspapers have referred approvingly to India's Communist Party — Marxist (CPI —M) But as its celebrations of the Stalin centenary clearly shows, the CPI—M theoretical line is completely contrary to the JVP. Even its Foreign policy positions are different. What is your com-ment on this disparity.?

The theoretical line of the CPI — M is completely different from that of ours, we quite agree. Although there are clear —cut distinctions in its foreign policy too, through them we witness some basic similarities. The most significant of all such similarities is the one that they too do not follow either Moscow or Peking blindly. They assess the national and international political situation independently according to their own Marxist—Leninist standing. They come to conclusions on their own and act accordingly. This is what we value most in the CPI(M).

(Continued on page 24)

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Shanta de Alwis

The NSSP has advocated united front tactics at three levels.

- 1) A. U. F. to unite the working class in struggle, and the formation of a workers delegates council.
- 2) United left front to be based on a revolutionary socio-economic program in order to post the question of a left government.
- 3) Unity in action with all oppositional force in defence of democratic rights.

'Chintaka' conveniently forgets the first two points (we have been the most consistent advocates of these front since mid 1977) and chooses to concentrate his fire on point 3). The implication seem to be that 3) when used in relation to the SLFP will essentially bring about a political alliance.

In order to show that our U. F. tactics have nothing to do with Lenin's he presents his interpretation of the latter. Let us take up his first "scenario."

"A bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie against an openly counter-revolutionary threat (the bloc with Kerensky against Kornilov)."

This authority on Lenin doesn't seem to realize that Lenin considered Kerensky to be practically a Kornilovist and that he never defined the UF with Kerensky as one with the "liberal bourgeoisie against etc." Lenin referred to "the Bonapartist Kerensky" and ... maintained that "Kerensky clearly at the Cadets bidding. concludes an agreement on terms unknown to anyone with Kornilov" Furthermore he refers to "Kerensky and the counter-revolutionary Cadets who use him as a pawn." Again he says the "new" government of Kerensky, Avksetyev and co. is merely a screen for the counter-revolutionary Cadets and the military clique which is in power at present."

Capture Power

Hardly a characterisation of a "liberal bourgeois". The point is

that because of his history the significant sections of the masses (including a section of the working class) still had illusions in Kerensky and the provisional government. In other words, they did not realize that he was merely a screen for the counter revolution etc. It was in order to defend the revolution against the militant threat and to win the masses that UF tactics were adopted. Through that united action with the masses who still had illusions in Kerensky, Lenin showed that the Bolsheviks were the most consistent and courageous defenders of the revolution, whilst Kerensky was indeed a Kornilovist. Kerensky's popular base was eroded and the Bolsheviks emerged enormously strengthened and were able to capture power.

However as Lenin pointed out "we shall fight in the very same way as the Social-Democrats fought' tsarism in February 1917, together with the Cadets, without entering into any alliance with the Cadets or trusting them for one second."

That is exactly our relationship with the SLFP. **We certainly do not see any "liberal" features in Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike.** Even when we appeared on the same platform in a meeting to protest against Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's constitutional bonapartism, we pointed out her reactionary role. We continue to do that even though we advocate common actions against the government.

Chintaka's utter naivety is shown clearly by the following statement: "In a period following the SLFP's electoral defeat in 1977 the Left Forces should have assisted and concentrated fire on the SLFP thereby inflicting the maximum damage on it."

Join Forces

Does this mean that the Left should have joined forces with the UNP gangsters when they were burning and looting the homes of SLFP supporters or does it refer to verbal fire? Even if he is not

Prof. Shanta de Alwis of the Central Committee of the Nava Samasamaja Party concludes his reply to Chintaka, on the attitude of the NSSP to inter party alliances—ED.

suggesting the former, to **concentrate** even verbal fire on the SLFP in the face of the onslaught of the UNP, (with the full force of state power behind it) on SLFP (not merely on the leadership but also on the rank and file) would have been to alienate the petite bourgeois masses.

What one has to realize is that section of the petite bourgeoisie which today look to the SLFP for leadership is **precisely the more radical section** i. e. the potential allies of the proletariat. The proletarian parties cannot win them shunning united actions on issues which affect them, and "concentrating fire" on the SLFP. **That is precisely the path which the JVP has taken and has made it appear to be a tool of the UNP.**

These masses can only be won over by showing them that the Left parties are prepared to lead the struggle against the hated UNP regime and that they are ready and willing to do that in a much more decisive and militant role. The SLFP can only be exposed through this process.

The assumption that Chintaka seems to be making is that unity in action necessarily adds to a political alliance. One need only ask oneself whether Lenin's "bloc with Kerensky" led to a political alliance?

Shameful

Does Chintaka (and the CP "radicals" etc) repudiate the united actions with the SLFP in connection with the recent strike? Every worker who participated in the strike would have realized the necessity for the broadest possible alliance for action in the defence

of trade union rights. Of course those who are outside the struggle and are hostile to it such as the JVP can afford to be purists. This is precisely the pontification "from the fringe of the working class movement" that I referred to in my earlier article. As for the claims of the JVP 'Niyamuwa' about a U. F. with the SLFP being subtly formed, this is merely an excuse to cover their shameful role in the strike.

Chintaka chooses to characterize the NSSP as a "quintessentially parliamentarist party". The reason: "despite a degree of agitational extra-parliamentary activism, (the NSSP—S de A is by no stretch of the imagination, wedded to an **armed struggle strategy** (witness its attitude to the armed actions in the North....")

Armed Struggle

Yes indeed we are opposed to the sort of "armed struggle strategy" that this group of desperate Tamil youths have (or had) resorted to. However heroic they may have been such actions of individual terrorism only provides the state with excuses to launch large scale repression against the developing mass movement. **They have nothing to do with Marxist strategy.** One of the main differences between the Russian Social democracy and the Narodniks was precisely on this issue and nobody who considers himself a Marxist can be unaware of this.

The NSSP stands for **mass actions culminating in a Hartal centred around a general strike** to throw out this government; and for the formation of a revolutionary Left government based on workers and peasants councils. Is this the quintessence of Parliamentarism?

Internationalism

A proper Internationalist, Chintaka's laboured sarcasm about the "truly internationalist revolutionary praxis of the good professor" is utterly irrelevant. We are discussing the NSSP not the "good professor", and Chintaka himself (or rather his anonymous alter ego) has in the same issue of the **Lanka Guardian** supplied plenty of evidence of the truly internationalism of

our party. Everyone of the solidarity actions (as in the strike) that are mentioned except the New York demonstration, were initiated by the NSSP and its Trotskyist contacts in Britain, the Militant Tendency of the British Labour Party. One wonders what happened to the "truly internationalist etc...." of the Stalinists with their enormously powerful international movement backed up by the "socialist" (and presumably internationalist) superpower.

In conclusion I cannot help reflecting on the strange ironies of the political struggle. Hitherto Stalinists have criticised us Trotskyists for being ultra-Left, when we condemned their class collaborationist role, their alliances with the so called "progressive national bourgeois" and the reactionary thesis of the "non-capitalist road" for neo-colonial countries, like Egypt, Iraq, India. **Today some of these Stalinists in Sri Lanka have suddenly discovered that the "progressive role" of the national bourgeois is over and that the present stage of the Sri Lanka revolution (from 1970?) is anti-capitalist.**

This implies that the earlier stage (s?) the anti-imperialist democratic revolution is complete: i. e. the bourgeoisie has completed the revolutionary democratic transformation in the countryside, broken from Imperialism, solved the problem of the home market etc. We Trotskyists on the other hand have always maintained and continue to maintain that these basic problem of underdevelopment **remain** that only the dictatorship of the proletariat with the support of the peasantry can solve them. This is the fundamental reason why we reject political alliances with any section of the bourgeois.

This belated attempt to outflank Trotskyism from the left will not deceive the workers. It springs either from sheer theoretical confusion or from political charlatanism.

(Concluded)

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CUBAN FILMS OF THE 70s

Laleen Jayamanne

CINEMA

Eight recent films were screened at a Cuban film festival in Sydney, sponsored by the Australian Film Institute and the State government of New South Wales. Two of Cuba's leading film makers, Tomas Gutierrez Alea and Octavio Cortzar brought the films and conducted discussions, one of which was on "The Development of the Cuban National Cinema". People here have been privileged to see and hear of one of the most important third world cinemas which is very popular in its own country and has/is receiving international acclaim.

The Attorney General of New South Wales who declared open the festival said that though Cuba and Australia have different political and economic structures there is much that the growing Australian film industry can learn from the Cuban industry which has achieved so much in just 20 years.

Similarly, I feel that Sri Lanka too can learn from the Cuban cinema perhaps even more than Australia because we are both poor countries, with limited resources.

Cuba is exemplary because it has made a virtue of its poverty, her lack of facilities. When one compares the 40 year history of the Sri Lankan cinema with the 20 year history of the Cuban cinema one is struck by the aesthetic, intellectual and emotional poverty of our cinema (with of course the handful of exceptions) in contrast with the intelligence, humour and energy of the Cuban films. The Cuban state has helped create a Cuban film culture in a way in which the Sri Lankan state has not, (all political parties are implicated in this in different degrees). Because of this and many other reasons as well we are still locked into producing trash, for the most part. It is I think ten years since some early Cuban films were screened in Sri Lanka.

Laleen Jayamanne is a post-graduate student of cinema at the University of Sydney, and is working on a thesis on the role of women in Sri Lankan cinema.

I write this in the hope that the State Film Corporation and those in positions of power who are committed to the creation of a 'Just' society will realise the vital importance of exchanges between the third world countries and will facilitate such activity. The screening of *Godfather*, *Jaws* and *Apocalypse Now* may be entertaining, and may even open our eyes and mouth wide by the sheer weight of cinematic magic created with millions of dollars, but they can not open our minds. (I am of course assuming that the latter would be a worthwhile thing). Our cinematic models have to be from the third world and not from Hollywood because our conditions of living are radically different.

Eighty per cent of films screened in Cuba prior to 1959 were Hollywood products, while 20% were from Mexico. After the beginning of the revolution in 1959 50% of films screened are Cuban and 50% are divided among films from western capitalist countries, from socialist countries and Japan. So Cubans are able to see a much wider range of films than either Australians or Sri Lankans. The new Cuban film makers had the task of creating a new audience for the Cuban films: an audience that loved Hollywood and Mexican films. So they set about making films which at first Cubans did not enjoy but after a period of debate and discussion and innovative film making which addressed the Cuban experiences, the audience began to appreciate their own films. So the familiar argument of distributors (whether private or government) that "we give them what they want" is shown to be a lame excuse for not wanting to change the status quo, because it is profitable not to do so, because change does involve some risks, both financial and other. The Cuban industry is not hell bent on profit, it puts more resources on documentary films than on feature films. The shooting ratio of documentary to fiction film is 5 to 1. So they produce about 10 feature films per year for a population of 10 million people.

The Teacher is one of the most popular Cuban films, attracting over 500,000 people in less than one month. It is a fictional film based on real events of 1961 when 100,000 young people, both male and female, volunteered to join the literacy brigade to do into remote parts of the country to teach peasants how to read and write and thus wipe out illiteracy. The film is a tribute to that generation and recounts the experiences of one such 15 year old youth who is a remote village. The sight of the young boy teaching an elderly wood cutter, the resistance of the old man to being taught by a 'mere boy' and later their mutual learnings (the boy learns manual work from the old man) are all presented in a lively cinematic style full of humour. It was very satisfying to see young people so intimately involved in the development of their country.

Portrait of Teresa by Pastor Vega deals with the contradictions in the life of a working class woman with a husband and three small children. The problem is that she has two jobs, one in the factory and the other at home; the 'double day' as feminists have conceptualised it. Cuba is perhaps the only country which has legislated that if both husband and wife are working, they have to equally share the domestic chores. This is known as the Cuban Family Code of 1975.

The physical and mental strain of the wife increases because her husband refuses to do any of the house work and when Teresa gets involved in organising a theatrical troupe connected to her union her husband throws a fit and says she is neglecting him and the children. He fails to see that her work outside her role as mother and wife are important to her development as an individual, that it brings her in touch with other people in an activity which is pleasurable. The husband is totally selfish and patriarchal in his attitude to women so that all he can think of is making love to his wife when she comes home dead tired late

at night, while all she wants is to go to sleep so she could be up early in the morning to prepare breakfast for her family and then go to work in the factory. The marriage breaks up under the strain. Teresa's mother brought up under a different social order says, "men are men and women are women and not even Fidel can change that" but this film clearly shows that both Cuban women and some men are determined to question oppressive sexist relationships between men and women, and create a new kind of family life which is egalitarian. The last image of the film is that of a determined Teresa walking away from her husband while here husband tries to run after her but gets lost in the crowd. In a public square, a calipso band plays a lively rhythm to extremely sexist lyrics which command a woman named Teresa to get on her knees and scup the floor, (the traditional position of women). Our heroine walks firmly and proudly with great dignity (non of the helpless crying and wailing so familiar to us in the Sri Lankan cinema). Cuban women do not have to lament their fate because they are in a position to actively change their lives and the last look Teresa gives to us the audience is not a happy one but neither is it a hopeless one, it is the look of a woman who is determined to struggle and assert her dignity.

The only film in the festival by a woman was **One Way or Another** made by the late Sara Gomez, a black Cuban woman who died soon after completing the film. It is perhaps the most sophisticated and daring film in the whole festival, both in the subject it deals with and also formally. It is set in a housing development built in 1962 by former slum-dwellers who now live there, and deals with the problems these people face in trying to live productively after generations of marginal existence in shanty towns. The complex problems

are explored through the relationship between a young middle-class female teacher who goes there to teach and a worker from the slums who finds it hard to get rid of 'macho' attitudes and the 'male code of honour'. Once again these films do not provide us with easy solutions so popular in the Sri Lankan cinema. In **Hithuwoth Hithuwamai**, the lovely, innocent village girl tells her rich lover, "How can we marry, you are rich and I am poor", the rich inspector replies, "Love can conquer all", then the girl says, "Ah! then love is like socialism.". But in a society like Cuba which is building socialism, the people are aware of the complexities and the lack of fit between love and socialism and are exploring the contradictions between the two. while in Sri Lanka we seem to be satisfied with populist statements which provide facile endings to films. Sara Gomez' death is a great loss to the development of a third world feminist cinema.

These recent Cuban examples, and that of Latin America and Africa have amply demonstrated that the films produced in 'underdeveloped' economies need not necessarily be themselves underdeveloped, precisely because their standards are not those set by Hollywood or European 'art' cinema. The best products of the third world cinema are in fact a challenge to the Hollywood cinema, and at least some countries have recognised this. It is certainly time for Sri Lanka to do so now. Our film makers have worked with great odds against them and the State Film Corporation has given a new life to the industry but it is not enough to give birth, careful nurturing is vital for growth. The state has to take much greater responsibility to create a film culture in Sri Lanka and one of the best ways to do this is by exchanging films and people in the way Australia and Cuba have done recently.

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*Leewardly tilting towards Yew
Is something I'm sure we'll rue;
Following the path of Singapore,
And slamming shut the Dharmista
door!*

*The funny thing about Mister Lee:
He calls his state a "Democracy",
Where the P. A. P. wins every seat,
A truly representative feat!
The reason why his critics fail,
Is that they're nearly all in jail.
A trick he'd like to teach us too
With willing pupils, green and true,*

*But Lanka and Singapore, if you
please
Look even less alike than chalk
and cheese;
Lankans guard their freedom dear,
Dictators, therefore, we'll not fear.*

*So up good citizens and strike a
blow!
And let our leaders firmly know
That down the path of Singapore
This country has no wish to go.*

— Sri

(From "Between the Lines")

JVP's . . .

(Continued from page 19)

*You totally reject the concepts
of revolution by stages, Popular
Fronts, anti imperialist united
fronts with the progressive sections
of the national bourgeoisie etc.
Yet your paper Red Power in its
issue of August 1978 refers to
'The Iranian National Front, a
progressive and democratic alliance
headed by Dr. Mohommed Mos-
sadegh'. Its not that anyone could
disagree with this description but
doesn't it run contrary to your
stated theoretical positions?*

Negative, it does not run contrary
to our theoretical position. **When
it comes to the point of strug-
gling against us imperialism
in its direct intervention—or
against a fascist regime—the
need to form anti-imperialist
united fronts may arise, perhaps.**
It isn't right to say that we reject
the concept of united fronts totally.
The determinant factor of our
acceptance of it or rejection is the
existing conditions and the changing
circumstances. That is precisely why
we referred to the Iranian National
Front as a progressive and
democratic alliance.

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Has it occurred to him that
the forces, official and unoffi-
cial, are actively striving to
revise the existing borders to
the states which existed prior
to 1939?

Did not the same tremors
of "anti-Communism" the Amba-
ssador suffers from, cause the
emergence of Fascism in the
early thirties? And is this not
the very same hysteria a part
of official policy of FRG even
today under SDP?

The Ambassador neither refu-
tes nor disputes the facts but
speaks about the merits of an
individual German, viz Willy
Brandt, to paint a rosy picture
of FRG.

Nevertheless, he cannot hide
the ascendancy of the dark
forces, that encouraged Nazis
in the thirties, from the eyes
of the world.

K. Mahendrarajah

Vaddukkodai.

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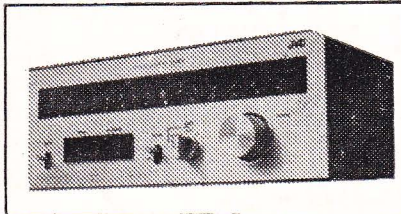
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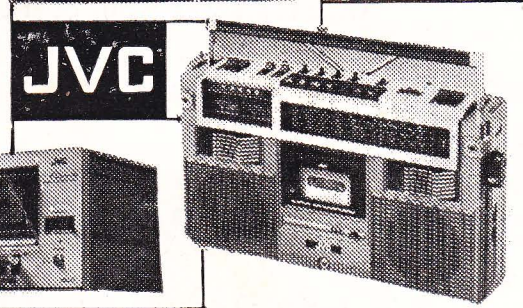
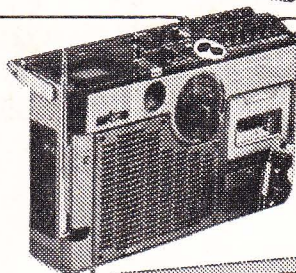
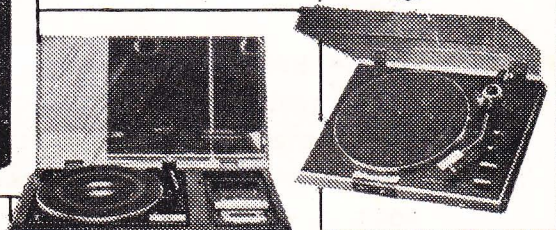
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