

EXCLUSIVE

THE WRITER IN THE THIRD WORLD

— Cecil Rajendra

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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PRESIDENTIAL POLL

Will the S L F P unite ?

Will the North abstain ?

* **Continuity and change in Tamil politics**

— V. I. S. Jayapalan

* **Is the JVP a Revolutionary**

Working Class Party ? — Chintaka

* **China's 12th Party Congress :**

Eliminating ultra Leftism

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THE T. V. ELECTION?

Some twenty years ago, a UPI correspondent watching Colvin on the platform at Galle Face Green turned to a local journalist and said: "Gee, this guy will make a fortune on T. V.!"

Will Television add a new dimension of our electoral politics? An Oxford don who is on the BBC Advisory Council spoke on the subject at the SLFI sometime last year and advised both journalists and media monitors to watch the impact of TV on politics. Personality and 'image', she said, will matter much more.

By the time this issue of the L.G. is out, the six candidates should have made their radio and TV debut. Radio will help the "newcomers" (Rohana, Vasu and Kumar) to establish personal contact for the first time with an invisible audience of millions. As ministers, J.R., Colvin and Hector have had their voices "tested".

It is the "Idiot Box", if the distinguished gentlemen will permit the term, that is likely to win votes and carry new converts for the Sri Lankan audience — literally the man-in-the-street watching in the shop window — is now really "hooked" on this new toy. But there'll be no T.V. debates, and no questions by trained and experienced journalists. Only speeches and personal appearances.

It is still too early to say whether this will be a T.V. election.

TROUBLED WATER

There's a civil disobedience campaign of a kind going on in suburban Kotte. Each time water meters are fixed, the authorities find that they are destroyed or put out of action within a few days. Inquiries have been instituted to ascertain whether this was planned "sabotage", meaning whether it was engineered by a political organisation. Evidently, it is a disobedience campaign started by a few and then taken up by hundreds as the word got around how to avoid paying new rates.

FRENCH FRONT

The EELAM propaganda brigade has established a bridgehead in Paris. LE MONDE, one of the best known newspapers in the world, has published articles on the "Tamil struggle" on three successive days, 3, 4 and 5 August. And in a longish piece later, it reported the meeting of thousand Tamils living in France who had resolved in favour of "setting up a provisional government of Tamil Eelam in one year or two".

The Paris meeting also pledged support to the Liberation Council formed by the New York Convention held in July. The New York Convention, according to LE MONDE, had been advised by 'moderate TULF leaders to act with greater caution because they "did not wish to engage in a trial of strength with the government when both the presidential and parliamentary elections are approaching".

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Sai Baba the Mystic

I feel impelled to respond to the letter from the Reverend monk of Gotami Vihara on the subject of Sai Baba, published in your issue of the 1st September. Why all this malice towards this mystic? His Hinduism surely cannot be the cause — other Hindus have not evoked such an emotional response. The cause cannot be the claim that Sai Baba is an Avatar of the Divinity. For this is in the best Hindu tradition, and indeed thousands of Buddhists turn to another quondam avatar, viz Kataragama Deva, for a solution to their various mundane problems. Does the cause lie in his performance of "miracles?" "Oh for a Kovoov" the monk seems to say, "to castigate this charlatan", Perhaps this provides a clue: the monk adopts the rationalist — materialist stance. He cannot have forgotten surely that the Buddha rejected both the annihilationism of the materialist and the eternalism of the theist.

Western philosophies have a healthy tradition of scepticism. Their origins may be traced to the introduction of Plato and Aristotle (via the Arab civilization) to the West in the 13th Century. Plato's ideas burst bomb-like on the desert of western thought and well-nigh destroyed Christianity. (The Reformation would have occurred centuries earlier if not for that excellent patch — work artist St. Thomas Aquinas who married several Aristotelian concepts to a modified Christian theology.) Plato, then, was a Colossus in the history of Western Philosophy and indeed of Greece. But among his contemporaries in India, where numerous philosophical schools were vigorously contending, Plato's ideas commanded no position of pre-eminence. Some centuries earlier to Plato, several Indian seekers after Ultimate

Truths had abandoned the method of analysis and synthesis and the use of logic. and turned their attention to mind-control and self-development as a means to this end. This was the genesis of Hindu mysticism. The meditative practices of the mystics (of whom the Buddha was an outstanding example), yielded strange supernormal powers (as a consequence though not an objective) — powers possessed by many Buddhist monks in the Buddha's lifetime. Perhaps the mystic mind reached out into a new dimension where time and space possessed a new significance.

However that may be, clairvoyance, clair-audience, and prevision are today among the supernormal powers recognised by the western philosopher as no longer a myth; and he gives these phenomena the vague appellation "Extra Sensory Perception". But how far does this field of experience extend? To Uri Gellers stopping of a watch's movement by holding it in his palm? Or causing a fork to bend by gazing at it? Or may we include

such incidents as the changing of water into wine? Or the multiplication of the loaves and fishes? Can the developed intelligence of a mystic heal the sick? Read one's thoughts? Project ideas into one's Consciousness? Coax **thalis** out of thin air for a Thondaman?

The truth is that neither the western philosopher — scientist, nor you nor I know the answers. His western yardstick is not adequate for measuring the extent of such supernormal phenomena, or determining the volume of a mystics consciousness. And so, while scepticism is certainly admissible, condemnation is merely a symptom of our own ignorance. A modicum of modesty would be more becoming in the circumstances, than superciliousness.

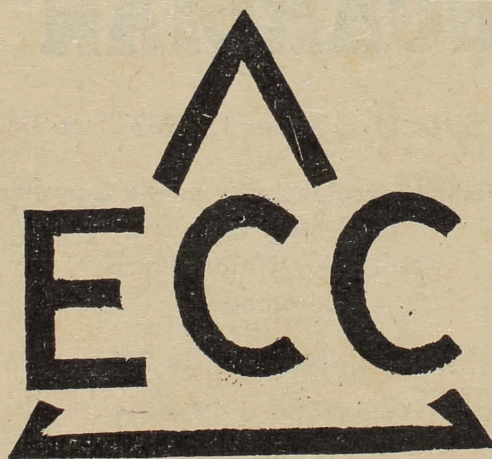
Sai Baba's message of Universal Love and Brotherhood preaches no new religion, He believes that all the world religions point to the same Truths, quoting freely from all scriptures. But here he is surely in error?

He may expatiate on the Buddhist Truths of Anichcha and Dukkha. But the Buddhist concept of Anatta is alien not only to his Hinduism but also to all other religions. Thus the reverend from the vihara may certainly reject Sai Baba's teaching as being misguided. But unfortunately he has gone further, and (in my view) without justification, offending, in his tirade the stance advocated by the Buddha vis-a-vis other religions and their gurus.

But quite apart from the magic of miracles and the claims of divinity, we can discern in Sai Baba a great humanitarian and social worker, as evidenced by the free schools, universities and hospitals he has set up and is running — not to speak of the exercise of his own healing powers. Even if we reject his message and his divinity, and remain sceptical about his miracles, these give us reason to offer him respect rather than vituperation.

Sumitta

Nugegoda.



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Can SLFP—Opposition unite to deny JR his Austerlitz?

NEWS
BACKGROUND

While the committed SLFP supporter seems to be fighting on two fronts (one against the main enemy, the UNP, and the other against a suicidally disunited and squabbling SLFP high command) the UNP leader has had to open a second front too — to contain the local unpopularity of some of the UNP MP's. At least thrice last week, his speeches on the campaign trail have highlighted that problem.

Forget about your MP, think of me. Remember you are electing a President, not an MP. That in effect was his message to the UNP voter.

And on at least one occasion he gave the impression that all was not hunky-dory in the UNP camp either. I know, the report went, that there are some who are playing foul, and some who are playing fair. I shall deal with those people who are playing foul soon.

The basic reason for the unpopularity of an administration is the adverse impact of its policies on the mass of the people. Usually, this hinges on economic issues. But a party's poor image can also be traced to the bad impression created in each electorate by the MP. In the rural areas, in particular, the sundry activities of the politician are known quite intimately to the voter. Not the doings of the MP only but of his coterie, his relations, his private secretary, his local organiser, his business friends and, as that lovely word goes, "catchers". The accumulated criticism, hostility and disgust finally translates itself to a once popularly elected party's terribly tarnished image.

If President J. R. does not win with that "thumping majority" he has so confidently predicted he will surely rue the day he did not live up to his reputation as a stern disciplinarian and tolerated too much too long.

SLFP SQUABBLES

Otherwise the UNP leader had much cause for satisfaction, especially on September 26, the anniversary of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's death. Never had the SLFP leadership presented such a pathetic picture of disarray. The subject of an L. G.

JR at 75, SLFP at 30

The SLFP has been celebrating its 30th anniversary. On September 26th both groups paid homage to their revered founder, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike who was assassinated 22 years ago. It is a sad irony that this September 26th saw a party leadership which has brought the party so perilously close to burying the hopes and aspirations of its countless supporters.

But politics is a human enterprise although a little divine intervention is often solicited by even its most hardened and cynical practitioners.

Sowing discord among one's enemies, keeping them off-balance and guessing, even helping one side now and another later in order to foster their disunity and prolong their internal fights is a maxim highly recommended by Niccolo Machiavelli, author of the classic treatise on state craft "The Prince"

*Happy birthday, sweet prince.
— (L. G. 1. 10. 81)*

comment last year (SEE BOX "HAPPY, BIRTHDAY SWEET PRINCE" L. G. Oct, 1 1981) the SLFP's parlous condition had very much to do with JR's strategems. The SLFP command structure was

falling apart and the pieces were falling into His Excellency's ample lap. In keeping with his oratorical style and grand manner, he dug into his favourite treasure-trove (English and Indian History) and came out with a picturesque parallel — the last days of the Moghul Empire, easy pickings for the British.

"Hector pays tribute after ceremonies are over" announced the well-informed ISLAND on 27/9, and then followed it up with a lead story next day headlined "No decision by SLFP to take Maitri back — Sirima". The Elections Commissioner's "recognition" and the accompanying reward of the hand symbol had certainly not resolved the SLFP's internal disputes. In fact, a new "struggle" has started, as a sequel to what looks like another re-alignment of forces. Hector, TBI, Maitri, Vijay K., Ratnasiri, Kularatne, Udagama, Suriaratchi etc are working together. It may well be an *ad hoc* alliance geared strictly to the Presidential campaign but its possible long-term significance became obvious when (a) the official SLFP list of electoral agents was suddenly cancelled and a fresh one presented and (b) Anura was still not appearing on an election platform (up to 30/9) and (c) Maitri, Suriaratchi etc came on Hector's platform.

"All Anura's men" observed a veteran SLFP supporter when the ISLAND published the list of the "rejects". It was a pretty accurate assessment for the list included many of those who had crossed over with Anura, back and forth: Stanley Tillekeratne, Basil Rajapakse, Dixon Silva, Sumathipala Jayawardene, besides other Anura supporters like Dr. Nevilie Fernando. These names were NOT submitted. as electorate — level agents.

"Not only Anura's, madam's chaps too" corrected another insider, and he had a point to make. At district

TAMILS AND POLLS

Amir as Arafat

level, the names of Lakshman Jayakody MP, M. M. Mustapha, William Silva, Jack Kotelawela, Jaya Pathirana and K. B. Ratnayake (hand-picked substitute for Maitri in the NCP) were not submitted.

Plainly, the party machine was in the hands of an individual or group, outside the direct control of Mrs. Bandaranaike or Anura. History had repeated itself. The 12/5 division in the poliburo which had led to the first split had returned to haunt the party again.

Sept. 26. It was a strange way indeed to honour SWRD, the founder of the SLFP. The party of the Bandaranaiques was going into battle without the Bandaranaiques!

RURAL MOOD

"Don't go by the Colombo mood... the anti-UNP tide is rising in the rural areas" a political scientist from one of the "brown brick" campuses told the L.G., adding "In the last week, all candidates save perhaps Wijeweera will see their support vanish and all anti-UNP votes will converge to give Hector a fighting chance".

In short, will the SLFP voter rally round the flag and vote **en masse** for Hector, despite the divisions in the party? Already, various trade unions, left groups (other than the C.P. which has officially come out in favour of the SLFP candidate) and traditional anti-UNP organisations are moving towards united action. Only a united campaign to back up and capitalise on the anti-government feeling in the countryside can deny President J.R. his "thumping majority" and his Austerlitz.

One Promising sign for the Opposition is the shift in the public debate from the constitutional issue (1978 vs. 1972, democracy vs. dictatorship) to the economic issue. Paradoxically, it was the UNP that took the offensive on economic policy. Do you want a return to the "bullock cart era", the era of queues and shortages and permits? The Opposition attacks the "surrender" to foreign interests. The UNP promises more foreign investment. The Opposition assails the FTZ. The UNP says it will make the whole of Sri Lanka a free trade zone.

"If the implied parallel holds, does that make the TULF the P.L.O. of a yet unrealised 'EELAM'?" asked the L.G. (15/6/82) in its cover story titled "AMIR IN THE CROSSFIRE" Having had occasion much earlier to refer to Mr. Amirthalingam's as not very different from Mr. Yasser Arafat's, this commentator was naturally pleased to find Messrs Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam using the Arafat analogy to defend themselves against their radical young critics who have looked with suspicion on the TULF's talks on DDC's etc with President Jayewardene. If it was good enough for the PLO leaders to talk to the US (Philip Habib) what was wrong with the TULF speaking to J. R.? they asked in pointed reply.

The parallel, never too firmly founded, breaks down at that point, because a strict application of analogy would place J. R. in the role of Menahem Begin!

History, the nature of the problem and its regional/international dimensions make the two situations the Tamils and the Palestinians, quite different. But our allusion to Arafat was intended to highlight the predicament of the TULF leadership caught between the UNP (Sinhala) government and their own Tamil constituency, and trapped in the middle between "diplomatic negotiations" and "armed action".

Mr. Arafat pinned his faith to some extent on a negotiated settlement using various methods of persuasion and pressure. Thus his reliance on the Arab states, including the highly conservative ones, his initial support for the Fahd plan, his contacts, direct and indirect, with the US and Israel. The failure of this "diplomacy" drew fire from Palestinian militants, notably the PFLP and PDFLP, which have no faith in "negotiated settlements".

Those are the dilemmas of leadership. And that's where Mr. Amirthalingam and the TULF high command find themselves. Their

diplomatic moves, directly and through intermediaries (J. R. is not Philip Habib, for Philip Habib is Dr. A. J. Wilson from New Brunswick would have been hailed as personal and political triumphs if they had "delivered" something tangible, something worthwhile to the Tamil constituency in the north. They must deliver the goods — DDC powers, army and police presence, home guards, varsity admissions, jobs, colonisation etc. Not everything, but something that will satisfy the "moderate majority".

If they had done so, the ground would have been cut under the feet of Mr. Chandrasana, Dr. Dharmalingam, Mr. Mahesan (*Suntiran* editor) Mr. Eelavenden etc. It is their evident failure after protracted and tortuous negotiations to present any tangible gains to the northern province Tamils that has encouraged the restive ranks of the TULF, and strengthened the hand of the anti-leadership dissidents.

Since the TULF, leaders are experienced politicians, it would be a mistake to believe that they are the victims of their own incredible naivete. To be fair, time worked against the TULF leaders. Once the President started thinking about elections, concessions to the TULF became unthinkable. No (Sinhala) President or Premier, would grant concessions, especially on the DDC's (an issue with a long history beginning with the Regional Councils of the B-C Pact) to a Tamil party on the eve of elections unless of course he was secretly contemplating his early exit from politics.

Now the TULF leadership has been pushed from "non-participation" to "virtual boycott". Even Mr. Kumar Ponnabalam has played a hand. Once a major factor in Tamil politics, the T. C. of G. G. Ponnabalam was rapidly eclipsed by Mr. Chelvanayakam's F. P., later TULF. The TULF may regard Mr. Kumar Ponnabalam's entry into the

(Continued on page 6)

Tamil politics in historical perspective

V. I. S. Jayapalan

The State Council election in 1931 were boycotted in the Jaffna Peninsula at the instigation of the Jaffna Student Congress (later known as Jaffna Youth Congress). Inspired by this boycott, Mr. Philip Gunawardena, one of the founders of the left movement in Sri Lanka sent a letter to the "Search-Light" — a Journal Published in Colombo — from London on May 27, 1931. In this he stated: "Jaffna has given the lead. They have forced their leaders to sound the bugle call for the great struggle for freedom for immediate and complete independence from imperialist Britain.

"Will the Sinhalese who always display supreme courage understand and fall in line?" In the same letter he had blamed the Sinhalese Student movement in London and in Colombo such as Y. M. C. A. and Y. M. B. A. for not taking any active part in the struggle for freedom.

After about half a century, again we are hearing the same type of voices from the Youthful left Quarters of the South.

The roots of the present politicization of Tamils masses and the radicalization of the Jaffna youth have come from the 1930's liberal radicals of the Jaffna youth congress. Both the left movement in Jaffna and the progressive wing of the Tamil nationalist movement which is always against the domination of the wealthy and Pro U. N. P, sectors of Colombo Tamils, had originated from the early radicals of Jaffna Youth Congress. The weakening of the left movement in the Tamil Provinces after its Parliamentary victory in Point-Pedro electorate was due to three main reasons.

1. The left movement did not take a stand against the Sinhalese colonization of the Tamil Provinces, which the Federal Party opposed in the 1950's.

2. The left trade union failed to take up specific problems faced by the Tamil employees as the result of the implementation of Official Language Act passed in 1956. This failure led to the establishment of separate Tamil trade unions such as A. E. S. (Tamil Clerical Services Union) in 1961.

3. Abandoning of the original Language policy of equality by the L. S. S. P. and C. P. in order to maintain the united front with the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist Party, the S. L. F. P. In this regard they went to such an extent that they had to adopt anti Tamil tactics to oppose the so-called national government (1965-70) formed by U. N. P. of which Federal Party and the Tamil Congress were members. The mainstream left, ie the LSSP and the C. P, also participated with the S. L. F. P. in the communal campaign against the proposed Tamil Language (Special Provision) Act introduced by the U. N. P. regime in 1966. This campaign was basically anti-Tamil in character.

In this short article I like to outline the history of the left movement in Jaffna, its failure and its effect on the present radicalization of the Tamil Youth.

As happened to the emerging elites in any part of Sri Lanka in the first half of the century, the major part of the Jaffna elites also were absorbed by the expansion of Colombo city. Among the people who had been drawn to Colombo from Jaffna, one was the group of professionals, Administrative officers and wealthy businessmen. They settled down in Colombo and participated in the bourgeois nationalist movements like those led by Sir P. Ramanathan and Sir. P. Arunasalam. The other group composed of such sections as clerks and white-collar workers who had been either contemporaries or students of progressive school teachers in Jaffna. It was those teachers who stood in the forefront of the Jaffna Youth Congress. This Second group of clerks and white collar employees played a significant role in establish-

ing the left trade union movement and even the L. S. S. P. in Colombo.

The educated middle class and lower middle class who were left behind in Jaffna—the counterparts of the Colombo based group of clerks and white collar workers — eventually emerged as the pioneers of the left and trade union movements in the Northern province. As correctly pointed out by Santasilan Kadirgamer in the Handy Perinbanayakam Memorial Volume, "with the founding of L. S. S. P. in 1935 it become customary for the leaders of the left movements to address meetings in Jaffna very often under the auspices of the Youth Congress.N. M. Perera, Philip Gunawardena, Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Gunawardena, S. A. Wickremasinghe and W. Dahanayake were frequent visitors to the North."

During this period the Tamils who were drawn into the Nationalist movement and the Tamil Nationalist movement came mainly from the upper strata of the high caste Hindu families which had Colombo connections. On the other hand to left leadership of the North consisted of educated Hindus and Christians from the middle and the lower middle strata of the high caste. Moreover the Left in Jaffna inherited the strong lower caste base from the Jaffna Youth Congress.

In 1930's especially after the Anti-Caste 'eat-together & sit together' ("Same Asanam and Same Paskarnam") Campaign of the Jaffna Youth Congress, the upper caste and upper class based nationalist leadership of Jaffna and their little magazines like "Suthesanadiyam" become hostile to the Jaffna Youth Congress. On the other hand the Jaffna Youth Congress leadership not only organised and participated in the anti-caste struggle hand in hand with lower caste leaders like Joel Paul but also included them in their committee from 1929 onwards and thereby in their leadership.

When the Stalinist group led by Dr. Wickremasinghe broke away from the L. S. S. P. and started the Communist Party in

1943, most of the Jaffna L. S. S. P. Organizations and the 'low-caste' base of the Left too went along with the C. P. But in the Southern Sinhalese districts, the main power base stayed back with the Trotskyist leadership of the L. S. S. P. The Tamil clerical section of the trade unions in Colombo remained with the L. S. S. P. at the split.

In the Jaffna Peninsula, L. S. S. P. became a clerical servant and teachers dominated middle class group with the notable "middle caste" participation. The mistakes of the left movement in the early 1950's was a result of their misunderstanding of the Nationality problem of the Tamil people, taking it merely as language problem. The colonization policy of the U. N. P. govt. was vehemently opposed by the Federal party, however.

The Federal party also participated in the United front organised by the L. S. S. P., V. L. S. S. P., D. W. C. (Quoted from Leslie Goonawardena) in 1953 in the struggle and the Hartal against the withdrawal of the rice subsidy by the U. N. P. government." There is criticism that the L. S. S. P. should not have allowed the Hartal of August 12th 1953 to be confined to one day..... People who make this kind of criticism are unaware of the situation that existed..... Only three Organisations were prepared to issue a call for the one day Hartal namely L. S. S. P, the V. L. S. S. P. — C. P. united front and the Federal Party. Non-Commitment of the left movement on the questioning of Sinhalese Colonization of the traditional home-lands of the Tamil speaking people, and the struggle of the Federal Party against the Sinhalese colonization, made the Federal Party more attractive to the left and, liberal sections of the Jaffna youth of this time.

In the early 1950's when the dominant party in the North was T C and of the Eastern Province the U. N. P, the upper Strata of the Colombo Tamil population either supported T. C. or U. N. P. or both. During this period the liberal and independent line of the F. P. was instrumental in shifting the support of the upper strata of the Colombo Tamils is from the T. C. to the F. P.

As Jayaratne S. Maliyagoda of the Lanka General Services Union pointed out, in the beginning at least a group in the Communist party, that is the leadership of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation in 1944, had the correct understanding of the problems of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. The resolution passed by the CTUF on 22nd September 1944 was a manifestation of the Leninist line that existed in the party. In that resolution the CTUF of 1944 stressed the "recognition that the nationalities (Sinhalese and Tamils), have the right to free self-determination including the right if they so desire to form their separate independent state." But the C. P. as a party never corrected the mis-interpretation of the national question as merely a language issue. This misunderstanding of the National problem, the C. P. inherited from the LSSP.

Therefore the C. P. did not consider the planned Sinhalese colonization of the traditional homelands of Tamil people, a problem. But in 1955 they improved their policy regarding the National question and accepted Autonomy as the solution for the National question and won a seat in the Jaffna Peninsula in 1956 election. It is notable that the total number of seats they had in the parliament in that time was only three (3).

After the implementation of the Sinhala policy in 1956 up to 1960, the Federal party organised **extra-parliamentary agitations** against discrimination and against the various forms of national oppression such as Sinhalese colonization of the Tamil provinces. Some of these extra-parliamentary struggles have no parallel in the Sri Lankan history other than the 1953 hartal. This is the '56-'60 period, one must reiterate.

The main controversy of the left movement of that period was created by the special disabilities caused by the 1956 Sinhala Only bill to the Tamil employees. Sinhalese employees, benefited by this law in various ways such as easy promotions etc. The L. S. S. P. and C. P. trade unions instead of taking a Marxist line to fight and defend the rights of their Tamil members, simply avoided involvement. This came as a big blow to the progres-

sive sections of the Tamil speaking people. As I mentioned earlier, this blunder of the left parties and their trade unions made the formation of a separate Tamil trade union movement inevitable.

And thus the A. E. S. was formed. The A. E. S. became popular with the Kodeswaran case. For the first time since the late 20's and the Jaffna Student Congress (Jaffna Youth Congress) days, the Tamil leftists became frustrated simply because of the fact that they could not trust the left movement anymore, when it came to the question of the problems of the Tamil people.

(To be continued)

Can SLFP . . .

(Continued from page 4)

presidential battle a quixotic gesture but it served its purpose of embarrassing the TULF. And in a strange paradoxical way, it gave more strength to Mr. Chandrasenan's elbow — and elbow he has plainly thrust into the soft underbelly of the TULF bosses. (Ponnabalam Jr. has thus helped Chelvanayakam Jr.).

Mr. Chandrasenan, the rising star of the North, has assets other than the fact that he is Chelvanayakam's son. He has some of his father's virtues, including his integrity. He is a hard worker and has had the courage to appear for every young Tamil snatched by the police or army.

He was in the committee that drafted the TULF's General Council statement of 19th. Although it may be imprecise in its "boycott" call, Mr. Amirthalingam has explained with a nice gift for ambiguity: "We will not ask the people to vote, we have left it at that."

The Jaffna district has nearly half a million registered voters. What percentage will go to the polls?

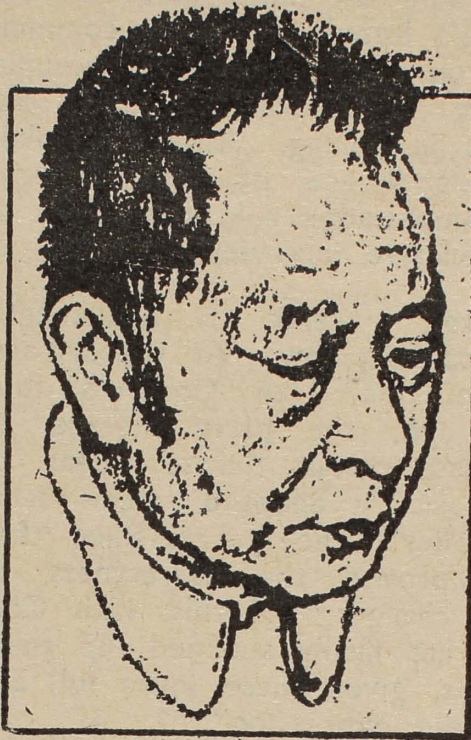
In a longer projection, a connected development may be even more important. Ranil Weerasinghe, the SUN's "internal security" specialist wrote a very interesting item on the latest moves of the militant Tamil youth groups. Six such groups have teamed up in a loose coordinating committee to launch, inter alia, a joint campaign against the TULF high command.

Advance in all fields

(The following passages are excerpts from the report presented to the Congress by the General Secretary, CPC, HU YAOBANG)

The "Left" mistakes made before and during the "cultural revolution" had a deep and extensive influence and caused serious damage. While thoroughly exposing and repudiating the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing counter-revolutionary cliques, we found it necessary to make a clean sweep of all such "Left" mistakes. This unavoidably involved the mistakes made by Comrade Mao Zedong in his later years. Comrade Mao Zedong's contributions to the Chinese revolution were great and indelible; that is why over long years he enjoyed enormous prestige in the Party and among the people and will continue to do so in the years to come. Whether we had Marxist courage to conduct self-criticism of our Party's mistakes, including those made by Comrade Mao Zedong, and whether we could conduct such self-criticism correctly and in a historical perspective constituted the key issue deciding whether things could be set right. During the two years before the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee, the question of rights and wrongs in the Party's guiding ideology was not clarified as it should have been and the work of setting things to rights proceeded haltingly; this was because in the early days after the smashing of the Jiang Qing counter-revolutionary clique, our Party was not ideologically prepared for an overall liquidation of the "Left" mistakes and also because the principal leading comrade in the Central Committee at the time continued to make "Left" mistakes on a series of important issues.

A jumble of problems accumulated during the 10 years of domestic turmoil. Many things that needed to be done or needed to be



Hu Yaobang

reformed claimed our attention. Moreover, the progress of new work inevitably gives rise to new problems. The Party therefore had to draw up a list of priorities, do its work systematically and solve problems step by step.

Economic Tasks

Take economic work for example, The Third Plenary Session first grasped the link of agriculture, laying emphasis on overcoming the long-standing "Left" mistakes in the guidelines in this sphere. This involved restoring and expanding the power of decision of the rural people's communes and their production brigades and teams; restoring the private plots, family and collective sideline production and village fairs; and gradually introducing, in various forms, the system of responsibility for production in which payment is linked to output. At the same time, the state purchasing prices of grain and some other agricultural products were raised; then the policies providing for a diversified economy were formulated. As a result marked changes have taken place in agriculture, in which vigorous growth has replaced stagnation. For many

years, the peasants have not been so happy as they are today. This has done much to start a turn for the better in the whole economic and indeed the whole political situation.

Following the improvement in agriculture, we began to readjust the structure of industry, laying emphasis on remedying the disproportion between light and heavy industries and on readjusting the service orientation of heavy industry. The result has been a rapid expansion of light industry. At the same time, we readjusted the ratio between accumulation and consumption and reduced the scale of capital construction which had been over-extended. This has resulted in improved living standards for the people as well as better proportions between the various branches of national economy. In other fields, we have, by and large, used the same method — that of tackling the key problem first to facilitate the solution of the rest.

Foreign Policy

China's future is closely bound up with that of the world as a whole. The successes China has achieved in its revolution and construction provide a powerful support to the world's movement for progress and a bright future, and conversely, our successes would have been impossible without the struggles of the people of other countries for a bright future. China has received help from the countries and peoples, and in turn has helped others. In the early years of our People's Republic, Comrade Mao Zedong pointed out: "Our general task is to unite the whole people and win the support of all our friends abroad in the struggle to build a great socialist country, defend world peace and advance the cause of human progress." Integration of patriotism with internationalism has always been our basic point of departure in handling our external relations.

Being patriots, we do not tolerate any encroachment on China's national dignity or interests. Being internationalists, we are deeply aware that China's national interests cannot be fully realized in separation from the overall interests of mankind. Our adherence to an independent foreign policy accords with the discharging of our lofty international duty to safeguard world peace and promote human progress. In the 33 years since the founding of our People's Republic, we have shown the world by deeds that China never attaches itself to any big powers and never yields to pressure from any big power. China's foreign policy is based on the scientific theories of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, and it proceeds from the fundamental interests of the people of China and the rest of the world. It follows an overall long-term strategy, and is definitely not swayed by expediency or by anybody's instigation or provocation. Because we have firmly applied the basic principles of our foreign policy formulated by the late Comrades Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, socialist New China has gained prestige, made friends throughout the world and maintained its dignity in its relations with foreign countries.

Third World

Socialist China belongs to the third world. China has experienced the same sufferings as most other third world countries, and she is faced with similar problems and tasks. China regards it as her sacred international duty to struggle resolutely against imperialism hegemonism and colonialism together with the other third world countries.

The struggle initiated by Latin American countries against the maritime hegemony of the superpowers and the struggles of the petroleum exporting countries and other raw material producing countries for permanent sovereignty over their own natural resources the struggle of the non-aligned countries against power politics and bloc politics and the struggles of the developing countries for the establishment of a new international economic order — all these struggles have converged into a mighty current of forces upholding justice in our time and

CHINA

Eliminating Leftist Tendencies

“It's a very important Congress” said the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China commenting on the Chinese Communist party's 12th Congress held last month in Peking. Asked to explain the significance of the Congress, the Ambassador told the **L. G.** in an exclusive interview:

“First, I refer to fundamental changes in policy. At the 3rd session of the 11th Congress four years ago, the party started to eliminate certain ‘leftist’ ideas of the past. It adopted a more realistic policy. The years since then have proved the correctness of those changes, and this 12th Congress has finally summed up these policies, given these ideas full and complete expression”.

greatly changed the situation in which the superpowers could wilfully manipulate the fate of the world.

The common task confronting the third world countries is, first and foremost, to defend their national independence and state sovereignty and actively develop their national economies so that they can back up the political independence they have already won with economic independence. Here mutual aid among third world countries is of particular importance. We third world countries have vast territories, large populations, immense resources and extensive markets. Some of us have accumulated considerable funds, and many have acquired their own distinctive technologies and gained experience in developing their national economies which the others can learn from. Our mutual economic co-operation commonly known as “South-South co-operation,” is no less effective than our co-operation with developed countries so far as some kinds of our technology and equipment are concerned in meeting mutual needs. Such co-operation is of great strategic significance, as it helps us to break out of the existing unequal international economic relations and establish the new international economic order.

Q. What Impact will such decisions have on life in China?

A. I foresee a new upsurge in socialist reconstruction.

Q. The Chinese and foreign press have also commented on some changes in party structure, a generational change in command posts. Is this correct?

A. Yes. Some adjustments have been introduced in party organisation and one of them is the replacement of the old by the young. The veteran cadres move back to the second line, while younger men go up the first line.

Q. What is the point of this?

A. To ensure continuity of policy and stability.

Q. What role will the seniors play?

A. The veteran cadres, those who were in the revolution, and have not only 40 years of experience in party work but have high reputations, will be members of advisory committees. So, their experience will flow freely to the younger cadres. In the party committees, as many as 2/3 rds are new and young members.

China, the Ambassador explained, has been following an “open door” policy. It has given the national economy a fresh impetus, a new vitality. The majority supported this policy but there were some who criticised it, who wondered whether the policy was the correct one. After the Congress, a more united position has been achieved. The policy has the full backing of the party and the people.

Q. Did the Congress take any decisions that will affect Chinese foreign policy and diplomacy?

A. No changes. Our fundamental principles are independence and sovereignty. Our policy consists of three major considerations (1) Solidarity with the Third World (2) Opposition to hegemonism i. e. refusal to be bullied by and superpower or to become a superpower and (3) support for world peace.

Coalition's end

"Let's face it, the SPD are not our best buddies" a (US) official said of Mr. Schmidt's Social Democrats. "The Christian Democrats are our kind of guys" — WASHINGTON POST. (Sept. 19)

They called him "Schmidt Schnauze which is probably the German equivalent of "Louis the Lip". Yes, he was fast with his tongue, abrasive and patronising. An admirer of Immanuel Kant, Marcus Aurelius and the work of Henry Moore, he also tended to deliver lectures to those whom he regarded as his intellectual inferiors, when he wasn't attacking them for their ignorance or ineptitude. When, for instance, Mr. Reagan imposed sanctions on European firms over the

Soviet gas pipeline deal, Chancellor Schmidt virtually accused the US president of "duplicitous". For many months before that, of course, he had been trying to educate the Americans on the problems of international economics, especially money and trade.

Now that his coalition government's collapsed, Washington may find the prospect pleasing, while Moscow may keep its fingers crossed that a right-wing CDU-CSU (and FDP?) government does not lead to a deterioration of FRG — Communist bloc relations. Mr. Schmidt did respond to the Polish crisis with a restraint that irked Washington. On the other hand, the Chancellor was a warm supporter of the NATO move to station new US missiles in Europe. He did this by holding the party's

anti-nuclear 'Leftwing' on a tight rein. A rightwing regime may not be able to stem the swelling European tide of popular opposition on war-and-peace issues. (The return of the Socialist Olaf Palme in Sweden is in some ways an index of the general mood).

However, the crisis in Bonn was not created by Mr. Schmidt's personality or his personal views on major issues. The real reason is the current recession which has hurt even the relatively strong FRG economy, and unsettled the once complacent West German voter.

Correspondent Hugh Stephenson (**Guardian**) makes the point ably. "By the standards of other industrial countries things have still not gone seriously wrong..... But in the German context, this is not the political or psychological point..... A weak mark, high interest rates, balance of payments, constraints on expansion, a desperate energy crisis with no security of supply — these are all unnervingly new experiences for a child of post-war Germany".

(Continued on page 18)

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Is massive and enduring nuclear death salable?

John Kenneth Galbraith

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts — Like others in these last years, I've been deeply concerned over the dynamics of the nuclear arms race and the somber promise that it holds for mankind. Feeling so, I have tried to do whatever might be possible as a private citizen to arouse interest in arms control and concern for the exceedingly probable disaster if it does not succeed.

I was a member of Americans for SALT; I have had a role in the Council for a Livable World and been a cochairman of the American Committee on East-West Accord; I persuaded the BBC, in the course of a television series on the issues of our time to do a sequence in Death Valley to show how the landscape between Hartford and Philadelphia would look after a modest nuclear exchange; I have made speeches for Physicians for Social Responsibility, our most effective organization in advising people as to the consequences of nuclear war.

At the Democratic National Convention in 1980, I joined Adm. Gene La Rocque of the center for Defense Information and Frank Askin, a lawyer from New Jersey, to speak in favour of a resolution calling for a bilateral nuclear weapons freeze. The freeze, a straightforward and wholly practical

first step, seemed by far the best way of getting the issue away from the nuclear theologians who have made weapons policy, including arms control, their exceptionally private preserve.

The convention experience was especially instructive. Harold Brown, then in his residual days as secretary of defense, reproached me with extreme solemnity for appearing on so frivolous a mission. He was there to lobby for the MX missile.

My own words like those of my colleagues, were greeted with great waves of apathy. We were resoundingly defeated.

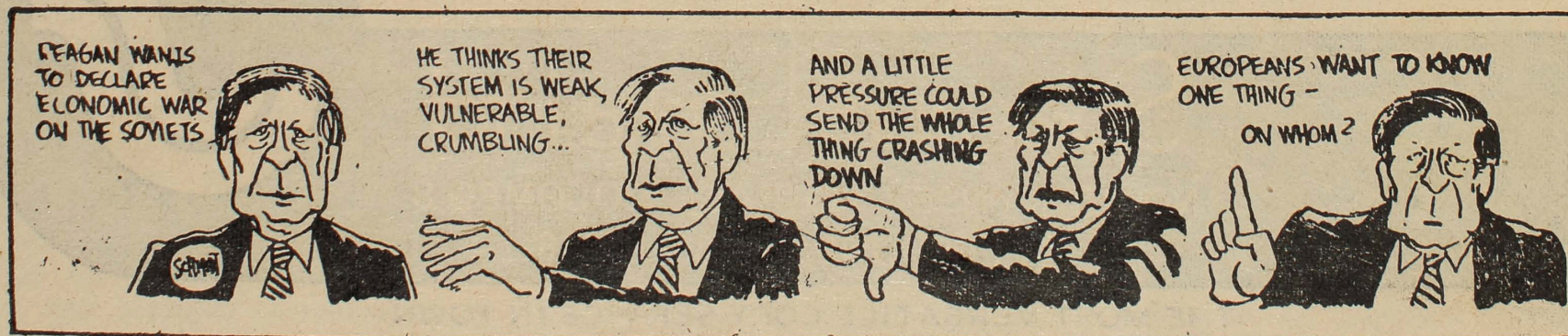
I cite these efforts not to suggest any seniority in the present discussion but to establish my credentials for affirming that, despite much effort, we were not getting anywhere until Ronald Reagan and his people came along to bail us out.

Concern for the danger of nuclear confrontation and war was, I am persuaded, just below the surface. But like the prospect of death, with which it is so largely identical, it was subject to psychological denial. Better and certainly happier not to think about it.

Widely regarded as the western world's greatest economist since John Maynard Keynes, **John Kenneth Galbraith** is now Emeritus Professor of Economics at Harvard. This article was specially written for the **New York Times**.

Needed was a major shock or series of shocks to bring the alarm into the open. This we could not provide. And this the Reagan administration, in a superbly orchestrated effort, has provided. That it was not intended does not subtract at all from the achievement.

The stage was set by the big increase in military spending, which was linked, in turn, to the assault on social expenditures. The first made the second necessary. Many in the past had sought to show military expenditures are



at the expense of other public needs. The administration made the choice clear, vivid and unmistakable, a major exercise in popular education.

Then came the renewed commitment to the MX missile and the extended debate over its basing. This was admirably designed to arouse important and articulate people, and particularly western Republicans and the Mormon church. There is a wholly nonpartisan aversion to having the MX as a neighbour and target.

Next came the well publicized decision to proceed with the neutron bomb with its thought-provoking emphasis on the destruction of people as opposed to property.

This highly substantive action was combined with more theoretical talk of a limited nuclear war, which emerged as a quite probable prospect, tolerable except to the Europeans immediately involved. The latter promptly raised their voices, which, not surprisingly, had resonance across the Atlantic, including with those who wondered in their inconvenient way if a limited war could ever be limited.

Next came the renewed emphasis on civil defense. The educational value of this is simply immense. Nothing so aroused my Cambridge, Massachusetts, neighbours as a civil defense advisory saying that, in the event of a nuclear attack, we should all go in an orderly manner to Greenfield out near the Berkshires — those of us who had cars. As an especially telling note, we were cautioned to take our credit cards with us.

The effort to arouse the public and keep it aroused continued. Early this summer, we had word of the plans for a five year nuclear war from which we would emerge victorious if not quite happy and glorious. Following some criticism, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger reiterated his commitment, adding only the thought that while we might not win, we wouldn't lose.

Meanwhile, from the National Security Council came the news that it

was national policy "to prevail" over the Soviets, this being one of those inspired ambiguities that is especially designed to give scope to the imagination. A NSC staff member Prof. Richard Pipes, had earlier been quoted as saying that there could be no peace with the Soviets until, in generous way, they abandoned their economic and social system. In other words, a state of permanent war with the Soviets.

In July came word that the administration would no longer have negotiations on the comprehensive test ban; there were doubts about verification. Better the risk from the weapons. In August, Energy Secretary James Edwards went out to Yucca Flats to celebrate the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima by being present at a nuclear test. He proclaimed it "exciting" and promised more.

Prof. Eugene Rostow, in charge of arms control negotiations, had earlier recurred to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Asked if he did not fear a nuclear war, he responded that Japan had survived a nuclear attack and flourished. How better could one have guided thoughts to the unfortunates who were in the two cities on those summer days and who neither survived nor flourished?

Thus the contribution of the administration. Can anyone doubt its effectiveness compared with the feeble voices previously raised? In consequence, the freeze has become a national crusade; there has been nothing comparable since the Vietnam War; as all know, it came within two votes of success in the House of Representatives.

Considering the risks we had been accepting, including that of the blind delegation of power to those who make nuclear game theory and the resulting megadeaths their monopoly, can anyone be sorry? One must even marvel, in a certain way, at the political courage (or insouciance) that was involved. Not previously had anyone imagined that massive and enduring death was a salable proposition for the average American voter.

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The higher duty of a writer in a developing society

Cecil Rajendra

“**S**peak in the name of those who cannot write”, exhorted the late great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda at an International P. E. N. Congress in 1966. “If the poet”, he continued, “did not make himself the spokesman of the human condition, what else was there for him to do?”

It is to our eternal discredit that we writers, especially those of us from the Third World (developing countries) have, for the most part, chosen to ignore or devalue Neruda’s noble call. But continue to pursue our little concerns, in our idiosyncratic niches, as if the activity of writing is a thing apart from, and not a part of, the great tapestry of life.

Worse, there are those who actively seek to deny the legitimacy of creative writing that makes any sort of social comment on the times we live in, dismissing such works as rhetoric, propaganda or subversive (frequently all three!). And nothing short of a Nobel award to the author will suffice as a stamp of approval and acceptance of his work by these critics. The strategic burning of Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *Bumi Manusia* (Man’s Earth) and *Anak Semua Bangsa* (A Child of All Nations) only after the Nobel Committee had announced the award of the 1981 Prize in Literature (for which Pramoedya had also been nominated) to Elias Canetti, is a cautionary lesson in this respect.

It is pertinent also here to observe how authoritarian regimes and the literary establishment, often poles apart on questions on censorship, security and individual freedom, join hands and seem almost to echo each other in their vociferous denunciation of the creative writer

who, directly or tangentially, intercedes for social justice.

Yet social commitment in literature, especially in Asia, is nothing new and dates back to the dawn of writing itself. One of my favourite rebuttals to detractors who accuse me of polluting literature with too much socio-political content is an early Sanskrit verse which is as relevant today as it was when first written over two thousand years ago:

“Let the rains come down
upon the earth in time:
Let the earth bend down
graciously with the produce of
the land,
Let this country be without
scourge;
let the learned be fearless.
Let the sonless have sons
let those who have sons have
grandsons,
Let the poor become rich,
Let all my people live for a
hundred autumns.
O Lord, let all my people be
happy and fulfilled.”

So, what has caused the rot to set in? Why has the writer in Asia abandoned his historical position near the axis of his community to hover nowadays somewhere in the periphery? Why has it become so unfashionable to take sides and speak up in the name of justice and common decency?

Without wishing to lay yet another baby at the colonisers’ doorstep, I posit that the shift began with the advent of colonisation and the importation of the doctrine of ‘art for art’s sake’ (*L’art pour l’art*) into the colonies from the West.

According to this insidious ideology, propounded by notables such as artist James Whistler and critic Dr.

A. C. Bradley (author of the celebrated *Shakespearean Tragedy*) it was held that a work of art was an end in itself and was to be judged entirely from within. No external canons or moral considerations should be applied in any evaluation of its intrinsic worth for, indeed, ulterior ends (such as the furtherance of a cause or the softening of passions in a poem) tended to lower its poetic value!

It is easy to understand how such a doctrine, which insisted upon a severance between art and life, could take root and hold sway over a Continent steeped in the tradition of Court poetry and chamber music. Where the arts were historically the preserve of the rich and elite—an insular, almost incestuous, activity practised by a chosen handful for the gratification of a privileged minority.

But that such an alien and pernicious ideology should be embraced so unreservedly and defended so stubbornly, even to this day, by the literati of developing countries is a phenomenon at once bewildering, and yet further attestation of colonialism’s pervasive and lingering influence.

For while the ‘art for art’s sake’ doctrine has long been exploded by critics like I.A. Richards, and the narrowness and vacuity of its concepts exposed in our own time by literary giants such as Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus (“It seems to me that the writer must be fully aware of the dramas of his time and that he must take sides every time he can or knows how to do so. To me art is not a solitary delight. It is a means of stirring the greatest number of men by providing them with a privileged image of our common joys and woes”), Pablo Neruda, A. Solzhenitsyn and C. Milosz (“Today the only poetry worthy of the name is

(Continued on page 14)

REPUBLIC OF CONTRADICTA

In the Republic of Contradicta:
Nationalist politicians condemn
Western imperialist mentality
while
in Savile-cut lounge suits they
delicately sip Napoleon brandy

Ministers of Education extol
virtues of the education policy
while
despatching their sons to Eton
Oxford, Harvard and the Lycee

In the Republic of Contradicta:
Proclamations urge husbanding
natural resources — conservation!
while
hucksters grant timber franchises
double oil and coal production

Technicolour posters beckon
to sun, sea, surf and sand
while
zeppelin ballons of hunger
hang heavy over the land

In the Republic of Contradicta:
They speak of Revolution
They speak of Freedom
and
their Revolution is found
on the back-pocket
of a pair of blue jeans
and
their Freedom comes
in a packet
of imported sanitary towels!

Cecil Rajendra

YELLOW RAIN

Cloudburst nor thunder
nor a single drop of water
heralded that rain; yet
afterwards, fields were wet.

In that terrible rain
a powder fine as ground
saffron dusted the land
seasoning all for the pan.

Dog, fowl, fish and man
jumped like catfish
caught on a griddle;
bodies crackled to blisters

Twitched and turned black.
Convulsed with diarrhoea,
children like broken marionettes
jerked screaming across the land.

Farmers became fountains
spouting blood from nose
ear, throat & eye-socket;
the paddy-fields ran scarlet.

Yes, when that rain fell
not water, but blood, vomit
tears and faeces irrigated
this good earth turned hell.

Cecil Rajendra

The higher . . .

(Continued from page 12)

eschatological, that is, poetry which rejects the present inhuman world in the name of the great change"), we still have influential poet/critics and academics in Asia who with impunity write, "Were it to intrude directly, social commitment, however laudable, generally undermines poetry", and "He isn't anywhere near being the poet he could have been had he been as consistently exercised by the ideal of poetry as agonizing if also joyous creation and arduous or even fastidious craft as much as he has been concerned with poetry as 'sincere', 'committed' statement in the cause of social and humanitarian issues".

And thus the writer/poet who puts Life before Art is neatly put down by these critics; his writing, tarnished and tainted by social content and commitment, regarded as somewhat inferior to the work of his fellow writers engaged in the pursuit of such lofty and timeless themes as God, Death and Love!

And this in an Asia ravaged by war, famine, disease, malnutrition, military repression, economic exploitation, ecological destruction and what have you.

Speaking at another time, to another generation, when his homeland seemed to be in the grip of some sort of collective madness, the playwright/poet Bertolt Brecht asked, "What time is this, when/talking of trees is almost a crime/Because it involves silence/about so many atrocities?" Unfortunately, the same question can legitimately be asked, today, of too many countries in the Third World.

At such a time, assailed on all fronts, as it were, by reports of man's horrendous inhumanity to his fellow-men, it becomes untenable, I would say indefensible, not to take sides; not to concern ourselves with questions of social justice and human rights.

The writer who holds otherwise runs the risk of being labelled an "ostrich" and the critic who seeks to devalue, dismiss or ignore an author's work, merely because of his social commitment, can justifiably be accused of being immoral and obscene.

For against a nightmare scenario composed of such terrifying elements

as flood and famine, napalm and 'yellow rain', refugee boats and kwashiorkor, book-burning and internment camps, racism, repression and ecological ruin, it becomes no longer a matter of choice, but the moral obligation and bounden duty of every responsible writer to bear witness to the times he lives in and to put his life and his work at the service of humanity.

The future of literature is inextricably dependent on the future of man. There can be no compromise. As Solzhenitsyn once so tellingly wrote:

"Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that dares not transmit the pains and fears of that society, that dares not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers—such literature does not deserve the name of literature; it is only a facade".

(NOTE: This paper was first presented at the Asian P.E.N. Conference in Manila, Philippines. The themes of that conference was Literature and Social Justice.)

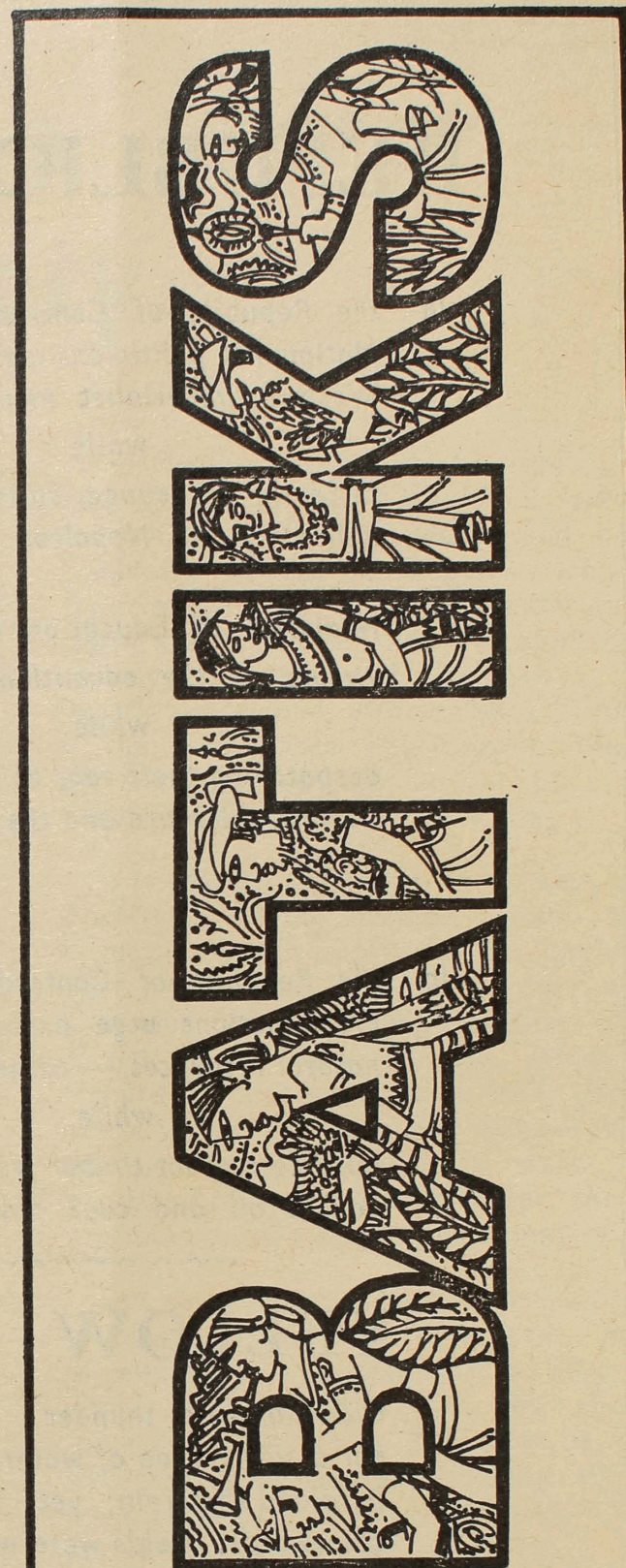
RADIATION & THE RUBAIYAT

*And yes, I too am
tired of protest.
O to be done
with this madness
and like Khayyam
take to the wilderness
with a loaf of bread
a flask of wine
a book of verse
and a wild wild lass. . .*

*But now beneath
that nuclear
bough, Omar
there's no paradise
the bread crumbles
to radioactive pieces
the wine is toxic
the maiden leukemic*

*a skeleton
screaming, not singing
in a wilderness
of ash.*

— CECIL RAJENDRA
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WASP ideology — the kernel of the American Kernel Lessons

J. Raj

Thanks to the largesse of the Asia Foundation, for the second year running, freshers following the two-month Intensive Course in English at our Universities have been given a massive dose of White Anglo Saxon Protestant ideology.

The indoctrination comes via *American Kernel Lessons: Intermediate* etc of the core texts used in the Intensive Course.

I will not comment on the linguistic aspects of the text; what interests me is Operation Brainwash which the text seeks to carry out.

I shall concentrate on the first few lessons for the simple reason that it's the first impressions that count — especially with impressionable young minds.

The first lesson in the first unit — dealing with the Simple Present Tense and Frequency Adverbs — introduces a black girl called Jane Nelson who works in the executive office of a big company. Two white typists are talking about Jane who has come in five minutes late. The conversation runs: "Does her boss know she is *always* late?" "No, he doesn't. He is usually late too." (*italics mine*).

The implication, or rather insinuation, — blacks are not punctual becomes all too evident when we move on to the very next lesson which deals with Frank Martin, a white factory worker. We are told: "He *never* gets to work late." The contrasting frequency adverbs mask a racist stereotype.

A few lessons later — in between there are some characters I'll come back to — we meet Jane Nelson once again. The text tells us that "Jane often gets up late and she

got up late this morning." So what does she do? She rushes through breakfast and "left the dirty dishes in the sink. She did not wash the dishes." The black not merely never gets to work on time; She is also very untidy, if not dirty. The very next lesson shows Jane having lunch with a friend. She looks quite cheerful. The white friend asks her "Were you late again this morning?" The unrepentant Jane's rather curt reply is "Yes I was, and my boss, Mr. Ellis, was already in his office." So, apart from the other negative qualities, the black lacks a sense of responsibility or duty: the pages of conscience certainly don't torment her.

On top of all this, Jane is flighty too — with a hard, mercenary streak in her. In the sixth unit we see her with an unnamed black boyfriend. By the ninth unit she has made up her mind to dump him. The reason? He has no car! The text runs: "Jane and her boyfriend saw a movie in San Francisco this evening. The fastest way home is by bus but they are obviously going to miss it. It is going to leave any second. 'I'm going to find a boyfriend with a car!' Jane is thinking to herself." Sure enough, she does find another black boyfriend — with a car. From the tenth unit onwards we see her getting around with her new acquisition though they never get round to marrying, unlike the WASP couple Joe and Susan who cut the wedding cake by the third unit itself.

Unit four relates the saga of the true-blooded WASP, Bruce: how he started working for somebody else, worked 48 hours or more a week and never made more than 80 dollars a week. His first wife Joan was living then: she worked as a salesclerk in a department store, worked 40 hours a week and earned 60 dollars. Life natu-

rally was not easy for them. Joan had to give up her job when she had a baby. Bruce was forced to find a better job. He did find one: he had to work 40 hours a week and earned 550 dollars a month. A few years later, Bruce started his own small shoe factory. He had to work 60 hours a week at first but this was compensated for by the fact that he made 12,000 dollars that year. Then his wife died and he married Laura. Now, i. e. when the text begins, his factory has grown, it employs about 200 people who earn from 150 to 300 dollars a week. The text is reticent about how much Bruce makes.

Bruce's miniature 'from log cabin to White House' saga embodies the white American dream. Spurred on by the Protestant work ethic, Bruce 'makes it'.

Unit five is a good example of particularly blatant indoctrination. There's a picture of a demonstration: one of the demonstrators is a black, the others look like white hippies. The placards they carry call for peace, a halt to nuclear tests and a stop to the arms race. This is what the sneering texts has to say: "This is a small demonstration in a park in New York. There are some demonstrators in the park. There are some policemen there too, but only a few. There aren't any local people but there are a few tourists. There are also some children in the park but they are not very interested in the demonstration." This off-handed dismissal of one of the most important movements of our time — the anti-nuclear peace movement — will certainly warm the cockles of Reagan's heart.

The last example I want to look at, again from Unit five, refers to a strike. The picture shows a handful of dejected-looking pickets

(Continued on page 18)

The author is a University teacher of English.

Is the JVP a Proletarian Vanguard Party?

"The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcements of the momentary interests of the working class, but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement".

— 'The Communist Manifesto'.

"A party must be judged in accordance with its capacity to give attention to the needs and initiative of the popular masses".

'A Fundamental Critique of the PCF'

— Louis Althusser

Comrade Jagath defends the JVP's conduct during the 1980 General Strike by saying that it was unrealistic to expect the JVP to do more than it did, because that party "began open political work only towards the end of 1977 and the strike took place barely 2½ years later". But in saying this, Comrade Jagath merely affirms what he should explain. It is precisely this strategic path it charted since late '77, that of "open Political work" to the veritable exclusion of all other forms of struggle, that rendered it impossible for them to act other than the way it did in July 1980. It is this strategy that is at issue here. So it does no good for Comrade Jagath to flourish it as answer or an excuse.

"To expect the JVP TU elements to neatly substitute themselves into a TU bureaucratic syndrome encrusted with the accumulated abuse of decades of betrayed, is idealistic", says Comrade Jagath. I expect no such thing, and frankly I can't understand a word of what Jagath is saying! All I expected was, for the JVP to support and participate in a struggle of the working class. At the very least, one expected

them to put up as many posters supporting the strike as they did advertising their song-fest 'Vimukthi Gee'!

Comrade Jagath informs us authoritatively that "revolutionaries take on the Big One only when the time and the place and as many of the contributing factors are suitable. Of course one never gets a perfect conjunction of conditions, but neither does one go into battle with ones soft under-belly exposed". Having seen Messrs. Wijeweera, Waas Tillekaratne, Lionel Bopage and Shantha Bandara at recent public meetings, I can understand that Jagath's use of the phrase, 'soft under-bellys' is an accurate empirical description of material reality, but I fear I cannot agree with the political point he is seeking to make. Jagath sums up the JVP's political line "do not trust the political leadership of your T. U. S.". Well, does he think the JVP's actions or inaction during the strike have led the working class, or its advanced strata, to trust the political leadership of the JVP?

Comrade Jagath must realize that one of the foremost factors and central conditions for taking on the Big (Green or Blue) One is the construction of a real Communist Party i.e. Proletarian Vanguard Party. What does this mean? This means that it is not enough to construct a Marxist-Leninist organisation. Such an organisation must also be the **organisation of the practical leaders of the proletariat.** It should be clear to Comrade Jagath that the honest, practical leaders of the workers will never join a party, however 'red' in hue, that does not fight in their immediate interests. Comrade Jagath may raise an objection that such a line is 'tailism' or 'bowing to spontaneity'. But first of all 'tailism' is following the workers — accepting the

leadership of workers who do not have a scientific programme but who may be skilled in the current struggle. What I am trying to say here is that the cadre of a truly revolutionary proletarian party, would use the battle of the workers to win them over to the party programme, which itself is essentially an organised statement of these current struggles. It is only in the spontaneous (reform) struggles that a comrade can win positions of leadership and confidence.

The JVP, in the course of the General Strike, and right throughout, has been striving to oust the traditional left and the T. U. bureaucracy through 'ideological' struggle. But the 'misleaders' must be isolated, exposed and expelled from the working class movement **in the context of the class struggle.** With the decline of living standards, the workers demand that standards of wages and labour be kept up. Their present leadership finds this impossible. Thus ensues a struggle against a leadership that cannot deliver the goods. It is possible to politicize and radicalize this struggle and win over the honest leaders of the workers in the battle against the 'Old left' This is an important first step in the battle against the capitalist system.

The displacement of the old leadership and the building of the new party can and must be done **solidly on the basis of the class, and the mass struggle. The starting point is the defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class.** The call for Socialism sounds credible to the working class only if it is linked with the basic demands of the class for a better living wage, working conditions etc. Not entering struggles around these demands isolates the Party from the working class.

The JVP obviously is unaffected by this and its fortunes have not dwindled despite the 1980 strike as Jagath proudly points out. This is because the working class is not **its** class!

A genuine Party of the Proletariat must be involved in the concrete struggles of the working class, must organize and seize the instant to lead the struggle, because that is the way to **inject** proletarian class consciousness into these struggles. It is only through the Marxist — Leninist Party's class conscious leadership of class struggles, rather than through platform oratory and poster campaigns, can the working class defeat the policies and influence of the corrupt trade union leadership, win control of the trade unions, extend trade union organization to the masses of unorganised workers (esp women workers) and win over the most revolutionary strata of the working class i. e. the unskilled and semiskilled workers. It is only through **the revolutionary struggle for concrete reforms** can the proletariat be organised for its emancipation.

Throughout its history, the JVP has not understood the vanguard role of the working class, nor the linkage between reform and revolution. In the pre — '71 period, working class struggles were dismissed as struggles for a "cup of porridge" which detracted from the main task i. e. that of nationwide simultaneous armed insurrection. Since '77 the main task has been contesting the Presidential, Parliamentary, District Council elections, but the attitude that working class struggles for immediate aims detract from the 'main task', remains.

A genuinely revolutionar Proletarian Vanguard Party would have striven in July 1980, and would strive now, to support and enhance the struggle of the working class for its just economic demands: that means to dig deep into the strike wave, and to use it as an opportunity to unite the call for the defence of the basic rights and desires of the working class with the struggle against capitalism as a system. The Party's role is not to deflect the working class from the spontaneous struggle, but to push forward the spontaneous struggle to its next step.

Instead of its 'One Trade Union' proposal, which strangely paralleled the UNP's 'White Paper on Employment Relations', the JVP should fight for **trade union democracy**, so that the trade unions will be effective weapons of the workers in the economic and political struggle against capital. A truly revolutionary party would not try to intil a line of 'no strikes' as the JVP did, but recognise that all aspects of the economic struggle, including the unfettered right of workers to organize into unions, are the basic rights of the working class which the present crop of labour leaders are incapable of defending.

A real Communist Party would have as the main target of its Marxist-Leninist education, not the petty bourgeois youth, but the factories, the trade unions, the organisations of the working class. As for recruitment, its main sources would be the rank and file members of trade unions and all organisations of the working class. Special emphasis would be given to semi-skilled and unskilled workers, workers of oppressed nations and women workers. As for organization, the Party strength would not be located mainly in the high schools and universities and among the unemployed. Rather, the principal effort would be "to make every factory a red fortress" by winning the vanguard of the Proletariat to the cause of Socialism and Communism through the organization of factory nuclei in the large factories, that is the basic industries which contain the strategic sectors of the working class. By 'Strategic' we mean the key sectors of the working class that occupy strategic position in relation to the means of production. In these industries the Leninist Party would concentrate the work of the 'nuclei' among the trade union activists, organizers, middle and lower level leaders and the semi-skilled and unskilled workers who are most active in resisting the blows of the capitalists. (All this presupposes an analysis of strategic industries, secondary industries and the concentration of the workforce in Sri Lanka.)

As the Communist International stated, "the large factories and railroads are the nerve centers of the economic and the political life of the

country. In the large factories, the workers are concentrated in large numbers. Workers in the large factories are better trained and disciplined by the process of production, and finally workers in large factories, are generally more militant because, concentrated in large numbers in one enterprise, they feel their strength".

What is needed today is the development of an apparatus that can recruit the practical leaders of the workers and poor peasants; an apparatus that can assimilate the experience and skills of the practical leader and in return arm them with the necessary clarity and science to accomplish their tasks. Has the JVP developed or is it developing such an apparatus? If the answer is in the affirmative then truly the JVP is a revolutionary working class party.

Comrade Jagath is correct in that "the whole experience (of the General Strike) was an object lesson to the organized urban working class of the absolutely crucial issue of revolutionary leadership", but the point is that the most militant and class conscious elements of the working class who participated in that struggle are aware that such leadership will not emanate either from the 'Old' or 'New' (i. e. JVP) left. The repressive nature of the bourgeois, state, the decrepitude of the Trade Union Left and the anti-working class nature of the petty bourgeois JVP are all lessons gathered from the 1980 experience.

What Comrade Jagath must realize is that the working class will be given political leadership neither by 'the revolutionary intellectuals of the English speaking middle and upper classes' (he is correct here) NOR by the 'JVP constituency' i. e. the rural petty bourgeois youth. These segments of the 'JVP constituency' who have committed 'class suicide' and **entered the labour process** (Jagath does well to note this) will play an important, and perhaps the leading role — but then they would no longer belong to the 'JVP constituency' proper! The class suicide of the petty bourgeoisie a celebrated phrase of Amilcar Cabral, can take place by these elements becoming proletaria-

(Continued on page 18)

Letter

Tell it as it is

I have often wondered why so many Tamil commentators on the communal problem spoil, by **suppressio veri** and **suggestio falsi**, the strong case they could make out by a mere recital of the bare facts. Why can't they see this is counterproductive?

For instance, David Selbourne tersely and entirely accurately reports: 'Police were killed and in reprisal committed arson and plunder in Jaffna'. Dr. W. R. C. Thambiah's version of the same facts is that the Tiger movement had only a 'limited objective' and this was 'deal with (sic) the Tamil renegades who betrayed the mandate the Tamil people had so unanimously given'. He goes on to suggest that the Police in the North should go unarmed like their British counterparts. He does not mention that the Tigers' 'limited objective of dealing with the Tamil renegades' included several cases of armed robbery with violence and the killing of many innocent people including 21 policemen, 17 of whom were Tamils. (I hope I've got the statistics right.) However reprehensible their actions, it cannot be denied that the police had some provocation for 'committing arson and plunder'. So what does Dr. Thambiah do? He reports that it was the **military** (which could not claim such provocation) that committed the arson and plunder. Samudran writes that G. G. Ponnambalam Sr. 'did nothing to prevent the disfranchisement of the plantation workers'. The truth is that G. G. was a member of D. S.'s cabinet at the time and voted for the disfranchisement. It simply wouldn't do to admit that a Ceylon Tamil leader of the stature of G. G. was a party to the disfranchisement so Samudran tells it differently. But his revised version is equivalent to asserting that Cassius did nothing to prevent the assassination of Caesar in the Capitol!

Samudran writes: 'Dry zone resettlement had a consciously

perceived side of Sinhalization when it extended into the two Tamil provinces'. Of all the major actors on the political stage of that time C. Suntheralingam is still alive and no doubt will be able to confirm that at his urging D. S. tried but without success to send Tamils and Muslims as settlers to these new colonies'.

Who cares for dull truth anyway when it is so much more interesting to whip yourself (and with luck others) into a fury of indignation by publishing fairy tales of your own fabrication?

Boyd Almeida

Dematagoda.

Coalition's

Continued from page 9)

With the economic crisis "two other bulwarks of post-war system are being undermined". First the strains in the US-European relationship and NATO, and the difficulties within the Common Market and accompanying FRG disillusionment. Secondly, the conviction that West Germany represented 'the national heritage' — symbolized by the rhetorical demand for re-unification still voiced monotonously. Hugh Stephenson, noting the massive celebrations in the GDR honouring Martin Luther and Karl Von Clausewitz, writes:

"West Germany today is becoming uncomfortably aware that East Germany (in a way no one would have expected) is establishing a claim to be the main legitimate inheritor of the historic spirit of the German people".

WASP...

Continued from page 15

standing outside a factory gate. The slogans on their placards call for shorter hours and better benefits. The text says: "This strike began last week and it is still going on. There are some pickets and some policemen in front of the factory but only a few. It is Saturday and most of the men are watching a football game. The

strange thing is that there aren't any reporters or television cameramen there; perhaps they are at the game too." When there are more exciting things like football, who bothers about strikes? Certainly not the majority of strikers. Further comment on this anti-strike ideology is superfluous.

If the University Grants Commission had remembered to 'fear the Yankees even when they bring gifts', they could have saved our students from the WASP's sting.

Is the JVP...

(Continued from page 17)

nized either by becoming workers, or ideologically i. e. by taking up the politico-philosophical positions of the proletariat. The JVP's ideology however is not proletarian, but petty bourgeois (semi-Trotskyist, social chauvinist). So in this sense, the JVP-constituency will NOT, in the main, provide revolutionary political leadership to the working class, any more than the scions of the Anglicized elite will.

The working class does not need Messiahs, redeemers from on high. The emancipation of the working class is the revolutionary act of self-emancipation. The vanguard of the working class must emerge from the struggle of the working class. It must articulate the historical experience of the working class with the strategic objectives of that class. It must represent both continuity and rupture — 'rupture' in the sense of the qualitative leap forward to the creation of the working class vanguard, and 'continuity' in the sense of doing this while keeping the long experience of the struggle of the working class. The JVP isn't a natural organism of the struggle of the working class in that it hasn't developed from and isn't part of the politico-historical experience of the working class. The strategy of the JVP does not coincide with the political needs of the working class. For all these reasons, the JVP is not, and shows no signs of becoming the revolutionary party of the proletariat, unifying the proletariat while organizing it independently of the bourgeoisie.

(To be continued)

Useful addition to studies on constitutional change

BOOK
REVIEW

MECHANICS OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE. THE SRI LANKAN STYLE — By D. C. Jayasuriya Colombo, 1982, pp. 130.

The political and constitutional changes, which occurred in the last decade, represented a phenomenon that is unique to a developing polity like that of Sri Lanka, and the most significant aspect—the making and unmaking of constitutions—became the special feature of the process of constitution making. As D. C. Jayasuriya has rightly pointed out in his 'Mechanics of Constitutional Change. The Sri Lankan Style', the making and unmaking of constitutions has now become a matter of prestige for political parties rather than something to be undertaken as a serious and deliberate exercise (page 2). Constitutional changes, irrespective of the novel institutional which they accompanied, have been introduced in such a haste that the whole process had failed to take note of the fact that democratic institutions need time to take root in the local polity. Autochthony, in itself, is good constitutional strategy, and it was this concept of 'the home-made' Constitutions that was used to fashion many constitutions in the new States. The advantage of a 'home-made' Constitution is that the local political leadership gets an opportunity to frame constitutional proposals appropriate to their special needs and circumstances, above all it offers an opportunity to take note of the aspirations of the people. The end of colonial domination and the achievement of independence brought in a wide array of political demands, and the need of a 'home-made' Constitution, in fact, became a major demand of the forces which fought against imperialism. In Chapter 3, Jayasuriya examines the importance of the concept of autochthony and states that 'it is the freedom and independence as a nation that formed the basis to give to ourselves a Constitution' (page 34). This, he sees, as the assertion of national sovereignty, and the authors

of the Constitution were aware of the need to achieve this objective, which, in my view, was an important contribution to the process of political modernisation of the country. This aspect of the 1972 Constitution has been amplified with a learned examination of the concept of autochthony (pages 39–46). The 1972 Constitution, despite its deficiencies and limitations, opened a new chapter in the constitutional history of Sri Lanka, and the UNP, which, in its previous regimes, made no serious effort to revise and re-model the constitutional structure of the country to suit to the aspirations of a newly independent State.

The constitutional changes, a phenomenon that is characterised by both haste and frequency, are certainly not in the interest of the stability of the institutions which the particular constitutional reforms want established, and above all, they interfere with the continuity of the process of political, economic and social change. Rapid social and economic development, which has now become the motivating force for constitutional change, could not be realised with such frequent changes that interfere with the structural balance in the polity. In my view, this is the key aspect of the mechanics of constitutional change in Sri Lanka, and Jayasuriya in the course of his learned examination of this facet of constitutional change, has pointed out the dysfunctional consequences of a hasty attempt to meddle with the institutions of government. The dynamism and political volatility of the Sri Lankan Political system need to be taken into consideration in making further changes in the constitutional structure, and the failure to do so is certain to encourage extra-constitutional forces to emerge as factors that can very well threaten the total political order. Jayasuriya has prefaced his discussion of the mechanics of constitutional change in Sri Lanka with an examination of the Westminster legacy, and it is in this chapter that the 29th section of the Soulbury Constitution has been discussed with

Reviewed by Prof. Wiswa Warnapala

several legal and academic interpretations relating to the limitations which it imposed on the law making power of the Parliament. It has been examined with a large variety of citations of the relevant judicial pronouncements largely to labour the point that it interfered with the exercise of total sovereignty.

Yet another unique aspect of this book is the discussion on the concept of the mandate. The mandate, as in the context of the politics of the developing states, could not be considered a meaningful expression of the wishes of the people; on the other hand, it has been used by elected governments to legitimise the introduction of changes, merely because of the fact that some reference to it appeared in the election manifesto. It has now become the practice to utilise the so-called mandate for fundamental changes and though Jayasuriya failed to see its limitations, he is not wholly unaware of its dubious connotation in the context of our polity. Though the concept of the mandate was utilised for the introduction of the Second Republican Constitution, the procedure followed in formulating the constitutional proposals represented a vital breakaway from the 1972 experience. The UNP, which in my opinion, cannot claim to have had a constitutional strategy in the past, exposed it in 1977 by the Second Amendment and the Select Committee. Both showed that the attempt was to make some changes in the existing Constitution and it was this mode of constitution-making which prevented the involvement of the people. The lack of discussion and deliberation on the fundamental changes the Constitution of 1978 introduced, in fact, came to be reflected in the Constitution and as Dr. N. M. Perera stated, it was 'a hasty, slipshod and flatby draft'. The amendments—there are already three and the fourth is in the stage of preparation—illustrate the viewpoint that constitutional changes need to take note of the basic characteristics.

PR, which in itself is a safeguard against immediate amendment of the Constitution, is to be changed, and the changes, in my view, will radically alter the very objective of this mode of representation. The system of PR, which the authors said would eliminate the electoral distortions under the single-member constituency system, has been introduced with absolute disregard to certain unique characteristics of the polity. The assumption is that a two-thirds majority is well nigh impossible; in my opinion, this new is a fallacy. No political system will remain static under a mode of representation. The mood of the electorate will change according to the mode of representation and the electorate, with its usual dynamism and volatility, is certain to find a means of changing the system. In my view, this can certainly be achieved in Sri Lanka. The authors of the Constitution, by introducing that infamous clause — which they later withdrew and about which even H. W. R. Wade commented — wanted some kind of rigidity unknown to democratic institutions. It demonstrated the attitude of the authors of the Constitution to future constitutional changes, and the view that the fundamental instrument of Government needs to be flexible and acceptable should not be forgotten. The device of the referendum, practised in advanced prosperous States, has been used to inject further rigidity into the Constitution, and this device, as Jayasuriya says (page 89) is certain to remain an unused proudial device in the Constitution.

Jayasuriya's book, which contains a learned discussion of the mechanics of constitutional change in Sri Lanka, is yet another useful addition to the studies on the process of constitutional change. Though his work bears the stamp of the experience of a lawyer, it is a noteworthy addition to the growing literature on Sri Lankan political and constitutional affairs, and both students and teachers can benefit from his contribution. With a view to making his assessment of the mechanics of constitutional change more useful and relevant to current political discussion Jayasuriya has added a bibliography. It gives additional utility and importance to his thought provoking discussion of the mechanics of constitutional change.

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