

Jaffna, Trinco — security problems widen

— Mervyn de Silva

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MRS. B and the NEW GANG OF FOUR



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— Jagath Senaratne

Race and Class

— Kumari Jayewardene

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OPPOSITION PROTEST AND JVP

The mutual recriminations in the Opposition's ranks so evident just after the May 18 mini-polls have been washed away, it seems, by the monsoon rains. The anti-UNP opposition, such as it is, bestirred itself last week to issue a joint statement calling upon the people to "express their strongest opposition to this onslaught on their rights and freedoms". The statement was signed by the general secretaries of the S.L.F.P., the L.S.S.P., the C.P.S.L., the J.V.P. and M.E.P.

The UNP stands accused of "subtly and cunningly destroying the fundamental rights of the people". The means employed are identified as (a) amendments to laws and regulations (b) improper use of official organs of force (c) patronage to thugs etc.

The statement says that various influential groups were selectively attacked — working class and unions, students, priesthood, opposition parties, the intelligentsia in general, and now the institutions. This the first judicial statement by these particular parties and it could represent a trend worth watching because of the participation of the J.V.P.

The occasions on which the JVP has joined others on any important issue have been few and far between. Playing the role of prima donna, the JVP which often styles itself as the "biggest" (if not the "only") Left party in Sri Lanka has preferred to go-it-alone on major political questions. Why were the NSSP and C.P.C. (Shan) excluded? Last year and earlier this year, the SLFP at least was on talking terms with both.

GEOPOLITICS

Geo-politics appears to have clinched the ASEAN issue. Only the Press Trust of India made any reference to Sri Lanka's 2 year old application for ASEAN membership. While Brunei was admitted, Sri Lanka was kept out in the cold. Both the choice of Brunei and the rejection of

Sri Lanka suggests that geo-politics and not foreign policy or friendship settled the matter.

Each of the ASEAN five have the most cordial relations with Colombo, and Sri Lanka is in basic agreement with ASEAN on what is its main preoccupation, Kampuchea, although Colombo does not go to the extent of supporting Sihanouk for a seat in the NAM.

With the imminent visit of the Bangladesh president, Sri Lanka's regional interests will be more closely defined in terms of the South Asian Forum. BD's Ziaur Rahman was the architect of the fledgling group. The Indian foreign minister has been here and this was followed by BD Foreign Minister Doha's visit. President JR would have been in Pakistan last month but for President Zia's illness. The South Asian forum meets next month at Foreign Minister's level and this may be followed by a summit.

KOREAN CONNECTION

In the economic field, the most dramatic expansion of external relations in recent years has been with Japan. Trade has increased ten fold, while Japan has become Sri Lanka's No. 1 aid giver, slightly ahead of the U.S.

As noteworthy in a much wider area of contact has been South Korea's contacts with this country. Not a month passes without some Korean dignitary or delegation visiting Colombo.

TRENDS + LETTERS

Main Theme and "Fringe Thoughts"

Reggie Siriwardene's article on MARXISM AND LITERATURE (LG May 1st, 1983) was interesting in two ways: Firstly, it breaks away from the traditional (Mainstream) Marxist approach to Literature. Secondly, it tries to find an answer to the age-long question that why a literary work or work of Art which is supposed to be the product of a particular ideology of a particular social formation should continue to have its effects even after the very ideology and socio-economic set-up has become non-existent.

Reggie explains how Marx himself posed this question and failed miserably when he gave an answer basing on nostalgic childhood theory. While commending Reggie for his boldness to contradict Marx, we cast our doubt in his attempt to solve this very problem collaborating with Bernard Sharratt and Tony Bennett. Reggie says, according to Sharratt, 'the notion that there is a single and fixed meaning of a text is a myth, Literary meaning is inescapably plural.

Holding this as the final criterion Reggie says that "bour-
(Continued on page 2)

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geois academic criticism supposes that their (literary works) 'permanence' is due to the fact that they are in some way expressive of the 'timeless human condition.' On the contrary, it is because these texts have been most susceptible to continual transformation of meaning that they have survived."

To confirm this notion Reggie further quotes from another critic Tony Bennett's book; "A condition of any text's continuing to exert long term cultural effects within any society must be that it is constantly brought into connection or articulated with new texts, socially and politically mobilised in different ways within different class practices, differentially inscribed within the practices of educational, cultural and linguistic institutions and so on

If we are to accept this explanation as the whole truth we have not only failed to understand the meaning behind literary work or Art but we are also distorting the real function of Art.

It is true, as Reggie and his collaborators say, that every creation undergoes a continual transformation. This happens in the field of Literary work or Art too. But, what is being transformed in a literary work or Art is the question. Yes, what is it that is subject to continual transformation? It is not the main theme of a literary work or Art. But the sub-theme or the association of ideas surrounding the main theme. This can be elucidated better in the words of T. S. Eliot, who calls this sub-themes or associations as "fringe thoughts." It is the fringe thoughts that surround the main theme, undergo change and not the main theme itself. Every genuine creative work, whether it is art or poetry or music, is associated with these fringe thoughts; while adding beauty to the main theme, it tends to vary with the time and the person who reads it. This ten-

dency of the fringe thoughts to change is mistakenly identified with the main theme of the creative works. But the main theme remains unchanged emitting the fringe thoughts around it. Though both the main theme and the fringe thoughts, like Saturn and its rings coincide, the latter would be non-existent without the former.

If we take the planet Saturn as the main theme of a creative work, the rings of Saturn become the fringe thoughts of that main theme. While Saturn remains unchanged, the rings that surround it look different to each in accordance with his mental maturity. One would say it looks like a silver circle, the other would say it looks like a fire ball or a ring of smoke, and this would go on endlessly. There are also some extreme cases who would go to the extent of saying that there is nothing called the planet Saturn but the rings. (These people have some affinity to the people who say there is nothing called fixed texts. Every creative art undergoes transformation.)

Hence it is a fact that the **main theme** remains unchanged and it is with this we make our communication and come to know the other 'border issues'.

In the same way when we read *Romeo and Juliet* or *Wuthering Heights*, we make communication with their main themes. i. e. the strong love Romeo and Juliet have to each other and the ways and means they employ to achieve it. It is this main theme which remains unchanged, but dynamic brings us in touch with the fringe thoughts of its very nature. These fringe thoughts without distorting the main theme do stir the mind of the reader and brings out a lot of association of ideas, such as his past experiences of this kind or some-one class, or the practices of his race, or some other culture, or clash of fringe thoughts of some other creative works which he had read earlier,

and it goes on like a snow ball. The expansion and contraction of fringe thoughts depends on the readers' experience, education, intellectual capacity and maturity of the mind and his line of approach.

This shows that without having a clear idea of the differences between the main theme and the fringe thoughts, to say in a slipshod manner that 'everything undergoes a continual transformation and there is no fixed text as such' would give rise to a lot of anomaly. According to this illusive un-analytical generalised theory nothing can remain in its original form. If this is seriously taken, we can say that there is no such thing as Marxism today.

Now we have hit at the gist of the problem. We have shown clearly that it is not the main theme of a literary work or Art that undergoes change and give plurality of meaning but the sub-themes or the fringe thoughts.

Hence we are confronted with the same old question again: why should a creative work continue to have its effects even after the socio-economic set up in which it was created had changed? In order to answer this we must understand the functions of Art and literature.

All creative works mainly function as a medium to communicate with the different human mental planes such as rational or conscious, sub-conscious, and superconscious states, etc.

If a creative work is a rational type and if it can stand the test of reason it tries to communicate with the rational plane of the reader and remains giving inspiration to various sub-theories or fringe thoughts. Philosophical works, creative art and literature of socialist realism and other scientific theories are good examples for this type of work.

If a work falls into the category of 'cloudy impenetrability'

(Continued on page 3)

SLFP in the throes of transition

NEWS
BACKGROUND

*"Between two worlds, one dead
The other struggling to be born".*

From Mathew Arnold's wellknown lines, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the founder of the SLFP, drew inspiration for a pet phrase which became his standard diagnosis of all social ills. It was he who persisted in saying "a period of transition".

Is the SLFP 1983 also in the agonising throes of transition? And if so, to what?

Or should we look at the latest crisis in a congenitally crisis-ridden SLFP through the historical image used by President J. R.? In his October 1982 campaign, J. R. said that the SLFP is collapsing like the Moghul Empire before the advancing British.

A new 'Gang of Four' has resigned their top posts — Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Deputy Leader. Mr. Kobbekaduwe the party's vice

president and presidential candidate, Mr. V. W. Kularatne, polit-buro member and Mr. Vijay Kumaratunge, Assistant Secretary, and the leader's son-in-law.

Mr. Ilangaratne criticised the lack of discipline and democracy in the party. Repeating a pointed criticism made two years earlier, but with a greater asperity, Mr. Ilangaratne said he was always ready to discuss party problems as equals — not in the manner of a serf before a feudal lord!

The main grievance of the 'rebels' is that all are equal but Mr. Anura Bandaranaike is more equal than others. This is clear from a statement of Mr. Ossie Abeygoonesekera where he poses the question why S. D. Bandaranayake was expelled for advocating a 'National Government' while no action was taken against Anura who seemed also sympathetic to that idea in a press interview. The other line of attack of the anti-Anura finds support from a

remark of the Prime Minister who said that Anura had produced useful information. Investigations into the "Naxalite plot" of Oct. 1982 are still going on and the SLFP general secretary has issued a statement on Mrs. B.'s instructions warning SLFP members not to be misled by information circulated by anti-party sources about the 'Naxalite plot'.

Mrs. B.'s speech at a trade union meeting last week did create a sense of *deja vu*. She said there was a "plot to oust" her, which is precisely what she said in mid-1981. She then took all power into her hands and carried on regardless — thus triggering the first party schism, and the appearance of the Maitri-Anura faction.

Mrs. B. wants the party rank-and-file to believe that the sole cause of dissension, division and demoralisation in the SLFP is **external machinations** i.e. the UNP. If the UNP is indeed engineering divisions in the SLFP, it is surely to the UNP's credit for that is what a rival political party is supposed to do. The Sirima-Maitri conflict brought rich rewards to the UNP and the biggest harvest came in the Presidential election itself. But now the same exercise in 'dividing the enemy' is all too evident, with one significant difference, a generational change. The SLFP infight is not between Sirima and Maitri but between Anura and Vijay / Chandrika. If that operation is successful then the UNP will have the enormous advantage of having its traditional foe brought to a condition of near-paralysis by internal conflicts, till the end of this decade.

The internal conflicts would not exist, however, if the SLFP High Command and the Bandaranaike family did not fall prey to the divisive tactics of their opponents. That is why the heart of the problem is in the SLFP because it is the power-play within the SLFP and the struggle for succession which creates the conditions amenable to external manipulation.

Main theme...

(Continued from page 2)

while it remains un-revealing its true nature, it communicates with the unconscious plane and gives room for various interpretations (fringe thoughts). The work of symbolism, expressionism, impressionism and other allegorical works belong to this realm. It is a mixed realm of anxiety, fear, bliss etc etc.

If a creative work is capable of communicating with super-conscious plane it has hit the target. Because this super-conscious plane is the true nature of all beings. Here every (human) being experiences the feeling of his blissful nature. When some people read this type of work they say, "I do not know what has happened to me. I have completely forgotten myself." i.e. When they read this type of work, their senses become suspended and they go beyond their sensory perception. That is why after reading such works some people come out of it as

if they are coming out of deep sleep saying "I feel fine". Music of higher order act as an easy medium to take one to this plane. The inseparability of form and content of music take one straight away to this plane without being obstructed by the attacks of reason, imagination and the fantasies of other planes.

It is with this superconscious plane that all creative art and literature try to communicate, but stop half-way, satisfied with their petty discoveries (or rather petty bases) to which their mind is capable of arriving at.

Hence it follows that any form of art which is capable of communicating with these three planes will have its effects even after the socio-economic conditions in which they were created have undergone varied changes.

It is because of this, other bad or trashy literature and art which feeds only on superficial imagination and wishful fantasies of the reader die a natal death.

M. Ponnambalam

As security threat spreads, settlement chances fade

Mervyn de Silva

"Time for a rethink" is the headline of a recent *FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW* report on the Tamil situation written by that journal's South and West Asian specialist writer, Salamat Ali. This wellknown Pakistan-born journalist, now based in Delhi, visited Jaffna soon after the violent disturbances which accompanied the May 18 local polls.

While it is indeed time for a rethink, the re-thinking can take different forms. We can talk of rights and wrongs — and that's most important — of what ought to be or what might have been. Likewise it can take the form of a hard, steady look at the objective situation or what *is*.

First a matter of terminology. As a rule, the local press favours either "Tamil terrorists" or "Tigers" (the Sinhala dailies of the big groups are passionately addicted to "kotiyo") while at least one major international news agency uses the term 'Tamil guerrillas'. Other terms included militant separatists, Eelam militants, armed rebels, hardline militants, Eelam 'underground', Tamil resistance, liberation fighters etc.

Call them what you will but it is the objective, cumulative consequences of their activities, planned or unplanned, which really count in any serious "rethink".

(a) the gap between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, especially those in the north, has widened — a significant psychological factor.

(b) the gap between Colombo, the centre of power, and Jaffna, the periphery, has widened — a question of fiat.

(c) the gap between the TULF, from the 70's the indisputably legitimate 'voice' of the Tamils of the north, and its opponents, from above-ground critics to the clandestine groups, has widened. This has made Tamil (TULF) participation in national affairs at the Centre

Jaffna : Sri Lanka's local and parliamentary by-elections on May 18 — expected to be the last such electoral battles until 1989 — produced a contradiction. On the one hand they confirmed President Junius Jayewardene as a figure of unchallengeable stature in the nation's political affairs. On the other hand, by focusing attention on the growing dissidence among the country's Tamil minority in Northern and Eastern provinces, the polls demonstrated a need for fresh thinking on the present unitary form of government that Jayewardene represents.

The Tamil underground sessionist movement seems to have acquired more popular sympathy than it had a few months ago — but is still too early to predict its chances of success in its quest for Eelam, the name for the sought-for sovereign state that the secessionists want carved out of Sri Lanka. However, what cannot be ignored is the current total alienation of the Tamil region from Colombo, plus an unusually high degree of antipathy between the Tamils and the majority Sinhala communities of Sri Lanka. Hence the safest prediction for now seems to be that the unitary form of government, in force since Sri Lanka became independent in 1948, will eventually be drastically diluted.

Ironically, Tamil militancy has grown to new heights of influence during the tenure of a president who has done more to accommodate the Tamils than all his predecessors put together. However, even moderate Tamils now agree that Jayewardene's plan for countering the cry for Eelam — by granting local autonomy through district development councils — has been overtaken by events and no longer has any chance of achieving its intended results. Appapilli Amirthalingam, general secretary of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), told the *REVIEW* that nothing short of recognition of Tamil nationhood would satisfy the Tamils. "The issue whether there should be regional autonomy or federalism or something else can be taken up only later," he said.

— Salamat Ali (FEER)

(Colombo) more difficult and it has forced Tamil parliamentarism to engage in what increasingly looks like a losing battle with extra-parliamentarism. The stunningly suc-

cessful boycott of the local polls. (May 18) dramatised the second fact. Together these developments trapped the TULF leader in a wobbly, insecure middle. (See **AMIR AS ARAFAT**, L. G. July 1)

(d) the gap between the average Tamil citizen in the north and the civilian administration there is widening through the physical disruption of normal administrative activities — a question, again, of Colombo's effective authority and the actual reach of its writ.

As confusion, agitation and dismay produce frustration and anger among sizeable sections of the Sinhalese community, the question of "What is to be Done?" becomes the main topic of concerned discussion.

The toughest military crack-down is the solution recommended by the daily and Sunday Sinhalese newspapers of the big groups. Their highly charged idiom and invective may of course be a classic case of the competitive commercialism of the mass media rather than crude communalism i. e. catering to the constituency, or playing to what the papers believe is the real deep-seated sentiment of the Sinhala reader, and thereby increasing circulation.

While urging the government to assure the people "that force will be met by force, fire returned by fire", the *SUN* (8/7) also argued strongly for "urgent confidence-building measures", though it did not mention what type of measures it had in mind.

Nobody will dispute the need for 'confidence-building measures', but whose 'confidence' — Sinhalese confidence, Tamil confidence or both?

Ranil Weerasinghe, the *SUN* group's specialist writer on these matters, wrote an extremely readable deep-background piece on the Trinco situation after a visit to that strife-torn town. While providing one answer to the question of "whose confidence?" his report of what actually happened in Trinco and the conclusion he draws from what

he saw and heard are certainly worth quoting:

"Eighteen deaths have been reported over a one month period, and every single one of them Tamils. Even the fact that two of them had been allegedly killed in a conflict between members of the same community cannot alter the course what is undoubtedly being set". **What course is being set undoubtedly?** The WEEKEND reporter's answer to that question is not only more explicit but also fits neatly into the pattern of developments outlined at the outset.

The end result is that Tigers or any such militant group become more acceptable to the Tamils in the East, not as subversives but as freedom fighters willing to help defend them not only against their aggressors but also against their 'military oppressors' who allegedly turned a blind eye to the activities of the assailants".

The lesson from the Trinco experience then is that 'force' too often becomes brute force used so indiscriminately that the end result as the WEEKEND correspondent observes counter-productive. We saw it in Jaffna after the DDC polls, in the plantations areas where President Jayewardene himself was shocked and ashamed, and again in May this year in Jaffna.

Thus, the government appears to be adopting a two-track policy, a combination of 'political' and 'military' moves. Perhaps one of the most impressively high-powered/official committees ever appointed will soon report on how to make Tamil language rights (the Constitution and other enactments like the Official Languages Act) effective and the DDC's, in essence devolution, operational. This means the powers and functions of the DDC's, a district budget and a district service. Salamat Ali in his FEER article says that President J.R. has "done more to accomodate the Tamils than all his predecessors put together". But the TULF, while agreeing, has argued always that these concessions remain largely on paper. Is the current attempt to give flesh and blood to the constitutional provisions, the rights granted in various laws and regulations, and

the DDC exercise 'too little too late'? That's the main question in regard to that particular effort at a 'political solution'..

Meanwhile many other parties and inter-racial organisations (the Centre for Society and Religion, pro-Trotskyist "JANA URUMAYA" the Maoist C. P. etc) are putting forward their own ideas for a 'political settlement', a trend which reflects the growing concern and agitation of the Colombo intelligentsia. (A summary of these proposals will appear in our next issue).

A political settlement, in any meaningful sense, must mean an understanding with the TULF in such a way as to win the confidence of the average Tamil who may be sympathetic to the notion but certainly not to extra-parliamentary violence or extra-legal modes of struggle. Like the TULF though, the UNP has its problems — the fear of alienating the Sinhala constituency, and of running counter to the hardline group within the party.

Thus the government has not responded to the TULF appeals regarding the arrest of the TELF leader, 77 year old Dr. Dharmalingam, former Jaffna mayor. He is the uncle of the TULF MP for Jaffna, Mr. Yogeswaran. Also arrested was Mr. Kovai Mahesan, who edits the Tamil paper Jaffna-based 'Sutantiran', which has been banned, along with the English weekly 'Saturday Review', a newsheet that had made its mark very quickly both by its outspoken comments and as a source of regional news for the English-speaking Sri Lankan. The government intends to charge them both.

On July 21, Mr. V. Navaratnam MP will make a speech and walk out of parliament to absent himself from sittings thereafter. When the seat is declared vacant, the TULF can nominate a successor or force by-election. A proposed constitutional amendment will compel all new MP's to take an oath (and submit an affidavit to the Elections Commissioner) renouncing separatism. These ambiguities expose the TULF, the party which must be a party to any political settlement, to pressure from both sides, a thankless situation which leads to further polarisation.

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EDUCATION — GOING PRIVATE

While the Court will examine all the legal issues when these objections and counter-objections are filed, the case itself has once again focussed attention on the implications of some recent changes in educational policy, particularly higher education.

If the economy goes private, can similar changes in other spheres be far behind? In the last number of the L. G., this journal which has devoted special attention to the universities since it began publication, wrote: "We are now on the brink of the privatisation of the plantation sector.. privatisation of education may be next". This process had already started in mid-1981 with the establishment of a highly controversial fee-levying private medical school. About 120 students were admitted, and fees it was reported, could exceed 60,000/- per year or 5,000/- a month, the highest monthly salary in the public service.

When it was proposed in 1977-78 to close down Teachers Training colleges, E. H. de Alwis, a former Director of Education, introduced an article on "Understanding Educational Change" (L. G. May 1, 1978) with this passage:

"The partial removal of food subsidies marks, in my opinion, the beginning of a process which has as its aim the dismantling of the welfare system, a structure which in the conventional wisdom of the World Bank and the IMF is a serious impediment to our economic growth. While no attempt is made to disguise that fact in the matter of the food subsidies, in the areas of Education and Health however—the very services which we are wont to hold up to the world as our finest achievements in welfarism—the means adopted appears to be indirect and gradual."

Even in affluent countries where social welfare (health, education, social security) has been a well-established feature, new economic policies seeking solutions to the problems of recession have made

STAY ORDER ON MBBS

Thousands of the Medical Faculty and other campuses thronged Hulftsdorp when the Court of Appeal met to give its order on a writ of Mandamus application filed by 163 students of the Colombo University. They sought a 'stay order' on the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine who were scheduled to hold a second MBBS examination for 126 students of the North Colombo Medical College, on Monday 10th July. In this case which aroused a great deal of interest among students, teachers and parents, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, with Mr. Batty Weerakoon and Miss Saumya de Silva appeared for the petitioners, and Mr. H.W. Jayewardene QC, with Messrs I. S. de Silva and Roland de Alwis appeared for the respondents.

The Court of Appeal (Justice H. D. Thambiah and Justice O. L. T. Moonemalle) issued the stay order restraining the respondents from holding the exam until a final determination of the application. The respondents have been asked to file objections by July 15, and the petitioners time till July 20 to file counter-objections.

social welfare spending a favourite target of attack. Whether it is called 'Reaganomics' or 'Thatcherism', this trend has been seen in the US, western Europe and Australia.

In Sri Lanka the problem has another aspect—the highly competitive 'A' level, the gateway to the universities. "The demand for higher education continued to rise in the 70's and the universities were not able to meet this demand even though Sri Lanka had a low university entrance rate compared to other countries of the region. This feature stands out in strong contrast against Sri Lanka's high participation rates in secondary education. The result was the growing competition

at the level of university admission" (ECONOMIC REVIEW)

While politicians and publicists trot out impressive figures of increasing expenditure on education, these statistics in (devalued) rupee terms are misleading. At least at the university level there has been steady cut-backs in real terms either for strictly financial reasons or because campuses are regarded in E. H. de Alwis's words 'hotbeds of unrest and subversion'.

The widening of the educational base and numbers joining the rat-race mounting, with job opportunities shrinking rapidly in the 1960's but the point of entry to the university always narrowing, youth frustration in the middle social strata, particularly among the rural middle class, reached its explosive climax in the 1971 insurrection. Various **ad hoc** reforms, some showing ethnic bias, were introduced. But the problem acquired alarming proportions.

In the 1970's, when there were tight restrictions on travel and education abroad, the super-rich, the politically powerful and influential, found dubious devices by which to send their children to foreign universities. With the advent of the 'open economy' and the removal of such restrictions in 1977, the affluent could find places for their sons and daughters abroad. But the recession in the west resulted in a situation where only those in the highest income group could afford to pay 20,000 to 25,000/- per year to educate a student abroad. Institutions like the private medical school and schemes to allow "external" students to follow university courses of payment of fees were an attempt to cater to the needs of upper-middle class families whose off-spring could not find places in the universities by surviving the most demanding of tests, the University's entrance'.

Instead of the survival of the (academically) fittest, the academic survival of the affluent became the prime need. Thus, attempts were made to allow students of the Kotelawela Academy, for instance, to

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Williamsburg to Belgrade — the poor can wait

FOREIGN
NEWS

On his return to the island from the month-long UNCTAD 6, Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said the results of the conference were "generally disappointing, but good in parts". Identifying one such measure where some progress was made, he said that the acceptance of the Common Fund, endorsed by the European community, was a step forward. "But a greater commitment by the U.S. would have been appreciated. This was the consensus of opinion".

While the Sri Lankan trade minister's comments were relatively mild, his general view reflected nonetheless, a basic Third World reaction to the utterly negative and obstructionist attitude adopted by the U.S. The same hard-line which Mr. Reagan took on both disarmament and development at Williamsburg was evident at Belgrade. The western industrial nations under the leadership of the U.S. which is spending billions of dollars and planning to spend more on arms and the deployment of arms must **first** achieve "economic recovery" before they could turn their attention to the desperate needs of the poor world, now groaning under the intolerable burden of mounting debt.

"I am completely discouraged... there is not much prospect for success" said Mr. Said Osman, the spokesman of the Group of 77, the Third World. Mr. Osman who "blamed the western nations for the deadlock" is a senior Cabinet minister from Somalia, a country extremely close in its foreign policy to the U.S.

Nor could the French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson conceal the same plain truth. The demands of the Third World for immediate relief measures and institutional changes were so resolutely opposed by the U.S. that Mr. Cheysson described the U.S. tactics as "blocking" moves. Anticipating a

UNCTAD THREATENED BY RIFTS BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

BELGRADE, June 28 (AP) — Questions had achieved limited progress on financial matters, but the U.S. and other industrial nations had agreed only to reduce from 1980 to 1985 the amount of aid for a world bank.

US disagrees with UNCTAD-6 conclusions

BELGRADE, July 3 — A United Nations Economic Conference ended with modest results early today after United States dissociated itself from a final statement on world economic

convicted economic recovery under way and could be. The U.S. support of UNCTAD, the old forum for developing

'significant political impact' the French minister told Reuters "If it (Unctad 6) were to fail, there would be a gigantic attack on the U.S."

Thus both Third World delegates, politically friendly with the U.S. as well as members of the Western alliance, like France, clearly recognised that the chief cause of failure at UNCTAD 6 was the Reagan administration's cold unconcern for the grave problems now plaguing two-thirds of humanity.

Accommodation after accommodation, compromise after compromise, was the general trend in Belgrade with the Group of 77 doing its utmost to reach accord on at least a few issues with the western bloc. Even the leading western news agencies felt compelled to describe the results as 'modest'. But the final deliberations left the U.S. in a minority of one, revealing to what is undoubtedly the largest international forum the Reagan administration's total lack of

sympathy for the urgent needs of the poor nations.

The U.S. dissociated itself from the final declaration on the world economic situation. The explanation given by US Chief delegate Gordon Street was that the "text was too negative, one-sided and in places too ideological to be acceptable"

No re-structuring

The fundamental issue which emerged from these protracted and tortuous negotiations, often too technical for the non-specialist to understand fully, helped expose the main thrust of the US-led counter attack and its underlying motives.

Since Algiers, the main agitational platform of the Third World has been the 'New International Economic Order'. With the pressures released by a recession-hit world economy aggravating the already severe difficulties confronting the

(Continued on page 24)

Salaries of Academic Staff of Universities

A. Ekanayake

Consequent to the upward revision of salaries in the public service with effect 1. 1. 1982 in terms of Public Administration Circular No. 197 of 31. 12. 1981, the University Grants Commission proposed a consolidated salary scheme for university staff in March 1982. The initial salaries of the scales proposed were Rs. 3525, Rs. 3125, Rs. 2675, Rs. 2225, and Rs. 1700 for Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers respectively, while they were already getting **gross salaries** of Rs. 3515, Rs. 3053, Rs. 2745, Rs. 2315 and Rs. 1365.

The proposed revision did not meet the demands for a reasonable **increase** of salaries. On the contrary it had the effect of reducing the gross salaries of Lecturers and Senior Lecturers and reducing the take-home-pay of all except Assistant Lecturers. Therefore the University Teachers Associations submitted their own proposals to the authorities concerned during April and May 1982. The Associations discussed these proposals with the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) on 2. 5. 1982.

At the invitation of the Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) the representatives of Teachers Associations participated in a discussion with him on 28. 5. 1982 and submitted that the following principles should guide any revision of salaries :

(i) The take-home-pay should not be less than what it was and what it would be on the existing salary scales.

(ii) The relative differentials that existed between the salaries of university staff and those of the public service etc. should be maintained.

Mr. Ekanayake is a Senior Lecturer. He is also Hony. Secretary, Federation of University-Teachers' Associations.

(iii) In order to conform to (ii) above, the "Present Salary" for purposes of conversion should be those that were effective from 1. 7. 1981.

(iv) Conversions should be done by giving incremental credit for the number of years of service or increments earned in the grade in which a person was on 1. 1. 1982.

The revision of July 1981 salaries on this basis and in accordance with the principles contained in Public Administration Circular No. 197 of 31. 12. 1981 would have resulted in salary scales shown below under the heading "New Consolidated Salaries" which were the proposals submitted to the UGC by the Federation of University Teachers Associations (FUTA) on 28. 5. 1982.

The Chairman UGC agreed to prepare his proposals on the basis of these submissions and he requested that representatives of University Teachers should support the UGC at its discussions with the Treasury.

The meeting with the Treasury representative was held on 8. 6. 1982 presided over by the Chairman UGC. It was suggested that the

FUTA should revise its salary scales to fall within the range of Rs. 1700 and Rs. 4800 per month. There was no other objection either from the UGC or the Treasury representative on the principles or the details of the FUTA proposals.

In order to bring about a negotiated settlement the FUTA revised its scales and submitted them at another discussion with the Chairman UGC held on 7. 7. 1982. At this meeting the UGC circulated among those present what the UGC termed a "revised proposal". What that "revision" did was to add to their earlier proposals Rs. 100/- to the scale of Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers and Rs. 25/- to that of Associate Professors. It still failed to remove the anomaly of the reduction of take-home-pay and did not meet the demand for a meaningful salary increase. Therefore it was rejected as unacceptable.

The Chairman UGC then requested the FUTA to send him a memorandum incorporating the demands of university teachers for submission to higher authorities with UGC recommendations. He also agreed to arrange for a delegation of the university teachers associations to

Table I — Monthly Salary Scales

Grade	July 1981 salary scales	New Consolidated Salaries (including all allowances)
Professors	Rs. 2500 - 10 x 75 - 3250 (3515 - 10 x 82/50 - 4340)	4600 - 6 x 100 - 5200
Associate Professors	Rs. 2080 - 3 x 60, 4 x 75 - 2560 (3053 - 3 x 66, 4 x 82/50 - 3581)	3700 - 7 x 100 - 4400
Senior Lecturers	Rs. 1800 - 2 x 50, 6 x 60 - 2260 (2745 - 2 x 55, 6 x 66 - 3251)	3250 - 8 x 75 - 3850
Lecturers	Rs. 1500 - 5 x 50 - 1750 (2315 - 5 x 55 - 2690)	2750 - 5 x 75 - 3125
Asst. Lecturers	Rs. 1000 - 6 x 50 - 1300 (1365 - 6 x 55 - 1695)	2050 - 6 x 75 - 2500

Note : Figures in brackets are the gross salaries corresponding to the scales shown above them.

meet the Salaries Review Committee if and when the proposals were referred to it by the Cabinet.

This memorandum was sent to the Chairman UGC on 20.7.1982. It contained, among other things, salary scales revised to fall within the range of Rs. 1925 and Rs. 4800 the demand for step for step conversion, and the demand for the payment of specialisation allowances. The salary scales asked for were as follows:

Professors Rs. 4300 – 5 x 100 – 4800 per month.

Associate Professor Rs. 3750 – 3 x 75, 4 x 100 – 4375 per month.

Senior Lecturer Rs. 3375 – 8 x 75 – 3975 per month.

Lecturers Rs. 2925 – 5 x 75 – 3300 per month.

Assistant Lecturers Rs. 1925 – 6 x 75 – 2375 per month.

For a very long time after this the associations did not know what happened to their proposals. Their letters were unanswered. The Executive Committee of the FUTA met on 31.03.1983 and decided to remind the Chairman UGC of the undue delay in implementing their proposals and to re-emphasize the principles that were agreed upon earlier in the discussions for the revision of salaries.

We now find that the UGC by its Circular No. 222 of 11.5.1983 is implementing its proposals that were totally rejected by the teachers associations on 7.7.1982. These salary revisions while giving net **monthly** salary increases of Rs. 11.50 and Rs. 4.00 to Professors and Associate Professors respectively have reduced the take-home-pay of some Lecturers and Senior Lecturers respectively by Rs. 58.50 and Rs. 53.50 per month. This is in complete contrast to the so-called increases of thousands of rupees per month to which some newspapers gave wide publicity a few months back.

The basis for these misleading statements seem to lie in the fact that before the recent consolidation of salaries, "**the salary**" was what may be loosely termed "basic salary". For instance while the initial "salary" of a Professor was Rs. 2500/- per

month, he in fact received a gross salary of Rs. 3515. The difference of Rs. 1015 was made up of several allowances introduced by the government over the period from 1966–1981. These allowances were not paid exclusively to university staff but were also paid to public servants as well as those in the statutory boards and corporations.

When the authorities gave publicity to the recent salary revisions what they did was to compare (i) the former basic initial salary of Professors (Rs. 2500 x 12 = 30000) with (ii) the maximum of the new consolidated salary scale (Rs. 4525 x 12 = 54300) completely disregarding both (iii) the appropriate gross salary drawn before the revision (Rs. 3515 x 12 = 42180) and (iv) the corresponding new consolidated salary (Rs. 3625 x 12 = 43500). Even to compare the former basic salary (Rs. 30000) and the corresponding new consolidated salary (Rs. 43500) is misleading. But to compare the former basic minimum salary with the **maximum** of the new consolidated salary is mischievous, to say the least. What in fact has happened is that the former gross salary of Rs. 42180 has been consolidated at Rs. 43500 involving an increase of Rs. 110/-, the increase net of provident fund deductions being Rs. 11.50 per month.

It is necessary to take a brief look at the past to understand the demand by university academics for increased salaries. Prior to 1969 the initial basic salary of an Assistant Lecturer was Rs. 430/- per month. In addition he was paid, as in the government service, a few other allowances which resulted in a gross salary of Rs. 685/-. The initial salary of a Probationary Staff Officer of the Central Bank was also Rs. 430/- per month at this time. The initial salary of a staff officer in the government service was Rs. 340/- per month and this worked out to a gross salary of about Rs. 585/-.

In 1969 the salaries in the government service were consolidated and the universities followed suit. The initial consolidated salary of a government staff officer was fixed at Rs. 600/- per month. This was later increased to Rs. 650/- for Administrative Service Officers. They

also received a marriage allowance, where appropriate of Rs. 87.50 (going up to Rs. 100 with increases in the salary) making it a gross salary of Rs. 737.50. The Assistant Lecturer's salary was consolidated at Rs. 700/-. No marriage allowance was paid to him. The Assistant Lecturer who was Rs. 100/- ahead fell behind the government staff officers by Rs. 37/50 per month. The erosion of the position of university academics had begun.

The university teachers began to agitate for salary increases in a concerted manner after 1976 when they could no longer withstand the economic burdens. In May 1977 the previous government (which was a caretaker government by them) granted an increase of about Rs. 100/- per month. It was nothing more than the grant of the marriage allowance that was denied to them since 1969. Because of this as well as the rapid decline in the living standards after 1977, a sixty per cent salary increase was demanded in 1979. In September 1979 the U. G. C. announced that university teachers would be given a forty per cent salary increase. However since nothing concrete happened till June 1980 the teachers in some universities refused to perform any duties other than academic work and it was after this that the salary increases effective from January 1980 were implemented. The actual increase for Assistant Lecturers was 15% from Rs. 800 to 920 per month while some higher grade academics got only about a 3% increase. In spite of protests from university teachers Associations the UGC thought it fit to link the salaries of university professors to those of the directors of research institutes.

By this time the Central Bank revised its salaries with effect from July 1979. The initial salary of Probationary Staff Officers was increased to Rs. 985/- from Rs. 430/- per month. The gross salary amounted to about Rs. 1800/- and may be well over Rs. 2000/- now. Besides these increases, conversions were done on a step for step basis. In the case of universities everyone came down to the initials of their respective scales irrespective of the seniority in the grade as no step for step conversions were allowed. The gross salary of

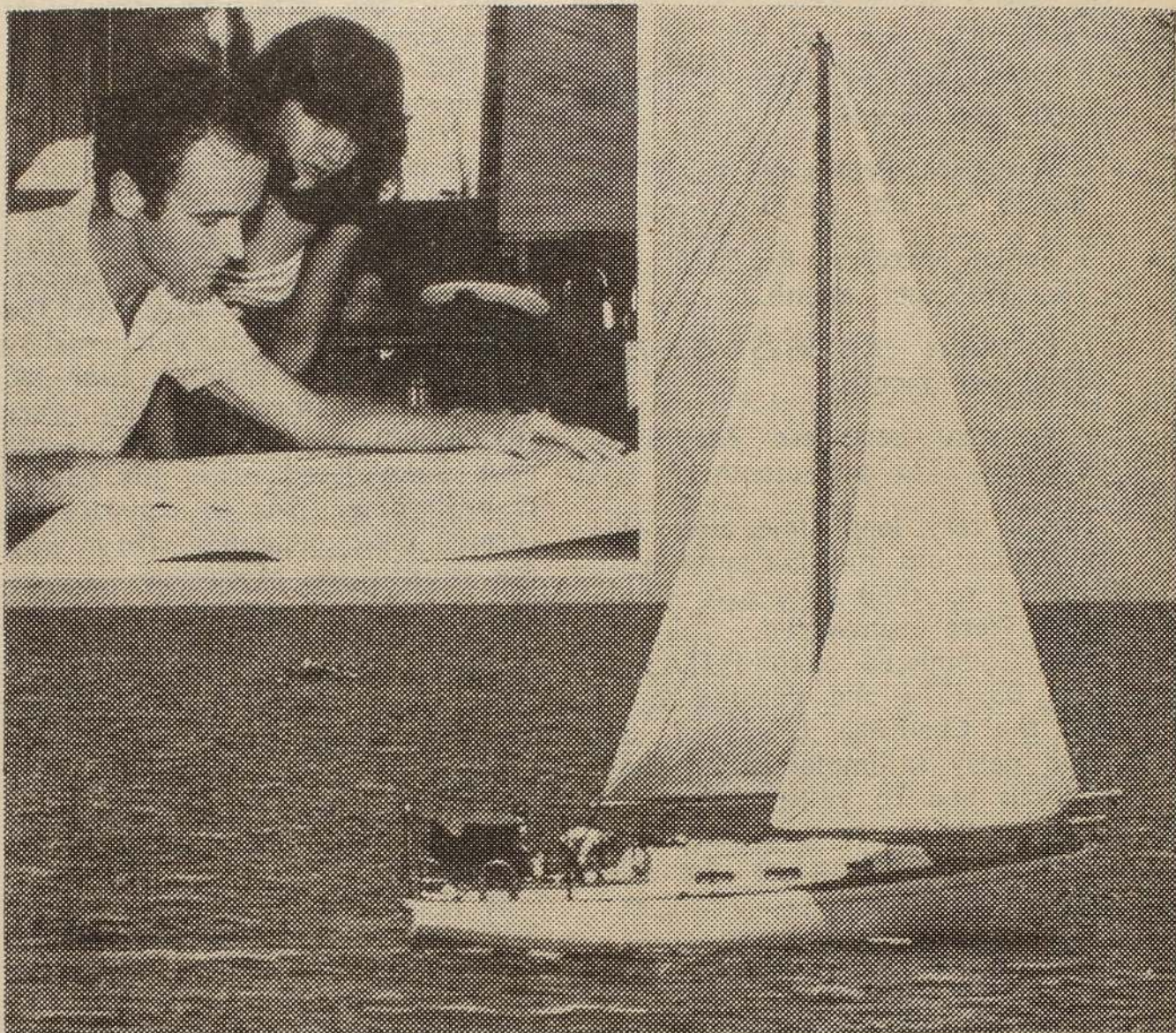
an Assistant Lecturer even after the 1980 revisions was only about Rs. 1200/- per month. It may be recalled that prior to 1969 the initial basic salary of Assistant Lecturers as well as Probationary Staff Officers was Rs. 430/- per month. The recruiting qualifications were also the same, as they are now.

In 1981 there was a revision of salaries in some research institutes in the public sector with whose salaries the salaries of university teachers were linked and therefore the UGC was compelled to revise the salaries of the latter. In July 1981 the salary of an Assistant Lecturer was increased to Rs. 1000/- resulting in a gross salary of Rs. 1365/- per month. It was at this revision that two grades of Professors were created, (in spite of the protests of teachers associations) with an initial salary of Rs. 2500/- to Professors, Grade II. Even after this revision the salaries did not come up to the revisions demanded in 1979. In the case of Assistant Lecturers a 60% increase over 1977 salaries would have meant an initial salary of Rs. 1280/- resulting in a gross salary of Rs. 1673/- per month.

While the UGC was getting ready to implement the July 1981 salary revisions, the salaries in the public service were revised.

The revision of salaries of University Academics has always been subject to misunderstandings and misleading (if not mischievous) statements by the authorities. It is the bitter experience of university teachers that their representations are completely ignored either because they are not aggressive in their demands or because they had a misplaced confidence in the good sense and wisdom of a university bureaucracy whose main objective seems to be the destruction of the very institutions which they are entrusted to protect and foster. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why they should begrudge an increase of Rs. 20/- per day for a Professor. A pavement hawker may, if told that even after the latest revisions a university professor gets Rs. 120/- and an assistant lecturer Rs. 56/- per day, wonder in disbelief and think that it is a practical joke.

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PARLIAMENT

Shelton Kodikara

Foreign policy formulation is not a subject that can easily be brought within the purview of parliamentary control. The necessity to ensure secrecy in diplomatic negotiations, the need for quick responses to international crisis situations and for foreign policy decisions to be made even when Parliament is in recess or under dissolution, have all made subordinate the role of Parliament in the matter of foreign policy decision-making in democratic politics. The ineffectiveness of democratic decision-making in foreign policy has been commented upon since de Tocqueville's classic *Democracy in America* averred that foreign politics demanded scarcely any of those qualities which a democracy possessed but required, on the contrary, all the faculties in which they were deficient a sentiment echoed by more recent writers like Max Beloff,¹⁸ and reiterated by Joseph Frankel, who held that as large clumsy bodies, parliament cannot effectively exercise initiative, and their participation upset diplomacy."¹⁹ No approximation to the Congressional-style committees on the American model were set up in Sri Lanka's Parliament after the adoption of Presidential government under the second Republic, and in fact, all executive powers including defence remain firmly vested in the President of the Republic. But by the expedient of amendment of Parliament's Standing orders Sri Lanka has established Ministry Consultative Committees in 1978 on the Indian and French models, and if we are to go by the Indian experience, this departure is not likely to have any visible impact on foreign policy decision-making.²⁰

Even so, it is in Parliament that the Foreign Minister is exposed to the most important public discussions on foreign policy. A specific issue of foreign policy might lead to the discussion of a substantive motion; or a foreign policy statement of the Prime Minister/Foreign

Minister may lead to a debate; or foreign policy general may be discussed in the context of the debate on the Throne Speech or President's Address, or the Appropriation Bill when the votes of the Ministry of foreign Affairs are being discussed; or an Opposition member of Parliament move the suspension of Standing Orders to discuss a current topic of international affairs. Further, the Foreign Minister, or someone on his behalf, is obliged to reply to the Opposition at Question Time, and on all these occasions the Prime Minister/Foreign Minister and other members of the government are called upon to defend their policies.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, therefore, will not easily expose himself to the criticisms of the parliamentary Opposition by espousing a controversial foreign policy unless it is an important article of faith in the party programme. During the period 1948-56 there existed a fundamental divergence of approach between Government and Opposition on important foreign policy issues in Sri Lanka. Since 1956, successive governments have espoused Non-alignment as the basic tenet of their foreign policy, though governments headed by the SLFP have tended to be pro-socialist in orientation, while UNP governments have veered toward the West. The present President himself has often stressed the continuity in foreign policy between present and previous administrations, though a recent non-official commentator claims for the present administration of Mr. Jayewardene (1977) a more 'strict' adherence to non-alignment than any previous government.²¹ The fact is that element of consensus on issues such as anti-colonialism, anti-racism, disarmament and arms control have existed in Sri Lanka whatever the party political complexion of the government in power, while elements of dissension have existed mostly on issues concerning the East-West conflict. Parliament has

been the main forum where these elements of dissension have been discussed, but is not only the views expressed by the parliamentary Group, which bear upon decisions taken on important foreign policy questions. The time-frame of reference and the nature of the government's parliamentary majority no doubt influence the role of the government parliamentary group in foreign policy decision-making. As the following pages attempt to demonstrate, the necessity to take account of the Buddhist, Indian or Muslim interest in foreign policy decision-making imposes constraints on the decision-makers, which may appear within Parliament itself, or outside it, and outside influences may make themselves felt within the government parliamentary group. But the size of the government's majority influences the effectiveness or otherwise of dissent within the group. Under the second republican constitution, the role of the government backbencher has in fact been greatly devalued, in that a defector from an opposition party automatically loses his seat in parliament. The UNP government came into line with the main Opposition parties on the issue of making Sri Lanka a Republic due to a proposal which originated in the Resolutions Committee of its parliamentary group.²² A General Secretary of the same party, alleged divergences with the party leadership, among other differences, on the Indo-Lanka citizenship question. When he resigned from the party in 1967,²³ and criticism of government policy in the government parliamentary group was probably an important cause of Sri Lanka's reversal of policy on the Hungarian issue in the United Nations in 1957.²⁴ All MPs have their constituents, and all MPs are therefore sensitive to public opinion trends in the country, whether they are specifically related to foreign policy issues or not. The proportional system of representation

adopted under the second republican constitution may make public pressures on individual MPs less important than before. But MPs by and large do re-contest elections and tend to be the most habitual purveyors of public opinion trends to government decision centres.

The Environment

In discussing the impact of public opinion trends, we shift our concern from the institutional to the environmental factors relevant to decision-making, recognising that the domestic and external milieu impose influences and constraints which are directly perceived by the decision makers, apart from those brought to bear upon them through the institutional framework.

The influence which domestic protest had in influencing US policy in Vietnam, and the continuing importance of the Jewish lobby in US foreign policy in the Middle East provide classic examples of the importances of the domestic milieu in foreign policy decision-making.

The Domestic Milieu in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, too, the political importance of the Muslim component of the population (6% of total population), combined with her fraternal relations with Arab countries which shared a common colonial experience, has determined the island's consistent pro-Arab and strongly anti-Israeli stand on the Middle Eastern question. Likewise on foreign policy issues where Buddhist interests are involved, successive Sri Lanka governments have either been under pressure from Buddhist interest groups or have themselves initiated action supportive of such interests. The Chinese action in Tibet in 1959, for example, engendered a reaction in Sri Lanka Buddhist circles, which organised public meetings condemning the Chinese suppression of the Tibetan uprising, and which called upon the Prime Minister, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, to take the initiative in calling an Asian Regional Conference to discuss Tibet or to refer the matter to the UN.²⁵ Bandaranaike, who had established diplomatic relations with China

only two years before, did not accede to these requests. But during 1963, Mrs. Bandaranaike as Prime Minister persistently espoused the cause of Buddhists in South Vietnam. Not only did she make a personal appeal to President Kennedy to use his good offices with South Vietnam to ensure the grant of freedom of worship and religious equality to the Buddhists of South Vietnam, but she directed UN initiatives in this respects, seeking the support of Buddhist countries for these initiatives, and later personally meeting, in Colombo the envoys of India, Burma, Japan, and Thailand to discuss the South Vietnam question.²⁶

The Sri Lanka ambassador in Washington, in a broadcast over the American Broadcasting Company network declared that South Vietnam posed a potential threat to peace in Asia, and that "the entire Buddhist world is against at the stories of persecution in South Vietnam."²⁷ Again it must be presumed that it was pressure from Buddhist interest groups which prompted Dudley Senanayake, Mrs. Bandaranaike's successor as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs to despatch the prominent Buddhist leader, scholar and diplomat, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera on a one-man fact-finding Mission to South Vietnam in 1966. Nor was the Buddhist response to foreign policy isolated to specific issues such as those of Tibet and Vietnam. President Jayewardene, representing Sri Lanka at the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference held in San Francisco in 1951 (then in the capacity of Finance Minister) quoted from Buddhist scripture to the effect that "hatred ceases not by hatred but by love" when, on behalf of Sri Lanka, he waived reparations for damage done by the Japanese in Colombo and Trincomalee during the second world war. And the most important foreign policy pronouncement of the first Prime Minister, D. S. Senanayake, was contained in his "middle way" speech, delivered over the BBC in London in 1951, in which he extolled the virtues of the middle path, scripturally hallowed in Buddhist tradition, between the extremes of communism and anti-communism (by which he meant power

rivalry between the USSR and the US).

Apart from this, Sri Lanka's non-aligned foreign policy, as it developed, as in other former colonial territories in Asia and Africa, was compounded with elements of nationalism, anticolonialist sentiment, and psychological responses to the widening disparity between North and South, between the 'have' and 'have-not' nations. It was after four hundred and fifty years of foreign rule that Sri Lanka became independent in 1948. Nationalist and anticolonialist sentiment therefore entered strongly into the consciousness of Sri Lankan political and intellectual leaders generally, and combined with pride in independence was a widespread antagonism toward all remaining colonial Powers and sympathy for nations yet subject to colonial status. Attitudes toward the West were influenced by political memories of past associations with colonial Powers, and by fears of new threats to independence or forms of neo-colonialism. It was, indeed, a Sri Lankan Prime Minister who denounced 'communist colonialism' at the Bandung conference in 1955, this was hardly typical of the Sri Lankan outlook. Generally, Sri Lankan leaders absolved communist countries of the 'cosmic guilt'²⁸ of colonialism, which was identified as a by-product of Western capitalism.

Sri Lanka's commitment to a non-aligned foreign policy, too, was strengthened by the new emphasis which the Non-aligned Movement began to give to economic imperatives after the Algiers Summit in 1973, by the formulation and search for a New International Economic Order after 1974, and by virtue of the fact that Sri Lanka's own chairmanship of the Movement (1976-79) straddled the governments of rival political parties headed by Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mr. Jayewardene, respectively. Membership of the Non-aligned Movement and commitment to its goals, therefore provided basic continuities in Sri Lanka's foreign policy, and tied up foreign policy postures with pressures emanating from the domestic environment.

External Milieu

In the same way international economic determinants played a large part in the foreign policy decision-making process in Sri Lanka. As a Sri Lankan Representative to the UN put it at a General Assembly session :

Ceylon offers a perfect case study of the effect of adverse trends in world market prices on the economy of a developing country which relies preponderantly on agricultural exports as a source of foreign exchange earnings.²⁹

Being a country whose very existence depended upon world market forces beyond her control, Sri Lanka placed great emphasis on preservation and expansion of her external export markets, and the maximisation of external economic assistance. It was an anti-communist western-oriented UNP government which first negotiated the Rubber-Rice agreement with the People's Republic of China in 1952, despite a US embargo on the sale of strategic war materials to China, and the agreement has been renewed up to date.³⁰ The fact that the Arab countries of West Asia are important to Sri Lanka's tea trade is not without bearing on her foreign policy in this area. Sri Lanka might denounce South Africa's apartheid policy but could not do without the South African market for Ceylon tea.

The primacy of internal economic development, and the dependence of the island's export-import economy on external economic and technical assistance has therefore been a major factor influencing Sri Lanka's policy of promoting international co-operation and avoiding entangling alliances with Power blocs. Mrs. Bandaranaike declared at Belgrade in 1961 :

It is not coincidence that the majority of the under-developed nations believe in a policy of Non-alignment. They are only too aware of the enormous tasks which confront them in the economic field and the need to devote their slender resources to the fulfilment of these tasks.

They also realise that the tension which exists between ideological blocs can be traced directly to the existence of economic imbalance. As long as there exists a gulf between the developed and the underdeveloped countries the possibilities of tension are immense.³¹

Economic determinants apart, geographical location provides another important environmental constraint on foreign policy decision-making generally, and as in the case of Sri Lanka, where geo-strategic location is juxtaposed to the interests of other Powers, such constraints constitute a crucial variable in the decision-making process. One need not subscribe to the locational determinism implicit in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* to recognise the mutual importance attached to foreign policies pursued by neighbouring countries *vis-à-vis* each other and the rest of the international community. The British conquest of Sri Lanka at the end of the eighteenth century was determined by the strategic importance of Trincomalee harbour and the necessity to deny its use to the French, in the context of the security of British possessions in India. Trincomalee still plays a strategic role in relation to Sri Lankan foreign policy, and the uses of Trincomalee as a naval base still remain a matter of international concern, particularly to India. The factor of geography has decided that India is Sri Lanka's only close neighbour, and considering the vast disparities in their size and military power it is not unnatural that there should exist in Sri Lanka ever-present fears and anxieties on the very score of juxtaposition to a colossus. It might be said to be inherent in Sri Lanka's status as a militarily weak small Power lying within India's periphery that her freedom to pursue a foreign policy clearly injurious to India's interests is limited by considerations of her own national interest. Sri Lanka's close commitment to the Commonwealth during the period 1948-56, friendly ties maintained since then with Pakistan and China, and her major role in the Non-Aligned Movement and commitment to non-aligned philosophy can be interpreted, in a sense, as diplomatic devices to counter-

balance Sri Lanka's unequal relationship with India. For Sri Lanka, relations with India are crucial, and may even be said to form the point of departure of her foreign policy generally.

This proposition remains true whether perceptions of the national interest vary from government to government in Sri Lanka and irrespective of the fact that conception of national interest may not be easily identifiable and objectively ascertainable. ●

18. See Max Beloff: *Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process* (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 85-86.
19. Joseph Frankel, *The Making of Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decision Making* (London, 1963), p. 25.
20. See Misra, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-44. An approximation to the American model, however, is provided by the creation of a Select Committee of Parliament to review higher government and Corporation appointments including ambassadorial appointments.
21. See article by Devinda R. Subasinghe "Philosophy Behind Foreign Policy" (Part IX), in *Ceylon Daily News*, 6 May 1981, where it is stated *inter alia*: "Previous UNP administrations may have had to — and indeed did — follow a deliberate low profile, western-oriented foreign policy given the domestic requirements of the time, the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership and the international context of the time".
22. *The Times* (London), 11 January 1955.
23. *Ceylon Daily News*, 5 November 1967.
24. See *infra*, pp. 13-14.
25. *Ceylon Daily News*, 1 June 1959.
26. See *Ceylon Today*, Vol. 12, July, 1963; *ibid*, September 1963.
27. *Ibid*.
28. The phrase is George Kennan's.
29. *Ceylon Daily News*, 7 November 1967.
30. There now appears to be second thoughts on the continuation of the agreement, however, in the context of Sri Lanka's achievement of near self-sufficiency in rice production. See statement of the Trade and Shipping Minister as reported in *The Sun*: 9 May 1981.
31. *Ceylon Today* Vol. X, September 1961, pp. 1.9 for text of speech.

WOMEN IN TRANSITION

A study of isolated women in the novels of Jean Rhys

Susan Eckstein

Jean Rhys died at the age of seventy-nine in May 1979, leaving behind an unfinished autobiography **Smile please**, an admission into the real world of the heroine familiar to all her novels. In the four novels written between 1928 and 1939, **Quartet**, **After leaving Mr. Mackenzie**, **Voyage in the Dark** and **Good Morning, Midnight**, she explores what were essentially her own experiences as a painfully vulnerable woman in Paris and London between the wars. **Quartet**, tells the story of Marya Zelli, once a chorus girl in London, now living in Paris. When her husband is sent to prison, she is befriended by the Heidlers and the story describes the ghastly "menage a trois" that ensues, her passionate love for Heidler, and ultimate loss of both him and her husband. **After leaving Mr. Mackenzie** also begins in Paris where Julia Martin is living on an allowance from an ex-lover. When this is stopped she goes to London to look up former lovers, has a disastrous affair and returns to Paris to face an empty, threatening future. **Voyage in the Dark**, tells the story of Anna Morgan, a chorus girl who spent her childhood in the West Indies. On tour, she falls in love, and when her lover abandons her, drifts into prostitution. **Good Morning, Midnight**, the most complex of the novels, tells of Sasha Jansen deserted by husbands and lovers revisiting Paris, aged 40, of her relationship with a gigolo, her memories and loneliness.

Only one type of woman is depicted; the woman who can rely on nothing except loneliness, exploitation and the lack of money, who is exposed to a society to which she can never belong, from which she must be forever isolated. Jean Rhys identifies and depicts universal themes and concerns, though the lives of her women are essentially

only typical of women in particular circumstances and in a particular era.

The emotionally isolated women are passive. They allow themselves to be manipulated and exploited by men, to be crushed by society and destroyed by their own characters. Deep within them they seem to harbour a kind of self-hatred that draws them to men who are not good for them and situations over which they feel they have no control. As Sasha Jansen in **Good Morning, Midnight** drifts into marriage, so she finds herself unable to resist being dominated by her husband. Julia Martin in **After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie** "felt that her life had moved in a circle, predestined she had returned to her starting point..." None of the women believes in any kind of guiding, all-powerful God. They do not feel that they are being directed through "passages (which) will never lead anywhere" by anything other than events as they are determined, and their own character. The slow process of destruction reduces the heroine from the woman in **Quartet** who initially has still to learn that the world is one without trust or love, to the embittered Sasha of **Good Morning, Midnight**. Sasha knows that she is "easy to fool, easy to torture, easy to laugh at", that it is an unquestionable fact that "men could be mercifully shot; women must be tortured".

The vulnerability of the female condition is a theme central to her novels. Julia Martin, in **After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie** is given away by her eyes which show that she was "too vulnerable ever to make a career of chance". Mr. Mackenzie is amazed and annoyed by her inability even to attempt to assert herself, and concludes that any woman who does not have the instinct of self preservation deserves her fate. Within every Jean Rhys woman lies the fear and knowledge that she will be betrayed,

JEAN RHYS was born in 1890, in the West Indian Island of Dominica, the daughter of a Welsh father and Creole (white West Indian) mother. She came to England at the age of 16, an outsider in a strange, cold, country. Her novels tell of similarly displaced women, who are "at loose" in Europe. Jean Rhys, who was a friend of the writer Ford Madox Ford, lived on the fringes of the expatriate American and English writers' community in Paris in the 1920's. Though writing during the post-suffragette period, when feminist ideas were widely discussed, she never writes specifically about feminism or the emancipation of women. But her women, by their rootless, unstable existences, tell us much about those products of emancipation who had achieved a remarkable degree of freedom, yet existed in a world not yet, ready to accept and assimilate them.

Many women in Sri Lanka who attempt to lead similarly "independent" lives today find themselves encountering an equally unsympathetic and un-supportive society. The Jean Rhys books (now available in Penguin editions) are therefore bound to evoke a response in Sri Lanka.

Jean Rhys did not gain recognition until the 1960's when her last novel 'Wide Sargasso Sea' won several major literary prizes. It tells the story of Mrs. Rochester, the "mad" Creole wife in *Jane Eyre*. An article about *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jane Eyre* will appear in a subsequent issue of the *Lanka Guardian*.

that her brief periods of felicity are fragile and transient, yet none of them anticipates the crippling effect of this fear. After Sasha is left by her husband she "began to go to pieces. Not all at once, of course, First this happened, and then that happened..."

Because of the fear of isolation and betrayal, the women continually look to men for love and protection. Marya is happy to be "the petted, cherished child, the desired mistress, the worshipped, perfumed Goddess". She will go to almost any lengths to try and retain the love or interest of her lover, caring nothing for her self respect or pride, willing to humiliate and abuse herself in front of him, though it is this pathetic stance which leads to the man's revulsion.

The women seem to need men for a sense of their own value, to confirm them in their identities as women, or even living human beings. They even have jobs whose security is dependent on their appearing attractive to men and receiving their approval. With Mr. Mackenzie no longer there to reflect Julia as a woman, to assure her that she exists, the "necessary illusion about herself which had enabled her to live her curious existence with a certain amount of courage and audacity" is destroyed and she is left "sort of smashed... up". Their involvement with men only increases the women's isolation. Anna, in **Voyage in the Dark** knows that the gulf between her and Walter is insurmountable, that he is alienated by the honesty of her love. She sees the look in his eyes which was "like a high, smooth, unclimbable wall. No communication possible".

Jean Rhys considered that "the whole business of money and sex is mixed up with something very primitive and deep". The women

are doubly vulnerable as they are dependent on men for both emotional and financial support. The women will humiliate themselves to obtain money by begging from their disdainful families or one time lovers, or by sleeping with men they do not want. It becomes a very easy habit to acquire yet Jean Rhys shows how this economic and social dependence can undermine a woman's psychic being.

The women, nearly all of whom survive by their looks in their private and professional lives, are regarded as sex objects and treated accordingly. They are forced, as Anna is, too see that to men "a girl's clothes cost more than the girl inside them...you can get a very nice girl for five pounds... you can even get a very nice girl for nothing if you know how to go about it. But you can't get a very nice costume for five pounds". The women themselves seem to subscribe to the opinion that they feel is held by men — that women are 'for sleeping with — not for talking to', that a woman is "an

instrument, something to be made use of. . ." yet deep down they are hurt and angered by this exploitation.

The women are not even invulnerable when they possess money, normally spending it recklessly, usually on clothes and alcohol. The women's simultaneous acceptance and rejection, need for and hatred, of money corresponds to their attitude to society in general. The inability of the men to appreciate the vulnerability of the dependent woman corresponds to the larger indifference of the world.

Jean Rhys's women are not only isolated by men and the lack of money, but also by the incomprehension of society. The isolated woman's inability to be accepted as part of society makes her want to spit in a face representing "all good, respectable people". The "organized society" against which she "has not a dog's chance" is a target for the hatred of frustration and thwarted, disappointed love. If the women cannot belong, and can gain no lasting solace from

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FRESHNESS AND FLAVOUR GOODNESS OF



TEAM

violence, they will try and find strength in not belonging. Isolated and lonely, the women's thoughts are increasingly involved with themselves. Marya finds life hard, puzzling and awful and feels "a sudden, devastating realisation of the essential craziness of existence, and "the sense of the utter futility of all things". Finding life a meaningless trial, the women are often "suspended over...the abyss of absolute loss of self control". Because the despair is not dwelt upon, because the fear and the moments of near defeat appear sporadically and briefly, the intensity is heightened and the note of self-pity eliminated. The women come very near to total breakdown, yet none of them commits suicide. All, however, consider it, whether it is merely a longing for death or a more overt cry for the strength to kill themselves. They seem to feel compelled to live, to feel that if they rid themselves of the life which oppresses them, they will not have lived and suffered enough to merit their own deaths.

For the Rhys woman, it seems as though society must use the vulnerable not only as scapegoats, but also as standards against which "ordinary" people can measure themselves and find themselves superior. The vulnerable isolated woman takes on the aspect of a fool or clown, a target to be pitied or laughed at. Indeed, in these novels, laughter and fun are more often associated with pain than with pleasure, the friendless person sinks into isolation "to the accompaniment of loud laughter".

For the scapegoat, writes V. S. Naipaul, "the society is closed; the isolation of the expatriate, the woman, the outsider, is complete; she exists in a void". Most of Jean Rhys heroines are "expatriates", but the journey of the expatriate is not one from innocence to darkness. It is more accurately described by Naipaul as from "one void to another". Anna is not only marooned in England and its culture — in Dominica she also did not fit into any society, "marooned between being white and being black". However, the women are isolated from an environment and a past which, though

not without conflict and pain, seems to contain more warmth and spontaneity and to accord more with their natures, than the hostile and highly ordered existence into which they are forced. The experience of exile is examined in all of the novels and the life of the expatriate is evoked, whether in terms of actual exile or of a loss of identity with the past or family. Julia remembers her South American mother "Sickening for the sun" and suffering in the coldness and greyness of England, and Anna recalls bright colours and intoxicating smells only when retreating into memories of the past. She is confused as to her real racial and cultural identity, associating being white with being "cold and sad" and black with being "warm and gay". The women are used to being without familial support, are used to "a lack solidity and of fixed backgrounds" but they know there is a danger in such a rootless existence. They do not belong anywhere, they have "no pride, no name, no face, no country".

The final impressions, however, is not necessarily one of unmitigated pessimism. The vigour with which Jean Rhys tells of the lives of the women leaves the reader "with the impression not of having witnessed a funeral but of having experienced something extremely moving which was at the same time extremely funny" (Angela Williams). Recognising the inevitable relationship of laughter with suffering, Jean Rhys can be simultaneously deadly serious and off-hand. Only afterwards, as Margarat Land notes, "one realizes the haunting quality of this light toned voice, the integrity of its style and its uncomfortable truth".

Jean Rhys explorations of the subconscious, of the failings of people, of the contradictions in one's own nature, and most importantly, of the emotional, economic and social isolation of women have had a considerable influence on literature. These explorations, which are derived from private rather than literary or intellectual inspirations, have helped to open the way for that unabashed treatment of all types of characters which is expected and even demanded from novelists today.



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Sinhala merchant capital and the Buddhist revival

Kumari Jayawardena

As in many other countries, early resistance to foreign domination in Sri Lanka took the form of a religious-cultural revival. As Amilcar Cabral has pointed out:

The history of national liberation struggles shows that generally these struggles are preceded by an increase in expression of culture, consolidated progressively into an... attempt to affirm the cultural personality of the dominated people, as a means of negating the oppressor culture... it is generally within the culture that we find the seed of opposition, which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation.

In Sri Lanka, the 'seed of opposition' which sprouted through the affirmation of 'the cultural personality of the dominated people' did not blossom into nationalism or a full-scale liberation movement, but was confined to the realm of cultural and religious agitation by the majority group, later degenerating into communalism against the minorities. It is this phenomenon that one has to try to understand in order to assess correctly the growth of latter-day chauvinism.

Resistance to foreign rule started in the early decades of the 19th century eventually, taking the form of armed revolt and uprisings. Buddhist monks not only participated in such revolts but also led them; in later times they were also in the forefront of the struggle to purify and revive Buddhism. By the turn of the century, many contradictions had developed between Christians and Buddhists. The British rulers were regarded as supporters of Christianity and proselytization through missionary education; moreover, most of the leading families of the 'old' and 'new' bourgeoisie had become Christian. Those Buddhists who had made their wealth in arrack renting, mining, coconut, cinnamon and rubber planting, however, had the additional grievance that, despite their wealth and newly-ac-

quired status, as Buddhists they were not represented in the higher echelons of government service or the Legislative Council where, from 1833 until 1912 (with one exception), Protestant Christians belonging to a single family group had been appointed successively to represent the interests of the low country Sinhalese. The Buddhist bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie felt keenly that they were a deprived sector of the community both, politically and culturally.

The Sinhala Buddhists therefore agitated on several fronts. As regards the cultural aspect, this took the form of an attempt to rescue Buddhism from the degeneration it was seen to have suffered due to loss of the state patronage of Buddhist kings and the colonial state's support of Christian missionary activities. The Buddhists attempted to replace the state with organized private support for their temples, an important aspect of this being an attack on the government for its neglect of Buddhist education and its support and approval of Christian education and proselytizing activities. Another target of the Buddhists was the state's liquor policy under which taverns proliferated, causing increased social problems. Such state policies were seen as responsible for the decline of traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and values; the anglicized bourgeoisie was also attacked for its adoption of alien social values which were denounced as degenerate and false. Links with movements in the West — the rationalist and free thinkers' organizations in Britain which openly challenged Christianity, and the Theosophical Society with its emphasis on the brotherhood of man and its partiality for the religions of the East — also provided an impetus to the revival of Buddhism. In 1880, a founder of the Theosophical Society, who was also an able organizer and propagandist, set about

mobilizing the Buddhists and raising funds for their cause. The movement received money and support from the newly rich Buddhist cinnamon planters and arrack renters of the Southern Province, and from leading Sinhala Buddhist traders and merchants. While wealthy Buddhists helped with donations, the intelligentsia responded by writing pamphlets and articles, speaking at meetings, and forming local temperance associations and organizations for religious and social work.

It is relevant here to give a few examples of the Sinhala Buddhist fervour of the traders. For instance, N.S. Fernando, who had started with a small shop in 1875 and had become the first Sri Lankan importer of paper and stationery in Colombo by the late 19th century, only employed Buddhists. Not only was he very devout, observing all Buddhist rituals and financing a 'pilgrims' rest' in Anuradhapura, but he also started a journal in Sinhala for traders, called *The Merchant's Friend*. Another leading Sinhala merchant, D. D. Pedris, helped to finance the Buddhist movement. The principal importer of Indian saris, he was supported by the Buddhist press in a campaign to promote the sari as national dress for the country's women. It is significant that, during the 1915 riots, the British charged both their sons with inciting crowds to attack rival Muslim shops in Colombo, and sentenced them to death.

While Buddhist traders gave generously to temples and schools and financed the temperance movement, they were supported in their business ventures by the Buddhist press and the Sinhala petty bourgeois intelligentsia. Jayasekera has pointed out how, as long ago as 1888, Buddhist journals wrote against 'alien exploiters' and how, up to 1915, Buddhist papers continually attacked the domi-

nant trading position of minorities, calling upon the Sinhalese to boycott Muslim shops and eating houses. Such articles against foreign and minority traders were often written by Buddhist monks, school teachers and leading personalities of the movement. The foremost Buddhist activist, Anagarika Dharmapala, for example, wrote frequently on this theme, praising the Sinhala merchants for having accumulated wealth by fair means and calling on them to support patriotic causes, while denouncing the 'merchants from Bombay and peddlars from South India' who dominated the trade of the island.

Revivalist Ideology and Communalism

THE BUDDHIST revival was undoubtedly an agitational movement with semi-political overtones. The Buddhist challenged the privileges of Christians in colonial society; they attacked missionary education and aimed at imparting a more relevant education to Sri Lankan children in Buddhist schools. They exposed social evils such as drunkenness, which they attributed to foreign rule, and, imbued with the puritanism that is characteristic of revival movements, criticized the decadence of society under colonial rule, contrasting it with the ancient culture of the Sinhalese. The main emphasis of the movement, however, as symbolized in Anagarika Dharmapala's campaign in Anuradhapura in 1903, revolved around ridding the sacred city of churches, taverns and butcher's shops, rather than ridding the country of its foreign rulers. In the context of the time, such religious agitations — as well as the Buddhist temperance movements of 1904 and 1912 were merely signs of an incipient nationalism and were only semi-political in content. But given the nature of the class that led such movements, the nationalism remained 'incipient' and the agitation 'semi-political' — confined to taunting British officials on marginal issues such as temperance, rather than challenging British imperialism in any serious way.

There was no 'national bourgeoisie' with basic economic contradictions with imperialism which was sufficiently strong or mature to lead their religious-cultural agitations into a

full fledged anti-imperialist movement. The large landowning families stood solidly by the British; the new segment of the bourgeoisie agitated only for class privileges and, not too dissatisfied with the constitutional reforms of 1912 and 1923, did not launch any struggle against the foreign rulers. Even the leaders of the temperance and Buddhist education movements did not question the continuance of British rule; their activities were carefully limited so as not to appear disloyal, being confined to 'nibbling at sedition' as Herbert Dowbiggin, Inspector General of Police, perceptively reported.¹¹

This weak bourgeoisie was thus incapable of creating among the people a national consciousness based on a scientific outlook, or of leading a struggle based on the concept of a Sri Lankan nation. The very nature of merchant capital activity, which did not require the application of science and technology, probably prevented the growth of a modern rationalist outlook among these groups. Contacts with foreign rational and liberal thought remained superficial, without seriously affecting the consciousness of the people who were more susceptible to the traditional ideologies and superstitions that were dominant among the other classes. In this situation, where a Sri Lankan consciousness could not arise, the need of the new class for an identity that it could espouse vis-a-vis the foreign rulers and foreign economic interests was met by a revival of older identities based on the familiar traditional categories of religion, caste and ethnicity. Rather than being swept away by the winds of nationalism and national unity, the older forms of identity were given a new lease of life, resulting in communalism, casteism, a distortion of history, a revival of myths of origin and hero-myths, along with visions of a past 'golden age'.

In discussing the ideology of the Buddhist revival, three interconnected myths linked with racial and religious origins, which gained popularity during this period, should be noted, i.e.

1. the myth of the 'Aryan race' and the view that the Sinhala-speaking peoples belonged racially

to this group;

2. the 'Sihadipa' concept, namely, the myth of the landing in Sri Lanka of Vijaya and the founding of the Sinhala 'race';

3. the 'dhammadipa' concept and the myth of Buddha's visits to Sri Lanka and his special relationship with the island.

European Orientalists of the 18th and 19th century who studied the Sanskrit language, found that it had links with European languages and assumed that this presupposed a common origin. The discovery had many repercussions and led to the theory that the Aryans were a racial entity rather than 'a group of people who spoke related languages'. The Hindu revivalists of India adopted this concept, and also the Orientalists' 'golden age' vision of the 'ancient Indians as a people with an idyllic society',¹² and laid stress on Vedic culture as being the root of the Indian tradition. The glorification of the Aryans as the chosen people who had 'civilized' the earlier inhabitants and were the sole progenitors of, and heirs to, Indian culture, was put forward as historical fact.

Among the Sinhala bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie the idea of the 'Aryan connection' was strong and persistent, namely the view that the Sinhalese linguistically and racially were 'Aryans' of North India as distinct from the 'Dravidian, Tamils of South Indian origin. The Aryan mythology was borrowed from Europe where it had originated in the period of 18th century enlightenment, with its rejection of Christian dogmatism and the 'Jewish fables' of the Bible, when the quest for origins and the 'New Adam' had begun. The 'light', it was believed, was to come from the East and the origins of the human race were held to be in India. When in 1788, the British orientalist William Jones claimed that Latin, Greek and Sanskrit had 'sprung from the same source', the stage was set for the transition from common linguistic origin to racial origin, and the doctrines of racial superiority and racial purity gained acceptance. In Germany, in 1808, Schegel suggested that a North Indian race, which he called Aryan, had migrated to Europe; subse-

quently, philosophers like Hegel claimed that the Indians and Europeans had 'the same common ancestry'.¹³ It was the eminent German Sanskrit scholar, Max Muller, who popularized the myth that those speaking the inter-related Indo-European languages were of a common racial stock: 'The first ancestors of the Indians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts and the Germans were living together ... under the same roof.' Although Muller later claimed it to be unscientific to speak 'of an Aryan race, Aryan blood or Aryan skulls',¹⁴ the damage had been done and racist doctrines directed against non-Aryans were to become popular among many European intellectuals (Gobineau, Renan, Comte, Chamberlain, Arnold, Taine, Schopenhauer, etc.) As Poliakov has commented: 'The division between Aryans and Semites was accepted as dogma by the majority of researchers. By about 1860 this conviction was already a part of the intellectual baggage of all cultivated Europeans'.¹⁵

Not only Europeans, but also cultivated Indians and Sri Lankans picked up this intellectual baggage. Muller had claimed that the same blood ran in the veins of the English 'as in the veins of the dark Bengalese'.¹⁶ The Aryan theory meant that the colonized peoples and their European rulers were related; as Gunewardena has pointed out, it 'provided a section of the colonial peoples of South Asia with a prestigious "pedigree", it elevated them to the rank of the kinsmen of their rulers'.¹⁷ The glorification of the Aryans as the chosen migrant people of fair skin, who 'civilized' the earlier darker-skinned inhabitants, was popularized in both India and Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka scholars began to claim linguistic and racial connections between the Sinhalese and Aryans of North India. According to Gunewardena, European Orientalist work on the Aryans was popularized in Sri Lanka from the 1850s onward. In their search for an identity the Buddhist revivalists adopted the doctrine of racial superiority, glorified an idyllic past, and linked the Sinhalese people with the 'chosen' Aryan race and the 'chosen' Buddhist faith.

In Sinhala mythology the Aryan myth is linked with that of the landing of Vijaya and his Aryan colonizers from Sinhapura in Bengal; Vijaya (according to the early chroniclers) was the founder of the Sinhala 'race' and landed in Sri Lanka on the day of Buddha's death. Interwoven with this 'Sihadipa' (Island of the Lion) idea that civilization began in Sri Lanka with the coming of Vijaya and the founding of the Aryan Sinhala race, is the Dhammadipa (Island of the Buddhist Dhamma) concept of the special role of the Sinhalese as guardians of Buddha's teachings. Not only was it believed that Buddha had visited Sri Lanka three times, but on his deathbed he is said to have asked the God Sakra to protect Vijaya in his historic mission to Sri Lanka, the land where the dhamma would flourish for five thousand years.

Sinhala Chauvinism

WHAT WERE the local concomitants of such arguments and which classes found inspiration in this type of mythology? The implications of the Sinhala-Buddhist ideologies were clear: if the Sinhala people could put forward claims to being the first civilised inhabitants and therefore the legitimate 'owners' of the country, all other migrants who had come at a later date were regarded as 'foreigners'. The concept thus grew that Sri Lanka was the land of the Sinhalese and that non-Sinhalese who resided there were allowed to do so by grace and favour of the 'master race' who had prior rights of possession and were the exclusive 'sons of the soil'. This idea was typified in a statement made by Anagarika Dharmapala in 1922: 'Look at the Administration Report of the General Manager of Railways ... Tamils, Cochins and Hambankarayas [Muslims] are employed in large numbers to the prejudice of the people of this island — sons of the soil, who contribute the largest share'. The second implication was that Buddhism was the religion of dhammadipa and that all other religions were merely tolerated on condition of good behaviour. In addition, if the minority communities were non-Sinhala and non-Buddhist, they were by definition both racially and religiously inferior and 'infidels of degraded race' as Tamils, and Europeans were described in 1912 by Dharmapala.¹⁸

Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism, founded on the myths of the golden age which were an integral part of the Buddhist revival, also permeated the writings of many novelists, dramatists and journalists of the period. In Piya-dasa Sirisena's novels, which were immensely popular, the heroes and heroines were devout Buddhists and proud Sinhalese, and minorities of all ethnic groups and religions were the object of bitter diatribes. In 1909, as editor of the journal *Sinhala Jathiya* (Sinhala Race), Sirisena called upon the Sinhalese to 'refrain from transactions with the Coast Moor, the Cochin and the foreigner'.¹⁹ Similarly, W. A. de Silva did not hesitate to make contemptuous reference to Tamils and Muslims, while many of John de Silva's popular plays glorified the ancient rulers of Sinhala kingdoms, lamented the contemporary degeneration, and issued an emotional call for the revival of earlier values and traditions.

The new rich capitalists were among the foremost propagandists of the Aryan Sinhalese identity: 'The Sinhalese are a unique race in as much as they can boast that they have no slave blood in them and never were conquered either by the pagan Tamils or European vandals...the Sinhalese stand as the representatives of Aryan civilization'.²⁰

The popular appeal of such ideologies (which exist even today) may also be explained by the fact that the Sinhala petty bourgeoisie of small producers, small traders and urban 'white collar' workers, led an uncertain life between the bourgeoisie and the working class, their bitterness being aggravated by the competitive activities of minority groups in trade and employment — all factors which were seen to threaten the 'small' man's already tenuous economic existence. It may be that the precarious nature of their lives and their narrow horizons made it easy for them to find solace in past glories, in the heroism of great leaders, in myths of high status origin, and in victories against the 'historic enemy' and the defeat of the 'invader'. Where today's Tamil competitor belongs to an ethnic minority which had

(Continued on page 20)

The elegance of an andante

L. O. de Silva

In the frenzied hurry and scurry of Colombo these days Lester James Peries' *Kaliyugaya* offers a brief haven to those who value quietness and slow time. The maker of *Gamperaliya* surpasses himself in this tragic sequel of twenty years later. "The remote Chekovian grace of which Lindsay Anderson then wrote is still there, undisturbed by the shift from country to town and, in the making, from black-and-white to the exquisite tonal modulations of colour. The quiet ebb and flow of feeling in Gam-

peraliya, diffused over a wide canvas, is here compulsively concentrated into the brief time of nemesis; the momentary phase in which cause and effect are contemplated and revealed, unflinching but with Buddhistic compassion.

Kaliyugaya is totally absorbing through the slow quietness of its backward and forward analytical motion, in a primarily visual exposition. The painter works on the blankness of a canvas. Music is a wrestle with silence. The

based united stand against imperialism; what came into being was a weak class of capitalists who, together with small producers in the urban and rural areas, espoused the retrograde ideology of communalism which the Indian historian Bipan Chandra has correctly described as 'the false consciousness of the historical process of the last 100 years'.²¹

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CINEMA

cinema encompasses both dimensions and of the infinite variety of ways and styles in which it has been used by innumerable film makers, the way and style of Lester James Peries, elevated in this film to their quintessence, is universal and valid, even when the individual preference is for turbulence. Here is the cinema of Dreyer's *Joan of Arc*, of *The Diary of a Country Priest*, of Ozu and Ray and of that core of silence which was the essential Chaplin. Peries has occasionally strayed from his chosen path (don't we all?) and the results were not always graceful.

Kaliyugaya is suggestive of a cradle rocking gently in a shady lawn. It also suggests a coffin being lowered slowly into the ground. Here is social change being traced through individual circumstance between birth and death. Art is selection; art is elimination, discretion and economy. Peries works chiefly with the human countenance held in a medium shot. A significant look, supplemented by a gesture, a word and all is told. Nothing happens and yet all does happen. This is the art which used to be appositely called the magic box; in this case, triumphantly achieved by a film maker with the courage to be true to himself. The re-emergence of Punya Heendeniya, Henry Jayasena and Trilicia Gunawardena in their original roles might well have been a meretricious piece of showmanship but for the authority of their playing. They are the authentic characters of *Gamperaliya*, burdened by the ravages that twenty years had brought, moulded by a man whom I once had the pleasure of calling a classical actors' director. *Kaliyugaya* stands as a film by itself, independent of our memories. But who is there who having seen and loved *Gamperaliya*, does not see both films as one? There is in this historical event evidence of courage and endurance rewarded, even if that reward is the simple satisfaction of a job well done.

Sinhala merchant . . .

(Continued from page 19)

suffered defeat in war in an earlier epoch, such historical episodes as the famous confrontation of two Sinhala and Tamil kings (Dutugemunu and Elara) are revived, given a false interpretation as a war between ethnic groups, and misused for building-up communal hatred.

Conclusion

COMMUNALISM appeared at the time of the Buddhist revival at the end of the 19th century as a vicarious nationalism supported by the weak Sinhala bourgeoisie. It was also prevalent among the Sinhala petty traders, rural small producers, and other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, who believed that they had little chance of rising in the economic or political spectrum. Ideological support for such views was provided by the Sinhala intelligentsia and Buddhist monks who were keenly aware of the decline and supersession of traditional culture that had occurred under the impact of alien culture. The urban working class, mostly non-Sinhalese, was weak and, not having developed a proletarian consciousness, was amenable to the petty bourgeois chauvinism of the time. The Sinhala Buddhists, who felt economically hemmed-in, politically oppressed and culturally deprived, were to find succour in racist myths and legends and, in their search for identity, were to express violence against ethnic and religious minorities. In the Sri Lankan context, there did not develop a strong national-minded bourgeoisie which might have taken a secular-

DADAYAMA : A fugue on the politics, resistance, passion and despair of woman

Jagath Senaratne

Dadayama is based upon actual events that took place in the 1950's. Obeysekera shifts the temporal context of the events to the post-1977 period of the 'new consumerism'; the period during which, as a result of the present Government's economic policies there has been a phenomenal increase in the consumption levels and habits of certain social strata. The events take place within a social arena where these strata, flaunting their new found wealth give birth to aspirations in others who try desperately to emulate them. Although this is the larger canvas on which the personal drama is enacted, crude and economically deterministic correlations should not be drawn.

Rathmali, the younger daughter of a baker in an upcountry village, meets a handsome young man Jayanath, in the train while travelling with her parents. The stranger strikes up a conversation with her and a friendship begins. Rathmali desires to better her life chances, and Jayanath is one way in which this can be achieved. The aspirations of the girl, given her life situation, are quite natural and are accepted by the rest of the family as well.

The father would prefer a more orthodox path to upward social mobility. He would prefer education to be that ladder, and has been trying hard, true to his petty bourgeois inclinations, to boost his daughters. Given the way in which matters developed, he has little option, and is helpless in the face of the younger man's glib tongue and obvious ability to command more resources, and hence greater power in this class society. The father tries desperately in the only way he knows, to bring security to his family.

Rathmali is not ruthlessly and solely intent on climbing the social ladder at the expense of anything else. When she meets Jayanath she's still in school, and as she boasts playfully to her friends about Jayanath's apparent wealth and

belongings, one gets the impression of a naive pride in the fact that such a man finds her attractive. A singleminded acquisitiveness would be characteristic of a much older, disappointed, and embittered woman. It would do injustice to the film to consider Rathmali as devoid of deep romantic feelings towards Jayanath. Obeysekera's handling of her character is far more subtle; to perceive her as a grubby little climber who is exonerated and elevated because of her magnificent death is to mar the full complexity of her personality. She loved, but she loved unwisely. By the time she perceived him in a truer light and realised that in the way he greedily sucked at his Dunhill, he would heedlessly, selfishly exploit the opportunities offered him, it was too late to extricate herself. She loved him with the same strength and force with which she would later, implacably, hunt him down. An element of self-destruction, and even of perverse self-destruction can be seen in her love, her love-hate, and her hate for him. In the end, this trait drives her on to her death, as she tells him with cold hysteria that he must either marry her or kill her — both of which were quite irrelevant to her by that stage. If she was a mere gold-digger, she'd have desisted in pursuing him and looked for fresh pastures.

She tries with pathetic desperation to reach out and touch him. To somehow 'make-up' for any inadequacy of hers', attempting to rekindle something which she thought had existed. She calls him to the window of their hotel room to show him, to share with him... she tremulously reaches out but he coldly ignores her, preoccupied with some petty activity of his. ... Silently they pack their bags and leave yet another anonymous hotel room.

As she's subjected to more and more abuse and humiliation, she changes and begins to slough-off her naivete. Her inner core hardens into diamond-steel, tempered in the

furnace of her despair for her child, and her anger and hopelessness for herself. Her resistance is not merely that of violated motherhood, not solely the instinctive slash of the bared talons of an earth mother. It is violated womanhood that fights back, and hence deeply subversive of capitalist patriarchal ideology. Actually, if it had remained at the level of violated motherhood, it would not have stressed capitalist patriarchy at all, as the cult of motherhood and its associated mythology are stanchions of it.

Jayanath's character should have been crafted with greater care. There was no compulsion on Obeysekera to adhere to the vocation of the original killer. That was a different era, when a secondary school teacher could have conceivably maintained a high standard of living. Jayanath's frantic whirl is more that of a contemporary new rich playboy burning-off his father's surplus rupees. He could have been portrayed far more convincingly as a shallow young 'businessman' in a hurry to go places; hiding behind a thin veneer of pop sophistication — Brut, Dunhill and a Ford coupe.

His personality is portrayed in such stark negative terms that one wonders where he descended from, and the film would have certainly gained if his motivations and impulses were probed a bit more. Not with the intention of showing him 'in a better light', but for the purpose of foregrounding the casual assumptions and lack of understanding about women, his politics and the forces which have moulded him.

Jayanath's predatory male sexuality manifests itself in the mise-en-scene of the final sequence, where images are choked with meaning at several levels. In a previous scene at the house of the wealthy girl he'd planned to marry, there's a close-up of his eyes coolly measuring and weighing her up, and the girl cringes in the full glare of his look. This close-up foreshadows his baleful stare through the jagged shards of the shattered windscreen,

Williamsburg. . .

(Continued from page 7)

poor nations, the clamour for a 'new order' gathered momentum. Essentially, the NIEO meant a radical transformation of the US-dominated global economy. Hence the American use of the word "ideological" as an abusive term to stigmatize the very idea of radical change.

In effect, the NIEO called for a more balanced and equitable distribution of the world's wealth by a genuine transfer of resources and a simultaneous re-organisation of those international institutions, now controlled and manipulated by the US-led bloc, which 'manage' the operation of the world economy in its principal areas of trade, finance, technology, aid etc.

NIEO advocated a radical restructuring of the world economy. Such 'a new order' was however interpreted by the West as a direct threat to the **status quo**, to the entrenched positions of the US and its allies, and ultimately to their wealth and power.

In Belgrade, therefore, the US strategy was to force the Third World to accept the position that the present demand for 'immediate remedial measures' was a retreat from the NIEO, if not its total abandonment by the Group of 77. This is NOT the Third World position.

The world economic order is a grossly unjust and distorted system which favours the affluent few and helps to perpetuate the exploitation of the vast majority, the poor of what was once a colonised world. The deformations and iniquities of the prevailing system have been examined and catalogued by UNCTAD, among others, and books and brochures, complete with facts, figures and charts, have been published as part of the supportive campaign of the NIEO.

The crisis which has hit the Third World in the past few years — commodity prices, protectionism, debt burden, interest rates, etc — is so severe that the Group of 77 has demanded 'urgent action' i.e. quick relief measures. Such a demand is **not** a substitute for the NIEO.

THE FIRST AWARENESS

*It was Wesak, the full moon,
floated over the night sky,
a young boy, hangs a lantern,
on a bamboo grove.*

*He spent, weeks upon weeks,
days upon days,
on this creative venture,
of this boyhood — sensibility —
reds, blues, maroons,
a riot of color.
Embodied in meticulous symmetry,
of a perfect artistic unity and harmony.
He gazed at it with pride,
it was his skill —
swinging in the breeze,
under the floating moon.*

*He went to bed,
in the night a terrible gale,
shook the corners,
of his humble hut.*

*He got up in the morning,
weeks upon weeks,
of creative energy,
snuffed out
the lantern gutted out,
the bare skeleton hung,
indifferently from the bamboo grove,
he stared and stared.
But somewhere in the dark corner,
of his clouded mind,
lurked a dimly grasped,
indistinctly — what was it,
was it impermanence,
The village priest, kept on saying
at yesterday's Bana preaching,
he did not know for certain,
but the thought would not leave him.*

Ranjith Goonawardana

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On the contrary it is very much a part of it. Only a truly 'new order' can offer justice to the long oppressed and exploited. But the burden right now is so severe that immediate relief is needed. Belgrade is neither a diversion nor a retreat.

Yet, that was the general 'line' taken by the U.S. as part of its long-term strategy to repel and crush all Third World efforts for a re-structuring of the world economy to ensure justice among nations.

(To be continued)



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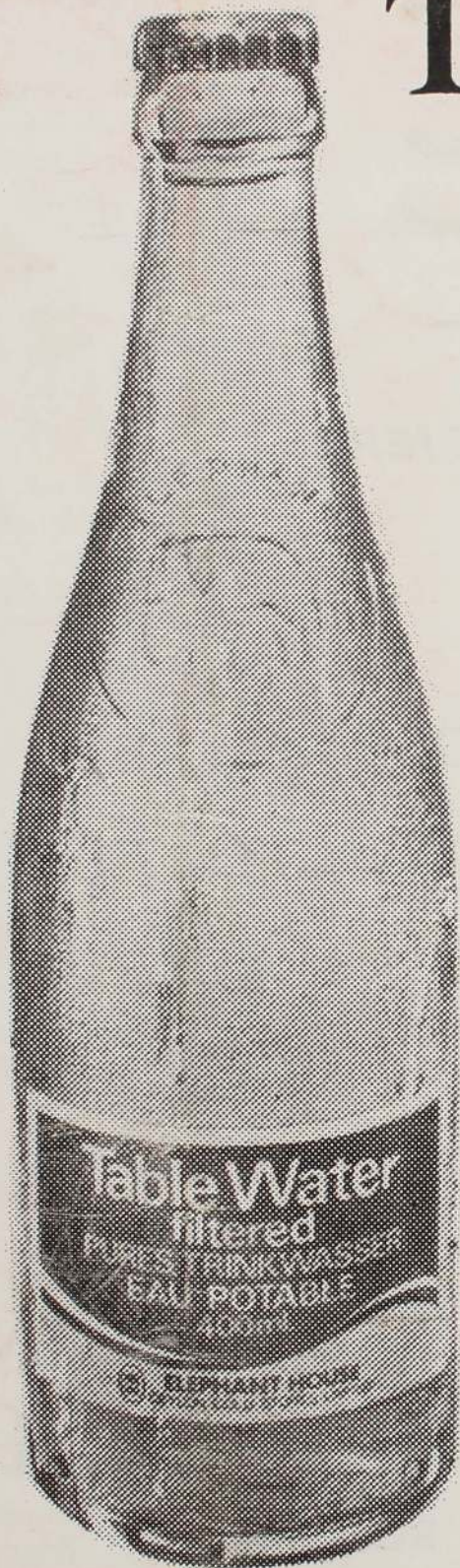
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