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CALCULATING MERCHANT RULERS AND CULTIVATING
COLONIAL SUBJECTS: COFFEE CULTIVATION IN
JAVA AND SRI LANKA UNDER THE DUTCH EAST
INDIA COMPANY, TO 1740 A.D.*

K.W.GOONEWARDENA

PART I - JAVA

"A species of black beans from which they make a black water and drink warm." This naive observation made from Mocha by Pieter van den Broecke in 1616, was, says de Jonge¹, the Dutch East India Company's first contact with coffee. Its active participation in the coffee trade, however, became notable only towards the last quarter of the seventeenth century when the drinking of coffee became a fashion in Europe and coffee-houses were springing up all over the continent, particularly in England and France and, rather more belatedly, in the Netherlands.

* The author acknowledges with gratitude that this paper originates from research into Sri Lankan history made possible, by a Visiting Commonwealth Fellowship held at the S.O.A.S., London, and by support from the University of Peradeniya.

1. J.K.J.de Jonge, De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie, Vol.VIII (Hague/Amsterdam, 1875) (hereafter cited as: De Jonge) p.CXXIV; cf. also P.A.Leupe, "Invoering der Koffijkultuur op Java, 1700-1750" in Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indie (Amsterdam 1859) (hereafter cited as: Leupe; p.54 and Kristof Glamann, Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740 (Copenhagen/Hague 1958) (hereafter cited as: Glamann) p.183.

After some fantastically high profits obtained during most of the sixteen-nineties at the auctions in the Netherlands, the turn of the century saw a somewhat more sober market for the Mocha coffee. But before long it picked up, both as regards price, and, even more impressively, as regards the volume of demand. Although the Heeren XVII (the Directors of the V.O.C.) sometimes blew hot and cold with regard to their orders for coffee from Mocha whenever there were significant fluctuations in the home market, it had nevertheless become one of the most important and profitable commodities of the Dutch Company by the second decade of the century, as they themselves stated in 1712.² Around that time, however, the Heeren XVII were about to receive coffee from a new source of supply which presented prospects of even more pleasing profits. That source was the island of Java where the V.O.C.'s Asian headquarters of Batavia was situated.

An examination of early eighteenth century coffee cultivation in Java was thought to be relevant and instructive, in regard to the projected study of the cultivation of that plant (also under the aegis of the V.O.C.) in Sri Lanka - and that, for several reasons. For instance, cultivation in Sri Lanka was attempted more than a decade after the Governor-General and Council at Batavia had organized systematic cultivation in Java, at the instance of the Directors; therefore, the Batavian experience must undoubtedly have had its influence on the experiment in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it is natural to expect that even after the cultivation got going in this island, developments in Java relating to coffee would have begun to impinge on the position of the new producer, and the latter in turn would have had an impact on cultivation considerations in Java. The fact that the Heeren XVII ultimately decided to favour coffee cultivation in one island more than in the other is yet another reason to make us pay some attention to the developments in coffee cultivation in Java.

2. For the above, see Glamann pp.186-94.

There are further reasons, of a rather different nature from the above, which make some comparative study - even to a limited extent - desirable. For instance, if any policies and methods adopted by the V.O.C. officials in Sri Lanka were different from those adopted in Java, they might point to, and illumine significant differences in the traditional economic, social, and administrative background in Sri Lanka as against the latter region. Any differences between the reactions of the subject peoples in the two islands towards the colonial coffee policies might serve a similar purpose, as also would any significant differences (as between the two areas) in the relationships between, say, the chiefs and the ordinary people. It goes without saying that similarities would throw their own special light on economic and social history.

Quite apart from all these considerations, one also finds that an excursion into the history of coffee cultivation in Java has an absorbing interest and value all its own. Thus, despite certain limitations imposed by considerations of objective, of time and space, and by reliance, for the most part, on printed documents and secondary material, that excursion has turned out to be so extensive that what had been projected as a history of coffee cultivation in Sri Lanka has had to be divided into two parts, the first dealing with Java and the second with Sri Lanka. Having made these preliminary remarks we can now go on to consider something of the history of the cultivation of coffee in Java³.

At a time of very high sale prices of coffee in Europe but, at the same time⁴, of great difficulties in procuring supplies from Asia⁴ the Heeren XVII were excited at the news that coffee was to be found growing in Java itself. Accordingly, on the 17th February 1707 they wrote to Governor-General Johan van Hoorn & Council asking for various particulars relating to cultivation, prices and quantities, and also for a sample. They further stated that if this product which was so much in demand at the time could be cultivated and

3. For previous work relating to Java coffee see Appendix: Select Bibliographical Note.

4. Glamann, p.192

promoted "successfully in our own lands and colonies, we would not be wanting in making our benevolence and favour felt by those who do so or have already paved the way and contributed towards that objective."⁵

Van Hoorn who had taken to coffee cultivation as a hobby⁶ some years earlier, immediately sent the required information along with two sackfuls of coffee beans. He further explained how he had already given coffee plants to the native chiefs both in the Batavia region and in the more outlying Cheribon, and encouraged them to take to its planting. At the same time he stressed that this culture would have to be fostered not only by the united goodwill of the Batavian Government but also by the powerful support and continuingly steady orders of the Heeren XVII themselves. The emphasis on this latter aspect, de Jonge points out, was because Van Hoorn knew from experience how changeable the orders of the XVII could be in regard to the cultivation of various products, depending generally on the state of the market in the Netherlands.

That this aspect of the Directors' policies was likely to apply to coffee cultivation also, was clearly implied in a communication sent by them not long after the above statement of Van Hoorn's. By their missive of 5th November 1711, they expressed satisfaction with the progress being made in coffee culture and indicated their expectation of better results with regard to the quantum of the coffee production than with regard to that of the indigo which latter crop, they admitted, was a more troublesome one for the natives to grow although what little that was being produced was of high quality. To encourage the Javanese to produce increasing quantities of coffee, the XVII suggested

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5. de Jonge, VIII pp. CXXXV-VI; Leupe, p.56.
 6. de Jonge, VIII pp. CXXXV-VI.
 7. Ibid. CXXXVI.

that they should be paid something more than even what was required for subsistence, even as much as 12 to 15 stuivers per pound⁸. But the ominous qualification to the effect that these prices were authorised "for the time being" /voor eerst/ clearly foreshadowed reductions in price when the XVII should think it desirable.

Meanwhile, with the active encouragement of the Governor-General & Council, cultivation of the new plant progressed, rather haltingly at first, more steadily thereafter, and, finally, by leaps and bounds. In November 1711, the Batavian authorities could report that they had collected 894 lbs. that year; two years later the amount collected was 1,774 lbs.; in 1715/16 it was 9,084 lbs.; two years later that amount itself was quadrupled; and in 1721/22 the increase was nearly seventeen times the amount received in 1718/19. In 1723 nearly a million pounds was shipped to the Netherlands and in the collection year 1723/24 the Batavian authorities received 1,804,797 lbs. of coffee into their stores⁹. There was now no doubt that the culture of coffee had become a resounding success in Java.

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8. Ibid. CXXXVII. Twenty stuivers made one guilder or florin and was roughly equivalent to the English florin. Whilst the V.O.C. accounts were kept in guilders, stuivers and penningen (or pennies) local transactions at Batavia and many other places in the East - as far as the V.O.C. was concerned - were reckoned in relation to the rix-dollar. The rix-dollar was reckoned at 48 "heavy" (swaare) stuivers (or stuivers Hollants) and 60 "light" (lighte) stuivers. The stuiver of account was the heavy stuiver. It was important, therefore, to note whether light or heavy stuivers were being referred to in the documents. As for weights, the Dutch pound was 0.494 kg. or about 1.09 lb. avdp. See C.R.Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800, (London, 1973 - Pelican impression) Appendix III p. 341 and Uytrekening Van de Goude en Silvere Munts Waardye, Inhout der Maten En Swaarte der Gewigten, In de Respective Gewesten van Indien. (Middelburg, 1691) pp. 1 and 3.
9. de Jonge, VIII p. CXXXVII; cf. also Glamann, p.208.

Chiefs and people had both taken to coffee cultivation with enthusiasm. Governor-General Zwaardecroon and his Council reported to the Heeren XVII that the Javanese had displayed a remarkable pleasure and satisfaction when they received payment for their coffee as they had realised that with that money they were in a position to buy rice and other necessary things¹⁰. This remark suggests that at this time the poorer Javanese were also participating in this cultivation and benefiting from it, along with the chiefs. The Batavian authorities, however, considered it their duty to point out to their superiors that production could outstrip demand; because there was no lack of land and no lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Javanese, who, it was also said, otherwise had the reputation of being lazy¹¹.

When, in the mid-1720s the Heeren XVII took stock of the position of Java coffee, they had reason to be thoroughly pleased. From having supplied less than one-tenth, Java had come to supply over two-thirds of the coffee which they were offering for sale in Europe¹² - and the production trends in Java, as reported by Governor-General & Council, were such that it would in all probability be soon able to supply all of the Company's requirements, displacing Mocha altogether as a source of supply, if so desired.

Besides, from the Company's point of view, Java had great advantages over Mocha. The supplies from the latter were more uncertain and subject to the control of an independent authority, unlike the coffee areas of Java

10. de Jonge, IX p. XVIII

11. Ibid. pp. 85, 76.

12. Glamann, pp. 206, 208.

which were almost completely under the Company's control¹³. Moreover, as the V.O.C. bought coffee at Mocha in competition with other European rivals as well as with Asian merchants, the cost there tended to be much higher than in Java where the Company had fixed its own price. Thus, for example, whilst coffee purchased at Mocha had in 1723 cost the Dutch 17 stuivers and 8 penningen (or 0.88 of a florin or guilder) per pound, in the following year 19 stuivers and 6 penningen (or 0.97 guilders), and in 1725 full 22 stuivers (or 1.2 guilders), the Java coffee had all the time been fixed at

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13. The servants of both the Dutch and English Companies complained frequently about the arbitrary exactions of the Mocha officials and of bribes that had often to be given in order to get business done. But K.N.Chaudhuri in The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760 (New Delhi 1978) - hereafter cited as Chaudhuri-at pp.370-73 shows that there was another side to the story. For serious doubts raised as to whether European merchants really paid all the bribes, alleged by them to have been paid to Asian officials and others, see K.W.Goonewardena, "Ayutthia in the Twilight Years and Its Triangular Relations with the V.O.C. and Sri Lanka" (Paper submitted to the International Conference on Thai Studies, New Delhi, Feb. 1981) pp. 23,24, 65-67.

8 stuivers (or 0.4 guilders) the pound¹⁴. What was more, the Javanese coffee had sold in the auctions in the Netherlands at only two or three stuivers less per pound than the Mocha product. Thus we know by calculating from the contemporary printed price lists that at the Amsterdam auctions in 1723 whilst the Mocha coffee rendered f 0.31 per pound more than the purchase price at Mocha, the Java coffee yielded f 0.60 to f 0.66 per pound more than the purchase price in Java. The position was similar with regard also to the auctions of the Zeeland Chamber of the V.O.C. that year. It was apparent, therefore, that the margin of profit on the Java coffee (purchase and sale prices alone being considered) was about twice that on the Mocha coffee¹⁵.

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14. The purchase price of 8 stuivers (heavy) for the Java coffee had first been fixed by Governor-General van Riebeeck on 14 April 1711, as can be seen from J.A. van der Chijs, Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811 (hereafter cited as van der Chijs) Part IV (Batavia/Hague 1887) p.11 and de Jonge IX p.85. For the Mocha prices referred to, see Governor-General & Council (GG&C) to XVII, 26 March 1725, Koloniaal Archief (hereafter K.A.) of the Algemeen Rijksarchief at the Hague, No.1898 (Bd.6) f.2588 and Glamann, p.201. It has to be noted, however, that in his calculations at pp.206 and 208, Glamann has confused "light" suivers with "heavy" and has failed to see that the purchase price of 10 stuivers per pound in respect of Java coffee should refer to "light" stuivers. Thus the profits on the Java coffee prior to 1726 were far more than Glamann visualized. In the present article the stuivers referred to are "heavy" except where specifically stated otherwise.
15. For the auction prices, see Sri Lanka National Archives (henceforth S.L.N.A.) 1/794, unpaginated. It is known that Amsterdam and Zeeland together accounted for about 3/4 of the coffee sales. Cf. also Glamann, pp. 201,206-07. As the Mocha coffee was first taken to Galle (a V.O.C. port in Sri Lanka) and then sent on to Europe, the hypothetical freight costs of that coffee could not have been less than that of the Java coffee. For further factors that enhanced the profitability of Java coffee, see pp.68-69 below.

Despite the undoubtedly much higher profitability of Java coffee, the Directors, however, decided not to withdraw from the trade at Mocha, but only to reduce their purchases there and to eliminate fixed establishment costs by giving up the V.O.C. Residency and, instead, merely sending a ship each year for coffee purchases there.

At least five considerations appear to have motivated them to continue the Mocha trade (though on a more limited scale than before). One was the ever-present hope of selling goods at a profit at Mocha (or the Red Sea region, in general), and financing, part at least, of the coffee purchases out of those profits; in fact, the problem of finding bullion to finance purchases was so acute at this time that in buying coffee mere barter with little profit seemed to have been preferable to disbursement of bullion at - in other respects - somewhat more advantageous terms. One can guess that a second consideration must have been the desirability of being in a position to offer the best coffee¹⁶, even in limited quantities, to the more fastidious customers or the connoisseurs of good coffee who preferred the Mocha variety to the Javanese - although in a fit of pique and anger the Directors were soon to go on record saying there was really no difference in taste between them - whatever "a group of lumpen Turks and Persians" might say! A third consideration was given explicit expression in their letters. By participating in the trade at Mocha they wished to push up the price there to such an extent that their European rivals would find the competition with the cheaper Java coffee of the V.O.C. in the European coffee market all the more disadvantageous. In Asia, too, they hoped with their cheaper Java coffee to drive the European and Asian traders with Mocha coffee out of the markets, especially in Surat and Persia¹⁷. A fourth consideration must, of course, have been the desirability of keeping the Mocha contacts alive in case Java supplies were disrupted through unforeseen troubles or

16. But see p.62 below for another angle to these purchases.

17. For this idea and for the denigration of the tastes of the Turks and Persians, see Glamann, pp.208-11, and pp.58-62 below.

problems on that island¹⁸. Connected with this was a fifth reason. The XVII did not wish to see the Javanese alone supplying all the coffee as that might put so much money and power into their hands as to make them a threat to the Company¹⁹.

While they decided thus to participate in the Mocha trade in a more limited manner, the Heeren XVII also decided that the profitable position in regard to Java coffee should be made even more profitable - by greatly reducing the price paid to the Javanese for their coffee. They were doubtless influenced in this decision to some extent by a rather steady decline in the sale prices of coffee in Europe between 1719 and 1723²⁰. But more decisive appears to have been a confident feeling that coffee cultivation in Java could now be manipulated in the same manner as the production of spices had been controlled by them in the Moluccas. Hence the suggestion made to the Batavian authorities that if production could not be properly limited by price reduction it could be done by extirpation of the trees. The XVII also expressed the view that the reduction in price could be further accentuated by making payments partly in goods, in which the Company would be making big profits, and partly in cash. This device would also reduce the run on Batavia's cash which had begun to cause concern²¹.

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18. As a matter of fact, the V.O.C. had re-established a residence at Mocha by the 1730s which was given up again around 1739. See KA 2344 f.209.
19. See the words of the XVII quoted in van der Chijs, IV. p.184. For a probable sixth reason see p.62 below. It should be noted in that connection that some Mocha coffee purchases were essential if any of the Java coffee was going to be passed off as Mocha coffee.
20. Cf. the statistics in Glamann, Appendix C Table VI p.285.
21. The idea of profiting in this manner by part payment in goods had occurred first to Zwaardcroon & C. cf. on the above, de Jonge, IX. pp.85,92.

At the close of 1724, on receipt of these instructions, Governor-General Hendrick Zwaardecroon, who was a horticultural enthusiast and a great protagonist of coffee culture in Java (he himself being a producer and supplier of coffee) decided to effect some element of price reduction only by making payments in commodities at a profit. However, because of the great unwillingness of the Javanese to accept more than one-fourth of the payment in textiles, he had to pay the remaining three-fourths in cash. On the textiles, nevertheless, the Company was profiting 100%²².

Though Zwaardecroon and his Council did not wish to make any other price reduction, Mattheus de Haan, who succeeded to the Governor-Generalship towards the middle of 1725, had no such hesitations. He was prepared to go all the way with the Directors - or even beyond - in reducing purchase prices. He effected a preliminary reduction by half shortly after his assumption of office²³ and proposed a further reduction the following year.

In a document placed before the Indies Council, (the Hooge Regeering) on 15th January 1726, de Haan gave three main reasons for the proposed reductions. One was the acute shortage of cash which had been prevalent at Batavia for quite some time, and which at that moment made it impossible to pay for the coffee that was being delivered. The second was the fear that a plentiful supply would cause a marked decrease in the sale price of coffee in the Netherlands. Both these factors had been more or less anticipated by the Directors in their instructions to Zwaardecroon earlier. The third reason, however, was more political than economic and a rather novel one, and de Haan

22. Realia. Register op de Generale Resolutien van het Kasteel Batavia, 1632-1805 (hereafter cited as Realia) ed. by J.A. van der Chijs, 3 vols. (Hague/Batavia 1882-85) I.p.298. For the orders of the XVII and the "price" reduction see: de Jonge, IX.pp.160-61; Realia, I.p.263; J.J.van Klaveren, The Dutch Colonial System in the East Indies (Rotterdam 1953) (hereafter cited as van Klaveren) p.61.

23. Realia, I.p.298; de Jonge, IX.pp.92, 159; van Klaveren, p.61.

considered it to be more important than even the others. This was the alleged wealth and opulence of the Javanese chiefs caused by their receipt of high prices for the delivered coffee and the implications of this in view of what he considered to be their rebellious nature. He asserted that this wealth could be utilised to create a dangerous threat to the Company - particularly because these chiefs had allegedly begun to purchase firearms in recent days. He argued that the Company should, therefore, not make itself "still more powerless by transferring yet more treasures into their purses." As later developments were also to show, there does not appear to have been much substance in this last argument, but it was of such a nature that none of his fellow-councillors were likely to venture on a contradiction, more particularly because de Haan's ostensibly anxious concern over security was likely to go down well with the Directors at home, for the latter had already indicated apprehension of the Javanese becoming too rich and powerful²⁴.

As it was, the Council accepted these views and by the secret resolution of that same date (15th January 1726), the price to be paid for coffee was drastically reduced to two stuivers per pound, and thus by three-fourths the price that had obtained in 1723. The reduction was made applicable to all areas, though some very slight upward adjustment of price was stipulated for land which they

24. and may have given de Haan the cue. See p.10 above and van der Chijs, IV.p.184. For de Haan's ideas and proposals and the consequent decisions, see de Jonge, IX.pp.100-110; cf. also ibid. 92-94 and regarding the reductions in price, see further the table between pp. 160 and 161, also in de Jonge, IX.

considered to be private²⁵ (and which, incidentally, supplied, on average, less than a tenth of the total coffee delivered). It may also be noted that the burden of the price reduction was further weighted by a doubling of the "over-weight" of 5 lbs. that had hitherto been additionally demanded with every picol of 125 pounds.

When de Haan had sounded the Javanese chiefs on the projected reduction in purchase price, some of them had pointed out that three-fifths of the new price barely covered the transport costs. The Governor-General claimed, however, that he had convinced them that the new price would still leave them with more profits than the production of sugar (in which also some of them had been engaged).

Despite this claim, de Haan apparently expected some adverse reactions from the Javanese because he renewed a placaat, or regulation, of 1723 against smuggling in coffee, making its provisions even more rigorous. At the same time he issued another amplified placaat forbidding, under severe penalties, non-Christian²⁶ natives from buying, selling,

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25. Lands (mostly situated in an around Batavia) which had been sold, leased, or otherwise granted by the V.O.C. to Europeans or other non-Javanese attached to the Company's cause were categorised as "private" lands and favoured. But the lands that had continued to be traditionally held by native Javanese chiefs and people were classified by the Dutch authorities as being Company's lands, or domains, from which feudal-style dues and services were owing to the lord, namely the V.O.C. See further, p. 14n.28, pp. 34, 35, 41, 42 below.
26. Security-wise the Christians, most of whom appear to have been of non-Javanese origin, were considered safe, and in many respects they were favoured above the non-Christian Javanese. For this placaat, see van der Chijs, IV. pp. 189-90 and de Jonge, IX. p. 94. For the Dutch colonial status system, see W.F. Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change, 2nd revd. ed. 2nd imp. (Hague 1964) p. 136.

using, or possessing fire-arms and stipulating the immediate surrender of any already possessed. This was apparently to underline the political and security alarms which he had already sounded in relation to the Javanese chiefs. It is also possible that he feared the repercussions of the drastic lowering of prices more than he openly disclosed. Further hints of the expected unpopularity of the price-reduction are furnished, first, by the Council's decision, at his instance, to gratify with a small sop or present those Javanese Chiefs who had shown themselves to be readily accommodating regarding the reduced prices;²⁷ and, secondly, by the later decision of 5th March 1726, also on his suggestion, to warn the chiefs, among the coffee suppliers, at the time of their impending departure home, that they should see to it that no one in their respective jurisdictions uprooted or damaged any coffee trees, on pain of imprisonment in chains for such actions as well as appropriate penalties for failing to prevent such action²⁸

Zwaardcroon, who had opted for a retired life in Batavia, was one of those who had misgivings about the wisdom of such an enormous price-reduction as had been effected by de Haan - and that, not purely because the late Governor-General was himself a coffee producer, but also on account of the repercussions on the Javanese and, therefore, on the production of coffee, as a whole²⁹.

27. de Jonge, IX. pp. 94, 109.

28. Ibid. pp.111-12 and 94. This may have been the first occasion when a theory of the V.O.C.'s ownership of the lands held by the Javanese had been unmistakably put before those people. The placaat stated that "no fruit-trees, much less coffee trees, could be uprooted as they were rooted on the Company's lands, which they (the Javanese) occupy and of which they enjoy the usufruct, purely through the Company's favour, and subject to recall." van der Chijs, IV.p.190.

29. de Jonge, IX, p.XVIII.

De Jonge cites a pamphlet-writer of the period to indicate how some Dutchmen themselves visualised the adverse effects of de Haan's actions on the Javanese. The writer had said that the Governor-General would perhaps have "brought a few hundred thousand guilders worth of profits to the Lords and Masters (ie. the Heeren XVII), but he had certainly brought down upon them full ten million curses from the native people."³⁰

In this context, what is most intriguing is to find that the reports from the Governor-General & Council to the Directors give hardly any indication of Javanese dissatisfaction. In their letter of 5th December 1726³¹, they informed the XVII that despite the price-reduction, the culture seemed to be in a good state, as evidenced by the nearly one million pounds of coffee that had been since received from the two main coffee-producing regions around Batavia - the adjacent Preanger region and the more distant Cheribon which bordered on the Preanger³².

30. Ibid. p.XX.

31. Ibid. pp.114-15

32. At times the documents distinguish the coffee-growing areas under the V.O.C. in some detail; but more often the references are more general and vague. It appears that the Ommelanden in the environs of Batavia and the so-called Jakatrasche Bovenlanden further to the south were often lumped together with the Preanger lands situated further away to the east. For all practical purposes, this general arrangement has been followed in this essay, with only a broad distinction being made between the Preanger region (encompassing the other divisions mentioned above) and Cheribon which was to the east of that region and more remote from Batavia. A Dutch presence in Cheribon - at least on the west - was signified by a small fort at the coastal town of Cheribon and by the Resident and his few subordinates.

In the circumstances so they said, they had been surprised to hear recently from the officials in Cheribon that on account of the reduction in price there had arisen an interruption in the gathering of coffee for delivery and the Javanese had abandoned some plantations, and that, therefore, they (the Cheribon officials) were afraid to impose the ten pounds' "overweight", instead of the previous five on each picol of 125 pounds, as ordered recently from Batavia, lest the natives become more refractory and discontented. The officials had, therefore, asked permission to refrain from levying the additional "overweight". That request, Governor-General & Council continued, had been granted by letter of 30th November 1726 on condition that they saw to it that the Cheribon bales of coffee carried the same weight as the Batavian bales when weighed in the Fatherland.

As regards the reports of the alleged reactions of the Javanese to the price-reduction, de Haan and Council went on to assure the Directors that they had pointed out the absurdity of those reports and had further explained to those officials that the natives could subsist better with the present price for coffee than with what they got for their other crops on which, moreover, they had to expend more trouble and labour than with regard to coffee production. The officials had, therefore, been enjoined to press the lazy Javanese to get along with that work. Finally, the Batavian authorities were able to conclude this subject on a triumphant note by drawing attention to the reply lately received from the Cheribon officials, by which Batavia's stand was shown to be fully vindicated. In that reply, those officials were begging pardon for their all-too-general report, (the weakness of) which they ascribed to the absence of the sergeant Penninck, 'who, otherwise had been getting that lazy folk to do their proper work.'³³

Though the Batavian authorities appeared to have been thus convinced that their price-reduction had had no adverse reactions amongst the Javanese, they had already

33. de Jonge, IX. pp. 114-15.

reported other factors that were causing a diminished supply. In their letter to the Directors a few weeks earlier³⁴ they calculated that the coffee delivered that year would be less than half the quantity of the previous year. They attributed this development to the belated rainfall and the reported flight of hired Javanese labourers most of whom were said to have gone back to their dwelling-places because they had not been paid enough by the chiefs. Granted that these reports were accurate, de Haan and his councillors indicated no relationship between them and the price-reduction. They merely stated that they would take all steps to step up coffee cultivation, particularly in the Company's own lands, in order to meet the annual Patria demand of four million pounds.

Meanwhile, the news of de Haan's reduction of the coffee purchase price had been received by the Heeren XVII with great pleasure mingled with some anxiety lest the extent of the reduction might lead to adverse results. But after they found that despite that reduction, the shipments at the end of 1726 were as high as before and the reports from Batavia were most optimistic³⁵, they wrote to Batavia on 28 August 1727 lavishing fulsome praise on de Haan for the memorandum, on the basis of which the Council had reduced prices. At two stuivers the pound, Java coffee must have been (other things being equal) four times more profitable to the V.O.C. than it had been in, say, 1723 when the purchase price had been eight stuivers. At the auctions at the close of 1727, Java coffee fetched over eight times the purchase price paid to the Javanese (0.85 to 0.87 guilders per pound for coffee purchased at 0.10 guilders). On the other hand, the Mocha coffee bought

34. 21 Oct. 1726 in ibid. pp.94-95.

35. The shipments to Europe at the end of 1726 must have included considerable quantities left over from 1725 or otherwise brought in before the price reduction was announced (see eg. Realia p.298), thus shrouding the effects of the price-reduction. On the initial misgivings of the XVII regarding the wisdom of making such an enormous price reduction, see Leupe, p.64.

in 1726 at 14.6 stuivers or 0.73 guilders the pound was, undoubtedly, sold at the same auctions of 1727, for 1.21 guilders which is only slightly over $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the purchase price. When one considers the fact that nearly 4 million pounds of Java coffee purchased at 0.10 guilders the pound found their way to the Dutch auctions in the autumn of 1727 as against 561,000 pounds of the much more expensive Mocha coffee offered at the same auctions³⁶, one can imagine how much the XVII must have appreciated de Haan's role in reducing prices.

In the general letter of 8th December 1728, the Governor-General personally expressed his great joy and thankfulness regarding the praise that had been showered on him and which, he said, would now spur him on to look out for further means to promote the Company's true interests and profits. But in that same letter, de Haan and his Council admitted that against all expectations supplies from the Preanger and Cheribon regions had been lower than even during the previous year, and that too by a full 780,000 lbs. The reports indicated that this had been caused by excessive and late rains, which had also affected the indigo fields causing them to be replanted three times. They remarked in pessimistic vein that all this showed that the fruitfulness of coffee and almost all other crops was undependable. In any event, they now feared that they would be unable to supply a good part of the annual order of four million pounds and they hoped to make this good in the future by better harvests or by new plantations on the Company's own lands. However, in order to fulfill the objectives of the Directors, they emphasized that they would in no way increase the buying prices, as that could pave the way for ill-intentioned persons to create a shortage by neglecting the coffee plants, concealing the fruits or by other trickish ways, all with a view to forcing the price further up, instead of being satisfied with the (presently) fixed price³⁷.

36. For the relevant coffee purchases and the auction prices, see de Jonge, IX table between pp.160 and 161, and Glamann, pp.201, 285.

37. de Jonge, IX.p.133.

Now, all this talk about not increasing, under any circumstances, the price paid to the Javanese coffee producers, makes little or no sense if the fall in production had been due only to unavoidable natural calamities, as hitherto suggested by the Batavian authorities. But we can assume, from other information in this very same letter that other factors had also been at play in regard to the fall in production. After saying that all necessary steps had been taken to prevent coffee from being disposed of at a higher price to unauthorized profit-seekers or foreigners, they go on to say that but for two steps taken on the initiative of the Governor-General there would have been more harmful consequences arising from the displeasure of certain Javanese. These men who appear to have been previously denied their just payments by their chiefs, had begun to abandon the lands after destruction of the coffee trees. The Governor-General had provided against this development proceeding far, first, by laying down in March 1726 severe penalties against the destruction, damaging, or neglect of coffee trees and, second, by making arrangements in September 1727 for the owners themselves to receive direct and immediate payments for the coffee brought and delivered by them to the Company, without having any obligation towards their chiefs other than to pay a trifling sum for necessary certificates relating to ownership and the amount of coffee being transported.³⁸

In their letter of 29th March 1729 to the Heeren XVII, Governor-General de Haan and his Council for the first time begin explicitly to express doubts about the unfavourable weather alone having caused the meagre supply of coffee in the Preanger and Cheribon regions the previous year. They wonder whether some other factors could have led to the extinction of the urge and enthusiasm for this culture, because in some areas which were of the same type, and which had been subject to the same inclement weather, supplies had not declined. They had, therefore, ordered the Dutch Resident in Cheribon to give a further explanation so that the real reason remained no longer hidden; otherwise, they intended to take extraordinary

38. de Haan & C. to XVII, 8 Dec. 1728, de Jonge, IX. pp. 137-38.

measures through which they could well ferret out the truth. Moreover, as they considered the progress of coffee-culture to be of the greatest importance for the Company, its neglect, either through lack of the necessary forethought or through the suppliers being defrauded with regard to payments or through any other reason, would not remain unpunished by them³⁹.

Matheus de Haan died in June 1729 and Diderik van Durven was elected by majority vote to the position of Governor-General (subject to confirmation by the Heeren XVII). In the first Generale Missive sent thereafter, Van Durven and his Council admit that the criticisms of the XVII (by letter of 12th October 1728) regarding the quality of much of the coffee last shipped to the Netherlands, were fully justified: it was too green and insufficiently dried.⁴⁰

From this admission it would appear that in order to mask the true extent of the fall in coffee production and to thereby minimise the very probable displeasure of the Directors towards the Batavian authorities, immature (and inadequately dried) coffee had also been shipped in 1727/28. In fact, at the V.O.C. auctions of 1728, Java coffee fetched by far the lowest price it had hitherto fetched at any of the auctions.⁴¹

The most significant point, however, in the first General Letter under the new Governor-General, is the open and categorical admission that the principal cause of the disastrous fall in production was the price reduction under de Haan. After saying that they had reason to fear that coffee supplies would turn out to be much less in 1729 than even in 1728, they say that there was no other reason for this situation than the low price that was being paid for this product. And, contrary to what de Haan and his Council had been previously saying, the new Governor-

39. Letter of 29 March 1729 in de Jonge, IX.pp.141-42.

40. The letter is dated 18 July 1729. See de Jonge, IX. pp.142-43. Note that Batavia tries to put part of the blame on the suppliers and part on the ships' officers (for not having given the coffee an airing during the course of the voyage); ibid. p.143.

41. Namely, 0.70 to 0.71 guilders per pound (Dutch). See table in Glamann, p.285.

General and his Council (the members of which were more or less the same as under de Haan) categorically stated that it was impossible for the suppliers to subsist on this low price and it would, therefore, have to be somewhat raised in order to encourage supplies.

It is useful to pause at this point and examine certain features and implications of the reports of de Haan and the Batavian Council submitted to the Directors of the V.O.C. One of the most striking features is the way in which the adverse repercussions and implications of the price reduction on coffee supplies were hidden from the Directors. On account of the standing rule that - inter alia - copies of all important correspondence (including that between Batavia and the officials in the outlying regions, such as Cheribon) had to accompany the Generale Missive, some inconvenient documents must, however, have had to be despatched. It is instructive to note how the damaging reports from Cheribon in 1726 relating to the Javanese abandoning some coffee plantations as a reaction to the price reduction, are made to look unfounded. That impression was strengthened when the Cheribon officials themselves taking their cue from the hostile reaction of Batavia to their report, wrote back virtually condemning that very report.

It is, however, not only the Cheribon servants of the Company who were trimming their sails according to the anticipated winds of official favour or disfavour, as the case may be. Apart, doubtless, from functionaries in other coffee-producing regions, in the Batavian Council itself we see that this was happening. With the exception of the new Governor-General, van Durven, who had abstained⁴² on the decision to lower prices in January 1726,

42. On the ground that it was not a judicial matter and that in terms of the orders of the XVII conveyed by letter of 1st Nov. 1709, he, as functioning President of the Raad van Justitie, could vote in Council only regarding judicial matters. cf. de Jonge, IX.p.108.

the very Councillors who had apparently gone all the way with de Haan between 1726 and 1729, in presenting a false picture of the repercussions of the price reduction on the Javanese, and of their reactions to it, were found barely seven weeks after his burial, giving an entirely different (and, in point of fact, a truer) picture of the situation. For the accuracy of the record, and also as an illustration of shrewd but unscrupulous tactics, we may also note how in the last Generale Missive sent under de Haan in March 1729, the ground was being rather cleverly prepared for the inevitable admission that price manipulations had also played a part in the fall in supplies.

There are certain other aspects of Batavian reportage which are interesting in themselves, but which might also be useful to keep in mind during our subsequent consideration of Dutch coffee policies in Sri Lanka. These are the alleged reasons given, or hinted at, for the fall in production. The weather - late and heavy rains - was a useful excuse for nearly three years⁴³. One suspects that alleged inclement weather could cover a lot of sins and was one of the best stock excuses for poor or inadequate performance in regard to colonial products, at a time when the distant metropolitan centre had, generally speaking, no other source of information on the subject than its own subordinates in the colonies.

The reports of de Haan also mentioned or hinted at problems in coffee production caused by another red herring: Javanese chiefs allegedly not paying the cultivators under them adequately. These cultivators are described in 1726 as hired labourers, and in 1728 more as owners of the lands, although the fact that they are said to have fled from the lands after destroying the coffee plants suggests that if permanent abandonment was also involved, some of them at least were not the owners of

43. Note the mark of authenticity that had been given (p.18 above) by stating that the adverse weather had also affected the indigo fields causing them to be replanted three times during a particular year.

the lands, but cultivators working for the chiefs more or less as hired labourers.

In fact, the problem of how much of the coffee in the Preanger and Cheribon regions was cultivated by settled cultivators and how much by shifting cultivators who had been induced or coerced by the chiefs to work on their plantations virtually as indentured labourers has been a moot point. Van Klaveren whilst pointing out that most of the cultivation in these regions appears (in the first half of the eighteenth century) to have been of the ladang or shifting type suggests that "there must have been means of pressure on ladang people which are not recorded."⁴⁴ There is, however, evidence to suggest that particularly after the beginnings of coffee cultivation, the Dutch tried to strengthen the position of the native chiefs vis a vis the ordinary people.⁴⁵ When de Haan threatened the chiefs with severe penalties if they allowed those under them to in any way harm coffee production, his action indicates a belief in, or a convenient assumption of, the absolute authority of the chiefs over the people. In this context, the report that people had destroyed the coffee plants before abandoning lands appears incredible unless the lands were owned by them, or they hoped to elude the chiefs forever, or else the destruction had been with the explicit or tacit consent of the chiefs themselves. It is also possible that the explanation might lie in the Javanese chiefs being at this time not as authoritarian, powerful, and ruthless as they were often depicted to be. Settled cultivators or possessors of land were in all probability also more numerous than hitherto assumed. This is suggested by the decision of the Batavian Council on 1st March 1729 to augment coffee supplies urgently by ordering that each household in Cheribon and the Preanger areas should plant ten new coffee plants.⁴⁶ We recall also the evidence, from Zwaardcroon's time, of the participation of chiefs as well as the ordinary people in coffee cultivation.

44. van Klaveren, pp.61-62.

45. See below pp. 52-54.

46. See van der Chijs, IV.p.220; Realia I.p.263.

The laziness of the Javanese is also suggested in the reports to the Heeren XVII as a factor in the fall in production, and the temporary absence of a Dutch "coffee" sergeant is given as a crucial factor for inaccurate reporting from Cheribon and for some dislocation in cultivation. It is true that a few such officials had been appointed to supervise, control, and promote cultivation of coffee - often other products too at the same time - since at least 1715.⁴⁷ An element of coercion or slave-driving is implied by the appointment of such officials (who were generally military officers), and implied also from the report from Cheribon which we have already noticed.⁴⁸

On the other hand, there is no doubt that by far the bulk of the coffee production (over nine-tenths as we have seen) was conducted by the Javanese and their chiefs themselves, as evidenced by the data regarding supplies,⁴⁹ the nature of the placaats and the exhortations to the chiefs (and princes) - quite apart of course from the fact that one or two Europeans could not have successfully supervised cultivation over such vast and often quite inaccessible areas.⁵⁰ In fact, we recall that in the Generale Missive of 29 March 1729 one of de Haan's ostensible concerns was over what could possibly have killed the earlier motivation and enthusiasm of the Javanese for coffee culture. What is more, the price reduction itself had been justified in January 1726 because the native response had been too enthusiastic towards that culture. We also note that once the success of coffee production had been assured, Batavia, even in the time of Zwaardecroon, had tried to discourage cultivation in areas outside adequate control of the Company. Thus, when

47. See pp. 43-44 below.

48. p. 16 above

49. See p. 13 above and de Jonge, IX.pp.102-04 and table between pp.160 and 161.

50. The Report of van der Schuer and van Baerle (referred to below) gives some idea of the difficult terrain even in areas relatively close to Batavia. cf. de Jonge IX.p.158

without any encouragement from the Dutch, some coffee produced in Bantam was offered in 1724, the Governor-General and Council had masked their displeasure and bought the lot through fear that otherwise it might reach the hands of the English or some other foreign nation.⁵¹ They were equally displeased when they found that coffee cultivation was being undertaken in Mataram, and fervently wished for its ill-success.⁵² What is more, when the XVII heard of these developments, they instructed Batavia not only to create problems regarding the acceptance of the coffee but also to put obstacles in the way of the progress of those plantations. They added the caveat, however, that these things should be done with due circumspection.⁵³

All this evidence would indicate that when there was advantage to be had, the Javanese were not lacking in industry or enterprise - so much so that the Dutch found it necessary on occasion to stifle such enterprise. It appears, therefore, that the refrain of the lazy Javanese¹ was too often only a concoction of the colonial administration required for the exculpation of its bungling and erring officials, or for the morale of colonial power.⁵⁴

51. de Jonge, IX.pp.87-88.

52. Ibid.p.88.

53. Letter of 20 July 1726 in Leupe, p.64.

54. In an otherwise admirable essay on "Dutch Historical Sources" in An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography ed. by Soedjatmoko, Mohamed Ali and G.J.Resink (New York 1965) pp.235 and 237, Graham Irwin claims that "the element of propaganda" was "entirely absent from the Company's records" and that "Dutch accounts of Indonesian customs, institutions and manners ... are as free from distortion and inaccuracy as they well can be." What is stated above regarding the allegations of Javanese "laziness" and on several other matters elsewhere in the present essay (e.g. at pp.22,24,29,32-33, 39,49-51,51n.94,55-56) would, however, show that Irwin's claims cannot be maintained.

Having thus examined the significance of certain aspects of Batavia's reports to the Heeren XVII primarily during the Governor-Generalship of de Haan, we can now consider the developments in coffee policy after van Durven's exposure in July 1729 of the true reasons for the decline in production.

For a moment, the Governor-General (and his Council) had toyed with the idea of solving the problem by settling Chinese on the lands of the Cheribon princes, in the belief that more successful development of plantations could be obtained thereby. It had been reported that these princes had been found agreeable to this idea when they had been shown the advantages that would accrue by way of tithes from the Chinese settlers. But ultimately the Batavian authorities appear to have balked at the idea of their having to pay advances to such settlers until such time as they could be on their own feet⁵⁵. Van Durven, therefore, had to think in terms of a price increase. But he (and his Council) had informed the Directors that they would delay increasing the buying price until they saw the nature of the new harvest towards the end of the year. Apparently seeing no improvement in the situation they decided by Resolution of 24 January 1730 to raise prices slightly.⁵⁶

55. van Durven & C. to XVII, 30 Nov. 1729, de Jonge, IX. p.152.

56. Ibid., pp.XXI-XXII; Realia, I.p.298; van der Chijs IV.p.246. The price increase was first confined only to the Preanger areas, but by resolution of 14 Dec. 1730, the increase was made applicable to Cheribon too. See on this, van der Chijs, IV. pp. 274-275; Realia, I.p.263.

This increase (to 2 1/3 and 2 3/4 stuivers) was considered inadequate not only by Javanese cultivators and chiefs but also by those Dutch civilians and Company's servants engaged in the cultivation - as can be seen from the Report of 7 September 1731 of two members of the Council, van der Schuer and van Baerle, appointed to go into representations that had been made. This report⁵⁷ showed also that (despite the new plantations that had been undertaken at the Company's instance since 1726) there was yet a shortfall of well over one million pounds in total supplies in 1730 when compared with supplies in 1725. To remedy this situation they recommended a further increase in price so that the producers of the so-called Company's lands (that is the lands under the chiefs and princes) received 3 1/4 stuiver per pound and the suppliers from the so-called private lands, (or lands sold, granted, or leased by the Company), received 3 1/2 stuivers.

It appears that these recommendations were not implemented on account of two reasons. One was that within a few months' time the Governor-General Van Durven, as well as van Baerle and several other members of the Council were dismissed by the Heeren XVII⁵⁸ and new members appointed in their place. The second reason was that before long the supply position had greatly improved.

In the meantime, by missive of 14 September 1731, the XVII signified their approval of the price increase of 1730, noting that it had been little over one-third of a stuiver more on each pound. They also stated that on account of the great scarcity of cash, they were unable to agree with the otherwise fine suggestion of Governor-General and Council to build up one year's extra stocks at Batavia. They suggested instead that the plantations in Java as well as in Amboina and Ceylon should be so extended that in addition to the annual shipment of four million pounds for Patria a further four million pounds could be

57. de Jonge, IX.pp.158-59.

58. by letter of 9 Oct.1731, de Jonge, IX.pp.168ff.

built up over a period of three or four years, and this old coffee could then be shipped. They believed that this coffee could be shipped earlier in the year than was customary with the fresh stocks and that the Company could obtain greater profits by thus being in a position to market its coffee earlier in the year than its English or other European rivals.⁵⁹

As for the supply position in Java, it soon improved beyond recognition; so much so that the new Governor-General, Dirk van Cloon, and his Council believed that the lands around Batavia, inclusive of Cheribon, could supply all that Europe needed and more. These were lands over which the Company claimed full sovereign rights and exercised a great deal of control. But much against the secret wishes of the V.O.C., and its efforts at discouragement, coffee cultivation had also developed significantly in the relatively more independent state of Mataram. Batavia, therefore, thought that the time was ripe to get the ruler to extirpate coffee trees and to turn his attention more towards two other products in which the Company was particularly interested at the time: indigo and pepper, the former being a crop which it had found very difficult to get cultivated because the inhabitants apparently found it to be burdensome and uncongenial, and the latter being a crop regarding which the V.O.C. had begun to face various problems, including serious English competition in the traditional pepper-producing areas, and that too during a period of increasing demand.

The Councillor Extraordinary, Frederik Coyett, who was sent as a special envoy⁶⁰ to the Mataram court achieved success in his mission. The treaty concluded on 8 November 1733 contained, inter alia, very interesting and significant provisions in Article 5.

59. Ibid., pp.162-163.

60. For the instructions to Coyett, his mission and the concluded treaty (and its provisions) see letter of G.G.van Cloon & C. to XVII, 7 March 1734 in de Jonge, IX.pp.222-40.

It stated, first of all, that with a view to helping the peasants (in Mataram) and in order to encourage them to plant pepper, from which as well as from other products they could subsist better than by planting coffee, the Company was promising and undertaking to pay 5 rix-dollars per picol of 125 pounds of pepper. The argument that the cultivation of other products was more advantageous to the Javanese than that of coffee, calls for some comment. It contradicted the earlier arguments of the Batavian authorities (which we have previously noted) describing coffee as an easier and more profitable crop for cultivation than other crops. The propaganda indicating concern for the welfare of the peasant must have also sounded rather hollow if news of the coffee policy of de Haan had reached Mataram; and still more so, in view of the further provision in Article 5 stipulating that in return for the V.O.C. having raised the purchase price of pepper, the Susuhunan (or ruler) should order the destruction of all coffee plantations in his territory except for a few that were to be allowed on a limited scale for the strictly domestic use of the principal chiefs.

The 5th Article further stipulated that the least grade in coffee was not to be permitted. What was more, the Company received full authority - "permission" is the euphemistic diplomatic expression used - to go after six months from the date of the treaty into all the villages, whether in the lowlands, the highlands, or the sea-coasts, and uproot all the (unauthorised) coffee plants and to confiscate all the coffee that might be found destined for trading transactions. The Susuhunan was to decide what portion of the confiscated coffee could be retained by the Company. This last proviso notwithstanding, one of the most significant points to emerge from the above stipulations is the extent to which the V.O.C. had acquired rights of interference in the internal economic activities of what was then the most powerful indigenous state surviving in Java, although of course it had been declining over the years into a dependent status in relation to the V.O.C. and had become particularly susceptible to its pressure at this time. The way in which spontaneous indigenous enterprise was being stifled and economic activity forcibly channelled to subserve the Company's interests is particularly relevant for our understanding of what was happening to the indigenous economies.

About a year subsequent to this treaty of 8 November 1733, the Batavian authorities found that after the despatch of coffee to the Netherlands, they were left with a stock almost double the reserve stock that they had been expected to keep. They, therefore, considered it to be high time to devise ways and means of keeping supplies down to the required level lest they be saddled with unwanted stocks, and more than they could pay for. They noted that the recent plans to encourage pepper cultivation (by promising a higher purchase price) would come in useful to dissuade the people from extending coffee plantations or replacing old or dead coffee plants with new ones. The encouragement provided by pepper, however, was not considered adequate to reduce coffee production to the required level. They appear to have considered extirpation of a certain number of coffee trees essential for the purpose, although they had hitherto prescribed heavy penalties for anyone in their territories - the Preanger and Cheribon regions - who might venture on precisely that activity.

Through fear of the adverse results that might otherwise arise, Governor-General & Council decided to proceed with circumspection and care. By resolution of 27 December 1734 they appointed a Commission consisting of two Councillors Extraordinary, F.J. Coyett and Abraham Patras - the latter of whom was soon to be chosen as Governor-General and, thereupon, replaced on the Commission by G.W. van Imhoff - to report to the Council on ways and means of achieving the objective of limiting production. The report was to be made not only after making a close study of the position of coffee cultivation in the Company's territories but also after sounding the native chiefs on the question of limiting production.⁶¹

61. G.G. Patras & C. to XVII, 21 March 1735, de Jonge, IX. pp. 250-51. Doubtless, a decline in the selling price of coffee which had set in around this time also contributed towards the idea of enforcing a reduction in production. See Glamann, p. 286; cf. also Chaudhuri, (for full title etc. see note 13 above) p. 365.

In terms of this resolution Coyett and van Imhoff had a conference with the chiefs of the regions around Batavia (who had been summoned for the purpose in the name of the Governor-General) in the presence of the Commissioner for Native Affairs⁶² and his assistants. The administration's objective of limiting coffee production was first communicated to the chiefs along with assurances of its good intentions, and their views were, thereafter, invited. The outcome of these procedures was the Report of Coyett and van Imhoff dated 26 August 1735.⁶³

The Report, inter alia, traced the increase in coffee production since the year 1731 leading up to a position such that even the whole of Europe would soon be unable to absorb what Java supplied. They pointed out that the situation was aggravated by the fact that the benefits of any increased consumption in Europe were being offset by the increasing supplies from the rival European plantations in the West Indies and on Mascarenhas and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. This development was causing great prejudice to the Company's plantations on Java and they could think of no remedy against that competition. On the other hand, there was an appropriate remedy - long applied in the Moluccas, they pointed out, in respect of excess clove and nutmeg trees - for checking the excessive growth of Javanese supplies so that the V.O.C. need have no fear of being over-burdened with supplies.

The remedy lay in uprooting the excess plants and seeing to it that only a fixed number of plants was maintained thereafter. Coyett and van Imhoff further assured the Council that it need have no anxiety regarding any repercussions that might flow from the application of this solution, because the chiefs of the Kampongs (or villages), who happened to be also the chief suppliers, had, so they said, readily agreed at the conference that there was no other feasible alternative.

62. See pp. 43-44 below.

63. in de Jonge, IX.pp.253-62.

For purposes of extirpation of excess trees, the two commissioners proposed that a distinction should be drawn between Cheribon on the one hand and the regions closer to Batavia on the other. Whilst only one-eighth of the plants in Cheribon were to be uprooted (whereby only the oldest trees would be affected) as much as half the plants in the Preanger and other lands closer to Batavia were to be uprooted. This would, in their view, still yield more than half the total projected supplies from the latter area and the balance (or less than half) would be from Cheribon.

Several reasons were given for the proposed disproportionate extirpation policies. One was that they envisaged that the regions closer to Batavia would have to cater to the V.O.C.'s new emphasis on pepper planting and, for that reason, more land would be made available by getting as much as half the coffee plants to be uprooted. In this connection they stated, though without giving specific reasons, that these regions could be the sooner and the better turned towards pepper cultivation, than Cheribon. Moreover, the natives could proceed with their plantation activities in these regions without any fear of changes in coffee policies because they (the commissioners) proposed that any further manipulations regarding coffee supplies, whether for cutting down production by further uprooting of plants or starting new plantations for increase in production, should be confined to the Cheribon region. As things stood at the time, however, they preferred that in this region, on the lands rendered vacant by the proposed uprooting of one-eighth of the coffee plants as well as on any other uncultivated lands, the inhabitants should be encouraged to plant paddy, with which crop Cheribon was not too well provided.

The question arises as to whether these were indeed the only reasons, or the more important ones, for the seemingly more favourable treatment recommended in respect of the Cheribon region. A clue towards an answer may be obtained by examining the implications of one of the commissioners' statements on prospective pepper supplies.⁶⁴

64. Ibid, p.258.

They explain their emphasis on making arrangements for such supplies from the Preanger region rather than from Cheribon by remarking that the Company could depend on a more trustworthy supply of products from the regions closer to Batavia because it had easier and greater control over them on account of that very fact of proximity itself. Cheribon, it must be noted, was, in contrast to the Preanger region, less under Dutch control, partly, of course, because of its greater distance from Batavia and partly on account of the somewhat connected fact of the greater degree of autonomy exercised by the Cheribon chieftains, most of whom the Dutch usually referred to as princes. It would, therefore, have been more difficult to enforce a widespread and radical extirpation of coffee plants in the region and the consequences of any attempt to do so must have appeared to Coyett and van Imhoff to be fraught with great danger. Such considerations would also explain their seemingly contradictory proposal to allow a greater proportion of coffee plantations to be retained in a region which they considered to be less subject to Dutch control, and thus more open to smuggling; whereas, primarily on account of the implications of inadequate control they had recommended that the newly-emphasized crop, pepper, should not be encouraged there at all.⁶⁵

The report of the commissioners went on to suggest a uniform reduction in the purchase price of a picol to 6 rix-dollars (ie. to about 2 1/3 stuivers for a pound), so that the distinction hitherto made between the coffee

65. It should be emphasized also that the Commissioners had been careful to point out in the report that the extirpation of 1/8th of the coffee trees in Cheribon could be so done that only the oldest trees would need to be uprooted. Moreover, their recommendation that future manipulation of production should be confined to Cheribon was easily said because they would not be answerable for the results of any future decisions.

from private lands and that from the so-called Company's lands would be done away with, and the same purchase prices would apply to both categories.

Several reasons were given for the latter recommendation. They pointed out that the private lands were mostly situated close to Batavia and they had none of the problems and expenses of long-distance transport which the other category was subject to in the delivery of coffee. With equalized prices for the two categories, the private lands would still be at an advantage. A second factor adduced in support of their recommendation was their suspicion that a lot of coffee from the other category of lands was being bought up at the lower price and re-sold to the Company at the higher price by owners of private lands.⁶⁶ A third consideration behind their proposal was that, by this means, it would be possible to automatically, but indirectly, bring about a reduction in production by the possessors of private lands when they realised that coffee was not so paying a crop as before.

The direct method of ordering the uprooting of half the coffee trees was not considered feasible with regard to this category - the possessors of the so-called private lands - because, in the opinion of the Commissioners, those people had been exhorted so very much to take to coffee cultivation by the V.O.C. itself, had devoted their own lands for the purpose, and made a living out of it. That the people in the other category

66. This had been happening even in the time of Zwaardecroon who had tried to prevent it by means of a placaat issued in April 1723 (v. der Chijs, IV.p.159). It may also be noted that this "abuse" has a further significance: the contribution of the purely Javanese elements to coffee production was more than the supplies attributed to them would indicate. For an idea of the proportion of coffee produced from the so-called 'private' lands, see pp.13, 24 above and the Report of Coyett and van Imhoff in de Jonge, IX. p.258.

of lands had also been exhorted in the same manner, that they might have devoted to the crop what many (if not most of them) considered to be their own lands and that they might be equally, if not more, dependent for a living on that crop - such considerations did not enter into the reckoning; they were to be ordered to uproot half the coffee plants on their lands.

Two factors appear to have played a part in this discriminatory attitude. One was the idea that the Company's overlordship over the Preanger and Cheribon regions made it the lawful owner of all the lands situated therein and consequently feudal dues or tithes were owing to it from every parcel of land. The idea had been expressed as early as January 1726 by de Haan in his memorandum to the Council of the Indies. He said that the Javanese coffee cultivators had hitherto been freely enjoying "the fruits from the Company's lands without having been up to now burdened with the tithes or any other dues owing to the true owner."⁶⁷ Now, in 1735, Coyett and van Imhoff gave their own elaboration of the V.O.C.'s alleged feudal rights by saying: "they / the Javanese / occupy the Company's lands and therefore must bear up having to cultivate on them whatever crops the Company might find to be most agreeable / to its interests /."⁶⁸ The second factor responsible for the discrimination might have been a sense of identification with, or nearness to, one category and a sense of inherent apartness from, if not of hostility, towards the other. The favoured category of possessors (or owners) of private lands consisted, for the most part, of burgers or Dutch colonists together with other settlers attached to the Dutch interest, such as native Christians and Chinese.⁶⁹ The most that the Commissioners recommended to their disadvantage - apart from the equalisation of coffee purchase prices - was to say that if the Council thought it fit, it could prohibit new plantations by this category of landed interest.

67. de Jonge, IX.p.106

68. Ibid. p.259. See also note 28 above and pp.41-42 below.

69. Ibid. p.259. Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
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In the final part of their report, they discussed what crops could be cultivated in place of the coffee plants that were to be uprooted according to their scheme. They first took up for consideration three crops which the V.O.C. had already encouraged or induced the Javanese to cultivate on its behalf even before coffee cultivation had been thought of. One of them, kurkuma or turmeric, they did not wish to encourage above the existing level of cultivation because the demand in the Netherlands did not warrant it. Regarding another product, indigo, they admitted that it was a particularly profitable article for the Company and greatly in demand in Europe, but they also pointed out that its planting and preparation required so much trouble and toil that "the lazy Javanese" had a great aversion to it, particularly because they could barely make a living - this suggests that the actual cultivators are spoken of here - on account of the very low price paid for it. (One cannot help but note that it must have been the very low price combined with the exceptional toil and trouble involved rather than any inherent laziness that had made the Javanese reluctant cultivators of indigo.) The Commissioners reported further that the indigo as well as cotton thread, the third product which they took up for consideration, were both looked upon by the Javanese as nothing but items of tribute imposed on them by the Company, because the prices paid for them were so inadequate.

In these circumstances, Coyett and van Imhoff had decided not to insist during their discussions with the chiefs on any new cultivation of indigo and cotton; but only to enjoin them to see that they delivered the quantities which they had hitherto been bound to supply annually. If they had insisted on replacing the profitable coffee with these two products, they feared that they would have caused dissatisfaction among the chiefs and also discouraged them from taking to a plantation which the Company wished to greatly encourage at this time, namely,

pepper.⁷⁰ They claimed to have found the chiefs willing to take to pepper planting. In fact, these men had declared that the very lands that were denuded of coffee plants could be used for pepper because the nature of the requisite terrain and the kind of labour that was required for cultivation as well as for gathering the crop were both similar, although, as they said, the plants as well as the crops looked so dissimilar to each other.

On the basis of their discussions with the chiefs, the Commissioners expressed their firm belief that given the necessary encouragement and supervision, pepper would soon turn out to be as successful a crop as coffee, in the environs of Batavia. They suggested, however, that encouragement of the newly-emphasized crop should not follow the pattern of coffee by paying a relatively high purchase price at the outset and drastically reducing the price as soon as the people had taken to the crop in a big way. To ensure the people's respect for the Company and their faith in it (which, they seem to acknowledge, had been lost by the coffee policies) they recommended that the necessary incentive required in the early years should be provided by the payment of a special premium of 100 rix-dollars for every 100 picols delivered from a particular area.⁷¹

70. Whilst the demand for pepper in both Europe and Asia had been increasing, the V.O.C. in the 1730s also faced increasing competition in its bid for supplies. With waning control or influence in the Malabar coast and with increased English trading activity there and even in the northern parts of the archipelago (where Chinese traders too were active) the V.O.C. naturally thought of repeating with pepper in Java the success which they had already achieved there with coffee. Relatively higher sale prices in Europe spurred the Company on, all the more, cf. Glamann, pp.89-90, 281 and Chaudhuri, pp.325-26.

71. This, we may note, would benefit the chiefs, or intermediaries, rather than the small producers. In fact, many colonial arrangements usually tended towards such results.

The proposals of Coyett and van imhoff were adopted for execution, by the Batavian Council at its meeting on 26 August 1735.⁷² But we notice that there was no real drop in coffee supplies in the next few years, partly occasioned in all likelihood by the coming into maturity of new plantations that had been encouraged at the turn of the decade and partly - and more important - because the extirpation proposals had not been fully carried out. In 1738 well over 4 million pounds had to be purchased when there was already in stock a quantity of over 13 million pounds. There was thus more coffee accumulating in the godowns of the Company in Batavia than could be disposed of in Europe. To make matters worse, the Batavian authorities were faced with a serious shortage of cash.

These circumstances led Governor-General Valckenier to propose further measures to curb production. On 5th December 1738 he and his Council decided to order the extirpation of half the coffee plants in all areas, inclusive of Cheribon, and to proclaim that in 1739 only half the quantity delivered in 1738 would be accepted for purchase, and for that too only half the payment would be made in cash whilst the other half would be in bonds carrying an interest of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.⁷³

There were protests from all areas - the Preanger (including the so-called Jacatran highlands) as well as Cheribon - against both the extirpation orders and the payment in bonds for part of the supplies. Batavia ultimately gave in on the question of non-cash payments. The total quantity to be accepted annually was also fixed at nearly 3 million pounds. But on the extirpation orders, it yielded only to Cheribon, and in fact made the execution of the orders relating to the regions nearer

72. Realia, I.pp.263,298.

73. van der Chijs, IV.p.434; Realia, I.p.298.

Batavia even more stringent than originally envisaged.⁷⁴ With regard to extirpation in Cheribon we find Governor-General and Council admitting that it had not been "executabel" there.⁷⁵ Great play was made by Batavia that its ultimate decisions had been influenced by its realisation that thousands of poor inhabitants under the Cheribon princes were likely to suffer adverse effects if the extirpation policy had been put into effect.⁷⁶ But there is no doubt that the solicitous concern expressed for the poor in Cheribon - there were poor in the Preanger too - was only a sanctimonious veil drawn over an accommodation with an unpleasant reality: the feared potential power of the Cheribon princes to cause serious problems if they were antagonised too much.

The way in which the state of the market in Europe and the connected interests of the V.O.C. dictated the policy towards coffee cultivation, was once again demonstrated within about an year of the decisions taken in December 1738. Even as Governor-General and Council were wondering whether their limitation of annual deliveries to less than three million pounds might not result in any excess being disposed of to smugglers by the cultivators, news was received that the demand in Europe had once again risen. The Directors now required six million pounds of coffee per annum instead of around four million. The Batavian authorities immediately became fearful lest the extirpation of coffee trees as well as the lowering of prices together with the limitation of deliveries that had already been effected might result shortly in inadequate supplies to meet the new demand. So in January 1740 the quantity of coffee that would be accepted by

74. Resolutions of 13 March and 20 March, 1739, van der Chijs, IV.pp.448-49; Realia, I.p.298; de Jonge, IX. pp.xxiii, xxv.

75. Realia, I.pp.263,298.

76. de Jonge, IX.pp.xxiii-xxiv. See also van der Chijs, IV.p.449.

the Company was once again raised to four million pounds.⁷⁷

What happened in Java in subsequent years is outside the purview of our present concerns. This is, therefore, the appropriate point at which we could look back on our sketch of coffee culture with a view to identifying more closely some of the salient features that might be helpful or meaningful for the projected study of coffee cultivation in Sri Lanka.

We could begin by noting the alternating 'blow hot' 'blow cold' policies of the V.O.C. In a sixteen-year period we can discern six such phases. Up to 1724 there was active encouragement of coffee cultivation everywhere in Java, except latterly in what may be called the "princely states". A second phase commences in the course of 1724 with instructions from the Heeren XVII to reduce prices and discourage cultivation and accordingly a period of strong disincentives to production lasted till 1727 with Governor-General de Haan presiding successfully over that phase. His very success brought its nemesis in the form of alarmingly low production (despite coercive regulations to stem the rot) and so a third phase lasting till 1731 was commenced in 1728. New plantations were encouraged or ordered and the buying price of coffee was somewhat raised as an incentive. From 1732 to 1734 was a passive phase during which things were allowed to run their course, with neither encouragement nor discouragement, except, of course, with regard to the "princely state" of Mataram. A fifth phase was ushered in in 1735 (with an added emphasis in 1738) during which discouragement was the order of the day, prices were again lowered and even a policy of drastic extirpation of trees was decided upon. Propaganda was

77. de Jonge, IX.p.xxv; van der Chijs, IV.p.503. The balance 2 million pounds - these references are all to Dutch pounds - required to complete the new annual order from the XVII, would, of course, be supplied from the accumulated stocks at Batavia.

now to be towards the promotion of pepper cultivation. But at the end of 1739 that policy was halted and we see in 1740 what appears to be another phase of encouragement of coffee cultivation in response to a greater demand than ever before for the product from the Directors of the Company. That was the sixth phase.

These rapid oscillations of V.O.C. policy indicate the narrow calculations of profit of a merchant concentrating on the day-to-day state of the market and not the considerations of a ruler mindful of (may be equally selfish) wider and more long-term concerns. The disadvantages that could arise from antagonising the Javanese, losing credit in their eyes or creating an aversion amongst them towards the cultivation of commercial crops - these were all at some time or the other sensed by officials on the spot from the time of Van Hoorn through Zwaardecroon and van Durven to the time of Patras. But the long-established model of the Moluccan spice monopoly was undoubtedly too powerful for such considerations to have much effect. Hence the attempts at a strict monopoly, paying minimum prices and expanding or limiting production strictly according to the market. Thus, the activities of the ruler were dictated by the objectives of the merchant. Involvement in the administration of the Preanger and Cheribon regions was more or less limited to contriving that coffee and other required crops were duly produced and delivered to the Company through the instrumentality of the chiefs, in the quantity and quality, and at the rates, prescribed.

Ideas of sovereignty or lordships derived from European feudal theory appear to have formed the basis for a claim to the supply of coffee as virtual tribute payments, and, from 1726, under a system of compulsory cultivation, from the lands possessed by the Javanese. Van Klaveren⁷⁸ was mistaken in believing that the claim related only to (previously) uncultivated soil. De Haan's statements and the Report of Coyett and van Imhoff make it clear that the V.O.C. claimed to be the "true owner"

78. p.61.

of all the land occupied by the Javanese and that it had the right, therefore, to prescribe the cultivation, on its behalf, of whatever crops it pleased.⁷⁹ On all these occasions there was no reference to Javanese law or practice and we may assume that the claim was based on a colonial theory of domination. A further fact lends strong support to this view. In the Report referred to above, the lands possessed by the Dutch and those favoured non-Javanese attached to the Dutch cause are described as their "own hereditary lands" (eygen erven) and these lands are contrasted with those of the Javanese, "who are reckoned as occupying the Company's lands" ('die gerekent worden's Comps. landen te bewonen'⁸⁰)

79. See p. 35 and p.14n. 28 above.

80. de Jonge, IX.p.258. On the imposition of Dutch law in regard to the concept of property, as well as the influence of the European feudal system, in colonial administration in Java, see J.Faes, Geschiedenis van Buitenzorg (Batavia, 1902) pp.28,36. Even if there had been a reference to Javanese law it would have been necessary to take that with a pinch of salt in view of the Company's lack of knowledge and expertise on such matters at the time and also because necessity would have been the mother of invention, given the V.O.C.'s inability to pay for the real value of the coffee (and other products) obtained from the Javanese. On this latter point, (the inability to pay the real value of the produce), see also J.S.Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice. A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India, (New York 1956) p.20.

With a view to ensuring that cultivation of coffee (and other prescribed crops) on these so-called Company's lands was carried out as desired, the V.O.C. appointed various Dutch functionaries. Van Klaveren says that when coffee culture developed quickly a special Commissary of Native Affairs was appointed in 1727. He was entrusted, inter alia, with the supervision and control of the Preanger region, whilst similar functions were performed by the official called the Resident in regard to Cheribon.⁸¹ The origins of the Commissary's office, however, go back to a much earlier period than Van Klaveren indicates. As early as 1660 an official to control and supervise clove production in the Moluccas had been appointed and we know that, doubtless influenced by that precedent, a Commissary of Native Affairs had been functioning in Java well before 1715. Furthermore, in December 1719 the precedent of 1660 is recalled and a similar official, along with 'some inspecteurs' under him, was appointed to see to coffee cultivation as well as indigo and other prescribed cultures. Whether this meant a revival of the post of Commissary (because it might have become defunct) or the creation of a new office with several subordinate posts to supplement the work of the Commissary, we do not know. A Commissary for Native Affairs - there appear to have been slight variations in the nomenclature of this post in the records - was, however, functioning even in 1726.⁸² As regards cultivation in Cheribon, the Resident was doubtless assisted by a few Dutch officials, as our earlier encounter with the role of the sergeant Penninck around 1726 would indicate. As we have previously noted, an element of coercion with regard to cultivation is implied by the appointment of such officials.

The work of supervision and control of coffee cultivation by the Commissary in the Preanger and the Resident in Cheribon (assisted by their subordinates) was ostensibly buttressed by the placaats or proclamations against smuggling in coffee and against uprooting or damaging the plants.

81. van Klaveren, pp.63-64.

82. See evidence in K.A. (vide note 14 for elucidation of K.A.) 1928 f.405. For the 1715 and 1719 references, see Realia, I.pp.306 and 27 respectively.

After the disruption of cultivation resulting from the price reduction, proclamations were issued ordering compulsory cultivation of a specific number of plants per household, as well as proclamations forbidding people from fleeing from one region to the other (apparently to escape the unprofitable cultivation of coffee).⁸³

The extent to which these placaats could be enforced, especially in the remoter regions must have been quite small wherever the Regents or the Princes withheld active co-operation in the matter. Under such circumstances the effectiveness of the Commissary's role or that of the Resident would not have been appreciably enhanced by such proclamations. Besides, we have previously noted that a couple of European officials could not have successfully controlled or supervised cultivation over such vast and often inaccessible areas. It has also to be noted that these officials often had many other duties besides overseeing the prescribed crops. Moreover, the inefficiency and corruption of these men (that have been recorded) must have further reduced their role in the promotion of coffee cultivation.⁸⁴

For these reasons the role of the Javanese cultivators and their chiefs acquires all the greater significance. Despite the discriminatory price policies in favour of producers who were Dutch or, at least closely attached to the Dutch interest, by far the largest proportion of coffee had, as we have already seen, been produced by the Javanese. It appears that notwithstanding the disparity in the price paid, and the greater problems of transport, the Javanese were either able to bring the coffee to market at relatively less cost or else they were able to subsist with more contentment on lower rates of remuneration for this product than the other producers. Whatever the reasons, the Javanese responded with alacrity to the opportunities for profit when

83. This last placaat was approved in Council on 19 Dec. 1727 (Realia, I.p.27). The others have been noted earlier in this essay.

84. See e.g. evidence of irregularities etc. of officials around 1715, 1723 and 1736 in van der Chijs, IV. pp.63, 159 and 388-89 respectively. cf. also van Klaveren, pp.63-64.

prices were attractive. That the prodding or prompting of Commissioners or coffee-sergeants had not been necessary is quite clear, particularly when we take note of successful production in Bantam and Mataram, two areas regarding which the V.O.C. (as we have seen) not only prayed for ill-success all the time, but also worked openly or secretly to eliminate coffee production.

On account of the manner in which the Javanese took to coffee cultivation, we have pointed out that there was little substance behind the constant refrain of the "lazy Javanese". In fact, such Europeans as were involved in cultivation - with a few exceptions such as Van Hoorn and Zwaardecroon - do not appear to have been so very successful because, despite the system of pricing being weighted in their favour and despite relatively lower transport costs, their production was not as high as it should have been. That was why Coyett and van Imhoff had suspected (and Zwaardecroon had previously noted) that a good part of what this group (and certain others close to the Europeans) passed off as produce from their own lands was in reality coffee clandestinely purchased from the Javanese for sale to the V.O.C., advantage being taken of the discriminatory pricing system. Moreover, it is certain that hardly any of the Europeans or those of mixed European descent themselves laboured in the coffee gardens.

We may note in this connection that the Heeren XVII had, by the second decade of the century, inquired whether cultivation of coffee in Amboina, might not be more successfully conducted through Europeans by assigning lands to them, rather than through natives. Zwaardecroon's (and his Council's) reply in November 1721 appears to be relevant to Java and other parts of Asia, and not merely to Amboina. He says that the European free persons (colonists) are "usually too lazy and too proud to themselves work in the fields; and, therefore, they have to employ slaves, whom, however, they are often too poor to buy." Thus laziness, contempt for manual labour, and an inability to engage successfully in coffee plantation work emerge as weaknesses amongst Europeans in the East Indies colonial setting rather than amongst the indigenes themselves. Of these traits, the laziness may be partly attributed to the enervating effects of a tropical climate on Europeans; but part of it undoubtedly stemmed from the haughtiness of a ruling group which assigned

wearisome and heavy labour to slaves or colonial peoples. (But part of it no doubt was sheer laziness !). Apart from these characteristics, Zwaardecroon also pointed out that the European settlers were more difficult to get along with as they raised many problems which the natives would never dare to raise. He, therefore, concluded that the method of producing coffee by means of the natives, which had been hitherto followed, was "really the best and the most profitable" for the Company.⁸⁵ The Dutch had indeed evolved an effective alternative model of colonial exploitation to the West Indian model of colonial plantations worked through slave labour, by harnessing the land as well as the labour of the Javanese peasants and that too, with far less expense and responsibility than the West Indian planters had to bear in respect of their slaves.⁸⁶

Coffee production in Java, then, must have become all the more a contribution of the Javanese on account of the factors militating against production by Europeans mentioned by Zwaardecroon. As to how cultivation of coffee was carried on by the Javanese, we have already seen some evidence in the course of our survey of developments during the period under consideration. We can now briefly discuss some of the more significant aspects of that information.

One point that has emerged rather clearly is that cultivation was by and large in settled areas or close to settlements. We noticed that when the Batavian authorities

85. Zwaardecroon & C. to XVII, 30 Nov. 1721, de Jonge, IX. pp. 75-76. For evidence of laziness and lack of enterprise amongst Dutch colonists in 17th century Sri Lanka, see K.W. Goonewardena, "A New Netherlands in Ceylon ..." in The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, Vol. II. No. 2 (July 1959) pp. 229, 334. cf. also, Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire (full title etc. given in note 8 above) pp. 246 and 250.

86. See also van Imhoff's comments in this regard at pp. 68-69 below.

wished to revivify the fallen state of coffee production, they considered that ordering every household even in distant Cheribon to plant ten new coffee plants would be a meaningful measure towards achieving that objective. If some of the ladang people (or those who engaged in shifting cultivation) had also been brought into cultivation activities on a regular basis, they must have had to give up their nomadic life; because we know that the cultivation process (including the picking, drying and peeling of the coffee) involved work spread through a good part of the year.

The categories or classes of Javanese involved in coffee production appear to have been roughly three: regents or princes with their subordinate officials, peasants who cultivated coffee on their lands for their own profit, and, finally, hired labourers, retainers, and those liable to compulsory services who cultivated the lands of the first category, the indigenous ruling class. It is possible that compulsory services in the coffee plantations of that ruling class were also provided from amongst the households of the second group, the land-owning peasants. But by and large, this group had independent producers, who appear to have been the most numerous among the coffee producers - if one were to judge by the great emphasis placed by de Haan, on the necessity to recognize them as the true owners of the coffee and, therefore, to eliminate as far as possible, any middleman role of the regents or chiefs. The argument is not invalidated by any unscrupulous motivation (such as the one we have earlier deduced) which may be ascribed to de Haan. Again, with somewhat similar motivation, Valckenier refers in 1739 to "thousands of poor people" among the coffee suppliers, who, he says, often banded together to bear the transport costs of their produce.⁸⁷ As regards the hired labourers mentioned under the third category, we have previously noted that many, if not most of those who were described by de Haan as hired labourers in 1726 were in effect described by

87. van der Chijs, IV.p.449.

him in 1728 as the owners of coffee lands who had to be protected against exploitation by the chiefs. But it is likely that some were indeed hired labourers, if the references to the abandonment of certain lands cultivated with coffee implied no subsequent return, and also because there are references to some of them abandoning the plantations and going back to their dwelling places.⁸⁸

Before we take a closer look at the role of the chiefs and the strictures passed on them by the Batavian authorities, we should make note of the by no means passive reaction of the Javanese cultivators (whether independent or not) to the unconscionable price reductions of the V.O.C. They not only abandoned some of the coffee lands but even gave vent to their resentment by uprooting and destroying much of the planted coffee. We have surmised that where abandonment of lands was of a permanent nature the people involved must have been hired labourers, and, in other cases, owners of lands. In any event, the actions of these people, particularly of those who destroyed the planted coffee, points to some sturdiness of spirit and to a defiance of the authority of the chiefs as well as of the V.O.C. In that connection some conjectures were made with regard to the attitude of the chiefs: either they sympathised with the popular resentment against the Company or else they did not have the power and the necessary ruthlessness to suppress these expressions of popular feelings.

The fact is that none of these conjectures are supported by the usual views of the Company's officials (or, of later writers,⁸⁹ for that matter); rather, they are contradicted.

88. See pp.19,23 above.

89. Even an exceptionally liberal scholar such as Wertheim. See W.F.Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change, 2nd revd.ed. 2nd imp. (Hague 1964) pp.90-91. Furnivall noted that in the traditional system, custom limited the arbitrary exercise of power by the rulers and that Dutch support enabled the chiefs to act more arbitrarily than before. But he gave full credence to the allegations of arbitrary conduct on the part of the rulers and chiefs, made by V.O.C. officials. See Netherlands India ..., pp.34,35,44. See also pp.50-51 below.

Far from there being any sympathy or understanding between the chiefs and those under them, Governor-General and Council expressed concern over the fact that the chiefs did not pay their dues to hired labourers and even embezzled the payments for coffee made by the Company in favour of the actual cultivators. To remedy this latter abuse de Haan stated that he had made arrangements to see that the cultivators themselves received the payment. But it is as well to note at this point that, as we have previously shown, de Haan's statements and assessments are rather suspect because he was looking for any kind of excuse or scapegoat to cover up the disastrous effects on coffee production caused by his own policies. We also recall in this connection the fear of the Dutch officials in Cheribon to impose the newly-decreed ten pounds' "overweight" on coffee for fear that the people who had already shown signs of dissatisfaction might become even more refractory. Such statements suggest popular feelings against Dutch coffee policies rather than against the administration of the chiefs. Again, we notice what appears on the face of it to be a lack of sympathy for the cultivator when we find Coyett and van Imhoff stating in their report that the chiefs of the Preanger readily agreed with their suggestion that the best remedy for the prevalent overproduction was the extirpation of the trees. But, then, we know that whatever may have been stated in that report, the fact was that the chiefs were soon found to be opposed to any extirpation of coffee plantations.⁹⁰

Whilst all this should make us cautious about accepting all the allegations against the Javanese chiefs, there is no doubt that the coffee cultivation system favoured the rise of oppressive practices. The Dutch favoured chiefs who fostered the cultivation even at the expense of the people. For this reason they raised some chiefs from obscurity to great prominence. Van Klaveren has cited the case of the regent of Tjiandjoer whose territory was enlarged by Zwaardcroon because he had taken coffee cultivation so much to heart. We have seen the cases of those chiefs who had readily accepted de Haan's price reduction being granted marks of his favour as against the empty-handed send-off to those who had protested. Moreover, when,

90. See pp.38-39 above.

as in 1726, the chiefs were severely threatened with punishment if anyone in their respective jurisdictions was found to have uprooted coffee plants, we notice what strong pressures towards oppression and authoritarianism on the part of the chiefs were emanating from the colonial government. In point of fact, appointments to regentships were made conditional on the regents' undertaking to duly promote the development of crops required by the V.O.C., inclusive of coffee.⁹¹

When we add to these things the corrosive influence (on a traditional society) of commercial profit, which appears to have become quite significant along with the success of coffee, we can imagine what varied and powerful forces were intensifying and extending the alienation of the chiefs from the people. It is in such a context that we find in later years a regent prepared to pay 10,000 rix-dollars to the Company for the privilege of riding in a gilded coach during his stay in Batavia.⁹² This sum was equivalent to the price paid by the V.O.C. for about a quarter million pounds of coffee in the 1730's. The indulgence in such pastimes had necessarily to depend on the extortion of the peasants and it also meant that the money paid out for coffee was returning to Batavia, back to the Company itself. Although indulgence in vain and empty luxuries and the oppression of subjects had probably not reached such high levels by the end of our period (1740), there can be no doubt that tendencies in that direction must have been accelerating.

There remains the question of how much power and authority the chiefs actually possessed and exercised over the people during this period. Van Klaveren, who does not specify any particular period, is generalizing for the entire eighteenth century when he says: "Their power over the people was virtually unrestricted. They could demand arbitrary services and tributes from them. The common man was not respected even in his rights of

91. See the relevant clause in the appointment of Wira Mangala as the new Regent of Tjiandjoer, on 14 May 1727 in van der Chijs, IV.p.196.

92. van Klaveren, p.61.

husband and father."⁹³ This picture stemmed no doubt from the official reports of the eighteenth century. But we have to note that it appears to be a characteristic of colonial reporting at this period - and, we can suspect, not only at this period - to ascribe the most despotic and rapacious type of administration to the traditional indigenous sphere,⁹⁴ and on the other hand to emphasise the colonial government's concern for, and intervention on behalf of, the ordinary man under such an administration. By reading between the lines, and by getting at the real motivation we have been able to see on several occasions that such ostensible concern or intervention in Java has been an attractive cloak to cover less endearing objectives and actions. What is more, that garb tends to obscure the very vital fact that the Company had deliberately tended

93. Ibid. p.61.

94. This characteristic, so far as the V.O.C. is concerned, could be traced to as far back as the 1620's when the foremost servant of the Company at the time, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, writing on the indigenous Javanese administration wrote: "May not a man in Europe do what he likes with his cattle? Even so does the master here do with his men, for everywhere these, with all that belongs to them, are as much the property of the master as are brute beasts in the Netherlands. The law of this land is the will of the King, and he is King who is strongest." Judging by Coen's actions, such as the wholesale massacre of the people of the Banda Islands, it would appear that the wish was father of the thought expressed by him here. (Coen's words are quoted in J.S. Furnivall, Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy, Cambridge 1944, p.44).

to increase rather than reduce the power of the Javanese chiefs over the people under them.

To get the newly-introduced crop, coffee, cultivated in satisfactory fashion, the Dutch appear to have soon decided to strengthen the power of the chiefs over the people; for it was through the chiefs that they had to get it cultivated as they themselves had hardly any direct relations with the ordinary man. The position is clear when we examine the development of their policies towards the chiefs after the decisive take-over of Cheribon and of those parts of the Preanger which had not hitherto been under their control (and which constituted by far the largest portion of that division).

This take-over took place after the Treaty of 1705 with Mataram whereby these areas were ceded to the V.O.C. The Preanger areas were taken over immediately, and by Resolution of 15 March 1706 it was decided that they were to be "ruled in the Javanese manner and by the Javanese laws". But in case there was any abuse of authority by the regents (or superior chiefs), the people could appeal against their punishments to the Governor-General and Council.⁹⁵ Control over the more distant Cheribon appears to have been undertaken in 1708 with the despatch of Commandeur Cnol as a special Commissioner. But even in regard to this region (which, as we have seen, remained relatively more autonomous than the Preanger region during our period) the original intention had been to control the judicial power of the chiefs. Accordingly, we find it laid down by resolution of the 21st December 1708 that the sentences in all cases involving the death sentence or other corporal punishment had to be referred to Batavia for approval.⁹⁶ It appeared that in this manner the V.O.C. was attempting not only to bring the chiefs in the two regions more under its control but also trying to limit and circumscribe their power over the people under them.

95. de Jonge, VIII.p. lxxxiii.

96. Realia, I.p.262.

The significant development that took place within a few years was that whilst the first aspect of their policy remained operative, the second one of trying to limit in some ways the power of the chiefs over the people - that came to be more or less jettisoned. This was done despite the fact that, under normal circumstances, the second aspect would have reinforced the first. But circumstances were changing. The intense effort that was being made to promote coffee cultivation in these two regions, it would appear, required that the hands of the chiefs should be strengthened - or, at least, that was what the V.O.C. appears to have believed. Thus, a big change in attitude and policy was signalled when on the 8th April 1712 Governor-General and Council pronounced that "the chiefs of the Preanger lands have an absolute jurisdiction over their subjects, both in civil and criminal matters, subject only to their keeping the Resident informed of their actions."⁹⁷ There is little doubt that what was laid down in respect of the Preanger region must have been even more applicable to Cheribon, over which the Company exercised a weaker control.

9 . Ibid. p.262: van der Chijs, IV.pp.20-21. It may be noted that with these resolutions there was a two-fold strengthening of the position of the Preanger Chiefs vis-a-vis the people under them. Whilst relaxing Dutch control over judicial matters, the powers of the Pangeran of Cheribon over these chiefs were also reduced by these decisions. In 1706, by resolution of 2nd March, the Pangeran had been given control (or more likely he was allowed to retain control) over the Preanger chiefs as a vassal of the V.O.C. (See: van der Chijs, III - Batavia/Hague 1886, p.566). Now, that control was reduced. In a series of further measures in 1724 and 1730 that control was still further reduced so as to emphasize the direct answerability of the Preanger chiefs to Batavia. (See Realia, III.p.83). Thus whilst these chiefs acquired greater authority to deal with the people under them (through these and other developments which will be noted next), their direct subjection to Batavia was also being increasingly emphasized.

We have also to note that it was not merely a removal or modification of restraints previously imposed by Batavia, that soon took place. With the fall in production in 1726 the beginnings of compulsory cultivation of coffee were made. Then, as we have seen already, the chiefs were not merely encouraged but also virtually driven to adopt a more authoritarian attitude in their administration by threat of severe penalties if they did not prevent the people in their respective jurisdictions from damaging coffee plantations. To these proddings towards greater authoritarianism were added the various placaats which we have already noted in connection with the role of the Commissary and the Resident. Of these, the one which weakened the position of the ordinary man most and correspondingly strengthened that of the chiefs was probably the placaat that was confirmed by Secret Resolution of the Council on 19 December 1727. By this, the free movement of people was restricted so as to prevent their leaving one area and settling down in another, in effect tying them like serfs to the land in which they resided.⁹⁸ A similar placaat issued in September 1739 laid down corporal punishment for the first offence and six months' imprisonment in chains for the second, along with a fine imposed on those chiefs who allowed such persons to settle down in their areas. It is very illuminating to find the raison d'etre of this placaat stated to be the need to ensure the delivery of stipulated products to the Company by the chiefs.⁹⁹

Whilst we note that the Company tended in this manner to increase the powers of the chiefs and make them more

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98. Realia, I.p.27. As far as the freedom of movement of people was concerned, the indigenous administration appears to have been rather "liberal" judging by Dutch references to "vagabonderende" natives around the time of their take-over of these lands. See van der Chijs, III.p.616.
99. van der Chijs, IV.p.491; cf. also, J.Faes, Geschiedenis van Buitenzorg, (Batavia 1902) p.36.

arbitrary and more callous towards their people, we have also to draw the conclusion that until then the chiefs had not possessed such powers. That would mean that the indigenous administration had been less authoritarian than generally assumed. In case such powers had indeed existed in the indigenous system, then they must have gone into abeyance by the time of the placaats, or else the chiefs had chosen not to exercise them, which again would give a better complexion to the traditional system than usually portrayed.

The evidence pretty well points to the fact that during the first three or four decades of the century, the Javanese chiefs had not been exercising the kind of ruthless and arbitrary power which V.O.C. officials so often alleged was inherent in the traditional system. Even after the Company, seeking a regulated supply of coffee, goaded these chiefs on with new inducements, pressures and instruments for the exercise of more arbitrary power than before, the general result was too mild and unsatisfactory for its profits, as the experience of de Haan and van Durven indicated. In fact, in August/September of 1731 some of the chiefs had informed the Commissioners van der Schuer and van Baerle that ever since the drastic price reduction of 1726 coffee cultivation had correspondingly declined and entire plantations had been abandoned by the people without their having been in a position to arrest those developments by any manner of means.¹⁰⁰

It thus appeared that where popular feelings had been aroused, the chiefs had either no ability, or no inclination, or did not think it feasible, to impose their will in opposition to those sentiments - despite the awesome power of the Company which they could count upon in the furtherance of its interests. That the chiefs had not prevented the destruction of coffee plants after the price reduction can be ascribed to such factors and attitudes. The protest against the extirpation orders of 1735 stemmed

100. de Jonge, IX.p.158.

from similar considerations as well as, presumably, a more direct motive of self-interest.

Evidence of a more positive concern for the welfare of the people under them, is indicated by yet other evidence. In 1722, the Preanger chiefs acting in concert requested the Dutch to suspend for some time their extraction of timber from these lands partly on the ground that "the weary, prostrate, and worn out" people had to be given some rest.¹⁰¹ In January 1736, Governor-General Patras had to accede to two requests from the Cheribon princes. One was for the abolition of the post of Superintendent of Charcoal Supplies and the other was for a limitation on the inland trips of the Resident, the reasons for both requests being based on concern over unnecessary impositions on the people.¹⁰² And finally, in December 1742 we find these princes making representations to the authorities against "the unreasonable treatment meted out to their subjects during the past three or four years, through the imposition of false weights and measures when they delivered goods" to the Company's officials.¹⁰³

Before concluding this essay, it appears appropriate to briefly place the significance of Java coffee, during the period under review, in a wider perspective by touching on the part it played within Asia, and also examining its role in the European market in competition with Mocha coffee brought especially by the English East India Company, and with coffee from other sources of supply.

Though the V.O.C. had embarked on coffee cultivation in Amboina and Sri Lanka (two other areas under its control outside Java) there was no significant development

101. van der Chijs, IV.p.156.

102. Ibid.p.388.

103. See Resolution of 28 Dec. 1742 in Realia, I.p.263. For evidence of the prevalence of such practices all over Asia amongst V.O.C. officials around this time and consequent condemnation of their servants by the XVII, see Goonewardena, op.cit. in note 13 above, pp. 68-69.

in either of those areas until the mid-thirties, when cultivation in their territories in Sri Lanka began to acquire some importance. As for Amboina, the crop never became noteworthy having petered out after the price reduction made (at the same time as in Java) in 1726.¹⁰⁴ But the Directors continued to exhort the Batavian authorities to encourage coffee cultivation in Amboina even after production had dwindled to less than a thousand pounds a year. The idea appears to have been not to focus on uncertain profits from Amboina coffee but on the sale of textiles to the Amboinese at such profit that the coffee purchases could be made worth while thereby.¹⁰⁵ We thus see another interesting facet of the Company's coffee policies in Asia. The persistent interest in Amboina however must have been fostered by yet another consideration which we have previously noted. This was the fear of the XVII that the Javanese might obtain too much money from coffee and thereby become powerful enough to pose a threat to the V.O.C., if coffee was not produced in other V.O.C. areas, thus diverting some of the money paid for coffee away from Javanese pockets.¹⁰⁶

There was one area where the V.O.C. had territory in which they were certain coffee could be successfully grown, but where they deliberately refrained from promoting its cultivation. That was the Malabar region, from which in fact coffee plants had been introduced into Java in 1699, through the instrumentality of Zwaardcroon who was then a Councillor Extraordinary in the Batavian Government serving on a mission to that region. No promotion of coffee cultivation was to be undertaken in this region because, as the Heeren XVII explained in 1727 (by letter of August 28), it was an area that was exposed to many competitors.¹⁰⁷

104. Resolution of 18 Jan. 1726, Realia, I.p.298.

105. XVII to G.G.& C., 30 Aug. 1732 in Leupe, p.64.

106. See pp. 10, 12 above and footnote 19.

107. Leupe, p.64.

The complete control over production and supply which the V.O.C. envisaged could not be maintained in a region where in addition to indigenous rulers such as the Zamorin of Calicut and the raja of Travancore, the Dutch would have had to contend with their chief commercial rivals, the English, who were very active there.

In these circumstances, any significant quantity of coffee produced under the V.O.C.'s control was Java coffee. (until the mid-thirties). And, once the Company was assured of adequate supplies for the European market, it became increasingly keen to dispose of the balance profitably in Asia itself. A certain amount was sold retail in Batavia for local consumption, as the Resolution of the Batavian Council on 20th May 1727 indicates.¹⁰⁸ The V.O.C.'s selling price was fixed at six stuivers the pound (Dutch), although almost all the coffee was received by the Company at one-third that price. But the quantities sold at Batavia and other places in the East Indies must have been quite small because of the poverty of the people, a fact emphasised by the Heeren XVII in regard to the Banda islanders when the Batavian authorities tried to paint unreal prospects of coffee sales amongst those people.¹⁰⁹

Though the prospects in the archipelago were dim, there appeared to be very bright vistas to the north-west: in Surat and Persia and, to a lesser extent, in the Coromandel region and in Bengal. Surat, "the storehouse of all India",¹¹⁰ was a particular focus of attention because of the great and long-standing demand for Mocha coffee there and because the high prices at Mocha were attributed in great measure to that demand. By their letter of 28 August 1727 the Directors of the Company instructed Batavia to sell as much of the Javanese coffee as possible at Surat in view of the high coffee prices there, and "more especially in order to prevent private traders and the so-called Goerabs (ships) from Mocha coming there

108. Realia, I.p.298.

109. Glamann, p.211.

110. Chaudhuri, (for full title etc. see note 13) p.49.

to trade."¹¹¹ These considerations appeared to be so important that the XVII also enjoined in that letter that the Asian demand should be first fulfilled before any coffee was despatched to the Fatherland, and that, if, as a result, there was not enough for the European market, then steps should be taken to extend the plantations.

The following year, however, priority appeared to have been given once again to shipments to Europe, the instructions being that only the balances remaining were to be used for the Asian trade. This shift in emphasis may perhaps have been due to news received relating to shipments of Java coffee having been allegedly brought to Surat by Muslim merchants.¹¹² The suspicion that V.O.C. officials at Batavia were involved in private trade in Java coffee at the Company's expense surfaced again in 1731 when the Heeren XVII had reason to believe that the French had been able to secure Java coffee.¹¹³

These suspicions did not mean, however, that the Directors lost interest in pushing sales in Persia and India. On the contrary, a decline in sale prices in Europe in the late twenties appears to have induced them still further to urge exploitation of the Asian market. To counteract the reported preference in taste for the Mocha coffee in that market, they suggested in 1728 itself that coffee which had been left to mature for some time in the stores might successfully deaden any peculiarity in the taste of the product from Java. If that failed they suggested that coffee from Sri Lanka or Amboina should be utilised to break into the Asian market.¹¹⁴ In their letter of 14 September 1731 they posed the question as to whether more sales could not be effected and "greater damage done to the Arabs" by lowering the prices in certain areas from

111. Leupe, p.68.

112. Leupe, p.68.

113. Glamann, p.210. Van Durven and others were dismissed from the service because the Directors believed that these officials were involved in private trade and other corrupt practices at the expense of the Company.

114. Leupe, p.68.

12 to 10 stuivers (the pound).¹¹⁵ It was emphasized that all such strategies should depend on the nature of the place of sale and the prevailing market prices.

With these instructions and strategies in mind, the Batavian authorities attempted to establish a position for Java coffee, at the expense of the Mocha product, in Persia and the Indian markets. The shipments sent, though, do not seem to have been more than 10,000 pounds at a time. Probes were made in the markets of Coromandel, Surat and Persia. But there was no real success to speak of. All efforts appear to have floundered on the rock of a deep-seated predilection for the flavour of Mocha coffee as against the Java product, in all these markets, as de Haan pointed out in December 1728.¹¹⁶ That was perhaps one reason which impelled Governor-General & Council in the later years of the thirties to instruct the Dutch authorities in Sri Lanka to try out coffee from that island too in these same markets. By that time coffee cultivation in Sri Lanka had turned out to be a proven success, and there were also the advantages of geographical proximity to the relevant markets. Moreover, sale prices in Europe had reached a new low and there was a more urgent need to find good markets in Asia. Hence Batavia authorized disposal of the coffee even at 6 or 7 stuivers the pound.¹¹⁷ Accordingly, by resolution of 29 November 1738, the Colombo Council decided to send 10,000 pounds to Surat and another 10,000 to Cochin for transshipment to Persia.¹¹⁸

Whether the coffee was from Java or (as happened later on) from Sri Lanka also, we notice that the V.O.C. was disposing of only very paltry quantities in Asia in comparison to the four million pounds that were taken annually

115. Leupe, p.69.

116. de Haan & C. to XVII, 8 Dec. 1728 in de Jonge, IX. p.138. See also Glamann, pp.209-11.

117. K.A. 2314 (Bd.4) fo.1714 and S.L.N.A. 1/76 fo.362. As usual, the stuivers referred to are "heavy" and the pound is the Dutch pound weight.

118. S.L.N.A. 1/76 fo.362.

for sale in Europe. Besides, it appeared to be only with the greatest difficulty that even ten thousand pounds were vended in any of the Asian markets: Java (and Sri Lanka) coffee could not really compete with Mocha coffee. Towards the end of the period under review, the Heeren XVII gave a striking illustration of this fact when they pointed out by letter of 4 September 1739 that whereas the French had been able to bring coffee from Mocha and sell it in Persia for about eleven stuivers, the V.O.C. had been unable to dispose of its Java coffee there even for two stuivers less.¹¹⁹

The XVII, however, appear to have drawn a different conclusion, from the one presented by their servants in the East, from all this evidence. They appear to have believed that the failure of Java coffee in the Asian markets was the result of poor salesmanship or even of illicit trading activities on the part of their officials in the East. They were quite certain that the failure was not due to any preference for the flavour of Mocha coffee, no matter what their officials in Asia might say. Glamann has drawn our attention to a rather colourful outburst in this connection.¹²⁰ in September 1738 they declaimed:

"We believe that there is no one in the whole world with a tongue so refined that he can distinguish between good, well-dried Java coffee seeds and the Mocha variety; as for us, when we did that test time and again no one was able to see that distinction. How can it then be believed that a set of lumpen Turks and Persians have so much more refined tongues than we and other people possess?"

Apart from the undertones of racist arrogance and an inadequate appreciation of special tastes cultivated over a long period within particular cultures, this passage is noteworthy for another important reason. Did the absolutely confident assertion that when tests were

119. Glamann, p.211.

120. p.211. A rather free translation of the Dutch quotation is given below.

repeatedly made by the Directors in the Netherlands no one had been able to note any difference between Java and Mocha coffee - did that mean that they had been able to successfully pass off some at least of the much cheaper Java coffee as Mocha coffee, in the Dutch auctions? It appears highly probable, particularly because coffee under the label of "Mocha" definitely fetched a higher price at the auctions.¹²¹

Whether any of the Java coffee was passed off as the Mocha product or not, the fact remains that Java coffee remained profitable enough for the V.O.C. and far more profitable to it, as we have previously seen, than the genuine Mocha product, which it also bought from time to time.¹²² As the English bought Mocha coffee at about

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121. In this connection it is significant that in 1728 (11th Oct.) the XVII had ordered all the Chambers of the V.O.C. "in future to remove all the coffee seeds from their packings, mix them all together and re-pack them in their old packings. Care was to be taken to see that the ordinary coffee seeds and the damaged remained each in its own grade." Whether this exercise was to apply only to Java coffee or whether Java and Mocha coffee were both mixed together is not clear from the brief extract given in Leupe, p.67. It is unlikely, however, that such a sharp practice as the latter would have been explicitly laid down in writing. The fact that such an exercise as that noted above was in operation is a significant pointer to manipulations. Consider also the suggestion (p. 59 above) made in 1728 to Batavia as to the manner in which any peculiarity in the taste of Java coffee might be successfully masked.
122. See pp.8,17,18 above. For some of the English and Dutch purchase prices at Mocha, see Glamann, Table 38 at p.205.

the same price as the Dutch, we can see how much more profitable than the coffee trade of the English Company that of the V.O.C. must have been, because the latter was also the sole shipper of the higher-profit-yielding Java coffee.

The picture is further improved in favour of the Dutch Company when we consider the total quantities taken to Europe. In the period 1725 to 1740 the English East India Company brought to Europe some 13,244,448 pounds¹²³ (avdp.) which works out to an average of 827,778 pounds per year. During this same period - barring two or three years during which there was a shortfall - the V.O.C. was, as we have previously seen, annually despatching from Java for the European trade over 4.3 million pounds avdp. (or 4 million Dutch pounds). When we note that this is five times as much as the English Company was bringing into Europe, we can visualize how very much bigger the V.O.C. impact must have been on the European coffee market through its Java exports - even if we leave the Mocha coffee of the V.O.C. out of the reckoning.

An indication of the relative volume and value of the Java coffee is provided by certain other data. In 1724, the English Company took to Europe 2,671,424 pounds of Mocha coffee which was by far the largest quantity of coffee ever taken by them in any given year from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. When Chaudhuri points out that the import value of this shipment amounted to no less than 21% of the total value of all the English Company's imports to Europe that year,¹²⁴ we are provided with yet another angle of evaluation of the over 4.3 million pounds of Java coffee taken by the V.O.C. to Europe almost

123. Calculated from data in Appendix 5, Table C9 in Chaudhuri (see note 105 above) p.522.

124. The Trading World of Asia ..., pp.361-62. Chaudhuri (p.362) also estimates that "in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century this share was more than 10 per cent on an average..."

every year after 1725.¹²⁵

The importance which we can assign to the Java coffee, as a result of the above data and calculations, in regard to the Dutch Company's imports into Europe, is seriously called into question by several conclusions of Holden Furber in his study of European trading empires in the East. He says, inter alia, that coffee "affected the Europe trade very little until late in the eighteenth century" and that "In shorter supply and more expensive to lay down in Europe, coffee could never compete with tea as a drink for the poor"; and also that coffee "was never to play a role in the East India trade comparable to that of tea."¹²⁶

It would appear that Furber's notions of tea being cheaper than coffee and of its being a drink for the poor stem from its post-eighteenth century reputation and are, therefore, mistaken in relation to much of that century

125. Calculating on the basis of the table given by Leupe at p.71 (the source is not indicated) we find that in the period 1726 to 1740 (both years inclusive) only a little over 3.5 million Dutch pounds (over 3.8 million pounds avdp.) were sold in Europe by the V.O.C., on average, each year. It is difficult to say what part (if any) deductions for tare, spillage, private sales, substitution for Mocha coffee, (or other methods of disposal outside the public auctions) may have played in yielding this figure which is considerably lower than the average amount surmised by us as having been despatched from Java. It is also possible that there are inaccuracies in Leupe's figures or else that our surmise is about 12% off the mark. But calculations made by Governor-General van Imhoff in 1747 (see p.70 below) indicate that our surmise errs on the side of underestimation.

126. Holden Furber, Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800 (Minneapolis 1976) pp.253-255.

itself. In the early part of the century, the more popular drink was coffee and, in fact, as far as England was concerned the public consumption of tea was first begun in the already flourishing coffee houses.¹²⁷ Though the sales records of the English East India Company for the period after 1706/07 have disappeared,¹²⁸ the sales records of the V.O.C. as given by Glamann enable us to see that right up to 1740, tea was generally more than twice as expensive as coffee.¹²⁹ The relative position must have been roughly the same in relation to the coffee and tea sold by the English Company. Even if the reports of extensive smuggling of tea into England¹³⁰ are proved to be accurate, tea must still have been more expensive than coffee. Moreover, it should also be remembered that even in the latter part of the century, tea did not catch on in continental Europe in the same way as in England (and it is the total European impact that Furber himself has been discussing).

The supplies brought to Europe or placed in the European auctions - which are not the same things, but in the absence of anything better, the two may be equated for

127. The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. IV, Ed. E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson (CUP 1967) pp.296-98. See also Charles Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, 1603-1763 (Lond. 1965) p.307: The Growth of English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, ed.W.E.Minchington (Lond.1969) pp.23,24, 125,127; John Burnett, A.History of the Cost of Living (Penguin Books 1969) pp.82,135,180,212.

128. Chaudhuri, pp.362,521-22 and 538.

129. Glamann, pp.285-86.

130. Chaudhuri, pp.385,392-95.

rough and ready purposes - by the two Companies are also relevant for a discussion of Furber's contentions. It is known that between 1725/26 to 1730/31 the V.O.C. placed 2,495,945 lbs (avdp.) of tea in the Netherlands auctions. This gives an annual average of 415,990 lbs. Statistics are not available for the later years, but we know from Glamann (whose data are being used for these calculations) that it varied from about one million pounds transported to Europe in 1732 to about 200,000 lbs. in 1741, and also that the Dutch Company lost ground during these years in the "race for the China tea."¹³¹ We may, therefore, assume with some confidence that V.O.C. imports of tea during the period from 1725 to 1740 did not really exceed an annual average of half a million pounds, as against over four million pounds of coffee. The English Company's imports of tea during this same period averaged 1,012,784 lbs per annum¹³² which is only slightly more than its average for coffee imports. It is also roughly double the amount we have arrived at in respect of the V.O.C. tea supplies and only one-fourth the V.O.C. coffee supplies. When we add up the annual averages of the quantities of tea taken by both the Companies to Europe and compare the resultant amount with the similarly calculated total for coffee, we find that the coffee imports were nearly three-and-a-half times as much as the imports of tea.¹³³ Moreover, the statistics given by Chaudhuri on the percentage

131. Glamann, pp.225,241 and 243.

132. Calculated from Chaudhuri's Appendix 5, Table C19 on p.538. It must also be remembered (when quantitative comparisons of tea and coffee are being made) that unlike in regard to tea, the English East India Company was not the sole legal importer of coffee into England. It had no say in regard to imports from the Levant or the West Indies.

133. There is a problem relating to the imports of coffee and tea into Europe which is not taken up for discussion as it appears that in the light of the evidence available no meaningful conclusion for our purposes can be arrived at. That is the problem of smuggling. Much smuggling into Europe (and, thereafter, within Europe) of both these beverages has been noted. See e.g. Glamann, pp. 210, 238-39; Chaudhuri, pp.385, 392-95.

value of tea and coffee respectively amongst the East India Company's imports from Asia indicate that the percentage value was higher for coffee than for tea in most years up to about 1735, although pound for pound coffee must have been cheaper than tea.¹³⁴

This evidence refutes Furber's contention that coffee was in "shorter supply" and less in demand in Europe than tea - at least in regard to the period up to 1740. It seems also to further contradict his conclusion that coffee - according to the context, referring primarily to coffee brought by the East India Companies - "affected the Europe trade very little until late in the eighteenth century." Before adducing further evidence which should clinch arguments on this aspect of the matter, it is useful to note two assumptions which appear to have contributed towards Furber's misunderstanding of the true situation. One, is his implied assumption that the Levant market was more important for European coffee purchases from the Mocha region than the supplies from the East India Companies. The other is more specifically related to Java coffee. He says that "throughout the eighteenth century" it "never succeeded in overcoming ... the increased competition from West India coffee in Europe."¹³⁵ If by this is meant complete elimination of West India coffee, then, of course the statement will stand. But without doubt what Furber implies is an inability on the part of Java coffee to hold its own in the European market against West India coffee.

That both the above assumptions are incorrect - for the period up to 1740 - can be demonstrated quite clearly with the aid of a memorandum which Governor-General van Imhoff presented to the secret sessions of the Batavian Council on the 14th March 1747.¹³⁶ In fact, this memorandum takes up for consideration, inter alia, all the sources of competition to Java coffee including the Levant

134. Chaudhuri, pp.97,521-22 and 538.

135. Furber, Rival Empires ..., pp.253,255 respectively.

136. Extracts from the memorandum ("Bedenkingen over de jaarlijksche retouren uijt Indie ...") in de Jonge, X.p.127ff, especially pp.127-30.

region. Though it is dated in March 1747 it appears relevant for the entire period up to 1740. Moreover, based as it undoubtedly must have been on the statistics and other information available to the Company at that time, it places the position of Java coffee in an illuminating perspective both with regard to the coffee trade of the V.O.C. as well as in regard to that of its competitors.

As sources from which the Company's competitors were taking coffee to market, van Imhoff refers to the Red Sea (Mocha) region where, along with the V.O.C., the English and the French were active; in addition, the French were transporting the commodity from their own possessions of Mauritius and Mascarenhas; and, finally he refers to the supplies brought from the Levant and the West Indies. It is significant to find him singling out the West Indies supplies and describing them as being "considerable". So it appears that the biggest competitor for Java coffee was the West Indian. He further points out that all in all more coffee was being grown than could be used up in the whole world. But, says van Imhoff, the decisive factor really hinged on who could supply the coffee at the lowest cost and thus remain longest in the market. In this respect it was the V.O.C. which had so many advantages.

Among these advantages, the Governor-General emphasised the fact that the Java coffee took up only ballast space, which would otherwise have had to be filled by less valuable items.¹³⁷ In the case of the rival Companies which had to depend only on the Mocha or Red Sea region supplies, they had to set apart entire shiploads only for coffee because there was little else by way of merchandise that could be obtained from that region. He also hints at the fact that these rival ships had to waste much unutilised space (at least during the voyage from the West Coast of India to the Red Sea) because, apart from bullion,¹³⁸ the

137. It is apparent that ballast goods were reckoned to be free of freight costs. See also Glamann, p.25.

138. On the need for bullion for this trade, see Chaudhuri, p.369.

Arab demand for goods had proved to be uncertain and unstable. As for the coffee from the Indian Ocean islands of the French he pointed out that there was likewise no economical handling of supply both on account of the nature of these islands and the state of French affairs in the East. Apart from other disadvantages, the Levant supplies were too expensive because most of the supplies had to come partly overland to the Mediterranean ports from Arabia (in the Yemen or Mocha region). Moreover, experience had shown that the supplies from Mocha were difficult to get at whenever the prices fell too low; he stressed that coffee procurement was liable to be much more elusive for the Levant merchants as that region was far more distantly situated from the producing areas.

Thereafter, van Imhoff took up the question of the West Indies coffee. He pointed out that here too, unlike in the case of the Dutch, ships had to be specifically assigned - at least for the most part - for transporting the coffee alone, and thus making the transactions less economical. If the sale price fell to one (Dutch) shilling (or twelve stuivers) there was no profit for the freight-carrier or the merchant, nor even for the West Indian planter, who had to spend much more than was the case in Java for everything required for cultivation. Moreover, if the market was so low it would not be worth the merchant's while to tie up his capital by holding on to such a poor commodity in the expectation of an improvement in the market.

All these arguments were adduced to prove that the V.O.C. alone was able to bring its coffee - leaving out of consideration of course, its relatively small Mocha purchases - to the European market at the lowest possible cost and also that it was therefore in a position, if need be, to hold on to its stocks for a longer period.¹³⁹ It is very interesting and, in the absence of any more precise information, very valuable to find estimates of coffee

139. As he himself points out coffee was a commodity which could be kept for several years without losing in quality. de Jonge, X.p.129. But cp. Chaudhuri, p.363.

consumption and supply in van Imhoff's memorandum. He estimates the annual European consumption of coffee in the mid-1740s at nearly nine million pounds (eight million Dutch pounds) and the total quantity brought to Europe at about eleven million pounds of which he says the V.O.C. alone would in all probability be bringing and selling or stockpiling fully half or about $5\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds each year. As the Governor-General undoubtedly had fairly adequate information at his disposal in order to make these calculations, we can accept them as being sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes. We might also remember that even in 1742, before he assumed the Governor-Generalship, van Imhoff had reminded the XVII that "coffee had been for a long time an outstanding crop to the Company".¹⁴⁰

These calculations and other points made in van Imhoff's memorandum directly support in many respects the refutation we have made (on the basis of other evidence and calculations) of Furber's underestimation and depreciation of the role of coffee, more especially of Java coffee, in the Europe trade.

Coffee, it is seen, affected the Europe trade to a notable extent. It appeared in far more voluminous quantities in that trade than tea: the eleven million pounds a year that van Imhoff spoke of as against two million or so pounds of tea (the acknowledged chief supplier, the English East India Company supplying only around a million pounds annually). The Levant coffee trade with Europe was of little consequence in comparison with the trade in Java coffee, and even the West Indies had, during this period, a significantly smaller share of the Europe trade than Java (when due allowances are made for coffee from the Levant and from English and French sources of supply in Asia). We had earlier noted the very favourable mark-up on the cost price of the coffee, which the V.O.C. had been obtaining from Java since 1726 at virtually tributary rates. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that, given the other advantages mentioned by van Imhoff, Java coffee, produced under a system of V.O.C. exploitation of the peasants in an indirect manner and through pressure

140. Leupe, p.53.

applied on the native chiefs, continued to maintain its position during this period even against the fruits of slave labour in the West Indies plantations system.

It is appropriate, however, that the final assessment regarding the results obtained from this alternative model of colonial exploitation should be left to the Directors of the Company themselves. In 1735, they declared that:

"the coffee has been now for many years past a magnificent product which has been largely responsible for keeping (the Company's) affairs going (well). But (now) on account of the fact that other nations have been following the example of the Company and have been daily expanding their plantations, and also as a result of the large supplies that are being brought from other regions, that crop too has begun to fall considerably in price - as witnessed by the fact that now, for the first time, it has had to be sold in the respective Chambers of the Company for 12 or 13 stuivers the pound."¹⁴¹

141. Leupe, pp. 59-60.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Whilst a few unpublished documents from the Dutch East India Company's records at the Algemeen Rijksarchief at the Hague and from the Sri Lanka National Archives have been utilised in this essay, the bulk of the Company's records that have been consulted have been from printed sources.

Of these, the most important and extensive have been the sources that have been reproduced or given in extract in the monumental series, De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie, more especially, volumes IX and X edited by J.K.J.de Jonge. In his erudite introduction and footnotes he has drawn on many other valuable records of the V.O.C., sometimes summarising their contents. In this manner, de Jonge has provided a rather broad-based and invaluable access to contemporary V.O.C. records relating to coffee cultivation and many connected matters.

Volumes III and IV of another work of monumental proportions give us access to the resolutions and proclamations of Governor-General and Council relating, among other things, to coffee culture and aspects of administration relevant to it. This is the work entitled Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811 (Vols. III and IV published, Batavia/Hague 1886, 1887) edited by J.A.van der Chijs. Though van der Chijs has often chosen to summarise or give only extracts from the resolutions and proclamations, it will be apparent from this essay that he has provided us with far more than small mercies. Moreover, there are many occasions when he provides us with other valuable documentation such as quotations from letters and comments of the Heeren XVII.

It is particularly fortunate that certain lacunae or inadequacies (for our study) in both the above works are filled by a register or index of resolutions of the Batavian Government edited by the indefatigable J.A.van der Chijs referred to above. This is the three-volume work entitled Realia. Register op de Generale Resolutien van het Kasteel Batavia, 1632-1805 (Hague/Batavia 1882-85). Though this

work betrays some evidence of hasty compilation or printing, it appears to be accurate enough for most practical purposes, as the continued dependence on it of generations of historians would also indicate.

In regard to primary printed sources, we have, finally, to note the usefulness of P.A. Leupe's contribution entitled "Invoering der Koffijkultuur op Java, 1700-1750" in Bijdragen tot de Taal - Land -en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indie" (Amsterdam 1859) pp.53-71. It is perhaps the earliest piece of writing on coffee cultivation in Java. But it is not really an essay on the subject, so much as a stringing together of various quotations or extracts from the V.O.C. records (pp.53-62), followed by six appendices (pp.63-71) of extracts from further official documents of the Company. The appendices - Leupe does not use that term - have the following headings: "Some notes regarding Coffee Culture"; "Some Regulations relating to the Transport / of Coffee /"; "Some Regulations relating to the Sale / of Coffee /"; "Some Regulations relating to the Sale of Coffee in Asia"; "Averaged Five-Year Demand for Coffee from Asia, from 1700 to 1750"; "Statement of the Coffee Sold by the Netherlands East India Company 1700-1750". Reflecting perhaps the state of the archival records at the time, or of scholarly practice, Leupe does not give any archival reference numbers etc. to the records he cites or quotes from (except the dates of the documents). But all the evidence points to their perfect authenticity. In default of ready access to the original records themselves, Leupe's material has proved to be invaluable, particularly because he has so often picked on information overlooked in the other compilations referred to above.

Of secondary works purporting to deal primarily with coffee, I am aware of two. Though they proved to be of little or no use for this essay, they are mentioned here so as to forewarn those interested in the subject. The first is entitled: De Onmogelijke Vrijheid - Het Gouvernement als Koffieondernemer (Utrecht, 1948) by A. Goedhart. The author concentrates on the 19th century as that was his real research concern. About a dozen pages, however, touch on our period by way of an introduction

to his main contribution. There is nothing that is new in these pages except perhaps a paragraph or two that may be relevant for coffee cultivation in Sri Lanka. The second is the work by William H. Ukers entitled The Romance of Coffee: An Outline History of Coffee and Coffee-drinking through a Thousand Years (New York, 1948). For the period covered by our essay - and, in fact, not only for that period - this work was found to be quite inadequate and inaccurate.

With Kristof Glamann's well-known work, Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740 (Copenhagen/The Hague, 1958), we encounter a contribution which has been most useful, particularly for the commercial aspects of coffee. But a few problems of general interest not taken up by him, have been discussed in this essay, quite apart from modification, amplification, or addition, to one or two matters of a more specific nature. On the administrative, economic and social implications of coffee cultivation in regard to the Javanese people, much useful comment and material relevant for this essay have been found in J.J. van Klaveren's The Dutch Colonial System in the East Indies (Rotterdam 1953) on pages 59 to 66. But one problem is that it is at times difficult to pin-point the exact year or years to which his statements refer, many of them being generalisations for the entire eighteenth century. It was, unfortunately, not possible to consult a work which both Glamann and van Klaveren (more especially the latter) have drawn upon, namely, F. de Haan's Priangan. De Preanger-regentschappen onder het Nederlandsch Bestuur tot 1811, 4 Vols. (Batavia 1910-12). It is hoped that little of significance relating to our period has been overlooked from this work by Glamann and van Klaveren, and that anything missed by them is to be found in the printed records mentioned earlier.

It has also to be noted that valuable information, insights, and points of comparison have been furnished by a recent scholarly work which deals with English trading activities in Asia two to three centuries ago. This is K.N. Chaudhuri's The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760 (New Delhi, 1978). His

chapter on "coffee" and some of the statistical tables have been of particular value. On the other hand, Holden Furber's Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800 has provided some points for disagreement and refutation. But it, perhaps, needs to be mentioned that on most other matters Furber leaves little room for such disproof. J.S. Furnivall's Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy (Cambridge 1944) and his Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India (New York, U.S.edition 1956) were of some use for an understanding of Dutch policy and also as indicators of the limits of inquiry made up to that time into the subject-matter of this essay. Finally, on economic developments in Europe having relevance to our theme, we may also mention The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol.IV - The Economy of Expanding Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century ed. E.E.Rich and C.H.Wilson (Cambridge 1967). Despite its sub-title, this volume is concerned with the first half of the eighteenth century too.

THE DUTTHAGAMANI-ELARA CONFLICT :
A HISTORICAL REINTERPRETATION*

W.I. SIRIWEERA

History, as Edward Hallett Carr states "is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past".¹ Carr therefore recommended to his students the study of the historian before turning to study the facts handled by him.² The 'facts' of early Sri Lankan history are mostly found in the chronicles of the island, the priestly authors of which were preoccupied with the theory and practice of religion. They took religion to be the supremely important factor in all affairs and recorded most things relating to it. It is no surprise therefore that the Dutthagamani-Elara conflict of Sri Lankan history was treated by them chiefly from a religious point of view.

With the dawn of the modern era a 'national consciousness' became pronounced in most countries of the world. In small plural societies like the society in Sri Lanka however it did not reach full maturity. For most Sri Lankans 'race' and 'religion' were more important than the 'nation' in its wider connotations. Consequently, writers including historians, elevated the brief spells of fighting between military adventurers with their small armies in early days of pioneering and colonization into racial and religious wars. They introduced 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian' differences into history and the

* This is a revised version of a paper presented at the Seminar on Nationality Problems organized by the Social Scientists' Association of Sri Lanka in December 1979.

1. E.H.Carr, What is History, London 1961, p.24.

2. Ibid., p.17.

Dutthagamani-Elara saga received treatment befitting these circumstances. Their ideas have also crept into school texts and literary writings. A reassessment of the historical treatment of this episode, becomes important therefore not for the glorification of the past nor for emancipating from it; but for the greater understanding of the past as well as the present.

The Dīpavamsa, our earliest extant record of historical tradition, attributed to the middle of the fourth century A.D.,³ contains only a brief reference to Dutthagamani Abhaya and Elara. It is interesting to note here that Sena and Guttika, the earliest invaders from South India are referred to as Damilas in this account, but Elara is not identified as such. It merely states that the Kshatriya prince named Elara, having killed Asela, ruled righteously for forty-four years. In its recording of events, the Dīpavamsa states further that the prince named Abhaya, the son of Kakavanna, supported by ten warriors, overcame and killed thirty-two kings and thereafter ruled for twenty four years.⁴ The objective of the Dīpavamsa was to relate the history of the visits of the Buddha and the introduction of Buddhism into the island which "existed as Sīhala after the lion".⁵ Thus the author of the Dīpavamsa gave articulation the Sinhala-Buddhist consciousness which was strengthened by subsequent chroniclers. Neither at the time of the writing of the Dīpavamsa, nor during the one or two centuries prior to it, did Sri Lanka experience South Indian invasions; Sinhala and Tamil communities living in the island seem to have existed as best as they could without conflict. This may explain in part the brief and dispassionate nature of the narration of events regarding Elara and Dutthagamani by the author of the Dīpavamsa.

However, the picture appears to have changed completely in the period prior to the writing of the Mahāvamsa. The Mahāvamsa is thought to have been written by a monk named Mahanama of the Mahavihara fraternity in the early years of the sixth century A.D., perhaps during the reign of

3. University History of Ceylon, Editor in Chief H.C.Ray, Vol.I, Pt.I, 1959, p.48.

4. DV. XVIII, 47-54.

5. DV. I, 1: IX, 1.

Moggallana I (491-508).⁶ It was compiled "for the serene joy and emotion of the pious" and was more a national epic of the Sinhala Buddhists of the Orthodox Theravada sector than a dynastic history of the island. A few decades before the writing of this chronicle, the country witnessed the rule of six Tamils; Panḍu, Pāṛinda, Khudda Pāṛinda, Tirīṭara, Dāṭhiya and Piṭhiya (428-455). The exact place of origin of these Tamils is uncertain. The name Panḍu of the first of these rulers, has given rise to the view that they came from the Pandya country. The Sinhala sources, the Pujāvali and the Rajāvali refer to them as being Tamils from the Coḷa country. The period in South Indian history from about the fourth century A.D. to about the middle of the sixth century is usually referred to as the Kalabhra interregnum and according to Tamil tradition, the Kalabhras kept the Colas and Pandyas in subjection. Perhaps the incursion of Tamils into Sri Lanka in the fifth century, which brought the island under foreign rule for a little over a quarter of a century, was not unconnected with the disturbed conditions that prevailed in South India at the time. The Cūlavamsa expressly states that Tamil rule did not extend to the southern part of the island, namely Rohana, where the Sinhala nobles had sought refuge. But epigraphic evidence suggests that the rule of at least some of the Tamil kings extended beyond the limits to which the chronicler confines their authority.

Thus it seems that when the Mahāvamsa was written, the element of conflict in the relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils had crystallized. The political threat posed by the Tamil feudal chiefs would have been fresh in the minds of the Sinhalese, and this background would have had some influence on bhikku Mahanama, the Sinhala-Buddhist author of the Mahāvamsa. He was alive and sensitive to the occasional threats posed by Tamil chiefs on Sinhala sovereignty, and by heretical believers to the Mahavihara tradition. For him, not merely non-Buddhists but even those who supported heterodox Buddhist establishments opposed to the orthodox Mahavihara

6. U.H.C. Vol. I, Pt. I, p.49.

7. Ibid., pp. 292-293.

were heretics.⁸ A dominant purification theme that suggests Sri Lanka should be free from all heretics is found throughout in the Mahāvamsa. It is no wonder then, that the author selected Dutthagamani, who unified the whole island under one banner for the first time in history and patronized the Mahavihara establishment tremendously, as the ideal king.

Gamani is first introduced in the Mahāvamsa at the point of his death in his former life. A meritorious Samanera (a novice) concedes at his death-bed to the pleas of Viharadevi, the barren Queen of Kakavanna Tissa of Magama, to be reborn as her son.⁹ Thus, entering life with a pre-established record of meritorious action, Gamani is born. In this saga the Mahāvamsa chronicler has portrayed a substantive image of Gamani as an up-and-coming religio-nationalist leader. When Gamani is twelve years old, his full potential for ideal kingship is evinced in a gesture precipitated by his father's request that he should never fight against the Tamils. It is narrated that when the young prince, enraged and frustrated, lay crouched upon his bed, his mother questioned him as to why he lay so; whereupon he replied comparing his bed to the island, "Over there beyond the river are the Tamils; here on this side is the sea; how can I lie with outstretched limbs?"¹⁰

It is important to examine whether the Mahāvamsa rhetoric provides a clear picture of the historical situation. According to the Mahāvamsa, the Tamils were represented by Elara of noble descent (as opposed to kshatriya descent in the Dīpavamsa) who arrived here from the Cola country.¹¹ There is no evidence as to the composition of his garrisons and the strength of his army. However, unless Elara had some support in Sri Lanka, it may not have been easy for him to occupy the throne at Anuradhapura for such a long period. As subsequent

8. See e.g. MV XXXVII, 10-14.

9. MV, XXII, 33-40.

10. MV, XVII 78 86

11. MV, XXI, 13.

history shows, most of the foreigners who succeeded in wresting the throne and ruling the country for any considerable length of time have had some indigenous support or had been backed by a foreign power. Unfortunately the chroniclers do not reveal much about this aspect of Elara's rule. Here is yet another instance of what Wilhelm Geiger observed when he stated that "not what is said but what is left unsaid is the besetting difficulty of Sinhalese history."¹²

However, reading between the lines in the Mahāvamsa account, one gets the impression that both Elara and Duddhagamani were participants in a feudal power game and not in a racial war fought between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The Mahāvamsa states that when Elara was on his way to the Cetiya Mountain in a chariot to invite the bhikkhus the nub of the yoke of his chariot struck a dagoba, thereby causing damage to the monument. On this occasion it is said that Elara's ministers told him "Oh king ! our thupa has been damaged by you."¹³ This clearly indicates that the ministers of Elara considered the thupa to be theirs, which means that at least the ministers who accompanied Elara in this mission were Buddhists, perhaps also Sinhalese. We also find that one of the generals of Elara was Mitta¹⁴ who was a Sinhalese. His sister's son¹⁵ was Nandimitta, one of Dutthagamani's ten commanders, to whom superhuman exploits have been ascribed in the Mahāvamsa.

Dutthagamani's march northwards in his campaign against Elara was along the right bank of the Mahaveli river. In the process Dutthagamani had defeated Elara's generals known as

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12. Wilhelm Geiger, Cūlavamsa, Eng. Tr. Pt. I, London 1929, P.V.
 13. "Deva thupo no tayā bhinno", MV, XXIII, 24; "Deviyani apage saya teme oba visin bindina laday kivuha", Mahāvamsa, Sinh. Tr. Batuvantudawe Devarakshita, Colombo, B.E. 2485, pp.23-24; Geiger's English translation of the original Pali stanza is inaccurate.
 14. MV, XXIII, 4.
 15. MV, XXIII, 4-15

Chatta, Titthamba, Mahakottha, Gavara, Issariya, Nālika, Dighabhaya, Kapisisa, Kota, Halavabhanaka, Vahitttha, Gamani, Kumbha, Nandika, Khanu, Tamba, Unna and Jambu.¹⁶ The Mahāvamsa states that all these were Tamils but evidence for verification is limited. In the above list at least two names, Gamani and Dighabhaya, seem to be essentially Sinhala-Buddhist names. Dighabhaya was the step brother of Dutthagamani who had been sent to Kaccakatittha along the river Mahavali by Kakavanna Tissa to guard the frontier buffer zone between Rajarata and southern Sri Lanka.¹⁷ It seems he subsequently went over to Elara's camp. For this reason even he is called a damila, surely in a derogatory sense, by the chroniclers.¹⁸ On the other hand, the name of one of the ten paladins of Dutthagamani, i.e. Velu, sounds like a Tamil name. However, a detailed etymological study of the names and a further examination of historical situations are necessary before arriving at a conclusion. In this connection it is relevant and significant to mention that at one stage in the battle the Sinhalese are said to have killed their compatriots because they had not been able to identify their foe.¹⁹ Such a situation could have occurred only if there had been a substantial number of Sinhalese in Elara's army. The name Bhalluka, which is given to the general who is said to have arrived from South India after Elara's death to fight Dutthagamani, bespeaks a non-Tamil origin. The Dravidian or Tamil equivalent of Bhalluka would have been Phalluka. The Buddhist suttas mention a thera named Bhailuka and it is also interesting to note that two merchants Trapussa and Vallika (Tapassu and Bhalluka) are considered as the founders of the Girihandu

16. MV, XXV, 7-15.

17. MV, XXIII, 16-17.

18. The word 'damila' is frequently used in the chronicles of Sri Lanka as a general term for inhabitants of the Peninsular Indian Kingdoms South of the Vindhya-Sathpura range.

19. MV, XXV, 16-17.

Dagoba, a later Mahayana shrine in Sri Lanka.²⁰

Both the Dīpavamsa and Mahāvamsa refer to the killing of thirty-two kings by the son of Kakavanna Tissa.²¹ The two references differ only in detail and the latter states that these thirty-two kings were Tamils. On the basis of this evidence it seems reasonable to assume that there were several semi-independent chiefs in the area north of Rohana when Elara was the foremost ruler in Rajarata and Dutthagamani in Rohana; perhaps Dutthagamani before striking the final blow at Elara's capital, subjugated these semi-independent chiefs in his attempt to unify the island.

In the final battle, Elara fell, pierced by his rival's dart, and subsequently Dutthagamani united Sri Lanka under one royal umbrella. He had funeral rites performed for his defeated enemy. Marking the site of his cremation for posterity he decreed that no one, not even the princes of the land, should pass by the monument without doing honour to the dead king. The Mahāvamsa noted that "even to this day princess of Lanka, when they draw near to this place, are wont to silence their music because of this honour."²² But time has dealt harshly with Elara's monument. It has disappeared and perhaps the back garden of a government medical officer's residence now contains all that is left of it.

The Mahāvamsa account states that Dutthagamani's campaign against Elara assumed the character of a holy war, the sole objective of which was the perpetuation and glorification of Buddhism. It further states that a band of five hundred bhikkhus from Tissamaharama monastery accompanied the army and that Viharadevi accompanied her son and shared the perils and hardships of the campaign together with the

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20. Epigraphia Zeylanica, IV, pp.153 ff; also see: A.D.T.E.
 20. Perera, "The Lineage of Elara, King of Anuradhapura and his Possible Relationship With the Aryan Predecessors of the Ruling House of Ceylon", Vidyodaya Journal of Arts, Science and Letters, Vol.III, No.2, July 1970, p.128.
21. DV, XVIII, 53-54; MV, XXV, 75.
22. MV, XXV, 73-74.

ordinary soldiers.²³ If the Mahāvamsa statement represents a historical event, by allowing five hundred ascetics to accompany Dutthagamani to war, the brotherhood responded in blatant contradiction to Buddha's measure forbidding monks to witness army parades and reviews. Not merely do they witness here, but actually participate in the very activity of war.²⁴ On the other hand, the bhikkhu participation in war may have been an innovation by the Mahāvamsa author or the creators of the Mahavihara historical tradition once the political alliance between the Mahavihara fraternity and the king was forged. One of the guiding principles of the Buddhist chronicles of Sri Lanka was the exemplification of the means by which dhammadīpa, or the sanctuary of true religion (Theravada Buddhism) is to be maintained and edified. Accordingly the chroniclers were far less concerned with the historicity of an event than with its significance. In their eyes, Dutthagamani's war was for the protection and promotion of the dhamma to vindicate the Mahavihara and to purify the dhammadīpa. As Bardwell Smith has emphasised; in the Sinhala-Buddhist chronicles, "bare fact was always less important than what the fact signified."²⁵

The whole Dutthagamani-Elara episode of the Mahāvamsa signifies the fact that Dutthagamani, having unified the island, established Buddhism on a very secure material basis, through tremendous royal patronage, by building monasteries and shrines of great magnitude in the Mahavihara complex. The Mahāvamsa author, who belonged to the Mahavihara fraternity, glorified the heroic and 'ideal' aspect of Dutthagamani and was far less concerned with the historicity of certain events and situations than with their significance. In a historical sense no evidence is found in the Mahāvamsa to suggest that Buddhists were persecuted under Elara. On the contrary, the chronicle itself states that Elara was a pious and just king and that, though himself a non-Buddhist, he had patronized Buddhism. Elara's invitation to the bhikkhus of the Cetiya

23. MV, XXV, 1-4; 55-56.

24. Bardwell L. Smith (Ed.) Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka, Chambersburg, 1978, p.18.

25. Bardwell L. Smith (Ed.) The Two Wheels of Dhamma, Chambersburg, 1972, p.32.

mountain, referred to in the Mahāvamsa, may have been for an alms-giving, for some form of religious function, or to seek advice or to solicit support. Unfortunately the purpose of this invitation is not given in the chronicle. But Elara's love of justice, even in the eyes of the chronicler, was stronger than the natural affection for his own son.²⁶ Ironically, Dathasena, one of the warriors of Dutthagamani Abhaya, later entered the Buddhist order after crossing over to South India, the homeland²⁷ of the Tamils and found peace in the monasteries there.

According to the Mahāvamsa, Dutthagamani having unified Sri Lanka for the greater glory of Buddhism, lamented that he had²⁸ been compelled to kill a countless number of human beings in order to achieve this great purpose. Here the Mahāvamsa author has been faced with a dilemma and, in his predicament he has improvised a convenient²⁹ solution. It is said in the Mahāvamsa that when the arhats³⁰ in Piyangudipa knew the king's thoughts they sent eight arhats to comfort him. And they, coming in the middle watch of the night, alighted at the palace gate.³¹ These arhats are said to have assuaged the king's feelings and categorically asserted that all the killings of human beings caused by Dutthagamani in no way hindered his path to heaven.³¹ Their argument was that, among the enemies of Dutthagamani who lost their lives in his war against Elara, there was only one person who had taken the Three Refuges and one who had observed the Five Precepts

26. MV, XXI, 13-33.

27. Saddharmāṅkārāya, (Ed.), Kirielle Gnanawimala, Colombo, 1954, pp. 544-555.

28. MV, XXV, 103-104.

29. arhat is a being no longer subject to rebirth; 'worthy one' in a literal sense.

30. MV, XXV, 105-106.

31. Sagga in Pali and svarga in Sinhala. The concept of heaven is found both in popular and canonical Buddhism. But heaven in Buddhism is not a permanent abode or the ultimate goal as in christianity.

in addition. The rest were "unbelievers³² and men of evil life ... not more to be esteemed than beasts."

Killing a human being on the grounds of his beastly character cannot be justified in terms of classical Buddhism. But the chronicles are not texts of classical dhamma and to expect classical Buddhism or realization of it in them confounds doctrinal and historiographical aspects. Historiographically, the legitimization of Dutthagamani's actions by the arhats rests on two points: those destroyed by the king were non-Buddhists and their destruction was caused for the glorification of the dhamma. As Regina T. Clifford has shown, the first point indicates a powerful Sinhala-Buddhist sentiment in emergence. Lanka must be free of all culturally heterodox, i.e. impure elements, before the dhamma can flourish. The second point reflects the justification of the warrior aspect because the conquests and acts of violence are committed for the sake of the glory of the Sāsana and therefore incur no evil. The full-blown institutionalization of the sangha is also reflected in this stance; in keeping with the concept of dhammadipa, the brotherhood³³ provides the power of the king with legitimate authority.

It is notable that the author of the thirteenth century Thūpavamsa, who drew most of his material from various earlier sources with the bulk of Dutthagamani-saga from the Mahāvamsa account, chose to edit out the content of the message of solace given to Dutthagamani by the arhats. According to the Thūpavamsa, the arhats assuaged the king's sorrow by stating that he need not lament because he had acquired sufficient merit through a countless number of previous births for him to be reborn for the last time³⁴ as the righthand disciple of the future Maithreya Buddha.

32. MV, XXV, 110-111.

33. Regina T. Clifford, "The Dhammadipa Tradition of Sri Lanka: Three Models within the Sinhalese Chronicles" in Bardwell L. Smith (Ed.) Religion and Legitimation of Power, p.43.

34. Thūpavamsa, (Ed.) Denipitiye Jinaratana, Colombo, 1937, p.697.

In order to glorify the achievements of Dutthagamani, as befitting an epic, the author of the Mahāvamsa not only introduced religious and racial tones to it but has also portrayed Gamani's father Kakavanna Tissa and brother Tissa as weak and cowardly characters. According to the chronicler, Gamani at the age of sixteen made known his intention of waging war against Tamils, but was thrice prevented by Kakavanna Tissa. Gamani, by his insulting retort, by sending women's ornaments to his father and by his self imposed exile in the central mountain region (Malaya)³⁵ earns the epithet 'duttha' (the enraged one).³⁶ The story may be a creation of a later age, perhaps by the author of the Mahāvamsa himself, but it signifies the fact that the relations between Kakavanna Tissa and Dutthagamani were strained when the latter was still a youth. Kakavanna Tissa was neither weak nor cowardly. In fact it was he, able ruler that he was, who welded the various kinglets of Rohana into one unit. He brought the Kalani kingdom under his influence by giving his sister Somadevi in marriage to Prince Abhaya who was the ruler in that area.³⁷ Kakavanna Tissa also very tactfully made the kinglets of Seru and Soma accept his suzerainty in Rohana. As Paranavitana has pointed out, it was Kakavanna Tissa who raised an army from among the able-bodied men of Rohana and had it trained. He established workshops for the manufacture of the weapons with which he equipped his soldiers. He had garrisons posted at strategic points along the Mahavali river. He sent his younger son Tissa to Dīghavapi and a son, named Dīghabhaya (who subsequently went over to Elara's camp) from

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35. The Rājāvaliya written in the eighteenth century specifically mentions Kotmale as the place of exile of Dutthagamani. (see Rājāvaliya, Ed. Watuwatte Pemananda, Colombo, 1959, p.37) The Myths and legends woven around his stay at Kotmale are analysed in Marguerite S. Robinson, "'The House of the Mighty Hero' or the 'House of Enough Paddy' Some Implications of a Sinhalese Myth", Dialectic in Practical Religion. (Ed.) E.R. Leach, Cambridge, 1968, pp. 122-152.
36. MV, XXIV, 1-7.
37. Dhātuvamsa, (Ed.) Munidasa Cumaratunga, Colombo, B.C.2483, p.30.

a consort other than Viharadevi, was entrusted with the task of guarding the frontier against possible inroads from the ruler of Rajarata. But unfortunately Kakavanna Tissa, like many other fathers with famous sons, suffered by comparison. Perhaps this was felt by some of the monks in mediaeval times and that may explain the importance and detailed treatment given to Kakavanna Tissa and his religious activities by bhikkhu Kakusanda, the author of the thirteenth century Dhatuvamsa.³⁸

Tissa, the younger brother of Gamani, though depicted as an insignificant prince by the author of the Mahavamsa defeated Gamani in their first encounter which took place at Yudaganava near Buttala, immediately after the death of Kakavanna Tissa. The warriors of the dead king did not participate in this battle, and this gives rise to the belief that though the elder Gamani was the legitimate heir to the throne, Tissa was also acceptable, perhaps on account of Gamani's rash behaviour. Dutthagamani had to flee accompanied only by one faithful follower. But in the second encounter Gamani was victorious after heavy fighting. Here the chronicler ridicules Tissa when he states that after the defeat, the latter sought refuge in the cell of the chief monk of a Vihara, hid under the bed and was later carried out of the Vihara in the guise of a dead monk.³⁹ According to the Mahavamsa, the Buddhist sangha subsequently intervened and brought about a reconciliation and Tissa submitted to Dutthagamani who was now free to wage war against Elara.

The attitude adopted towards the Dutthagamani-Elara conflict by Mayurapada thera, the Sinhala author of the thirteenth century work Pujavali, has been discussed by Liyanagamage in an excellent essay entitled "A Forgotten Aspect of Sinhala-Tamil Relations".⁴⁰ Mayurapada thera was a

38. U.H.C.I, Pt.I, pp.150-151.

39. MV, XXIV, 37-40.

40. A Liyanagamage, "A Forgotten Aspect of the Relations Between the Sinhalese and the Tamils; The Upasakajanalankara: A re-examination of its date and authorship and its significance in the History of South India and Ceylon" Ceylon Historical Journal, XXV, nos.1-4; October 1978, p.141.

contemporary of the Indian invader Māgha (1215-1255). Writing with the memory of Māgha's misdeeds fresh in his mind, the author has ascribed similar characteristics to earlier invasions and speaks of them too in an angry and embittered tone. The good words said of Elara are not only absent in Mayurapada's Pūjāvali but he is branded as an unrighteous ruler who destroyed monasteries and the Buddhist order.⁴¹ The Pūjāvali states further that Dutthagamani, having been consecrated after killing one million thirty four thousand Tamils, ruled in accordance with the ten kingly qualities (dasarajadharama).⁴² This text refers to Māgha's reign as demala arajitaya⁴³ (period of Tamil dominance without a king) conveying the sentiment that Māgha was not a legitimate ruler. Equally, by Sinhala Buddhist historiographical standards, Elara was not fit to be the king of Sri Lanka, that he must be removed from office was an irrefutable imperative. The Pūjāvali states "This island of Lanka belongs to the Buddha himself; it is like a treasury filled with the Three Gems. Therefore, the residence of wrong-believers in this island will never be permanent; just as the residence of the Yaksas of ancient past was not permanent. Even if a non-Buddhist ruled Sri Lanka by force for a while the special influence of the Buddha saw to it that his line would never be established. As Lanka is suitable only for Buddhist kings their lines only will be established."⁴⁴

Whatever the ideal position the Buddhist historiographers adopted, many outstanding and pious kings like Amandagamani Abhaya (19-29 A.D.) Voharika Tissa (209-231) Siri Sanghabodhi (247-249) Dhatusena (455-473) and Kittisirimegha (551-569) were killed owing to conspiracies and manoeuvrings for political power among the Buddhist princes and chiefs. In dynastic wars, kings such as Dathopatissa I (639-650) and his rival Kassapa even plundered treasures from monasteries and dagobas to carry on their campaigns.⁴⁵ One king warring against another,

41. Pūjāvali (Ed) Denipitiye Jinaratana, Colombo, 1937, p.697.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p.709.

44. Ibid., p.676.

45. CV, XLIV, 131-142.

the decline of the power of one ruler and the emergence of that of another and feuds between clans are nothing new in ancient history. Furthermore, between the rival Buddhist sects of the Mahayanists of the Abhayagirivihara and the ultimately victorious Hinayanists of the Mahavihara, a bitter struggle was waged involving kings and counsellors and adding another complication to a period of strife. In the circumstances the fact that the ruler of Rajarata during Dutthagamani's early phase happened to be a Tamil should not lead one to interpret the Dutthagamani-Elara saga as one of serious rivalry and conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. From the semi-mythical Vijaya down to Sri Vikrama Rajasingha, the last Kandyan king, the legitimate kings of the island at various periods established feudal matrimonial ties with Tamil families of South India. Candamukhasiva (43-52 A.D.) and Mahanama (406-428) had Tamil consorts and Queen Anula (B.C.48-44), who was notorious for changing husbands, married Tamil chiefs twice.⁴⁶ There have been Sinhala chiefs who had supported Tamil rulers⁴⁷ and Tamils who had supported Sinhala kings.⁴⁸ Kings like Aggabodhi IV (667-683) satisfied the Tamils in the island by appointing some of them to high office in the State. A few of them, such as Potthakuttha, Potthasata, and Mahakanda appear as benefactors of the Sangha. Aggabodhi IV (unlike Dutthagamani) was not a king who was idealized or glorified by the chroniclers; even so they record the fact that he was held in such high esteem by his subjects that when he died they all mourned for him even preserving the ashes of his pyre in the belief that the remains from the cremation of such a good man had curative properties. Potthakuttha, appointed to high office by Aggabodhi, became a king maker after the death of his benefactor.⁴⁹ Besides, in feudal rivalries among Sinhala princes, some of them such as Ilanaga (33-43) Abhayanaga (231-240), Jetthatissa II (328-337), Aggabodhi III (628); Dathopatissa II (659-667) and Manavamma (684-718) sought the assistance of South India to secure the throne.⁵⁰

46. MV, XXXIV, 15-27.

47. CV, XXXVIII, 38-39.

48. Pūjāvali, op.cit., p.711.

49. CV, XLVI, 1-147.

50. MV, XXXV, 27; XXXVI, 42-50; CV XXXIX 20-21; XLIV, 72-73.

Thus, the balance of forces on the Indian mainland often influenced the turn of events in Sri Lanka. In fact in ancient politics; feudal chieftains, royal princes and religious organisations, which were also part of the feudal structure, played a more important role than ethnic groups. It is interesting to note here that Duṭṭhagamani's warrior, Daṭhasena, who went to South India and entered the Buddhist Order, did so because Duṭṭhagamani had (it is said) given an order to kill him. According to the story, some favourite warriors of Duṭṭhagamani had poisoned the mind of the king against Daṭhasena, saying that the latter posed a threat to his royal authority.⁵¹ Yet what receives most emphasis in the Sinhala Buddhist records regarding non-Sinhala non-Buddhist chieftains and princes are the accounts of the harm caused by them, more particularly to Buddhism and Buddhist institutions. The chroniclers have painted a general picture of Tamils as the inveterate enemies of the Sinhala people and their religion.

The treatment of the Duṭṭhagamani-Elara saga in the three important texts, the Dīpavamsa, the Mahāvamsa, and the Pūjāvali, differs from one another and throws light not only on the development of historiography in Sri Lanka, but also on prejudices that have entered into historical records. The views of the authors of these texts which have had a wide influence on the shaping of contemporary attitudes (both Sinhala and Tamil) have to be re-examined in the context of the circumstances under which each work was written. Special cognizance has to be taken of the purpose of the author, and of the climate of thought prevailing at the time of writing.

II

These three chronicles, particularly the Mahāvamsa and the Pūjāvali have had a profound influence as source-books for the reconstruction of the history of the island. Historians such as Codrington, Mendis and Paranavitana⁵² have treated

51. Saddharmāṅkārāya, op.cit., pp.544-555.

52. see E.g. H.W.Codrington, A Short History of Ceylon, Revised Edition, London 1947; G.C.Mendis, Problems of Ceylon History, Colombo, 1966; S.Paranavitana and C.W. Nicholas, A Concise History of Ceylon, Colombo, 1961.

these sources with a certain amount of caution before extracting historical facts from them. But none of them have viewed the Dutthagāmani-Elāra Saga outside the racial or ethnic framework in which it was set by the chroniclers. The only admirable exception to the traditional approach is found in the Story of Ceylon written by Ludowyk.⁵³ Ludowyk states that his work is a narration of events, but in his narration he has made an exemplary attempt to examine the 'Vijayan myth' and the Dutthagāmani saga with critical acumen, and he has also made a brief study of the social formations in early Sri Lanka.

The religious background used to glorify Dutthagāmani has been examined in brief; by several scholars, including Paranavitana and, in detail, by Alice Greenwald, Regina Clifford and R.A.L.H.Gunawardena.⁵⁴ Of these, Alice Greenwald has gone to extremes in overemphasising contradictions between the ideals of canonical Buddhism and the practical politics of a king at war. Nevertheless these studies have greatly contributed to a better understanding of the nature of the historiography of Sri Lanka.

Most of the history text-books used in schools until recently, related the Dutthagāmani saga in accordance with the Māhavamsa-Pūjāvali tradition. Ceylon and World History by David Hussey; Vimarshana Sahita Lankā Itihāsaya by Handupelpola Punnaratana; Ceylon and Indian History by Ratnasabapathi and Horace Perera; Lankā Itihāsaya by N.K.Sirisena, Purāna Lankāva by Ranawaka and Lokuliyana; Alut Itihāsa Kiyaweem Pota and Lankā Hā Loka Itihāsaya by S.F.De Silva; Lankāva Hā Lōkaya by Somaratna Wijesinghe, and several versions of Lankāva Hā Tadāsanna Rajyayō prescribed for the G.C.E. Ordinary level examination could be cited as examples of texts falling into

53. E.F.C.Ludowyk, The Story of Ceylon, London, 1967, pp.31-36.

54. All in Bardwell L.Smith (Ed.) Religion and Legitimation of Power.

this category.⁵⁵ Some of these texts have even accepted in toto the legend concerning Dutthagāmani's birth found in the Mahāvamsa while others, in their treatment of the subject, have depicted the Tamils as the ancient enemies of the Sinhalese.

Outside scholarly historical works and writings of a text-book nature, some quasi-historical or semi religio-political writings have contributed considerably to the propagation of the Mahāvamsa version of the Dutthagāmani story. Of these, the book titled The Revolt in the Temple, and the writings of Anagarika Dharmapala stand out. The Revolt in the Temple was written to commemorate 2500 years of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, and the author closely follows the Mahāvamsa tradition in interpreting history. In the prologue he states, "The history of Lanka is the history of the Sinhalese race. Neither of the two stories has any extent or significance apart from the other." According to him, "Dutugemunu found his people helpless and dejected with little or no courage and, as was thought, with no future. In a few years he left the country full of fire and full of spirit. He projected his own personality into the brain and arm of every Sinhalese from Ruhuna to Rajarata. He fired the country with a new spirit and made the Sinhalese once more conscious of themselves and their destiny." The author goes back to his feudalistic, religio-cultural roots when he states "If Gemunu had no other claim to fame in this Island, he would have it in the memorable answer he gave to his mother, to the

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55. David Hussey, Ceylon and World History, Book I, Colombo, 1934; Handupelpola Punnaratana, Vimarsana Sahita Lankā Itihāsaya, Colombo, 1964; L.H.Horace Perera and M. Ratnasabapathi, Ceylon and Indian History, Colombo, 1964; N.K.Sirisena, Lankā Itihāsaya, Colombo, 1963; Ranawaka and Lokuliyana, Purāna Lankāva, Colombo, 1959; S.F.De Silva, Alut Itihāsa Kiyaweem Pota, Grade III, 1955; S.F.De Silva, Lankā Hā Loka Itihāsaya, Grade VI, Colombo, 1968, Somaratna Wijesingha, Lankāva Hā Lōkaya, Grade VI, Colombo 1968; Newton Pintu Moragoda, Lankāva Hā Loka Itihāsaya, (Colombo, 1967); Diviyagaha yasassi, Lankāva Hā Āsanna Rājyayo, Colombo 1966; Newton Pintu Moragoda, Lankāva Hā Tadāsanna Rājyayo, Colombo 1966.

question why he "lay curled up in bed". That simple answer has been our problem from the dawn of our civilization to the present day."⁵⁶

Anagarika Dharmapala, the well-known social and religious reformer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century cited the exploits of Dutthagāmani to instil Sinhala sentiments among his followers, as befitting his slogan "Sinhalese ! Awake". In a message to the young men of Sri Lanka he stated "we have to ransack the literature of the science of patriotism to learn to act as patriots should for the preservation of our nation, our literature, our land and our most glorious religion at whose source our fore-fathers drank deep for nearly seventy generations, which has preserved their vitality to fight against foes since the time of our heroic and patriot king, the righteous Dutthagāmani, who with the help of his mother and his patriotic followers, and blessed by the association of the Bhikkhu sangha reinvigorated and revitalized the nation..." In the same message to the young people he has admonished them thus: "Enter into the realm of our King Dutugemunu in spirit and try to identify yourself with the thoughts of that great King who rescued Buddhism and our nationalism from oblivion."⁵⁷

The Sinhala-Chauvinist aspects of the Dutthagamani saga as portrayed in the Mahāvamsa have been given prominence not only in history texts and quasi-historical and religio-political writings, but also in the language texts used in schools in the recent past. The Siksha Margaya Series written by Munidasa Cumaratunga; Kiyaweem Rajaya series by J. Francis Fernando; Siyabasmaga series by K.I. Karunaratna; Maybasa or the Sinhala Mother Tongue Series by A.D. Kaluarachchi, Gemunu

56. D.C. Wijewardene, Dharmavijaya (Triumph of Righteousness) or The Revolt in the Temple, Sinha Publications, Popular Edition, Colombo, 1953, p.25; p.58.

57. Anagarika Dharmapala, Return to Righteousness, A Collection of Speeches, Essays and Letters of Anagarika Dharmapala, Ananda Guruge (Ed.), Colombo, 1965, p.501-510.

reader series⁵⁸ by T.S.Dharmabandu and Situmina series by H.M.Somarathna are a few notable language texts which could be mentioned in this connection. In the language exercises in some of these texts the Sinhala child's mind was biased against Tamils through questions such as "Who was Elara? What were the hardships faced by the Sinhalese during his reign?"⁵⁹

Similarly kavmina, an anthology of poems by S.Mahinda approved as a text for standards VI, VII, VIII contain several poems which kindle 'Sinhala nationalist' feelings.⁶⁰ Even in some of the text-books used to teach Buddhism as a subject, Sinhala chauvinistic sentiments have been aroused by simplyfying the Dutthagamani episode of the Mahāvamsa. A notable example of this is found in a Grade III Buddhism text titled Pāthasāliya Buddhacaritaya.⁶¹ However, it must be stated that with the introduction of the educational reforms of 1972, greater attention has been paid to curriculum planning and the Government has taken over the responsibility for text-book writing. As a result, some improvement in the treatment of such sensitive topics as the Dutthagamani saga could be seen in the school texts. But there is a need for deep and balanced thinking in that direction, in the interest of the nation as a whole.

The Dutthagamani-Elara episode has been recreated by creative artists too, by faithfully adhering to the Mahāvamsa-Pūjāvali tradition. The Tower Hall playwrights Charles Dias, Stephen Lal Pathirana and L.D.A.Ratnayaka have

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58. e.g. see: Sikshā Mārgaya, Reader II and III; Kiyaweem Rajaya, Step III; Siyabasmaga, second and fourth standard Readers; Mavbasa for Grade VI, Gemunu Reader Series III, IV, V; Situmina Reader IV.
59. Sikshā Mārgaya, Second Standard Reader, 1951, p.58.
60. S.Mahinda, Kavmina, Colombo, undated.
61. Veragoda Amaramoli, Pāthasāliya Buddha Caritaya, Grade III, Colombo, undated; Lessons 19 and 20.

dramatized it;⁶² while Rapiel Tennokone and S.Mahinda have recreated it in Sinhala verse.⁶³ Henpitagedara Gnanasiha has elaborated on the Mahāvamsa story in his Pali poetical work Gāmani Gītā which was honoured with a literary award by the Government in 1968.⁶⁴ Besides, the anti-Tamil exploits of Dutthagamani, as glorified in the Mahāvamsa have been quoted at length by Piyadasa Sirisena⁶⁵ to stimulate the religio-cultural sentiments of the Sinhalese.

Thus, it is clear that the Mahāvamsa-Pūjāvali account of the Dutthagamani-Elara conflict has helped considerably to bring about 'Sinhala consciousness'. Similarly, myths and prejudices prevalent, among Tamils have contributed towards 'Tamil consciousness' among the Tamils of Sri Lanka.⁶⁶ A scientific understanding of the early history of both Sinhala and Tamil communities and the separation of myths from history would undoubtedly help in the study of history as a social process and initiate a closer dialogue between the society of today and that of yesterday.

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62. L.D.A.Ratnayake, The History of the Tower Hall Dramas, Colombo, 1972, p.150; p.166; p.228; p.279.
63. Rapiel Tennakone, Sinhala Vamsaya, Maharagama, 1956, S.Mahinda, Lanka Mātā: Jātika Kāvya, Colombo, 1962; Ratnamāli Kāvya, Colombo, 1965.
64. Henpitagedara Gnanasiha, Gāmini Gītā, Colombo, 1968.
65. Piyadasa Sirisena, Mahesvari 3rd edition, 1959, p.10, p.18, p.99; Jayatissa Saha Rosalin, 1961 edition, pp.169-172; Ishta Deviyā, 3rd edition, 1957, p.51, pp.114-115; Dingirimanikā, 7th edition, 1961, p.6; Aṣṭhalōka Dharma Cakraya, fifth edition, 1963, p.247.
66. e.g. see: C.Rasanayagam, Ancient Jaffna: Being a Research into the History of Jaffna, Madras, 1926; C.Sivaratnam, The Tamils in Early Ceylon, Colombo, 1968.

THE SECOND CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SRI LANKA*

W.A.WISWA WARNAPALA

The Constitution, inaugurated on 7th September, 1978, cannot be studied without examining the attitude adopted by the United National Party (UNP) to the Republican Constitution which was promulgated in May, 1972. The UNP, which constituted the main segment of the Opposition in the Parliament of 1970, opposed the enactment of the Constitution and the reasons attributed in support of this stand deserved to be mentioned because of their relevance in the context of the enactment of the Constitution of 1978. They, while accepting that the Soulbury Constitution did not have a purely indigenous character, decided to extend their 'unstinted cooperation in the processes and the procedures determined by the Government to formulate a new Constitution'.¹ Though this position remained the official stand of the UNP during the course of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly it did not prevent them from stating that the political climate in the country was not conducive to the work involved in formulating a Constitution. Another reason was that the people of the country were not provided with ample opportunities to be involved in the process of constitution making, and this, in other words, meant that there was no 'fullest consultation with all sectors of the people'.² The next reason was their opposition to an erosion of rights and liberties of the people. Though they enumerated the 12 points on which they rejected the acceptance of the constitution they stated 'the Government thought fit to proceed with undue haste in the formulation of the Constitution'.³ The restrictions on the rights and liberties, which immediately followed the 1971 insurrection, impaired the capacity of the people to 'concentrate meaningfully on the new constitutional proposals'. The UNP further argued that the opportunities

1. Constituent Assembly Debates. Vol.2, No.11, 22nd May, 1972, Column 888.

2. Ibid, Column 888.

3. Ibid, Column 889.

* This article was prepared for publication in March, 1979.

afforded to the people to study the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly were 'most meagre and that reasonable provision had not been made⁴ to keep the people informed of the constitutional changes. It was on the basis of these views that they stated that the 1972 Constitution did not reflect 'the wishes of the people as consultation with, and involvement of the people, have been most inadequate'.⁵ The authors of the Constitution denied the relevance of these criticisms and gave facts and figures to prove that all sections of the people⁶ truly participated in the formulation of the Constitution. The arguments advanced by the UNP in 1972 are therefore relevant because the constitutional changes of 1977 and 1978 have been introduced without providing opportunities for the people to discuss them. The Second Amendment, with which the Presidential system was inaugurated, was tabled in the National State Assembly on 22nd September, 1977 and the debate on the amendment took place on 4th October, 1977. Article 55 of the Constitution, which empowered the Cabinet of Ministers to refer 'urgent bills' to the Constitutional Court, was utilised and this prevented the people from examining the implications of the amendment.⁷ Article 54(2) provided that a leader of a recognised political party in the National State Assembly, a group of members in the NSA and a citizen of Sri Lanka could raise the question of the inconsistency of a bill within a week of its being published in the agenda of the NSA.⁸ Though this procedure offered ample opportunities for the organised political interests to examine the aspects of inconsistency in the amendment, it was not followed because of the decision of the Government to take refuge in Article 55 of the Constitution. The UNP, which rejected the Constitution of 1972 on the ground that it was formulated with 'undue haste' gave no opportunities for the people to involve themselves in the

4. Ibid, Column 889.

5. Ibid; Column 889.

6. See Wiswa Warnapala, W.A. 'The New Constitution of Sri Lanka, in Asian Survey, Vol.XIII, No.12, 1973, pp. 1179-1192.

7. Article 55 of the Constitution of 1972.

8. Article 54(2) of the Constitution of 1972.

discussion of the constitutional proposals.⁹ The debate on the Second Amendment was ineffective as a result of the weak Opposition in the present Parliament, and consumed only three hours of parliamentary time and six speeches in all were made. This, in fact, has been partially attributed to the failure on the part of the Opposition to debate the Amendment, they walked out of the Chamber, and the discussion, therefore, was confined to five speeches from members of Cabinet rank. The only private member to speak on the subject was S.Thondaman who represents the Indian Tamil community in Sri Lanka.

The inauguration of the Presidential system in February, 1978 on the basis of the Second Amendment demonstrated the desire of the Government to introduce constitutional changes within the context of the 1972 Constitution. The Manifesto of the UNP, which was placed before the electorate in 1977, sought 'a mandate to draft, adopt and operate a new Republican Constitution in order to achieve the goals of a democratic socialist society'.¹⁰ This, in effect, meant that arrangements would be made to promulgate a new Constitution and the conversion of the elected National State Assembly to a Constituent Assembly was to form the basis of the process of constitution making. Such a procedure, though a protracted method was to involve the people and it was perhaps this which encouraged the UNP to rush the Second Amendment through the National State Assembly. The appointment of the Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution in November, 1977 as in the case of the Second Amendment, created the impression that the constitutional strategy of the Government was to amend the Constitution of 1972, and the report of the Select Committee, it was thought, would be embodied in the

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9. Unlike in the case of the Constitution of 1972, the Second Amendment was not published in all the national newspapers; free copies were not made available to organisations and it was not published in the Government Gazette. The Government Publications Bureau, which sold a limited number of copies, made it available to the public only after the Amendment had been passed by the National State Assembly.
10. A Programme of Action to create a just and free society. UNP, 1977, p.10.

Third Amendment. The Select Committee, appointed on 3rd November, 1977, included ten members; seven members from the UNP, two from the SLFP and one from the Ceylon Workers Congress. The members of the TULF, just as they did in relation to the Second Amendment, refused to participate in the deliberations of the Select Committee. A questionnaire on 21 matters was prepared by the Select Committee and the public was asked through the national newspapers to obtain a printed copy of it from the Clerk of the NSA which was to be returned duly completed before 26th December, 1977. The politically conscious citizens, who responded to this invitation by the Select Committee, were summoned before the Committee only if it desired to hear 'oral evidence in amplification of any views' expressed by them.¹¹ Yet another limitation was that these citizens were expected to return the questionnaire within two weeks. The adoption of this procedure, therefore, restricted the involvement of the people in the formulation of the constitutional proposals.

The issues such as the Vice President, fundamental rights, the District Ministers, Consultative Committees in the NSA, the judiciary, the system of proportional representation, the Commissioner of Elections, the parliamentary scrutiny of appointments to high posts, public security and emergency powers, which were included in the questionnaire, constituted the areas intended to be revised by the Select Committee. The Committee held the first meeting on 18th November, 1977 and it, according to the Report of the Select Committee held 16 sittings to examine the 281 written replies to the Questionnaire.¹² On the basis of the written memoranda, the Select Committee summoned deputations from sixteen organisations, the majority of which represented racial minorities and the militant Buddhists.¹³ The only individual who was summoned

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11. See Questionnaire of the Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution.
 12. Report of the Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution. Parliamentary Series. No.14 of June, 1978, p.141.
 13. There were seven organisations representing the interests of the racial minorities; six organisations represented the interests of Sinhala Buddhists. The political parties, which were before the Select Committee, included the SLFP and Jathika Vimukthi Balavegaya.

before the Select Committee was the Ven.Madihe Pannaseeha Maha Nayaka Thera of Vajiraramaya of Colombo. There was limited involvement of the people in the deliberations of the Select Committee, and this was partly due to the haste with which the Committee wanted to conclude proceedings. Though, the Select Committee had been appointed to report on the areas of the 1972 Constitution which need amendment, it subsequently expressed the need to fundamentally change the basic structure of the Constitution.¹⁴ The Committee therefore, stated that 'it was more convenient to formulate the principles according to which the Constitution should be revised in the form of a Draft, rather than to attempt to formulate a multitude of specific amendments to a number of sections of the 1972 Constitution'.¹⁵ This for the first time, revealed that the Government had deviated from its previous strategy to bring about a revision of the Constitution of 1972. It was this strategy of the Government which created a problem for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which, though it participated in the proceedings of the Select Committee, opposed the utilisation of the proceedings of the Select Committee for the promulgation of a new Constitution.¹⁶ The members of the SLFP, who were constituent members of the Select Committee, stated in their dissenting report that the Select Committee, by attempting to draft a new Constitution, was acting ultra vires and outside the scope of the authority given to it by the National State Assembly.¹⁷ They further stated that they would not have participated in the proceedings of the Select Committee if it had been revealed that the purpose was to draft a new Constitution. Mrs.Sirimavo Bandaranayake, in her capacity as the leader of the SLFP, in a letter to the President dated 19th May, 1978, stated that it was only on 19th May, 1978 that they discovered that the Government was

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14. Report of the Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution, p.141.
15. Ibid; p.142.
16. See 'Dissenting Report of the members of the SLFP in the Select Committee', in the Report of the Select Committee, pp. 149-155.
17. Ibid; p.149.

planning to draft a new Constitution.¹⁸ The reply of Mr. J.R.Jayawardena, while referring to the Election Manifesto of the UNP, stated that 'the Select Committee has the right to recommend to the NSA proposals for amendment or repeal of the new Constitution; or to enact a new Constitution to replace the existing Constitution'.¹⁹ The SLFP, therefore, opposed the Report of the Select Committee on the ground that it had prepared a new Draft Constitution and not amendments to revise the 1972 Constitution.

The relationship between the Second Amendment and the Constitution of 1978 needs to be examined as a prelude to the discussion of the nature of the Constitution of 1978. The introduction of the Second Amendment in October, 1977 could not be justified in the context of the subsequent developments relating to the appointment of the Select Committee to revise the Constitution and the promulgation of a new Constitution on the basis of the recommendations of the Select Committee. The utilisation of Article 55 of the Constitution of 1972 relating to urgent bills to rush the Second Amendment through the NSA became a meaningless exercise in the light of the promulgation of a new Constitution. The reason for the Second Amendment to precede the promulgation of the Constitution of 1978 was perhaps the immediate need to replace the Nominal Presidency with an Executive Presidency. The view that this was an immediate need is contestable because though the Second Amendment, became law on 20th October, 1978 with the appointment of J.R.Jayawardena as the Executive President during the period of barely seven months between the inauguration of the Presidential system and the promulgation of the new Constitution there occurred no great change and improvement except for the fact that President assumed responsibility for certain departments like Civil Aviation which had hitherto remained under a Minister. In the case of the Department of Civil Aviation the President acted under Clause 14(2) of the Second Amendment.²⁰ The inauguration of the Presidential system was not accompanied by a reshuffle of the Cabinet of

18. Vide Mrs.Sirimavo Bandaranaike's letter to President dated 19th May, 1978.

19. Vide President's letter to Mrs.Sirimavo Bandaranaike dated May, 23, 1978.

20. Clause 14(2) of the Second Amendment.

Ministers and though this became a subject of political speculation, was postponed till the promulgation of the new Constitution. Though the Second Amendment, referred to such matters as President's Staff and Acting President, effected no such changes. Clause 10 of the Amendment stated that 'the President shall, with the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers, have the power to appoint such officers and advisers as are in his opinion necessary to assist him in the exercise of the powers, functions and duties of his office'.²¹ The appointment of a set of advisers was certain to result in the creation of a super Cabinet, and this by virtue of its close association with the President, could have emerged as one of the important centres of the executive leadership of the President. The possible development of a conflict between the Presidential Advisers and the Cabinet of Ministers was perhaps the reason which later compelled the authors of the Second Amendment to abandon it. The weakening of the role of the Cabinet was yet another reason. No immediate appointment of Presidential Advisers was made because the authors of the Second Amendment were not sure of the role of these advisers vis-a-vis the Cabinet of Ministers and this was amply demonstrated in the changes which they made in regard to this innovation in the Constitution of 1978. Though it incorporated a substantial portion of Clause 10 of the Second Amendment dealing with President's Staff, it dropped the reference to 'advisers', and mentioned 'secretaries' and other officers and staff who are in his opinion necessary to assist him in the exercise, performance and discharge of the powers, duties and functions.²² According to the revision made in article 41(1) of the Constitution of 1978, the officers who are to be appointed 'in consultation with the Cabinet of Ministers', are in the category of public servants.²³

The Constitution of 1978, on the question of an acting President, deviated from the Second Amendment, according to

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21. Clause 10 of the Second Amendment.
 22. Article 41(1) of the Constitution of 1978.
 23. Article 41(4) of the Constitution of 1978.

which the Prime Minister could act in the office of the President.²⁴ The occasion of the President's visit to Australia in February, 1978 to take part in the Commonwealth Regional Conference could have been used to test this clause on 'the acting President' in the Second Amendment by appointing the Prime Minister to act in the office of the President. No such acting appointment was made and Sri Lanka, for the first time after independence, was left without a Head of State resident in the country. The political and constitutional reasons, which led to the abandonment of the idea of appointing an acting President, conditioned the thinking on this matter, which, in the Constitution of 1978, has undergone a considerable change.²⁵ Article 37(1) of the Constitution of 1978 assign the role of an acting President to the Prime Minister. This innovation was in article 37(2), according to which the Chief Justice, in consultation with the Speaker, could make a communication that 'the President is unable to make an appointment' in terms of the conditions in article 37(1) of the Constitution. Then the Prime Minister, on the basis of article 37(2) can assume the role of an Acting President. This shows that in the eventuality of a situation in which the President cannot make the acting appointment due to sudden death or serious illness it is the Chief Justice who makes the communication for the need to make Prime Minister the acting President. The failure to provide for the office of Vice-President has resulted in this cumbersome procedure relating to the appointment of an acting President.

The Constitution of 1978, unlike its predecessor, consists of 24 Chapters which contain a total of 172 articles.²⁶ This document running to 135 pages, has certain unique characteristics, some of which were not included in the Constitution of 1972. The Constitution, which has been formulated in pursuance of the mandate obtained on 21st July, 1977, has given a constitutional status to the (a) twenty four administrative districts, (b) the national flag, (c) the national anthem and (d) the national day - 4th of February. Chapter 11, which

24. Clause 10 of the Second Amendment.

25. Article 37 of the Constitution of 1978.

26. The Constitution of 1972, which consists of 26 Chapters containing 134 articles, ran to 56 pages.

deals with Buddhism, is more or less the same as in the Constitution of 1972 except for the inclusion²⁷ of the word 'Sasana' meaning the Buddhist dispensation. The use of the traditional description 'Sasana' has given more effectiveness to the Chapter on Buddhism. Such innovations indicate that the Constitution of 1978 has gone beyond the conventional framework of a Constitution.

The Constitution of 1978 brought about changes in the executive role of the President and some of them, in my view, represented a significant departure from the changes incorporated in the Second Amendment. It has been clearly stated that the President shall be 'the Head of the State, the Head of the Executive and of the Government, and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces'.²⁸ The President, who holds office for a term of six years, is elected by the people, and he is qualified to seek election only if he has been nominated by a recognised political party. No citizen can aspire to be the President as an independent candidate and this, though provides strength to the organised political parties, restricts the right of the ordinary individual. Though the provision that no person is allowed to seek election to this office on more than two occasions is a salutary one procedure relating to the election of the President seems protracted and cumbersome. The Constitution states that the poll for the election of the President needs to be taken one or two months before the expiration of the term of the incumbent President. Another vital innovation has been the nomination of an Inauguration Day; the 4th February succeeding the date of the election of the President has been nominated for this purpose and this idea has been borrowed from the United States. The interim period, which intervenes before the assumption of office by the new President, and the vacation of office by the outgoing President, is certain to become a politically tense period because policies and directions unacceptable to the new incumbent could be implemented. If the newly elected President fails to assume office on this appointed day in February, the President in office could perform the functions till the Parliament under article 40 of the Constitution elects one of its members as President. This means that the

27. Chapter 11 of the Constitution of 1978.

28. Article 30(1) of the Constitution of 1978.

President in office, in the context of such an eventuality gets his term of office extended and this, according to article 31(4), is implicit in the particular provision. Several important changes came to be introduced in respect of the election of the President. Article 94, which is included in Chapter XIV of the Constitution, has given recognition to a preferential system of voting, according to which the voter enjoys second and third preferences depending on the number of candidates seeking election. This, in other words, means that the voters will have to indicate their preferences in the ballot paper if there are more than two candidates in the field. The election of the President is therefore on the basis of an absolute majority of the valid votes cast by those on the electoral register. The introduction of the preferential system of voting for the purpose of the election of the President represents a departure from the voting tradition with which the country was associated in the last several decades. The adoption of the preferential system of voting with a view to getting the President elected by an absolute majority has been contested by opponents of the Constitution on the ground that the people of this country have been used to a form of election where they were called upon to mark a cross against a symbol identified with a candidate and a recognised political party.²⁹ The Commissioner of Elections, in his observations on the proposed scheme, stated that the preferential system for the election of the President and the continuance of the system of marking a cross against the symbol of a candidate at elections to Parliament and Local Government institutions are certain to confuse the electorate, nearly 20 percent of which is still illiterate. Voters, all of whom are not fully capable even of marking a simple cross against a candidate, are now being asked to state their preference and this, as Dr. N. M. Perera has predicted, is sure to result in spoilt ballots.³⁰ The realisation that difficulties can develop in the future in respect of this form of voting perhaps led to the appointment of a Select Committee of Parliament to revise the Election Law, and some of the matters,

29. Report of the Select Committee, p.151.

30. Perera, N.M. 'President's Powers', in Socialist Nation of 6th August, 1978.

which come within its purview, demonstrate the necessity to change the election procedure relating to the election of the President.

Equally cumbersome is the procedure relating to the removal of the President. Article 38(2) of the Constitution states that 'any Member of Parliament may, by a writing addressed to the Speaker, give notice of a resolution', seeking his removal on the ground that the President has been guilty of (1) violation of the Constitution (2) treason, (3) bribery (4) the abuse of powers of his office and (5) moral turpitude. This kind of a resolution needs the support of two-thirds of the whole number of Members of Parliament and above all, the Speaker must be satisfied that such allegations merit inquiry and report by the Supreme Court. The Speaker will not entertain such a resolution unless it is signed by two thirds of the membership of the whole Parliament. If, however, he is satisfied that allegations merit inquiry and report by the Supreme Court, he will accept the resolution with a majority of the full membership supporting it. This, in effect, means that the Speaker has an important role in respect of this matter. The mere passage of the resolution with a two-thirds voting in support of it is insufficient and the Constitution stipulates that the resolution needs to be referred by the Speaker to the Supreme Court for inquiry and report.³¹ The decision of the Supreme Court is conveyed to the Parliament which, with a two-third majority, votes for the removal of the President. The whole procedure is both cumbersome and complicated and it can have grave political consequences. The initial debate on the resolution in Parliament is certain to take the form of a protracted discussion depending on the extent of support the President commands in the legislature. The President can appear before the Supreme Court and plead his case; he can retain counsel for the purpose. The role of the Attorney General, in this context, has not been defined and it is not known whether he will appear on behalf of the members of Parliament. The inquiry by the Supreme Court, therefore, can take years, and this, in my view, injects uncertainty into the political life of the country. Neither the President nor the legislature can function amicably in the

31. Article 38(2) of the Constitution of 1978.

context of the conflicting situation. The utilisation of this procedure, on the other hand, to remove the President is not in the interest of the growth of conventions associated with an Executive Presidency. The examination of the procedure for the removal of the President shows that it has been done in such a way so as to see that it takes several years and Dr.N.M.Perera, criticising this procedure, thought that it would take nearly two years to complete the process of removal.³² Several critics have argued that the passage of the resolution with a two thirds majority is more than sufficient for the purpose and they saw no necessity to refer the matter to the Supreme Court.

An equally complicated procedure has been adopted in respect of the appointment of an Acting President. Article 40(1) of the Constitution states that if the office of the President falls vacant by death or inability to function in the post due to physical infirmity, Parliament shall elect one of its members as President to function for the unexpired period of the term of office of the President vacating office. This election, which is held within one month from the date of occurrence of the vacancy, will be by secret ballot and an absolute majority of the votes cast is necessary for a person to be elected President. Article 37(1) of the Constitution stipulates the conditions under which the Prime Minister assumes the role of Acting President. According to this article, if the President is out of the island or if he is of opinion that he is not physically fit to carry out the functions of his office, he may appoint the Prime Minister to act for him. It may be suggested that the Prime Minister under the present Constitution assume the role of Prime Minister cum Vice-President. This change is certain to give a different status to the office of the Prime Minister.

The President, in addition to the exercise of the executive power of the people including the defence of Sri Lanka, enjoys a series of powers in terms of articles 33 and 34 of the Constitution. Article 33 enumerates six important areas in respect of which he exercises powers; they included the making of a statement of Government Policy at the commencement of each session of Parliament, presiding at the

32. Perera, N.M. *op. cit*, p.2.

ceremonial sittings of Parliament receiving, recognizing, appointing and accrediting diplomatic representatives, the making of appointments such as that of the Prime Minister, Ministers and Judges of the Supreme Court and the declaration of war and peace. Article 34 stipulates the conditions under which the President grants a pardon and this included the substitution of less severe punishment. There are two Chapters dealing with the powers of the Executive in the Constitution and the provisions in Chapter VIII relate to the powers and functions of the President. According to Article 40 of the Constitution, the President is made responsible to Parliament for the discharge of his powers, duties and functions. The President, who is the head of the Cabinet, appoints the Prime Minister who, in his opinion, commands the confidence of Parliament. The determination of the size of the Cabinet, the assignment of subjects and functions and the appointment of members of Parliament as Ministers are done by the President in consultation with the Prime Minister. The Second Amendment, though it covered this aspect of the Presidential powers, did not refer to the need to consult the Prime Minister.³³ Consultation of the Prime Minister, in this context, is not a constitutional requirement; the observance of this practice depends on the understanding between the Prime Minister and the President. A change in the size of the Cabinet and the changes in the assignment of subjects and functions are done by the President and such changes do not affect the continuity of the Cabinet of Ministers.

While the formation of the Cabinet of Ministers is an important function of the President, the Constitution also provides for the appointment of several categories of Ministers. Article 44 provides for the appointment of the Cabinet of Ministers and the present Cabinet, including the Prime Minister who is in charge of the specific subject of Local Government and Construction, consists of 26 Ministers.³⁴ In addition, the President is in charge of two Ministries - the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Plan Implementation and this, therefore, means that there are 28 Ministries in all. No Cabinet of this size has ever functioned in Sri Lanka

33. See Second Amendment, pp. 7-8.

34. The Cabinet of July, 1977 consisted of 24 Ministries.

since the inception of Cabinet Government.³⁵ The next innovation in the area of Cabinet formation is the provision in the Constitution for the appointment of Ministers in charge of specific subjects, but who are not members of the Cabinet.³⁶ Three such appointments have been already made and they are the Minister for Proscribed Movements, the Minister for Colombo Hospitals and the Minister for the Coconut Industry. These Ministers, though enjoying the status of a Minister, are really Deputy Ministers in charge of a subject and they are expected to work through the Cabinet Minister under whose general authority the respective subject falls. For instance, the Minister in charge of Colombo Hospitals is expected to work through the Minister of Health. This procedure has to be maintained in respect of the submission of Cabinet memoranda. The appointment of District Ministers under article 45(1) of the Constitution created yet another set of Ministers who are responsible and answerable to the Cabinet of Ministers and to Parliament.³⁷ Though there are twenty four districts in the island, only 22 Ministries have been appointed. The constitutional change of 1978, therefore, resulted in the appointment of 51 members of Parliament with the rank of Minister. In addition, there are 28 Deputy Ministers, appointed under article 46(1) of the Constitution, to 'assist the Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers in the performance of their duties'.³⁸ This, therefore meant that a total of 79 members of Parliament enjoy ministerial rank of one kind or another and this was more than half of the membership of the UNP in Parliament.

The Powers relating to the delegation of functions to Ministers who are not members of the Cabinet have been widened under this Constitution and this represented a vital innovation. The Parliamentary Secretaries of the Soulbury Constitution complained that they were not entrusted with any responsibility and the Constitution of 1972, more in the form of a rectification of this anomaly, provided for the appointment of Deputy Ministers to 'assist the Ministers in the performance of their duties pertaining to the NSA and

35. Eight Parliaments of Sri Lanka, 1977. Lake House Publication, pp.8-20.

36. Article 45(1) of the Constitution of 1978.

37. Article 46(1) of the Constitution.

38. Ibid.

to their departments and to exercise and perform such powers and duties which are delegated to them.³⁹ Article 95(2) of the Constitution of 1972 provided for an extension of the responsibility of the Deputy Ministers. The function of delegation is now expanded to cover the Ministers who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers and Article 45(4) of the Constitution empowers any Minister of the Cabinet to delegate 'any power or duty pertaining to any subject or function assigned to him'.⁴⁰ The same power has been conferred upon the Cabinet of Ministers in respect of delegation of powers and duties to the Deputy Ministers. The expansion in the activities of Government and the decentralisation of the administrative apparatus through the medium of the District Minister provided added impetus to this form of distribution of responsibility.

The power of dissolution, in the context of the Soulbury Constitution, created certain political problems and it therefore led to the introduction of specific provisions relating to this issue. The 1972 Constitution, in articles 96 to 100, provided for political stability by carefully enumerating the conditions under which a Prime Minister shall be deemed to have resigned at the conclusion of a General Election. The rejection of the Appropriation Bill, the passage of a Vote of No Confidence in the Government and the rejection of the Statement of Government Policy by the NSA were situations calling for the resignation of the Prime Minister and they, in my view, were written into the Constitution to prevent a Prime Minister from remaining in power without the confidence of the legislature.⁴¹ Article 100(1) of the Constitution of 1972 introduced a constitutional safeguard against the dissolution of Parliament in the case of a rejection of the Statement of Government Policy at the first session of Parliament. The provision was made in the same section for the President to reject the advice of the Prime Minister and thereby prevent a premature dissolution of Parliament. These sections, which were inserted in view of certain experiences

39. Article 95(1) of the Constitution of 1972.

40. Article 45(4) of the Constitution of 1978.

41. Article 99(2) of the 1972 Constitution.

in the past relating to parliamentary stability, have undergone certain changes under the Constitution of 1978. Section 70 of the Constitution of 1978 states that the President shall not dissolve Parliament, which has been elected at a General Election, until the expiration of a period of one year from the date of the preceding General Election.⁴² The Parliament, may however, request the President to dissolve it. Such a resolution needs to be supported by a two-thirds majority. Article 49 of this Constitution states that the resignation or the removal of the Prime Minister necessitates the dissolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.⁴³ One wonders why this procedure was thought necessary because the Cabinet of Ministers though except for the President, it consists of the members of Parliament, is primarily the creation of the President who is the head of the Cabinet. The role of the Prime Minister as the Chief Minister and the agent of the President in Parliament is probably the reason for this provision incorporated in the Constitution. The Prime Minister, who combines the role of a Minister with that of the Leader of the House, is the leader of government business in Parliament. The position of the Prime Minister under the Constitution of 1978 can be compared with the office of the Vice President created in Tanganyika under the Constitution of 1962.⁴⁴ The situation, however, is different if the Prime Minister ceases to function in the course of a General Election and the Cabinet of Ministers can continue to function till the conclusion of the General Election. In the absence of a Minister who can fill the role of Prime Minister article 48(2) states that 'the President shall himself exercise, perform and discharge the powers, duties and functions of the Cabinet of Ministers. This means that in such an eventuality the President can establish a Presidential autocracy in the interim period. The rejection of the statement of Government Policy and the passage of a Vote of No Confidence in the Government became conditions for the Cabinet of Ministers to be dissolved under the 1972 Constitution and they are now incorporated in Article 49(2) of the Constitution of 1978. A safeguard against the adoption of this procedure is incorporated in article 70(1)b of the Constitution. The aim

42 Article 70(1) of the Constitution of 1978.

43. Article 49(1) of the Constitution of 1978.

44. Smith, S.A. *The New Commonwealth and Its Constitutions*. London, 1964, p. 250.

has been to avoid a dissolution of Parliament and thereby prevent political instability in the period immediately after the General Election.

9 The changes introduced in the Constitution of 1978 in respect of representation represented a total break with the past. The Constitution of 1972 sought no changes in the conditions of representation incorporated in the Soulbury Constitution, it introduced an element of democracy into article 70(5) of the Constitution, according to which a person is disqualified if he stands nominated for election⁴⁵ for more than one electoral district at a General Election. Yet another salutary feature was that a member of the NSA could not stand as a candidate for election for any electoral district. Article 91(1) of the Constitution of 1978 included these provisions with one exception, and it stated that a person is disqualified if he 'stands nominated as a candidate for election by more than one recognised political party⁴⁶ or independent group in respect of any electoral district. The retention of the mode of representation devised by the Soulbury Commission by the authors of the 1972 Constitution showed that they did not take into account either the growth in population or its density. The First Amendment, which became law in February, 1975⁴⁷ brought about a change in the basis of delimitation. The introduction of the system of the proportional representation, with no relationship to the form of representation based on the single member constituency system, is an improvement, the implications of which need to be closely examined. Though the twenty four districts have now been given a constitutional status in article 5 of the Constitution, article 96(1) provides for the delimitation of 'Sri Lanka into not less than⁴⁸ twenty and not more than twenty four electoral districts'. Each province may consist of two or more electoral districts. Another consideration has been the recognition of an administrative district as an electoral district. In addition to the number of members which an electoral district is entitled to return on the basis of the number of registered electors, each province, according to clause 4 of Article 96, is entitled to return four members, and this, which

45. Article 70(1) of the Constitution of 1972.

46. Article 90(1) of the Constitution of 1978.

47. First Amendment to the Constitution. 11th February, 1975.

48. Article 95(1) of the Constitution of 1978.

results in an increase of another thirty six members, is an arbitrary increase made without merits or demerits being examined by a Delimitation Commission. The Delimitation Commission is expected to distribute the four seats equitably among the electoral districts of each province and the criterion, which needs to be adopted by the Commission, has not been specified. Article 98(1), therefore, states that all electoral districts will together be entitled to return 196 members. The Constitution, however, provides a scheme of appointment of members in the case of the thirty six members and Article 98(4) stated that 'the total number of electors whose names appear in the registers of electors of all the electoral districts shall be divided by one hundred and sixty. The whole number resulting from such division is referred to as the 'qualifying number' with which the total number of electors whose names appear in the electoral register of the respective electoral district is divided in order to determine the number of members entitled to be returned by an electoral district. A final allocation for each electoral district cannot be obtained on the basis of this scheme because the dividing formula will not result 'in a rounded quotient without a surplus'.⁴⁹ The existence of a surplus indicates that the preliminary allocation, as stated in article 198(4) of the Constitution, has not filled all the 160 seats, and these surpluses, therefore, are used to fill the vacant balance. The electoral district which has 'the highest balance' is to get the first vacancy and in this way the vacancies will be filled until all the 160 seats are filled.⁵⁰ Dr.N.M.Perera, criticising this formula, stated that the electoral district which has an electoral roll lower than 'the qualifying quota' is certain to get priority.⁵¹ Another criticism is that the annual increase in the electoral register has not been taken into consideration and this increase is certain to be reflected in the final 'qualifying quota'. The same change cannot be found in the sparsely populated areas. The preparation of nomination lists on the basis of such changes cannot be undertaken by the political parties because

49. Perera, N.M. 'Proportional Representation', in Socialist Nation, 25th October, 1978. p.3.

50. Article 198(6) of the Constitution of 1978.

51. Perera, N.M. op. cit; p.3.

they need to wait for the Commissioner of Elections, in terms of Article 98(8), to make the final calculations. The novel procedure in respect of the determination of the number of members, therefore, is certainly cumbersome and complicated and above all, it deviates from the electoral tradition of the country.

Article 99 of the Constitution provides the basis for the scheme of proportional representation, the discussion of which needs to be prefaced with an examination of the major objectives which guided the introduction of this scheme. The Select Committee argued that the simple majority principle, which operated for more than a period of four decades in Sri Lanka, was a failure in terms of the accuracy with which it reflected political opinion in the electorates.⁵² The view of the Select Committee was that though the major political parties, secured a sizable part of the total vote, they failed to obtain an equal number of seats in the legislature. For instance, the SLFP, with 36.9 percent of the total vote, obtained 60.3 percent of the total number of seats, while the UNP with 37.9 percent of the total vote secured only 11.3 percent of the total number of seats. The General Election of 1977 reversed this process, and the UNP with 50.9 percent of the total vote was able to obtain 83.3 percent of the seats whereas the SLFP with 29.7 percent of the total vote secured, only 4.8 percent of the seats in the legislature.⁵³ This form of representation, while it distorted the nature of the political opinion in the total electorate was not conducive to political stability.⁵⁴ Though the simple majority principle introduced this distortion it operated in such a way that there were violent swings from one party to the other and such changes always affected the party in power. The authors of the Constitution in devising this scheme of proportional representation, took the performance of the respective political parties at elections into consideration, and the fact that the UNP in particular maintained a basic support base of nearly 30 percent of the total vote. In 1956, where this party experienced its worst debacle it had still secured nearly 29 percent of the votes cast at the election. It was therefore devised to make use of this support base and thereby to ensure 'a reasonable following in the

52. Report of the Select Committee, p.143.

53. Ibid; p.143

54. Ibid; p.143.

legislature in proportion to its strength in the country'. Though this scheme of representation inhibits the emergence of clear majorities, there is the possibility inherent in the system of negotiating and manoeuvring the formation of a Coalition Government.

There are many schemes of proportional representation. One method is to regard the whole country as an electorate and to allot to the political parties a number of seats in proportion to the votes cast for them all over the country. The parties, in the context of such a system, issue lists of candidates in order of preference and they fill the seats obtained by their party. The voters are expected to vote for a party list and this system gives the voter no personal contact with the candidate. In addition, it places greater power in the hands of the central party organisations. The need to reduce the local influence of the candidate could also be attributed to the introduction of proportional representation. The identification of an elected member with a particular electorate led to the development of various pressures on the member and these, like the distribution of political patronage, interfered with his role as a legislator. The list system, however, cannot totally eliminate the emergence of similar trends and the most known and the influential man in the list is certain to be chosen by the voter as the member who must attend to the numerous grievances of the voter. At the same time, the partymen in various local associations are certain to play the role of 'intermediaries' in this connection and it can lead to various kinds of problems including corruption. The reason is that the party organisations, both at national and local levels are primarily interest groups extending loyalty to a numerous variety of parochial interests. A modification of the system of proportional representation usually operates whereby a country is divided up into multi-member constituencies and candidates are elected if they obtain the requisite proportion of the votes cast. This system, as anticipated by the authors of the Constitution, gives rise to an unrepresented surplus of votes and they are collected together and allotted to certain party candidates. It is this system which has been adopted in the Constitution and article 99(1) provides that any recognised political party or any group of independents can submit a list of names in order of priority. The party or the group which polls the highest number of votes in an electoral district is entitled to have the candidate whose name appears first in the nomination list elected. Article 99(2) states

that a political party, which nominates a number of candidates equivalent to the number of seats in the respective electoral district, can increase by one third. The question is whether a party is allowed to produce an incomplete list of candidates and there is no provision in the Constitution to prevent such a deficient list of nominations. Any attempt to impose such a requirement is likely to interfere with the resources of the political parties. Such deficiencies are certain to be examined by the Select Committee which has been appointed to revise the election laws.

The independent candidates, though they have been given recognition in article 99, cannot be expected to form themselves into a group because such candidates profess different political views. Dr.N.M.Perera rightly questioned the necessity to extend recognition to independents in a system in which it could not survive and stated that 'a person is an independent precisely because he cannot fit himself into a group'.⁵⁵ He does not envisage such persons the possibility of being able to form themselves into a group. It is therefore very unlikely that the independent candidate can survive under the scheme of proportional representation. Article 99(5) provides for the cut off point of one eighth of the total votes polled and this means that those parties and groups polling less than this amount are disqualified from having any candidate being elected for the particular electoral district.⁵⁶ The political parties, which do not expect to obtain this qualifying quota, may not enter the election and this, as the Select-Committee mentioned, tends 'to reduce the intensity of the rivalries between candidates of different political parties'.⁵⁷ Though this argument has been advanced with a view to discouraging the formation of mushroom political parties, the cut off point is too high and it 'exceeds the lower limit imposed by any other country with proportional representation'.⁵⁸ The high percentage naturally favours the major political parties at the

55. Perera, N.M. op. cit; p.3

56. Article 99(5) of the Constitution.

57. Report of the Select Committee, p.144.

58. Perera, N.M. op. cit; p.4.

expense of the multiplicity of smaller political parties which have played a significant role in the political system of Sri Lanka. The Select Committee, justifying the introduction of the cut off point of one eighth of the total votes polled, stated that this was adopted because 'under the present system any candidate receiving less than one eighth of the total number of valid votes cast is not entitled to the return of his deposit.'⁵⁹ There is no foundation in this argument because the two systems of representation are so different, and above all, the forfeiture of the deposit under the simple majority principle was needed to discourage the numerous individuals contesting the elections. It is in this article 99(5) of the Constitution that one sees the features which go counter to the very concept of proportional representation. The small political parties, especially those of the Left, which hitherto played a role in Government in association with major political parties, have been cut off permanently from the arena of parliamentary politics. The authors of the Constitution, as the speeches at the debate on the Constitution demonstrated, happily anticipated the elimination of the leftwing political parties.⁶⁰ This, though it serves a purpose from their stand-point in politics, is certain to strengthen the extra-parliamentary roles of these political parties. A cumbersome procedure has been devised to reject the votes polled in support of the disqualified minority parties. The votes polled by these disqualified political parties would not be included in the total number of votes which form the basis for the distribution of seats in the electoral district. According to article (5)b of this article, the reduced total is called 'the relevant number of Votes', and the rejection of a substantial slice of the votes on the basis of this formula amounts to a virtual disenfranchisement of a section of the voting population. This, in itself, is a violation of the principle of proportional representation. The process does not end with the computation of 'the relevant number of votes' and this figure is then divided by the number of seats allowed to an electoral district to obtain 'the

59. Hansard, NSA. Vol.28, No.14 of 8th August, 1978. Columns 1549-1551.

60. Ibid.

resulting number' which, infact, becomes the quota necessary for a party to secure a seat. The adoption of the criteria incorporated in articles 5 and 6 of article 99 is certain to result in a surplus of votes, which are used in the determination of the extra seats required to fill the vacancies in the first distribution of seats. The party with the highest surplus is entitled to the first vacancy and this means that the scheme has been devised in such a way as to confer an undue advantage on the major political parties. Clause 12 of Article 99 gives yet another concession to the political parties by allowing them 'to change the order of priority of the persons whose names appear in the nomination paper'.⁶¹ It further empowers the party to 'substitute the names of other persons in place of those who have died or ceased to be members of such party'.⁶² The next important clause deals with the right of the party to nominate a person in place of a member who ceases to be a member of the party as a result of resignation or expulsion.* This anti-defection clause, though it strengthens the party machine, is certainly not in the interest of the rank and file of the political parties because the party leadership, based on both family and parochial interests, can assume the character of a party autocracy. The political parties, due to their weakness as loose organisations consisting of numerous interest groups, cannot be expected to check the emergence of this trend within the leadership of the major political parties. Another innovation intertwined with this same feature is the abolition of by-elections and this, though it provided an advantage to the party in power, is not at all a democratic feature in a country where people have shown enthusiasm at elections. The argument has been made that by-elections do not represent the mood of the total electorate and Professor A.J.Wilson, despite his understanding of the island's political system, quoted the example of the by-election at Mulkirigala in 1976 in support of the same contention.⁶³

61. Article 99(12) of the Constitution.

62. Ibid;

63. Wilson, A.J. 'New Constitution', in Tribune, Vol.23, No.14 of September, 30, 1978, p.2.

* The courts have the power to divide on the validity of the expulsion for member from a political party. Article 99(13).

The advantages of a by-election are that it offers the voters an opportunity to register their satisfaction or the dissatisfaction with the party in power and it makes the Government responsive and responsible. The authors of the Constitution, however, thought that this democratic principle weakens the confidence of the people in the Government. Such views were not expressed before the Constituent Assembly in 1972. The introduction of the principle of nomination, as demonstrated in the case of the Wattala electorate, is certain to erode the confidence of the people in the institutions of parliamentary government.

Though the supporters of the Constitution hailed the provisions relating to fundamental rights as an 'extensive charter of freedom', the minority communities have not adopted the same view, and it is therefore necessary to examine the relevant provisions to see whether they represent an improvement on the rights enjoyed by the people in the past. The Constitution of 1972 contained three Chapters, which dealt with language, principles of State policy and fundamental rights and freedoms and merely this order has been changed in the Constitution of 1978, which has four Chapters dealing with fundamental rights, language, citizenship and directive principles of state policy and fundamental duties. The Constitution of 1972, in the Chapter on the principles of State policy, adumbrated ten broad objectives which formed the guidelines in the preparation of legislation. Article 16(2) included seven objectives which, taken together crystallised the fundamental perspective of taking steps to 'carry forward the progressive advancement towards the establishment in Sri Lanka of a socialist democracy'.⁶⁴ Article 17 made it clear that provisions contained in Article 16 are not enforceable in any Court, and the Select Committee made the criticism that the enforcement of the fundamental rights was not guaranteed in the Constitution.⁶⁵ Yet another criticism was that they were limited in scope and the Select Committee therefore, stated that they intended to enlarge the scope of the fundamental rights, particularly by recognising the right

64. The Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1972, p.9.

65. Report of the Select Committee, p.147.

to freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and punishment and the right to freedom from torture.⁶⁶ The principles of State policy in the Constitution of 1972 were a set of social and economic objectives and the fifteen principles, which have been embodied in Chapter VI of the present Constitution are of the same character. The basic aim as stated in article 27(2) of the Constitution, is the realisation of a democratic socialist society. The establishment of a just and free society is integral to this basic objective. The economic philosophy, however, is different from that of the Constitution of 1972, which the UNP rejected on the ground that 'it makes a particular economic ideology a constitutional principle'.⁶⁷ The reference to 'the development of collective forms of property' in the Constitution of 1972 has been replaced with a clause which refers to both public and private economic activity. The means of production, distribution and exchange are not to be concentrated and centralised in the State, in the interest of the establishment of a just social order. The objectives included certain characteristics of a socialist society such as equality of opportunity, the elimination of economic and social privileges, the eradication of illiteracy, the abolition of exploitation of man by man, the provision of social security, the promotion of international peace and cooperation and the creation of an equitable international economic order. The question is whether these objectives, which transcend all areas of the State, can be realised by the proposed economic organisation. Another feature of the Constitution is the introduction of a set of fundamental duties and they have been listed as the defence of the Constitution and the law, the promotion of national interest and national unity, the preservation of public property, the respect, for rights and freedoms⁶⁸ of others and the conservation of national riches. This has been devised with a view to educating the people of the need to perform certain obligations to the State.

66. Ibid; p.147.

67. Constituent Assembly Debates. Vol.2, No.11 of 22nd May, 1972. Column 890.

68. Article 28 of the Constitution.

The exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms was made subject to restrictions, and this was done to give effect to the principles of State policy in the Constitution of 1972.⁶⁹ The enlargement in the scope of fundamental rights and the inclusion of nine basic rights and freedoms in article 14(1) of the Constitution made certain changes in respect of the restrictions. The exercise of the fundamental rights recognised in this section have been made subject to restrictions in 'the interests of racial and religious harmony'.⁷⁰ The freedom of associations and the freedom to engage in a profession have been treated in the same way in the interest of the national economy. The most significant innovation in respect of the fundamental rights is the conferment of the rights to seek remedy from the Supreme Court on any infringement of a fundamental right by executive or administrative action.

The language problems, which agitated the minds of legislators in Sri Lanka in the last two decades, attracted the attention of the authors of the Constitution of 1972 and they, in addition to the constitutionalisation of certain pieces of language legislation, introduced three basic divisions known as (1) official language (2) language of legislation and (3) the language of the courts.⁷¹ These changes, represented certain vital concessions but they, as Dr.N.M.Perera stated, did not go far enough due to the predominance of Sinhala chauvinism within the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.⁷² The Constitution of 1978, incorporating certain features of the Constitution of 1972, brought about a number of significant changes, the most important of which was the recognition of Sinhala and Tamil as the national languages of Sri Lanka. This, in effect, means that both Sinhala and Tamil enjoy parity of status and certain segments of the Tamil community⁷³ considered this a step in the direction of communal amity. The recognition of Tamil as a national language has been interpreted as acceptance

69. Report of the Select Committee, p.147.

70. Article 15(3) of the Constitution of 1978.

71. Chapter III of the Constitution of 1972.

72. Socialist Nation of 16th August, 1978.

73. Satyendra, N. 'The Language Provisions of the New Constitution', in Tribune of 14 October, 1978, p.29.

of 'the Tamil community as a distinct nationality with its own language and culture'.⁷⁴ This recognition incorporated in article 19, in the context of the position of Sinhala as the official language, could be interpreted in association with the provisions relating to the use of the national language in Parliament and Local Government institutions, education, administration and the courts. The use of the national languages in Parliament and local government institutions came to be recognised in the early fifties and the Standing Orders, in the case of the Parliament, were amended to provide for it. The significance of this provision is that it guarantees the right of a member of the Tamil community to use his own language in any local authority, irrespective of the area in which this is situated. The medium of instruction in education provided for the use of both Sinhala and Tamil since the introduction of Swabasha. Article 21(2) of the Constitution provides for the introduction of facilities to conduct courses in the medium through which the students were educated prior to their admission to the University. These conditions, which have been given a constitutional status, were in existence in the past but they were not part of the language rights written into the Constitution. The language of administration, which found no place in the previous Constitution, is an innovation of great significance. The Tamil language has been recognised as 'the language of administration for the maintenance of public records and transaction of all business by public institutions in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This demonstrates that a special status has been given to Tamil Language in the administration of these two provinces.' Article 22(2) confers a constitutional right on any citizen, irrespective of the place of his residence in Sri Lanka, to communicate with, receive communications from and transact business with any official of the administration in one of the national languages. This means that the use of Tamil is not confined to the two provinces specifically mentioned in the Constitution. A person, on the basis of the same provision, is entitled to obtain copies of documents, circulars and forms in the respective national language or with a translation. This provision, though certain to impose a burden on the administrative apparatus, ensures the right of a member of a minority

74. Ibid; p.29.

community to deal with the administration without experiencing difficulties due to the absence of a knowledge of the official language. This change is certain to facilitate the transaction of business between the administration and citizens belonging to the Tamil community. The language regulations pertaining to 'examination for the admission of persons to the public and judicial services' have been given constitutional recognition through the provisions incorporated in Article 22(5) of the Constitution. Though a person is entitled to seek admission to the public service through the medium of his national language, he is expected to 'acquire a sufficient knowledge of the official language within a reasonable time after admission to any such Service', and this, therefore, makes no change in the requirement that proficiency in the official language is necessary for a Tamil public servant to remain in the public service. A matter, which the Tamil community resisted, has now been given constitutional protection. The provisions relating to the language of the courts have given a status to the Tamil Language in the courts of the Eastern and Northern provinces. Article 24(2) enables a person to initiate proceedings in Tamil in a court in any part of the country and this is an important innovation because it gives equality of status to the Tamil language.⁷⁵ According to Article 25, the State is expected to provide adequate facilities for the use of the languages, and this provides a safeguard against any attempt to undermine the implementation of the provisions relating to language.

Another novel feature of the Constitution is the inclusion of a Chapter on Citizenship. Article 26(1) states that 'there shall be one status of citizenship known as the status of a citizen of Sri Lanka'.⁷⁶ The distinction between citizenship by descent and by registration came to be introduced by the Citizenship Act, No.18 of 1948, and this piece of legislation, which disenfranchised the Indian community in the island, reached the statute book during the period of office of the UNP. Article 26(3) clearly states that no distinction needs to be drawn between citizens of Sri Lanka for any purpose by reference to the mode of acquisition of such status, and this, in effect,

75. Hansard, NSA. Vol. 28, No.12, Column 1194.

76. Peiris, L.L.T. The Citizenship Law of the Republic of Sri Lanka, Government Press, 1974.

amounts to the complete elimination of the status of a registered citizen. The leaders of the Indian community, though welcoming this provision, thought that no attempt has been made to eradicate the iniquities in the existing citizenship laws.⁷⁷ Article 26(6) of the Constitution imposes a secondary status on the existing citizenship laws. These innovations, which provoked no opposition from the forces of Sinhala chauvinism, did not satisfy certain elements within the party in power. The Government, in introducing these changes in such areas as language and citizenship, has taken steps to rectify the mistakes for which they were partially, if not totally, responsible in the past.

The 1972 Constitution brought about a series of important changes in the Judiciary, and they, in the period of their implementation in the last five years, came to be criticized. The main criticism was that both the structural and procedural changes interfered with the independence of the judiciary. The Select Committee, therefore, stated that 'the independence of the Judges of the Superior Courts should be effectively secured', and with this in view several important changes were recommended in the organisation of the judicial institutions.⁷⁸ They recommended the establishment of Superior Courts, namely the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal and the abolition of the Constitutional Court created by the Constitution of 1972. The argument advanced in support of the latter recommendation was that 'there was no valid reason for the exercise of this jurisdiction by a body other than one of the Superior Courts' and wanted this jurisdiction to be exercised by the Supreme Court. The Select Committee, arguing further on the need to widen the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, wanted such matters as jurisdiction pertaining to the Constitution, interpretation of the Constitution, the protection of fundamental rights against infringement by executive action and consultative jurisdiction.⁷⁹ The Constitution adopted in September, 1978 further widened the jurisdiction of the

77. Vide S.Thondaman's Memorandum in the Select Committee Report. 1978.

78. Report of the Select Committee, p.146.

79. Report of the Select Committee, p.146.

Supreme Court entrusting it with extensive powers of judicial review, and the characteristics of Presidentialism in the Constitution perhaps justified this role.

Chapter XVI of the Constitution, which deals with the Superior Courts, consists of 29 articles, and this includes the part on the Court of Appeal.⁸⁰ Articles 118 to 136 deal with the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, which is 'the highest and the final superior Court of record in the Republic of Sri Lanka', and it, according to article 118, is empowered to exercise jurisdiction in respect of (a) constitutional matters, (b) protection of fundamental rights, (c) election petitions, (d) breach of privilege and final appellate and consultative jurisdiction is vested in the Court. The jurisdiction on constitutional matters, as incorporated in Article 120 of the Constitution, deserves close examination in the light of the abolition of the Constitutional Court. The Supreme Court has been given 'the sole and exclusive jurisdiction to determine any question' in order to see whether any Bill or any provision in such a Bill is inconsistent with the Constitution. A Bill, which proposes to amend the Constitution needs to be approved by the people at a national referendum, and it is the Supreme Court which decided whether such a Bill needs to be approved by a referendum. The Cabinet of Ministers on the basis of article 120, can decide that a bill needs to be passed with a special majority required by article 83 and referred to the people by the medium of the referendum and the Supreme Court exercises no jurisdiction over such a Bill, which, according to the Cabinet of Ministers, needs to be passed with a special majority and the Supreme Court, regarding such a Bill, is required to determine whether this Bill needs the approval by the people at a referendum. It was this which the Supreme Court examined in the case of the Special Presidential Commission Amending Bill in November, 1978.

The Constitution of 1972 laid down the procedure which needs to be followed in referring matters which are inconsistent with the Constitution for decision by the Constitutional

80. Ibid; p.146. Also see Sections 118 to 147 in Chapter XVI of the Constitution.

Court, and it provided that a leader of a recognised political party in the NSA, a group of members in the NSA and any citizen of Sri Lanka can raise such a question with the Speaker who, in turn,⁸¹ is expected to refer the matter to the Constitutional Court. This provision, which widened the process of people's participation in the legislative process, has been narrowed by the present Constitution, according to which the Supreme Court 'may be activated by the President by a written reference addressed to the Chief Justice, or by any citizen by a petition in writing addressed to the Supreme Court'. This needs to be done within one week of the Bill being placed on the Order Paper of the Parliament. The 'citizen' in this Section includes a 'body', which, in effect, means an organisation consisting of citizens. Article 12(2) provides that a Bill, which has been referred for the determination of the Supreme Court, cannot be discussed in Parliament till the decision of the Supreme Court is communicated to the President and the Speaker. The Supreme Court is expected to communicate its decision within a period of three weeks. These provisions closely followed the procedure adopted under the Constitutional Court of the Constitution of 1972. Article 55(1) of this Constitution empowered the Cabinet of Ministers to refer certain Bills 'urgent in the national interest' to the Constitutional Court for expeditious decision within twenty four hours, and the purpose was to prevent the delay in introducing legislation deemed to be urgent. A slight improvement has been made on the time limit which can be extended from twenty four hours to a maximum period of three days.⁸² This provision, with minor changes, has been included in the Constitution of 1978, which, as in the Constitution of 1972, states that such a Bill, if decided inconsistent with the Constitution, can only be passed by a special majority which, here, in this context, means a two thirds majority of the members of the House. The Supreme Court, by its decision on the Universities Bill conveyed to the Speaker on 1st November, 1978, held that three clauses of the Bill were inconsistent with the Constitution.⁸³

81. Article 54(1) of the Constitution of 1972.

82. Article 122(1)c of the Constitution of 1978.

83. Vide Supreme Court's Decision on the Universities Bill. SC No.1 of 1978 in Hansard Vol.1, No.9 of 1st November, 1978. Column 781-785.

The Government, amidst protests from the Opposition, decided to retain the relevant sections and pass the Bill with a two-thirds majority. As in the Constitution of 1972, the decisions of the Supreme Court on constitutional matters are final and conclusive and under article 124 of the Constitution they cannot be questioned before any other institution administering justice. Article 125(1) of the Constitution empowers the Supreme Court with 'sole and exclusive jurisdiction' to hear and determine matters relating to the interpretation of the Constitution and the subordinate courts, dealing with such matters, are subject to this provision. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in matters relating to fundamental rights has already been discussed and all these powers, including those pertaining to the role of the Supreme Court in the country, demonstrate the status of the Supreme Court under the Constitution. It was this pre-eminent position which provoked certain writers to characterise the Supreme Court as a third Chamber of Government and this role, as in the United States, is acceptable in a Federal system. The abolition of the Constitutional Court was a deviation from the French model. The SLFP, in its memorandum to the Select Committee, categorically opposed the detailed provisions relating to the Judiciary and they, in fact, stated that 'one need not incorporate the many provisions of the Court ordinance into the Constitution in order to guarantee independence of the judiciary'.⁸⁴ The dismissal and the appointment of Judges, on the basis of Article 163, attracted the attention of the opponents of the Constitution. Article 163 states that 'all the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts established by the Administration of Justice Law of 1973' cease to hold office with the enactment of the Constitution and this provision, according to Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, was 'an invasion of the innermost sanctum of the judiciary's independence'.⁸⁵ The argument was that the term of office of a Judge of the Supreme Court cannot be terminated prematurely in any circumstances. Yet another view was that the article 163 opened the road to discriminatory selection of Judges for appointment and interfered with the

84. Report of the Select Committee, p.152.

85. See Socialist Nation, Vol. 3, No.3 of 9th August, 1978.

principle of continuity of judicial appointments. This, in effect, was an attempt to pack the upper echelons of the Judiciary. There is a section on 'The independence of the judiciary' and article 107(2), in particular, stated that a judge shall not be removed except by an order of the President made after an address of Parliament and the Speaker will not entertain a resolution for the presentation of such an address unless it is signed by a two third of the total number of members of Parliament. This provides some form of protection for the judges.

The Constitution of 1972, by laying down the requirement of a two-thirds majority for the amendment of the Constitution, injected some rigidity into the Constitution. The Constitution of 1978 incorporated two such rigid requirements; article 82(5) refers to the requirement of a two-third majority while section 83 states that such a bill needs to be approved by the people at a referendum. According to the Select Committee, certain fundamental provisions of the Constitution, though they have been passed with a two-thirds majority, are not to be amended without 'the approval of the people obtained by the employment of the device of the referendum. This procedure needs to be adopted in order to introduce changes in the basic structure of Government (Articles 1-4), the place of Buddhism (Article 9), fundamental rights incorporated in articles 10 and 11, and the extension of the term of office of the President and the life of President (Article 82), and this indicates that certain vital aspects of the Constitution cannot be amended by the legislature. Chapter XIII of the Constitution deals with this question of the referendum, and there are two ways by which a Bill is submitted to the people. The President, on his own, can submit a bill with the certification of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Supreme Court, as stated elsewhere, can rule on that the necessity to obtain the approval of the people through a referendum. Any bill, with certain exceptions, which has been rejected by Parliament, can be submitted to the people by referendum by the President at his own discretion. This is certain to create a conflict between the legislature and the President who, in this context, may have to take a decision to dissolve Parliament. The next important thing is that under this provision, the president submits ordinary bills, and he appeals to the total electorate to give a verdict. This provision has been devised with a view to

preventing conflict between the Government and Parliament. Article 85(3) states that 'an absolute majority of the valid votes cast at a referendum'⁸⁶ is necessary to obtain the approval of the people. Any matter which in the opinion of the President is of national importance can be submitted to the people by the President. This shows that the referendum procedure is not confined to proposals which originate in the legislature in the form of bills. Whether this provision will include issues on which legislation being contemplated is still not clear. All these provisions relating to the device of the referendum, though interfering with supremacy of the elected legislature, enhances the role of the executive Presidency. A measure which has been passed with a two thirds majority, can be repudiated by a verdict of the people at a referendum and this, in effect, derogates from the supremacy of the legislature. The device of the referendum has been made operative in the constitutional systems of the advanced countries. Great Britain made use of this device to solve an issue which cut across political parties, and this provides ample testimony to the fact that the referendum procedure cannot be utilised for all ordinary bills not dealing with fundamentals. The procedure written into the Constitution does not prevent it from being used for such bills. Above all, the use of this procedure demands a certain degree of sophistication and a level of political development, and this, the authors of the Constitution thought, is found in the electorate which is used to changing Governments. The maturity, which the people displayed at General Elections, cannot be expected at a referendum, which, in my view, will not generate the same enthusiasm as in a General Election. The Select Committee, however, thought that the device of the referendum provided 'further recognition'⁸⁷ to the sovereignty of the people. No referendum has been held so far and this, therefore, prevents us from making an assessment of this objective of strengthening the sovereignty of the people.

Certain important changes have been introduced in the area of the public services. The two institutions - the State Services Advisory Board and the State Services Disciplinary

86. Article 85(3) of the Constitution.

87. Report of the Select Committee, p. 148.

Board - have been replaced with a Public Service Commission. Control of disciplinary matters, as under the Soulbury Constitution, has been handed over to the Public Service Commission. The appointment of committees to deal with disciplinary matters became the practice during the period of the Soulbury Constitution, and the same technique, with a few changes, has been written into the Constitution of 1978. The Cabinet of Ministers, under Article 57 of the Constitution, directs the Chairman of the PSC to appoint a committee of the Commission to deal with specific categories of public officers, and even appeals from among public officers could come within the purview of such a committee. The ultimate authority for altering, varying or rescinding any appointment order of transfer or dismissal or any matter relating to disciplinary control was vested in the Cabinet of Ministers, which, as in the Constitution of 1972, enjoys overall control on all matters relating to the public bureaucracy of the island. The next significant innovation is the transplantation of the institution of the Ombudsman. The growth in the activities of the Government and the related expansion in the structures in the first two decades after independence demanded the introduction of this device as a means of safeguarding the interests of the people. The politicisation of the bureaucracy in the last two decades gave further encouragement to this demand for an Ombudsman. The Report of the Select Committee admitted that the existing judicial remedies were inadequate to redress the grievances of the people, and Chapter XIX of the Constitution, which includes the section on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, states that the PCA is 'charged with the duty of investigating and reporting upon complaints or allegations of the infringement of fundamental rights and other injustices by public officers, and officers of public corporations, local authorities and other like institutions'.⁸⁸ The PCA is to be appointed by the President and holds office during good behaviour. His salary will be determined by Parliament and it cannot be diminished during his term of office. This indicates, that he, in reality, will be independent of the Government, and removal is only on the basis of an address of Parliament. The success of the PCA depends to a large extent on the nature of his independence and things such as the remuneration and the prestige conferred on the holder of

88. Ibid; p.146

the office are, therefore, important. In the case of the United Kingdom, the members of Parliament act as 'filters' for the PCA who investigates the complaints and reports back to the respective member of Parliament. This procedure could have been successful in the context of the single member constituency system where the member of Parliament came to be identified with certain local interests. The introduction of proportional representation diminishes 'the local role' of the member of Parliament and this development, in my view, will not make him the 'filter' for the PCA. The PCA has to build a strong tradition of impartial criticism of Government administration, the emergence of which depends largely on the first holder of this office. The adoption of the device of the Ombudsman, in the contest of a growth of political controls over the bureaucracy, as a part of the parliamentary process is certain to result in a loss of efficiency and an erosion of responsibility of the Minister. The innovation, however, is acceptable for Sri Lanka in the context of the erosion of the parliamentary opportunities hitherto enjoyed by the members of Parliament.

Certain features of the economic philosophy of the Constitution were found in the section dealing with the directive principles of state policy. The protection for private enterprise has been given a constitutional status in Chapter XX, which refers largely to foreign investment. The economic philosophy of the Government and the proposal to establish a Free Trade Zone, with foreign investment demanded constitutional provisions such as those incorporated in Article 157 of the Constitution. Any agreement or treaty with a foreign state, which has been passed by Parliament with a two thirds majority as 'being essential for the development of the national economy', has the force of law in Sri Lanka.⁸⁹ It further states that investments in Sri Lanka by foreign States, nationals, corporations, companies and associations are given protection. According to this article in the Constitution, no written law can be enacted, and no executive or administrative action can be taken in contravention of the provisions of such Treaty or Agreement. The security, which the foreign investors seek, has been given constitutional recognition, and this provision derived some inspiration from Investment Guarantee Law which the SLFP wanted enacted a few weeks before

89. Article 157 of the Constitution of 1978.

the dissolution of Parliament in 1977. Article 157 of the Constitution therefore, has been criticised as a neo-colonialist feature which constitutionally establishes 'national enslavement to foreign capital'.⁹⁰ This article, apart from its novelty, is yet another retrogressive aspect of the Constitution.

The strategy of Constitution-making, adopted by the Government of the UNP, demonstrated no faith in generating a discussion on the nature of the changes which they were introducing and this, perhaps was due to the failure to follow the procedures of a Constituent Assembly. The introduction of the Second Amendment created the impression that their constitutional strategy was to introduce amendments and this objective suddenly underwent a change with the appointment of the Select Committee, which, instead of reporting on the areas which need revision and amendment, produced a Draft Constitution. Opportunities were not made available to discuss and examine the various aspects of the draft Constitution and no national newspaper published the document in its entirety. This further curtailed the discussion of the issues by the general public and the discussion in the legislature did not display the characteristics of a debate on a fundamental law. All this was primarily due to the attitude of the Government which, in effect, introduced the famous article 157 of the Draft Constitution. This article, which the Government was forced to withdraw due to the united opposition of the political parties, made it a serious offence to advocate an amendment of the Constitution otherwise than in the manner provided in the Constitution and the punishment of such an offence was ten years imprisonment and mandatory forfeiture of all property of any such person. This provision, which is draconian in character, was included in the Draft Constitution with a view to emasculating any discussion after it has been adopted. The changes, which are incorporated in the Constitution, bear no relationship to the traditions established in the last four decades and the characteristics of three major constitutional systems of USA, France and the United Kingdom have been brought together to formulate the Constitution. The mixture of constitutional provisions unique

90. Socialist Nation. Vol.3, No.28 of 26th July, 1978.

to the history and traditions of different countries is certain to result in anomalies and they are sure to interfere with the smooth working of the Constitution. The two amendments the Government introduced within six months of the enactment of the Constitution demonstrated this aspect. The First Amendment dealt with Article 140 of the Constitution and the immediate reason for its introduction was the writ of prohibition issued by the Court of Appeal against the Special Presidential Commission. The Amendment, which declared the judgement and the order of the Court of Appeal in Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's writ null and void, was criticised as an attempt to invade the independence of the judiciary. The Second Amendment, which became law in February, 1979 introduced a new element into the parliamentary system of Sri Lanka. The most unprecedented provision in the Constitution is the one which debars a Member of Parliament from shifting allegiance from one party to another without forfeiting his membership in Parliament. The Second Amendment, which was introduced with a view to creating a special advantage to the party in power, made it possible for a member of the Opposition to resign from his own party and join the party in power.⁹¹ This amendment applies only to the present Parliament and the aim has been to strengthen the ranks of the Government.

91. Perera, N.M. Critical Analysis of the New Constitution of Sri Lanka Government, 1979, p.109.

INTERNATIONALISM VERSUS PARLIAMENTARISM:

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE CEYLONESE TROTSKYITES

Y.R. AMARASINGHE

Radical Marxist parties, irrespective of their particular persuasions, have kept an important place in their practice and ideology for internationalism. Internationalism is a nodal feature of Marxist ideology. In the study of a radical party this becomes an important aspect in view of the dichotomous problem of internationalist aspirations and national considerations. The importance of this aspect is greater still for the radical parties that have shown a tendency to adapt to the national political system. Such adaptation is very likely to create serious problems if the internationalism of the radical party goes beyond the mere ideological link, i.e. to maintaining organisational links with a definite international organisation. In this paper an attempt will be made to outline the development of the links that the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) had with the Fourth International (FI) and some of its Sections and to examine the nature of this relationship in the context of the deradicalisation that took place within the national party.

Ideologically and organisationally the LSSP was linked to the Fourth International until June 1964. Formed as a broad socialist party in 1935 the LSSP had embodied a dominant Trotskyite tendency almost from its inception. This Trotskyite faction was instrumental in successfully moving a party Central Committee resolution condemning the Third International in December 1939. However, the Ceylonese Trotskyites were not to establish organisational links with the Fourth International until 1942. In that year they, in

association with some Indian Trotskyites, formed the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India as the Indian Section of the Fourth International. Although the BLPI disappeared by the end of the 1940's the link with the FI was maintained by the Ceylonese Trotskyites who reorganised themselves in Ceylon as the LSSP. This link was kept up right upto 1964.

The F I was founded in 1938. The movement for the formation of a 'Fourth' International was afoot from about 1933 when Trotsky and his fellow left oppositionists became convinced of their incapacity to "transform" the Third International which was thought "degenerate", into a "vanguard of the International working-class movement". The founding conference was held on 3rd September, 1938, and was attended by about 30 persons representing 10 European countries and "Latin America". The "Transitional Programme" adopted by this Conference "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International" is the basic programmatic document of the world Trotskyite movement.

The relationship between the Fourth International and its Sections had been different from that between the Third International and its sections. The Third International was a very powerful organisation, and it had the resources and strength to make its branches adhere to the policies and directives of the centre. The Soviet power and the organisation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union helped the Third International sustain this strength. It had the first socialist state of the world as its base; behind it was the authority of the Soviet Union. The Fourth International on the other hand had to depend mainly on the ideals of Trotskyism and the person of Trotsky for its strength. It lacked a definite centre whose leadership was accepted by all the affiliated organisations. Paris served as the headquarters atleast in theory; in practice Trotsky functioned as the real centre until his death in the formative stages of the movement. Once the movement lost this main unifying force diverse centrifugal forces started threatening the tenuous foundations of the FI. Although Paris functioned as the official headquarters of the organisation, in France there never developed a Trotskyite movement powerful enough to back it up. This paved the way for the rise of competition from powerful branch organisations which very often undermined the cohesiveness in action of the organisation as a whole. Factional rivalries based on theoretical and personal differences were to plague the

movement throughout its existence. Needless to say that the Fourth International organization never even came near to achieving the power and influence of the Third International in its relations with the affiliated sections. In the main the Fourth International remained the institutional manifestation of the Trotskyist ideal rather than a dynamic international organization. One has to take these factors into consideration in discussing the relationship that the LSSP had with the Fourth International.

The LSSP did not become affiliated to the F.I. until 1942; technically even then the LSSP was linked to the F.I. only indirectly; i.e. as the Ceylon unit of the Indian section of the Fourth International, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India. Direct links between the LSSP and the F.I. were not established until 1950.¹ Before 1942 the LSSP had not attached itself to any International either directly or indirectly. However, it had had associations with at least one Trotskyist organization before that time.

The Socialist Workers Party of America was the first Trotskyist organisation with which the Samasamajists were to associate. At a time when American liberals were concerned with the developing nationalist struggle in India these socialists took an interest in the anti-imperialist and socialist movements of the Indian subcontinent. It was in this context that the Samasamaja movement in Ceylon drew the attention of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In its early references to the LSSP the SWP described the former as a "revolutionary socialist party"² The LSSP was seen as a nationalist fighting organization struggling against British imperialism for full independence in the face of a complaisant national political leadership. The "Socialist Appeal" (the weekly newspaper of the SWP) quoted the third annual conference report of the LSSP and highlighted the anti-fascist character

1. Until 1950 the Bolshevik Samasamaja Party was the official section of the Fourth International in Ceylon. In June 1950 the Bolshevik Samasamajists joined the Lanka Sama Samaja Party thereby making the LSSP the FI section in Ceylon.

2 The Socialist Appeal (New York), 17.3.1939

of the Ceylonese Samasamajists.³ In early 1939 the Socialist Appeal enthusiastically referred to the "aggressive and direct struggles" led by the "radical socialists" in Ceylon. It carried details of the activities of the LSSP during the same period and the main resolutions of the 1938 LSSP conference were published in full; the revolutionary ardour of the Samasamajists was emphasised. The LSSP was presented as a party that relied on revolutionary class struggle as the only means of fighting imperialism; on behalf of the SWP the paper sent its "heartiest congratulations and warmest greetings of solidarity to the revolutionary socialists of Ceylon".⁴ However, it must be noted that even towards the middle of 1939 the LSSP had not gained the recognition of the SWP as one of its fraternal organizations. By the end of 1939 the contacts between the two groups had been established; it is possible that the British Trotskyist group, the Revolutionary Communist League, was instrumental in bringing the LSSP and SWP close to each other. Once the victory of the Trotskyites over the Stalinists within the LSSP in December 1939 came to be known the LSSP was trusted as a fraternal group by the SWP.

The first known direct contact of the LSSP with the American Trotskyists came towards the end of 1939. Mrs. Selina Perera, the wife of N.M. Perera and an important member of the LSSP, stayed and worked with the SWP on her visit⁵ to the United States in November/December 1939. While in the States she made an unsuccessful attempt to meet Trotsky in person in Mexico; the whole trip was organized and financed by the SWP. In an interview given to the Socialist Appeal Mrs Perera expressed her own faith in the correctness of the line of the F.I.

3. The Socialist Appeal 25.4.1939.

4. The Socialist Appeal 16.6.1939.

5. See G.J. Lerski, Origins of Trotskyism in Ceylon, Hoover, New York, 1968, pp. 185 - 187
for correspondence concerning this trip.

According to the paper she denounced the Comintern and she was also against the Second International. At the same time she appeared hesitant to commit her party to the line of the FI. All that she was prepared to say was that her party accepted the policy of the "proletarian internationalism".⁶

These preliminary contacts were further strengthened by the visit of a leading SWP member, Sherman Stanley,⁷ in early 1940. While in Ceylon he had met and had discussions with some LSSP leaders. On his return he reported very sympathetically about the LSSP and described the Ceylonese Socialists as "genuinely nationalist and militant fighters".⁸ By this time the Ceylonese Samasamajists had established contacts with some Indians who were generally described as "Trotskyist". The Indians, however, did not have any links with the FI at the time. These associations with Trotskyists outside Ceylon show a consistent progression of the LSSP towards Trotskyism and towards establishing formal links with the Fourth International. The formation of the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India, Ceylon and Burma in April 1942 (of which the LSSP was the Ceylonese Unit) and its alignment with the Fourth International as its Indian section was an important stage in the development of the LSSP; it marked the culmination of the progression of the LSSP as a Trotskyist party: now it became a partner of a Section of the Fourth International, Trotsky's own party of the World Revolution.

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6. The Socialist Appeal, 17.11.1939. This newspaper report mentioned the interviewed member only as a "Ceylonese Comrade" and did not give any names. But because Mrs. Selina Perera was the only LSSP member who was in the United States during November/December working in association with the Socialist Workers Party it would be reasonable to assume that this was Mrs. Perera.
 7. Sherman Stanley was responsible for South Asian and for Eastern affairs at the SWP headquarters until he left the party in 1940.
 8. The New International, New York, September 1940, pp. 266 - 268.

The Bolshevik Leninist Party of India became affiliated to the Fourth International at a time when it was a scattered underground movement; despite the impressive name, it lacked the proper organization or a base for operations, and its leaders were on the run. This made the strengthening of the formal organizational links between the Trotskyists of the BLPI and the world movement extremely difficult. The centre of the FI, the International Secretariat in Paris, was itself in complete disarray as a result of the Nazi occupation and the persecutions that followed.⁹ Therefore until 1946 the Ceylonese Trotskyists had no real links with the International; only the ideological affiliations remained. But they did continue their relations with the SWP, the only Trotskyist group of any significance to survive the war without suffering major organizational disruption. However, even with the SWP relations did not reach the point of exchanging delegates or participating in each other's affairs directly; relations were merely associational. The SWP was in communication with the group in India, though haphazardly; it received documents from the Trotskyists in India and these were reproduced with very favourable comments in SWP journals. The strikes, lockouts and demonstrations in which their comrades in India took part were given maximum publicity. The SWP attempted to raise funds in order to help the comrades in India and in addition tried to arouse American public opinion to influence British policy there. In general, the SWP served as the "window to the world" for the outlawed Ceylonese Samasamajists who were in India at the time. The fraternal support it extended often accompanied by exaggerated claims as to the struggles and bravery of the BLPI in the face of persecution by the authorities may have helped to create a picture of the BLPI in the minds of the world Trotskyites as a militant revolutionary organization with widespread support in India and Ceylon.

9. M.Pablo, in "Vingt Annees du Quatrieme Internationale", serialised in IVe Internationale, Paris, between January 1958 and the first issue in 1959, states that even during the World War the FI did not cease to function and that it even managed to publish its official journal sporadically and to hold a secret conference.

In 1946, when the FI itself was re-constituted¹⁰ the relations between the world Trotskyist groups became regularised. From this time onwards Paris became the headquarters for the Ceylonese Trotskyites as for many other groups; consequently, the SWP faded into the background as the leading contact of the Ceylonese Trotskyists, just as the SWP journals had done before, so now the publications of the FI centre gave publicity to the activities¹¹ of the Trotskyists in Ceylon; in addition to publicity, guidance and encouragement also now came from Paris. Soon after the re-constitution of the International regular correspondence with the Section in Ceylon was established, and this was to remain an important feature of their relationship for a long time.

When the Trotskyites in Ceylon made remarkable gains at the general elections of 1947, the Fourth International¹² was elated and sent its greetings to the Ceylonese comrades. It also issued a statement which declared that the "electoral victory of the Ceylonese Trotskyists was a source of great jubilation to Fourth Internationalists the world over". The victories were considered as evidence of deep rooted strength of the Ceylonese Trotskyites and as an indication that "at least in the colonies the obstacle of treacherous Stalinism and social democracy could be by-passed".¹³

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10. In April 1946 the first post-war conference of the FI was held in Paris and a new organisational structure comprising an International Executive Committee and an International Secretariat was established.
 11. The activities of the Ceylonese Trotskyites came to occupy a permanent place in the section "News of the Workers' Movements of the World" in the IVE Internationale.
 12. The two Trotskyite groups won 15 seats out of a total of 95 and polled about 317,000 votes between them. The letter sent by the Fourth International to its Section in Ceylon is reproduced in full in The Militant, 13.10.1947.
 13. "La victoire electorale des Trotskyites et le projet d'indépendance de Ceylan", the statement of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. IVE Internationale, Jan - Feb. 1948, pp. 54 - 55.

During this early period the FI was concerned about the split within the ranks of its followers in Ceylon; this was regarded as retrogressive in a situation that was seen as immensely favourable to the growth of their influence. In its congratulatory message to the affiliated group the Bolshevik Samasamaja Party (a copy of which was sent to the "dissidents", the LSSP) after the election successes, the FI stressed the need for an early unification.¹⁴ Until unity was achieved three years later, the FI was to continually exhort its Section to unite with the dissidents in order to build a stronger and more influential Trotskyist party. Whenever there were signs of improved relations between the two Trotskyists groups, the FI became very enthusiastic and urged both the groups ¹⁵ in the name of Trotskyism, to establish permanent unity. Despite this enthusiasm, the FI in the period upto the establishment of organizational unity backed its Section against the dissident Trotskyites. For instance, on the issue of Independence the FI defended the militant position taken by the Bolshevik Samasamaja Party (BSP) against the conciliatory attitude of the dissidents. The FI warned that if ever the dissidents were to be admitted into the FI they should be required to repudiate their position on the Independence celebrations:

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14. "Your victory imposes a grave responsibility and it is our fervent hope that the two parties will work unitedly against the class enemy and that this unity will lead to the eventual fusion of all those who stand on the programme of the Fourth International", The Militant, 13.10.1947.
15. For example the short-lived agreement established on the eve of the 1947 elections made the Fourth International jubilant; it did not examine the nature of this "unity". IVE Internationale, Dec.1946, p.60.

"If dissidents are keen to be integrated in the FI they must clearly repudiate the position taken by their representatives in parliament on the question of Independence The dissident party must place itself within the discipline of the BLPI and the International in its future actions"¹⁶

Naturally, the American Trotskyite party, the SWP, also accepted the view of the FI and joined in condemning the "dissidents" for failing to oppose the "Independence fraud" in any positive way. "The dissident LSSP contributed its mite to this deception of the masses", it said, referring to the event.¹⁷ On the whole, however, the FI was keen to see unification despite these obvious differences in the degree of militancy between the two groups and therefore continued to urge unification.

Early in 1950, after months of negotiations, the two groups reached agreement about unity. What emerged from the "Unification Conference" in June 1950 was the Lanka Samasamaja Party, the Section of the Fourth International in Ceylon. Despite the fact that the unification was achieved with the Bolshevik Leninist group as a partner junior to the "dissident" group, the Fourth International was highly gratified.¹⁸

With the Second World Congress of the FI in 1948, relations between the Ceylonese Trotskyists and the FI attained a higher level; for the first time they were represented at the Centre of world Trotskyism. Colvin R.de Silva, who led the Ceylon delegation was also elected to the Executive Committee of the International, the highest

16. Ive Internationale, Jan - Feb. 1948, p.55

17. The Militant, 29.3.1948.

18. The International was very pleased to extend its recognition to the new LSSP; a letter from the International Secretariat to this effect was read at the Conference. The Militant, 26.6.1950.

executive body of the Fourth International.¹⁹ From this time the Ceylonese Trotskyites were to have regular representation at the centre of the Fourth International, and this brought them closer to the world movement. Between 1948 and 1964 almost all the major conferences of the Fourth International were attended by representatives of the Ceylonese Trotskyites.²⁰ Moreover, for a long period of time between 1948 and 1964 two leading Trotskyists from Ceylon, Colvin R de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, served on the International Executive Committee.

The Fourth International for its part sent leading executives of the International to Ceylon to hold consultations with the leadership in Ceylon and occasionally to address the general membership at conferences. There were five such occasions, twice before and three times after 1960.²¹ The most significant visit was that of Pierre Frank to the crucial June 1964 conference where he addressed the members and advocated a line that was opposed by the majority of the LSSP leadership. The LSSP, as the affiliated Section, was obliged

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19. The Second World Congress held in Paris in April 1948 was attended by about 50 delegates from 20 different countries. The Militant, 10.5.1948.
20. The following were among the Ceylonese representatives who directly participated in the affairs at the International Centre: V.Karalasingham (3rd World Congress, 1951), Bala Tampoe (Executive Committee Sessions in 1959) Edmund Samarakkody (7th World Congress, 1963); Colvin R.de Silva (2nd, 4th and 5th World Congress Sessions) Leslie Goonewardena (4th and 5th World Congress Sessions).

At the time when there were two Ceylonese representatives serving on the International Executive Committee the total membership of the Committee rarely exceeded 10.

21. Earnest Germain, "From Wavering to Capitulation", International Socialist Review, New York, Fall 1964, p.117.

to send its official documents, literature and reports on the general political developments in Ceylon to the International Centre. Occasionally, the International Secretariat would request the Ceylonese Section to apprise the International of a particular situation and to give the Section's view of this situation. By participating in the activities of the International Centre through its own representatives the Section in Ceylon could obtain first-hand knowledge and experience concerning the policy and developments of the International. Besides this, there were regular communications from the Centre to the Section in the form of reports of proceedings, circulars and comments on specific issues. Normally these communications were addressed to the leadership - the Political Bureau and the Central Committee - and not to the members of LSSP; yet, the International expected the members to be informed by the leadership about its policy. Like all other Sections the Ceylonese Section as an affiliated body was expected to make a subscription payment toward the expenditure of the International headquarters in proportion to its organizational strength. ²² Needless to say, the FI gave maximum possible publicity to the successes and encouragement to the activities of the LSSP. The International also opened its theoretical journals, the 4th International (the English language organ of the International Secretariat, published first in Amsterdam and later in Rome, between 1958 and 1962) and IVe Internationale (Paris) to LSSP writers quite frequently; this provided the Ceylonese Samasamajists with world-wide Trotskyite audience. At the International there was only the highest regard for the Ceylonese leaders; they were praised as foremost theoreticians, honest leaders

22. There was special provision in the constitution of the LSSP to make a collection of Rs.1.50 per member annually to be paid direct to the International. Lanka Samasamaja Pakshaye Vyvasthava (The Constitution of the LSSP) u.d. (1958), Section 4 (4), p.2.

and brave fighters against local and foreign reactionaries.²³

As an organization the FI was by no means rigid; in fact as a reaction to the "excessive bureaucracy" of the Comintern, the FI was overconcerned with being democratic.²⁴ The Sections had the "freedom to differ from or oppose the decisions and resolutions of the World Party (i.e. the FI), within the movement. But the Sections had to accept the general line of the International and they were bound by the resolutions and decisions of the World Party",²⁵ once decisions were made. There was an International Executive Committee elected by the World Congress as the highest executive body of the International; the day to day operations were carried out by the International Secretariat, a body elected by the Executive Committee. The International Secretariat had the power to supervise the activities of the Sections; it also had the authority to advise, criticise or make suggestions regarding their policy. The implementation of the decisions of the World Congress and the Executive Committee regarding the organization was also its responsibility. The following section will attempt to examine the nature of the relations between the FI and its section in Ceylon; in passing, the attitude of the other sister organizations towards the LSSP will also be discussed.

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23. In the main Trotskyites outside praised particularly the 3 leaders Colvin R.de Silva, Leslie Goonewardena and Edmund Samarakkody. See for instance the special editorial on Colvin R.de Silva in The Militant, 15.1.1951.
24. See Ernest Germain, Marxism Vs.Ultra Leftism, Key Issues in Healy's Challenge to the Fourth International, Fourth International Publications, 1967, Paris. p.22.
25. Platform of the Left Opposition (LSSP internal Bulletin) mimeo, p.10.

It can be seen that the year 1960 marks a dividing line in the nature of the relationship between the FI and the LSSP. Before 1960 the FI made criticism of the LSSP with the object of improving its revolutionary character. Attempts were made to encourage the party to organize itself along Bolshevik lines; the party was constantly advised to practice the concept of a democratic centralism in its decision making. The LSSP leadership, the larger part of which was engaged in fulltime occupations, was similarly continually exhorted to give more time to party work by the FI. Further, the party was advised against continuing the non-Bolshevik practice of relying on the "general membership conference" as the supreme decision-making body; instead, the FI wanted the LSSP to have a "national congress" comprising of delegates elected by the members. The lack of systematic educational work and the lack of a proper recruitment process extending to the plantation workers were also criticised by the International. Further, attempts were made to have the party leadership integrated into the International. The poor interest of a majority of the leadership in the affairs of the International was seen as retrogressive if the party as a whole was to develop along the lines of revolutionary internationalism. Particular emphasis was placed on this because it was only through the leadership that the International could reach the members, the majority of whom were regarded as possessing a "low degree of real internationalism".²⁶ The International also tried to make the Ceylonese section keep close links with the Trotskyist group in India. Another criticism by the Paris centre was that the LSSP did not make financial contributions in proportion to its organizational strength towards the expenditure of the International. Further, attempts were made to persuade the LSSP to "study the agrarian problem in Ceylon."²⁷ Despite claims to the contrary the FI did not succeed to any significant degree in any of these attempts.

26. Germain, *Marxism Vs. Ultra Leftism*, p. 22.

27. Germain, "From Wavering" *op. cit.*, p. 115.

That the relationship between the two was qualitatively different in the period after 1960 may be made clear by two considerations. First, before March 1960, the International, while it criticised the LSSP's lack of good organization and the poor quality of its internationalism, did not concern itself with the broad political perspectives and the day to day tactics of the LSSP. The LSSP's line regarding these received tacit approval of the International. From 1960 onwards, the International, having failed to help the LSSP to improve its revolutionary character, began to concern itself with the Party's general political line. Secondly, in respect of the style of contact, the International before 1960 attempted to guide the party through "comradely collaboration" at leadership level. The keynote was "correction by fraternal discussion"²⁸ between the International Secretariat and the top leadership of the LSSP. After 1960, a more drastic method of open criticism - thus addressed to all members and even outsiders - came to be used frequently by the International.

The new phase of the relations between the FI and LSSP commenced with the general elections of March 1960. On the eve of the elections the FI as well as other fraternal organisations gave their fullest support to the LSSP. The circumstances of March 1960 generated enthusiasm throughout the international Trotskyist movement, for this was the first occasion on which a Trotskyist party had made a serious bid for power. The enthusiasm owed much to the exaggerated image held by outside Trotskyites as to their sister party's chances. In any case this enthusiasm, while never amounting to direct and formal approval of LSSP tactics, came very close to being such. The National Convention of the SWP (U.S.A.) sent its blessings to LSSP's "valiant organisation and lead of the socialist vanguard in Ceylon" at a time when the latter was preparing for the March 1960 elections.²⁹ Later, The Militant (7.3.1960) gave a very optimistic report on the LSSP's election campaign. The Socialist Labour League (SLL), the militant Trotskyite group in Great Britain, was also very enthusiastic about the elections; it "saluted warmly its sister party in Ceylon on the eve of a historic general.

28. Ibid, p.115

29. The Militant, 13.7.1959.

elections" and pledged complete support. The SLL even promised to discuss "the opening of a fighting fund to help the LSSP".³⁰ The International itself sent its greetings. The 22nd plenum of the International Executive Committee unanimously voted to send the salutations of the Fourth International to the "Leader and member comrades of the Ceylonese section of the FI who are engaged in a decisive struggle for power".³¹

The results of the elections were disastrous for the LSSP and naturally dashed the hopes of LSSP and those of the FI. The FI in fact wondered whether it had been correctly apprised by the LSSP of its electoral prospects. In a letter the International Secretariat suggested "the necessity for a profound examination of the reasons which determined the non-verification of the perspectives of the party and of the International concerning the chances of the party in the elections".³² Not only that, for the first time the FI publicly questioned the correctness of the strategy of the LSSP. Referring to the coming elections (the second elections of 1960) and LSSP's preparations for them, the official journal stated:

"It would be rather dangerous however for the workers' parties to restrict themselves to the framework of the parliamentary aims and not look for a new effective contact with the masses through rigorous extra-parliamentary activity among the workers and peasant masses; and an electoral policy which put forward a radical programme to be realised by the united front of the parties which claim to be working class".³³

Basically, this statement summarised the line the Fourth International had recommended for the LSSP, i.e. more attention for extra-parliamentary mass work and cooperation with working class parties electorally, for the coming period.. So now the Fourth International even went to the

30. The Newsletter, (the weekly newspaper of the SLL), 12.12.1959.

31. Ive Internationale, Jan.1960, p.82 (Emphasis added. Own translation)

32. Quoted in "Ceylon: Towards New Elections", 4th International, Amsterdam), No19, Spring 1960, p.66.

33. Ibid., p.66.

extent of providing the LSSP with alternative policy lines. Furthermore, in addition to the normal method of confidential communications to the leadership, the International Secretariat now adopted the method of open appeal. Although at this time a distinct leftwing existed in the party leadership that advocated a policy similar to that of the FI., the International Secretariat still preferred to not take sides but to appeal to the party as a whole.

After the election defeat the right-wing of the LSSP steered the party toward a line of electoral cooperation with "anti United National Party" forces and of support for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in Parliament, even to the extent of joining in a coalition government. The strategy of anti United National Party cooperation was instrumental in bringing the SLFP into power with a clear majority; now the LSSP adopted a policy of "supporting every activity of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which would carry the country forward along progressive lines" and pledged to "assist the SLFP government to defeat and overcome any and every sabotaging effort of big capital."³⁴ In Parliament the LSSP group supported the Speech from the Throne and the Budget of the first government of Mrs. Bandaranaike. This policy appeared to be a direct violation of the policy line put forward by the FI, and brought further disapproval from Paris and from some sister Sections. The International Secretariat issued a statement publicly dissociating the Fourth International from the new policy of the LSSP.³⁵ This statement expressed disagreement in regard with both the LSSP's recent electoral strategy and its open support to the government of the SLFP. It stressed that the "no contest agreement, extended upto a mutual support agreement, involved the danger of creating illusions about the nature of the SLFP among the great masses". The statement went on to suggest that the party should have voted against the Throne Speech of the SLFP because of the "very moderate character of the government programme and its attitude against nationalisation of plantations".

34. The statement of the Secretary, LSSP, after the general elections. Ceylon News, 4.8.1960.

35. "A declaration of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International on Ceylon", 4th International, Autumn 1960, pp. 53 - 54.

The irony of this situation was that this was a time when the FI had very high hopes for an independent role for the LSSP in Ceylon, not primarily in parliament, but rather in the extra-parliamentary area of the mass movement. Particularly in view of the political instability following S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's death, the apparent collapse of the "liberal bourgeois" SLFP and the "demise" of the United National Party, the FI believed that a left/right polarisation was taking place in Ceylon and that its Section would be the greatest beneficiary. The Draft Resolution for the World Congress of the FI articulated this line of thinking in the general context of the colonial and semi-colonial world. In the main, the Draft Resolution saw the "national anti-imperialist phase of the colonial revolution during which bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships have been able to play a leading part ... giving way to a higher phase".³⁶ This was thought particularly relevant to many "formally independent" countries, in which category Ceylon was included. The Draft Resolution envisaged the possibility of "a touching off of a new revolutionary avalanche" commencing in India and Indonesia. Even in this context Ceylon occupied a special place; it was thought that due to the existence of the LSSP, the Ceylonese revolution may take place well ahead of a general revolutionary outbreak in the region. For greater victories the World Congress wanted the LSSP to strengthen its organizational structure along Bolshevik lines and link itself better with the peasant masses.³⁷ Yet in this atmosphere of great revolutionary optimism in the world Trotskyist movement, the LSSP was found playing second-fiddle in Parliament to a "liberal bourgeois" government.

Despite the warnings and advice that came from the FI through its official journals and direct communications the LSSP continued with its new line towards the SLFP government. It was in this atmosphere that the 6th World Congress assembled in Paris. After discussing the situation in Ceylon, the Congress adopted a resolution that censured the Ceylonese Section for "its erroneous policy line".

36. "Draft Resolution for the 6th World Congress of the Fourth International: The Colonial Revolution, its balance sheet, its perspectives and its problems" 4th International No.10, Summer 1960, p.60.

37. Ibid.

Section for "its erroneous policy line".³⁸ However, the Congress did not altogether exclude support for really progressive measures of any government: but believed that the "general programme of SLFP did not justify the support accorded to it by the LSSP. Further, the Congress appealed to the LSSP "for a radical change in its political course". This censuring by the World Congress of a Section that had not split away was a measure without precedent in the history of the International. This lead of the supreme body of the Fourth International was to be followed by constituent national Trotskyist groups who also censured the policy of the LSSP. The Militant,³⁹ expressing the view point of the Socialist Workers' Party of America, with which the LSSP had enjoyed fraternal relations for a long time, publicly criticised the new political line of the Ceylonese section as "an overturning of its past policy", the SWP appealed to the majority of the LSSP to "reassert their adherence to the tested principles of Marxism and turn to the revolutionary position" they had previously occupied. Despite the disapproval of the world Trotskyite movement, the LSSP was to continue its policy of "general support"⁴⁰ to the SLFP government for about two more years. Consequently, the attitude of the FI towards its deviant Ceylonese section also remained unchanged

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38. The resolution is reproduced in full in IVe Internationale, Jan. 1961 p.75. It stated, i.a. that the "World Congress disapproves the political line adopted by the LSSP following the election defeat of March 1960. The Congress condemns more specifically the vote of parliamentary support expressed on the occasion of the speech from the Throne and the adoption of the Budget by party's representatives in parliament". (own translation)
39. The Militant, 3.10.1960. (Editorial Comment).
40. A Short History of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, LSSP Publication, Colombo, 1960. p.65.

and it did not hesitate to make it public.⁴¹

From about early 1962 for a number of reasons the LSSP gradually moved to a position of opposition to the SLFP government; this change of policy was accompanied by a movement towards unity among the working-class based parties. The culmination of this policy line was reached in August 1963 when the 'leftist' parties, LSSP, the Communist Party and the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna of Philip Gunawardane, came together in a grand United Left Front (ULF) with the aim of forming a government. The new policy of the ULF with its obvious anti-government stand, revived the hopes of the FI regarding LSSP; the new policy was regarded as being "infinitely better" than the policy of support for the SLFP administration. This was of course the line advocated by the FI for LSSP in 1960 as an alternative to the latter's policy of cooperation with the SLFP. The 7th World Congress of the FI of 1963 at which the Section in Ceylon was represented by Edmund Samarakkody, greeted the ULF policy as a "fundamentally correct orientation".⁴² Nevertheless, the Congress, by means of a long letter drew the attention of the LSSP to four important weaknesses:

- (a) Insufficient analysis of the error of 1960;
- (b) Lack of clarity about the extra-parliamentary potentialities of the United Left Front in contrast to its parliamentary features;
- (c) Lack of any public criticism of the opportunist policy of its allies in the ULF;
- (d) Failure to integrate the unions⁴³ of the Tamil plantation workers in the ULF.

41. For instance when the 4th International, No.13, Summer 1961, reproduced a statement of the LSSP's parliamentary group on the "Language Problem of Ceylon", the editor of the journal attached a special note stating that the 6th World Congress of the Fourth International disapproved of the "Actions of the LSSP regarding SLFP" and that the policy of support to Mrs. Bandaranaike's government still remained the general line of the LSSP. p.46.

42. Earnest Germain, "Wavering to.....", op. cit., p.116

43. Quoted by Pierre Frank, La Quatrieme Internationale: contribution a l'histoire du Mouvement Trotskyste, Paris, 1969 p. 99.

With this support, though somewhat qualified, from the International, the LSSP pursued the ULF policy with vigour and the ULF thrived in Ceylon till early 1964. It should be mentioned that at this juncture the Socialist Labour League (SLL), the British Trotskyite group, came to oppose the LSSP's policy line.⁴⁴ The SLL characterised the tactic of "united frontism" as opportunistic; three weeks before the ULF agreement was signed it declared that "the Transitional Programme (i.e. the original manifesto of the FI) gives no place for any United Fronts". Through The Newsletter it appealed to the "hundreds of devoted communists in the LSSP" to reaffirm the "principles and programme of the FI and purge the party of revisionism and the revisionist leaders".⁴⁵ From this time onwards the SLL carried on a policy aimed at isolating the "revisionists" and winning over the "revolutionaries" in the LSSP.

The United Left Front was not to last very long; with the beginning of a new trend towards a coalition government between some left parties and the SLFP, the unity of the United Left Front shattered. As soon as the news concerning manoeuvres for coalition government in Ceylon reached Paris the United Secretariat advised the Central Committee of the LSSP, by letter,⁴⁶ against joining in any coalition with "bourgeois" parties. The letter stated quite categorically that the United Secretariat was opposed to LSSP's entering "any coalition government wherein decisive control is held by a party that has proved time and again its reluctance to move against the capitalist order and furthermore has demonstrated in action its essential anti-working-class

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44. The opposition of the SLL at this stage was not surprising as the LSSP was a leading participant, in 1963, of the newly united and enlarged Fourth International, grouping, the "United Secretariat". The SLL and La Verite group in France did not associate with the new formation; instead they formed a new Fourth International Group, "The International Committee", as a rival International to the one in Paris.
45. The Newsletter, 20.7.1963.
46. The letter dated 23.4.1964 is reproduced in full in Ernest Germain, "From Wavering" op. cit. p.116.

character". Furthermore, in this letter the United Secretariat counterposed as the correct perspective of the period a ULF government based on a socialist programme. Later, in May, the Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the FI endorsed unanimously the recommendations of the letter and decided to pursue the line advocated therein. It also decided to send a leading member of the Committee to Ceylon to attend the impending conference of the LSSP, which would decide the question of joining in a coalition with the SLFP. A few days before the conference, another letter was sent to the members of the LSSP in which the International Executive Committee reiterated more forcefully its earlier position of "no coalition with bourgeois parties".⁴⁷

In Ceylon, the representative of the United Secretariat, Pierre Frank advocated the line of Paris both in his address to the conference and in private and group discussions; the copies of the letter of the United Secretariat were distributed among the members. The Socialist Labour League had sent its own representative to cover the conference⁴⁸ and to pursue its line of isolating the 'reformists' and winning over the revolutionaries to the "international Committee", the International group led by it. Beforehand, the SLL had declared that the "left opposition (of LSSP) should wage a resolute fight which would result in the rout of the leadership or the splitting of the party and the formation of a real Trotskyist

47. Confidential letter dated 25.5.1964 of the International Executive Committee to the LSSP, reproduced in full in Ive Internationale, July 1965, pp. 46-47. The letter stated: "Let the SLFP government appeal to you in vain. We hope that the LSSP as a whole will remain faithful to its long tradition of uncompromising struggle against imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, and that it will successfully resist the manoeuvres of the bourgeois government in order to open the road for genuine representatives of the masses to come to power. No coalition at the expense of socialist principles and the possibility of a socialist victory! Forward with the masses in struggle for a government of the United Left Front!" (Own translation)

48. The SLL representative, G.Healy was refused admission to the conference on the ground that he was not a member of the Fourth International.

party".⁴⁹

The conference decided in favour of joining in a coalition with the SLFP, by a massive majority. What happened at the conference was a great blow to the prestige of the International; the International Executive Committee following the conference, decided to expel from the FI the three LSSP'ers who accepted portfolios in the coalition government. It also suspended all the members who voted for entering into a coalition with the SLFP. But it was not so forthright in disciplining the centrists; the two leaders of the centrist group Colvin R de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, the favourite sons of the International who were also members of the International Executive Committee remained so for two more months before they too were expelled at the insistence of the newly formed Lanka Samasamaja Party (Revolutionary). The new LSSP (R) was admitted as the "Section of the Fourth International in Ceylon" and the LSSP was dis-affiliated, thus bringing an end to a relationship that was over 20 years old.

On the whole what emerges from the above narrative is a relationship of a peculiar kind. It was not a relationship between a dominating Centre and a submissive Section, nor was it one of mutual cooperation between the Center and the Section. The relationship between the FI and the LSSP was more a case of the Centre adjusting, until about 1960, to the line initiated by the Section. Although the links were dutifully maintained, the Section did not allow itself to be controlled either by the International or by the sister Sections. The LSSP particularly valued the tag "the section of the Fourth International in Ceylon".⁵⁰

49. The Newsletter, 25.4.1964.

50. Between 1945 and 1950 when the Bolshevnik Samasamaja Group was the accredited section of the Fourth International, the Lanka Samasamaja group introduced itself as "LSSP, the Followers of the Fourth International". In 1964 after it was expelled from the International the old LSSP called itself "LSSP: the Fourth International Section", despite protests from the newly recognized LSSP (Revolutionary). The Short History of the LSSP p. 50, mentions that it gave up its membership in the Asian Socialist Bureau in March 1955 when it was asked to disaffiliate from the Fourth International as a condition for the continuation of membership.

Even when the differences between the FI and the LSSP were very wide neither party wished the links to be severed. The split in June 1964 occurred only after the left wing of the party led by a LSSP representative to the International Executive Committee broke away from the main party to emerge as a new LSSP (Revolutionary). Apparently, the practices of prior consultation by the Section or sending of instructions by the Centre had not been essential components of this relationship. Very often the Centre was seen to be lagging behind events. Its comments were usually made after situations had actually been resolved, or where an irrevocable course of action had already been embarked upon by the Section. Not that this mattered very much: for even when the Centre was made aware of a situation the most it could do was to give advice or comment on the merits of the views and tactics of the Section. It was upto the Section, LSSP, to accept the guidance or act on its own. Of course, the constitution of the LSSP states very clearly that the party is "bound by" the regulations and decisions of the FI:⁵¹ but this remained only on paper and never entered the practical relationship. Neither did the FI attempt to control or make decisions for the LSSP; its role was one of advisory capacity. If the Section acted contrary to the advice of the Centre there was nothing much Paris could do short of resorting to the extreme measures of suspension or expulsion. The FI possessed few financial or organizational resources and in both these matters it was largely dependent on the constituent Sections. It was not a powerful bureaucratic monolith backed by the authority of a state or a major political organization. Nor were there any "residing agents" supervising the affairs of the Sections affiliated to the International. Because of its general debility, the FI was not in a position to impose its will on any Section either by coercion or by offer of reward.

51. Sec.2 (6), Lanka Samasamaja Pakshaya Vyavasthava, "As the Section of the Fourth International this party accepts the actions and regulations of the Fourth International. Further, this party is bound by the decisions made by the ruling authority of the Fourth International".
(Own translation)

Therefore, the only lever open for the FI in leading its Sections was the lever of ideological attachment of the Sections to the Centre; and this was totally dependent on the level of revolutionary consciousness of the constituent Sections. As far as the LSSP was concerned revolutionary internationalism was at a very low level. Among the members in general this was to be expected owing to the lack of a proper recruitment process, lack of Marxist education, barriers of language and the almost total absence of liaison with the International; but there was very little revolutionary consciousness among the majority of the leadership and this stood in the way of developing any real ideological attachment with the International. The FI constantly reminded the leaders of this lack of integration with the International; yet, even in 1963 a majority of the leadership was not integrated with the International.⁵² The few leaders who were close to the International, ideologically as well as on a personal level (through participation in Conferences etc.), belonged to a minority group in the party that became less and less influential as a force. Hence there was not much opportunity for the International to enforce its will upon its Ceylonese section. As has been pointed out earlier the foundation principle of the FI organization was the concept of "democratic centralism". In its organization, "democracy", there was in plenty but without much "centralism". In practice, the Sections were free to disagree not only before a decision was made but also in action even after a decision was made. At least this was the case regarding the relationship between the FI and the LSSP.

Despite the differences and deviations the two parties remained linked for over 20 years. What were the factors that facilitated this situation? As for the LSSP, it valued the link with FI because it symbolised a link with a world revolutionary movement of which the LSSP was considered to be a part. This link was particularly important in view of the existence in Ceylon of another party competing for the leadership of the working-class movement, namely the Communist Party. Moreover, there was no particular reason for the LSSP to leave the International, for the link did not become an obstacle for its advancement at home; any break, on the other

52. See, Platform of the Left Opposition, op. cit. p.9

hand, could have had the effect of forcing at least a significant number, the dedicated internationalists, out of the party.

The LSSP had maintained Trotskyism as its basic frame of reference from the early 1940's; its spokesmen articulated the Trotskyist doctrines of permanent revolution, bureaucratic degeneration of the socialist states, world revolution, etc; and the party supported the position held by the FI on the problems of Algeria, Cuba, China and Yugoslavia. The LSSP was also an energetic crusader of anti-Stalinism in Ceylon. The FI often commended its polemical publications. Its participation in militant trade union struggles and extra-parliamentary activities like the hartal of 1953 helped the strengthening of the image of LSSP as a "revolutionary" party. The leaders of the FI were proud of the policies the LSSP followed regarding the important issues of national language rights of the minorities and social and economic change in general. Until 1960 the LSSP strategy upheld the need for and the feasibility of a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state in Ceylon. Because the LSSP retained this revolutionary ideological framework the FI was satisfied to have it as an affiliated Section, whatever its domestic political tactics were. The FI did attempt to correct mistakes of the LSSP, but failed almost completely; yet no attempt was taken to break the relationship. This was mainly because of the presence of the above mentioned ideological framework and the existence in the leadership of a minority that was integrated in the International.

Moreover, because of the numerical and the organisational superiority of the LSSP within the International, the allegiance of the LSSP would have been counted by Paris as a great source of strength. Long before a 'big' Trotskyite party like the Socialist Workers' Party of America was able to poll above 50,000 votes in American presidential elections, the LSSP was polling many times that number in Ceylon; between September 1947 and December 1959 the LSSP was the second biggest party in Parliament and a major political force. It was also a likely challenger for power in the country. This was a position well in advance of any other party of the world Trotskyite movement, and made LSSP a very significant force in that movement. Ever since it emerged as an "anti-Comintern" political group, rival Trotskyite groups completed

to win over the LSSP.⁵³ After the split among the world Trotskyites in 1953 the position of the Centre in Paris as the centre of world Trotskyism was itself in question; the continued association of the biggest Trotskyist group of the world, in this context, would have been of immense significance to the International Secretariat.

As has been shown the change in the nature of the relationship between the FI and the LSSP broadly coincided with the transformation that took place within the LSSP. When the Ceylonese Trotskyites were engaged in revolutionary activism in defiance of the legal restrictions placed upon them (in the '40's) the FI hailed them as great revolutionary fighters worthy of being emulated by other Trotskyites. When the LSSP practiced "parliamentarism" while maintaining a militant revolutionary ideology as the basic frame of reference the FI continued to keep it within the movement but made attempts to improve its revolutionary quality. In 1960, the LSSP not only adopted the parliamentary perspective overtly it also made concessions in its ideological frame work. Subsequently, the FI adopted a very critical attitude towards the LSSP, even to the extent of dissociating from it publicly. The relationship became less than fraternal, to end very soon when the party decided to join a party of the bourgeoisie to form a coalition government.

53. As early as 1940 at a time when even the Trotskyist character of the LSSP itself was not very explicit the majority wing of the newly split Socialist Workers' Party (USA) claimed the allegiance of LSSP against the break away group (led by Max Shachtman)., see Fourth International, New York, March 1942, p.82., and May, 1942 p.82. Despite the differences among themselves all the Trotskyist groups were sympathetic to the LSSP. For instance the SLL (of G.B.) which violently opposed the Centre in Paris, supported the LSSP until 1963. The sympathy of the SWP (USA) lasted until 1960. Even when the new LSSP (R) was born as a result of the crisis of the old LSSP, the International Committee, the International headed by the SLL attempted to attract the new party out of the Centre in Paris.

Certainly, there remained fairly important elements of reciprocity in the relationship. The LSSP wanted the revolutionary dressing that the Fourth International could provide; the Fourth International still saw as valuable the numerical and organisational strength of LSSP. These played some role in maintaining the links for so long. But the similarities in the basic ideology and the revolutionary internationalism of a minority of the party leadership were the two main factors that sustained the link.

The experience of the LSSP vis-a-vis the Fourth International and the world Trotskyite movement appeared to have been different from that of some other radical parties in this region, as for example the Communist Party of India, as has been outlined by Kautsky.⁵⁴ In fact the experience of the LSSP appears to have been almost the reverse of what had been found by Kautsky regarding the Communist Party of India. The Indian Communist Party is seen as a foreign transplant that has consistently and almost rigidly taken its lead from Soviet foreign policy. Kautsky maintains that the Communist Party of India shaped its internal policies and strategy according to the instructions and advice from Moscow. But Kautsky seems to view the World Communist Movement as a monolithic structure devoid of ideological and factional disputes. Moreover, the over-concentration on the international dimension prevents him from assessing adequately the importance of the domestic problems on the behaviour of the Indian Communist Party. In any event, the Fourth International and the LSSP are not, by any means, the exact equivalents of the Third International, the Soviet Union, the World Communist Movement and the Communist Party of India. The relationship between the Third International, or the Soviet Union, and a national Communist Party, would be different from that between the small, and not so well-organised Fourth International and one of its Sections, both in scope and in depth.

54. Kautsky, John H., Moscow and the Communist Party of India, John Wiley and sons, New York, 1956.

However, from the point of view of the National Communist Party or the Section of the Fourth International the ideological problems raised by this relationship would be very different.

Ideologically the LSSP identified itself with the policy of the Fourth International but frequently decisions on national strategy and policy were taken independently of this body. Even on international issues there were occasions when it did not strictly follow the lead of the Fourth International, particularly when the LSSP's own national strategy was affected, as in the case of the Sino-Soviet dispute. The LSSP never allowed itself to be dictated to by the International, either in matters relating to its general strategy or its policy. For instance, the priority it gave to considerations of local power strategies was so great that it defied continual opposition, including a specific censure resolution by the World Congress of the Fourth International on its attitude to the government of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party formed in July 1960. It also appears that the more the LSSP adopted itself to the national political situation the less it had become amenable to the advice of the International. It could also be seen that in their relationship the Fourth International had very often acceded to the policy of its Ceylon Section. This flexibility on the part of the International was greatly instrumental in sustaining the link for as long as twenty years. The reciprocity of interests, no doubt, facilitated this. However, when the International reached a point beyond which it was not prepared to adjust, and when the LSSP came to regard its national political strategy as more important than the maintenance of the link with the International, the link itself had to be abandoned.

The case of the LSSP shows that even when the International concerned claims to be more "internationalist" than any before it, the requirement of adjustment to the national political process inevitably leads to the sacrifice of internationalism for national political needs. LSSP experience also reflects on the nature of the Fourth International: (and this is largely valid for other international ideological movements): the difficulty is to maintain any effective control, when the organisation's only asset is the ideology it professes, and the only means of control is the degree of ideological commitment of the Sections.

CONSUMER FINANCES SURVEY DATA ON INCOME DISTRIBUTION
IN SRI LANKA, 1963 AND 1973:
SOME MIS-INTERPRETATIONS*

W.D.LAKSHMAN

In 1977, two articles written by an economist attached to the ILO appeared on the subject of poverty and income distribution in Sri Lanka during the period from the early 1960's to the early 1970's (Lee, 1977a and 1977b). Contesting the views held almost unanimously on the subject until then, the author of these two articles argued that the level of poverty and income distribution in Sri Lanka deteriorated during the above period. The opposite view expressed earlier by many writers (Rasaputram, 1972; Karunatilake, 1974; Jayawardena, 1974; Marga Institute, 1974; Lakshman, 1975) received its statistical support mainly from the Consumer Finances Surveys (CFS) of 1963 and 1973 conducted by the Central Bank (Central Bank, 1964 and 1974). The point of departure for Lee in his refutation of this view also was a re-examination of the same CFS data. He summarises his conclusions derived from this re-examination of the CFS data and his interpretation of other pertinent evidence as follows:

"The results reported ... are grossly misleading for Sri Lanka. Indeed ... the distribution of real income probably deteriorated rather than improved by the substantial margins reported. Independent data all point to a deterioration in the distribution

* Dr.S.A.Meegama's helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper are gratefully acknowledged.

of real income.... data on total consumption expenditure and even on food consumption showed increasing inequality (Lee, 1977b, p.284)¹

These views do not seem to have had much impact on subsequent writings dealing with the Sri Lankan experience in the area of distributive justice (World Bank, 1980). Yet it is necessary to examine critically the views expressed by Lee. This requires, however, an article of a much wider scope than the present one which is intended merely to be a commentary on Lee's interpretation of the statistical evidence in the CFSs of 1963 and 1973 pertaining to income distribution in Sri Lanka.²

It is useful to begin by recalling the analytical procedure adopted by Lee to arrive at the conclusions cited above. Lee starts off by analysing the income data in the CFSs of 1963 and 1973. Instead of making a Lorenze curve analysis of current income data as previous writers on the subject used to do, he computes average real incomes of quintiles of income receivers in 1963 and 1973. For this computation, he used the current incomes recorded in the CFSs deflated by the Colombo Consumers' Price Index which is popularly known as the Cost of Living Index. Serious objections has to be made to his method of deflating current incomes on the grounds that (a) the price index used is grossly inadequate for the

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1. Lee talks about trends in real wages too in this passage. The relevant sentence is omitted here. Having commented on his views on this subject elsewhere (Lakshman, 1980, pp.8-9), I excluded it from the scope of this article. See also Rodrigo's article in this issue of Modern Ceylon Studies.
 2. See (Lakshman, 1980) for an analysis of a wider range of pertinent evidence.

purpose and (b) the use of the same index to deflate incomes of different income classes is analytically incorrect.³ Given the nature of the statistical data base available in the country for use in quantitative economic analysis, the procedure adopted by Lee here is probably the best one could adopt. Lee used his data on trends in absolute mean real income levels of quintiles of income receivers also to derive the trends in relative real income positions of these groups. This had been done by comparing the time trends in absolute income levels of different income groups. The computations made by Lee showed that except for the estate sector, the absolute mean real income had increased at a higher rate for low and middle income quintiles than for the top quintiles. The data showed an actual decline in the real income position of the highest 40% in the urban sector and of the highest 20% in the rural sector. Thus the analysis of the trends in real income of different income classes, albeit the weak foundations on which that analysis rests, showed, as in the case of a Lorenze curve analysis of current incomes, that there was a movement towards more equitable distribution of income during the period under consideration.

This reduction in income inequality, Lee noted, occurred in the contexts of a growing economy. Since "...such a conjunction of growth and changes in income distribution is

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3. The so-called Cost of Living Index (a) is computed using 1952 as the base year; (b) its weights are determined according to 1951 consumption pattern of working class families in Colombo; (c) its basket of commodities is inadequate to measure trends in the cost of living in the country; and (d) for essential commodities under price control, its computation relies on control prices rather than on free market prices. The use of an out-of-date price index based on consumption patterns of one class of people living in one small area of the country to deflate incomes of different classes of people living all over the country is clearly an objectionable analytical procedure.

extremely rare in a developing country", Lee stresses the need "... to ascertain from other data the plausibility of the changes suggested by the Central Bank Survey data on incomes" (Lee, 1977a, p.164). Thus partly "as a cross-check on income data" and partly on grounds that "consumption data might be a more reliable indicator of changes in economic welfare than income data" (ibid., p.164), he sets out to examine changes in the distribution of economic welfare in Sri Lanka over the period, 1963-73, by analysing the CFS data on consumption expenditures. Whereas mean real income for the whole country, according to CFS income data deflated by the Cost of Living Index, increased relatively more rapidly for low income groups, consumption expenditure from the same sources, deflated by the same index, showed a decline for the bottom quintile and the most rapid increase for the top quintile (ibid., p.165).

It is on this basis that Lee talks of serious contradictions in the distributional trends shown by the income data of the CFSs, on the one hand, and those shown by their consumption data, on the other. His tabulations leave no doubt that there are contradictions in the data. His interpretation of the non-CFS evidence that is available makes Lee treat the distributional trends shown in the consumption data on the CFSs as more reliable. Hence his conclusions cited earlier in the paper.

The question whether the 1963-73 trends in Sri Lanka were towards greater distributional equality or otherwise cannot, in these circumstances, be settled purely on the basis of the CFS data. What is attempted here is merely to show that, whatever one expects on a priori grounds, consumption data in this particular instance, are not "a more reliable indicator of changes in economic welfare than income data".

The use of consumption data from the two surveys to indicate trends in welfare levels between 1963 and 1973 can be justified only on the assumption that the data show

the normal consumption patterns of the two years.⁴ Lee, in fact, works on the assumption that "there were no abnormalities in consumption patterns" during the two Survey periods (Lee, 1977a, fn. to Table 61, p.166). He comes to this conclusion apparently because both surveys were conducted during the first quarter of the two years concerned. Though in the same quarter, the Survey of 1963 was conducted in March and April (Central Bank, 1964, p.15) and that of 1973 in January and February (Central Bank, 1974, p.11).

Although there are festivities in January and February of the year, by far the most important national, and to some extent, religious festival of the year, celebrated by easily more than 80 per cent of the population falls in April. The so-called Sinhalese and Tamil New Year in mid-April calls for expenditures far in excess of the normal levels. These additional expenditures are on food as well as on non-food items and are generally distributed between both March and April. In this respect, one must also note that Lee assumed, by oversight, that the reference period in the case of these Surveys was seven days for all commodities. The seven day reference period, however, applied only for food expenditure. For non-food expenditures, on the other hand, the reference period was two months. (Central Bank, 1964, pp.18-19; Central Bank 1974, pp. 8-9). The data on consumption

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4. The question whether a comparison between 1963 and 1973 is able to provide a true picture of welfare trends between early 1960's and early 1970's is yet another matter. The year 1963 was a "normal" year and is able to reflect fairly accurately the conditions in the first half of the 1960's but the year 1973 was hardly a representative year of the first half of the 1970's. It witnessed the beginnings of the oil crisis whose adverse impact on the welfare of the Sri Lankan Society was aggravated by the contemporary world-wide scarcities in the supply of grains and other food items. The worst impact of these world events was not felt by Sri Lanka at the time of the CFS of 1973; yet they were beginning to exert their influence by that time.

expenditure for 1963 and 1973 from the CFSs, under these circumstances, are likely to be non-comparable. The data for 1963 are unlikely to indicate normal monthly behaviour of that year. Consumer expenditure reported in the CFS of 1963 overstates normal monthly consumer expenditure by the additional amounts spent in connection with the celebration of the New Year festival.⁵

Lee seeks additional statistical support for his contention that income distribution in Sri Lanka probably became more unequal between 1963 and 1973 from the CFS data on physical volumes of rice consumed by spending units of different income classes. These data on rice consumption show that (a) per capita consumption of rice dropped in physical terms as between 1963 and 1973 and (b) this drop was greater for low-income households (Lee, 1977 pp.166-7). The drop in the physical consumption of rice in 1973 was no doubt real, as there is other evidence as well for its

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5. The Survey Report itself warns the reader, in no uncertain terms, about this bias in the expenditure data:

"The survey was conducted during the month of March and during the first ten days of April. Data on food were collected for seven consecutive days -- Non-food expenditure data were collected for the two months preceding the survey. This period included the Ramazan festival. All Muslim households that entered the survey reported heavy expenditures on clothing, fuel and light, transport and on other non-food expenditures. The Sinhalese and Hindu New Year fell on 14th April. Though the day of the New Year was out of the survey period, it is likely that most purchases as New Year gifts would have been made at the end of March when wage payments are generally received. There would have been an increase in food expenditure as well because most of the short eats and sweet meats would have been prepared in the early week of April. Considering these facts, it is likely that the expenditure during this period is overestimated to a certain degree" (Central Bank, 1964, p.107)

corroboration.⁶ The extent of over-estimation of monthly consumer expenditure in the 1963 Survey is likely to have been very significant in the case of reported volumes of rice purchased. It is doubtful, therefore, whether much significance can be attached to the drop in rice consumption as reported in the CFSs of 1963 and 1973.

However, there are very good reasons to suspect the reliability of the data of the CFS of 1973 regarding rice consumption. Rice, as is well-known, was subject to an extensive subsidy scheme within a system of rationing during the decade under consideration. In 1963, consumers received 2 measures (i.e. 4 lbs.) of rice on ration per week at cents 25 per measure (Mahalingasivam, 1978, p.76). In 1973, the rationing scheme was quite different. Considered in relation to the rationing scheme which prevailed in 1973, data on rice consumption in the CFS for that year appear to be of dubious reliability.

(a) In 1973, non-income-tax-payers received a free measure of rice per week. (Central Bank, 1973, p.186). This works out at least to 8 measures per person for a two months period. But surprisingly per head consumption of free rice in 1973 by the lowest income class is indicated in the CFS⁷ of 1973 as 2 measures for a period of two months. Also shown in the CFS is a 2 measure consumption of free rice by those earning more than Rs.3000 for a two months period who can be expected to have belonged to the income-tax-paying group. (Table 1).

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6. Issues of rice from the Food Controllers' Department on ration are known to have dropped by a significant margin in 1973 (Central Bank, 1973, p.160), in comparison to 1972 of course.
 7. It is quite possible that, as it so often happened at the time, the low income households sold part of their free ration entitlement. Whether the money income they would have so earned is taken into account in the CFS income data is not known. Since the sale of one's ration entitlement was, strictly speaking, irregular, those who engaged in the practice were unlikely to have declared it to interviewers from an official institution like the Central Bank.

- (b) In addition to the measure of rice given free of charge, one measure was issued per person per week to non-income-tax-payers on ration at a price of Rs.1.00 per measure at the time of the 1973 Survey (Central Bank, 1973, p.160). Income tax-payers received a total ration of 2 measures per week at that price. This "paid ration" would have amounted to about 8 measures per head for a period of two months for non-income-tax-payers and 16 measures for income-tax-payers. But the CFS of 1973 shows that no income group purchased more than 5.05 measures of rice per head per period of two months on "paid ration", the consumption of 5.05 measures being that of the Rs.800-1600 income group (Table 1).
- (c) The CFS of 1973 also shows purchases of unrationed rice by all income groups (Table 1). Unrationed rice was sold at higher prices than rationed rice. It is difficult to see any logic in people, who have not exhausted their ration entitlement, buying unrationed rice at higher prices. It is doubtful whether quality differences in the rice sold within the rationing scheme and outside it can explain such consumer behaviour, particularly that of very low income groups.
- (d) The highest income group shown in the CFS, namely those with two-monthly incomes exceeding Rs.3000 are recorded to have increased their consumption of rice per head per two months' period from 13.2 measures in 1963 to 18.2 measures in 1973. This is quite surprising, since this group, being the highest income class shown, must have been in a position to purchase their maximum rice requirements even in 1963. An increase in their rice consumption by about 40 per cent sounds irrational since rice is, by no means, a rich man's food. Either a significant change had taken place in consumption patterns of these people or the rice consumption figures in the CFSs are suspect.

Table I - Per Head Consumption of Rice:
Rationed and Unrationed, 1963 and 1973

Measures per Two Months

Income Group of Spending Units (Rs. per Two Months)	1 9 6 3		1 9 7 3		
	Rationed	Unrationed	<u>Rationed</u> <u>Free Paid</u>	Unrationed	
0 - 50	13.87	4.30	2.09	3.85	2.73
51 - 100	14.30	4.00	6.20	2.28	2.53
101 - 200	14.75	3.90	6.65	3.58	2.45
201 - 400	14.55	4.75	7.32	4.96	2.90
401 - 800	12.86	5.69	7.49	4.77	3.60
801 - 1600	11.67	6.35	6.96	5.05	4.92
1601 - 2000	11.00	8.00	4.77	4.52	4.62
2001 - 3000	11.49	7.44	3.16	4.95	9.49
Over 3000	7.02	6.17	2.29	3.77	12.18

Sources: Central Bank, 1964. p.110

Central Bank, 1974. p.112

In the above circumstances, the use of CFS-reported volumes of rice consumed per head by different income groups to examine the trends in their welfare as between 1963 and 1973 requires a very cautious handling of data. The sharp drop in per capita rice consumption of the Rs. 0 - 50 income group from 18 measures in 1963 to 8 measures in 1973, on the face of it, should appear very significant in a discussion of trends in relative welfare levels of different income groups. Even if the reported data were of a high degree of reliability, the sharp drop in rice consumption shown for this income group is, however, of very little analytical and statistical significance because the "less than Rs.50" income group included a very small sample of 6 spending units in 1973 as against 193 in 1963.

Considering all the above facts, it is difficult to believe that per head consumption of rice in physical terms dropped between 1963 and 1973 by the large margins indicated in the unadjusted CFS data. Inaccuracies in data, however, do not entirely rule out the possibility of some drop in per head rice consumption, particularly in the case of the low income groups. The scarcities and relatively high prices of rice in 1973 must have produced the natural consumer response of substituting other foodstuffs for rice. Within such a substitution process, the drop in rice consumption, by itself, would not have produced an unequivocal welfare loss. The true welfare implications of a drop in rice consumption would depend on (a) the extent of that drop, (b) the extent of increase in the consumption of rice substitutes and (c) the relative food value of rice and its substitutes. No data basis is available to examine all these aspects of the question at issue. A process of substitution of wheat flour for rice was in evidence during periods of increasing rice prices. Wheat flour enters into consumption expenditures in the form of wheat flour proper and bread. CFSs of 1963 and 1973 provide data on per head consumption of wheat flour exclusive of bread by income groups (Table 2). Wheat flour consumption also dropped in the case of the Rs. 0 - 50 group, which was found to have suffered a very sharp drop in rice consumption. All other income groups (excluding the one next to the highest income group) increased their consumption of wheat flour, with the second income group (Rs.51 - 100) recording the highest per cent increase.

Data on per head consumption of bread are separately available for 1973 but not for 1963. This is so even in the case of the consumption of other rice-substitutes. It is known that there was, in 1973-4, a vigorous drive to promote cultivation of such rice substitutes like yams. Some believe that this yielded positive results and that consumption of yams increased relatively rapidly (Karunatilake, 1978, p.84) but no firm evidence is available to establish that this was so. Opinions vary also regarding the food value of such rice substitutes as yams.

To conclude this discussion of the trends in physical consumption of various food items, the available data on sugar also may be presented (Table 2). Sugar consumption per head dropped for all income classes. In 1963, sugar was freely

available at a very low controlled price but in 1973, it was in a partial scheme of rationing. In that year, sugar was issued on ration at the rate of 1 lb. per head per month at cents 72 per lb. and outside the ration, any amount could be purchased at Rs.1.50 per lb. The 1973 price of rationed sugar was about three times that of the controlled price of sugar in 1963. Outside the rationing scheme, sugar was sold at a still higher price. This also produced a process of replacement of sugar with "sugar-substitutes". The resulting drop in sugar consumption, however, does not appear all that large when considered in relation to the aforesaid overstatement of consumer purchases in 1963. The drop is, moreover, more or less equally distributed among different income groups and, if anything, was slightly more pronounced in the case of high income groups. The welfare implications of the drop in sugar consumption also depend on factors similar to those which would influence the welfare implications of a drop in rice consumption.

Neither the extent of increase in the consumption of sugar substitutes nor their relationship to sugar in terms of food value is known. A side effect of the expansion in the consumption of these sugar substitutes is, however, worth noting. The rise in sugar prices introduced strongly upward pressures on the prices of sugar substitutes. Since the bulk of their production was undertaken at cottage industry level, the rise in their prices and the expansion in their consumption had a favourable impact on relative income positions of the poor strata of society.

A careful study of the detailed tabulations of the CFS consumption data, particularly those of the 1973 Survey, further strengthens the doubts already expressed about their reliability. The case of the lowest income class (Rs. 0 - 50) which, was nevertheless of very small size in 1973, has already been referred to in several connections. Per head consumption in 1973 of rice and wheat flour was the lowest in the case of this income class but their consumption of protein foods like

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8. These are published in separate volumes, constituting the second part of each CFS report.

meat, fish and (tinned) milk per head in that year is reported to have been, surprisingly, much higher than relevant national averages.

Table 2 - Per Capita Consumption of
Wheat Flour and Sugar per Two Months
Period, 1963 and 1973

Income Group - Rs. per Two Months	Wheat Flour (lbs.)		Sugar (lbs.)	
	1963	1973	1963	1973
0- 50	2.6	1.8	4.7	3.4
51- 100	2.2	3.4	4.3	3.3
101- 200	3.6	5.0	4.6	3.3
201- 400	5.2	6.9	5.2	3.5
401- 800	6.1	7.0	6.3	4.0
801-1600	4.0	5.2	7.6	4.7
1601-2000	4.9	5.8	8.8	5.5
2001-3000	4.1	3.6	8.3	5.4
Over 3000	2.8	3.9	10.4	6.0
Average	4.7	6.4	5.6	4.1

Source: Central Bank, 1964 & 1974.

Meat consumption of this class (per head) at 35 ounces for a two months period, the highest per head consumption level for all income classes with two monthly incomes of less than Rs.1600, may be compared with the relevant national average of 10 ounces. Fish consumption per head at 66 ounces per two months was also higher than the relevant figure for all income classes drawing incomes of less than Rs.1600 per two months. The national average for per capita fish consumption was 48 ounces. Per capita consumption of tinned milk products by the Rs.0 - 50 income class, at 20 ounces per two months, was the highest for all income classes and the relevant national average was 4 ounces. In the case of

the bulk of consumer items listed in the CFS of 1973, per head consumption of this income class agrees with its low income position but the presence of dubious data like the above, casts serious doubt on the reliability of the physical consumption data of that Survey in their entirety.

The above arguments are not intended to imply that income data of the CFSs are more reliable than their consumption data. In order to arrive at a reasonably firm opinion about income distribution trends in Sri Lanka over the period concerned, other pertinent evidence as is available has to be carefully examined and interpreted. The foregoing analysis merely was intended to show the dangers in relying on CFS consumption data as welfare indicators for 1963 and 1973. More important, it should serve as a warning to those who would be conducting CFS-type surveys in future. Errors left undetected in such survey reports can mislead not only writers using their data as the basis of analysis but also the country's policy-makers who would be using such information as the basis of planning and policy formulation.

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WAGE BEHAVIOUR IN THE SRI LANKA ECONOMY,

1949 - 1978:

SOME OBSERVATIONS

P.C.RODRIGO

1. Introductory

What happens to wages is something that directly affects the level of income and living of every household which has one or more members engaged in wage-earning activity - and such units constitute the large majority of households in any modern economy. Wages also constitute a cost of production, and developments on the wages front have their inevitable impact on production and employment decisions in an economy, at the level of the individual decision-making unit as well as at the macro or aggregate level. From another angle, what happens in the wage scene has its repercussions on the level and composition of aggregate demand in an economy, since wage earners and their families represent a large segment of the market for final goods and services. Last, but not least, no serious discussion on issues of income distribution can afford to overlook developments in the wage arena.

Despite this theoretical and practical importance of the subject of wage behaviour in an economy, no research attempt appears as yet to have been made - apart from an ILO-sponsored study on Government pay policies (ILO, 1971) - to analyse in a systematic way the trends and developments in the field of wages and salaries in the Sri Lanka economy from a long term perspective; either in money terms or in terms of their real equivalent. Publicity is sometimes given to ad hoc statements made by trade unions or by successive governments acclaiming credit for victories or concessions at the wages front, but the approach in such presentations seems essentially to be a short term one, based on short term data. Analysis of the wage performance of the economy in a long term context has remained more or less outside the currents of contemporary research in Sri Lanka.

The present investigation represents an attempt in the direction of remedying this research deficiency. It presents a brief bird's-eye survey of the course of wages in the Sri Lanka economy over a span of nearly three decades since independence, together with some comments on certain observed aspects of wage behaviour. The inquiry provides a starting point for further research rather than an exhaustive summary of the developments.

2. Data base and coverage

The coverage of the inquiry and the nature of the data used need to be indicated at the outset. Owing to obvious data limitations, the study is confined to the institutionalised sector of the economy for which published information is available. The statistical material for the investigation is derived from the indices of wages and prices published by the Department of Labour and the Central Bank of Ceylon. Two sets of wage indices are available : one representing the private sector and the other in respect of the public sector of the economy. The indices representing the private sector are in respect of employees in the trades where wages are governed by decisions of Wages Boards.¹ Wages Boards, which number 33 today, have within their coverage the plantations sector as well as a substantial section of the non-agricultural or urban private sector workforce. Their coverage is basically in respect of manual and operative grades. The indices are weighted by employment figures as on 30.06.1953. The large bulk of those bound by Wages Board decisions are employed in the plantations trades; tea, rubber and coconut and, in effect, workers in these three trades receive a weightage of as much as 92% in the index. It may be pointed out here that as an inevitable consequence of this weighting system, movements in the overall Wages Board index are virtually dictated by wage developments in the plantation sector of the economy.

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1. Wages Boards are tripartiate bodies composed of an equal number of employers' representatives and workers' representatives and a specified number of members nominated by the government to represent itself. The determination of minimum wage rates, overtime rates, holidays etc. are among the functions of each Wages Board. For a detailed account of the Wages Board machinery and its working, see G. Weerakoon (1976).

As for the government sector, the available wage indices are in respect of categories below staff rank in government employment. The combined index is weighted by employment figures as on 30.09.1959. Considering the total coverage of our investigation, it is observed that well over a million employees (or close upon 50% of the paid workforce) are estimated as currently coming within the purview of Wages Boards² while the government has on its direct pay roll close upon half a million employees - out of whom over 4/5ths fall into the category of subordinate and minor grades (ILO, 1971, p.15). Thus, in all, our computations may be treated as directly representing not less³ than one-half of the total paid workforce of the economy, not taking into account the numbers that are engaged outside the above categories on Government or Wages Board rates of remuneration. A deficiency in respect of the data employed in our study should be mentioned at this stage, namely that the indices available are computed on the commencing or minimum wage rate of each grade. Although inclusive of statutory and 'living' allowances, such data do not take into account other supplements⁴ such as increments, overtime payments and bonus earnings.

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2. Certain estimates place the figure at 1.5 million (Weerakoon, 1976, p.3).
 3. At the Census of 1971 paid employees constituted 2½ million or 67% of the total employed workforce of Sri Lanka.
 4. An analysis of wage behaviour, properly speaking, should be based on actual earnings rather than on wage-rate data. Although information is available on earnings in the Wages Boards sector, no comparable time series data are available for the government sector; hence the choice of wage rate indices in this paper. In a subsequent article the author hopes to examine the pattern of behaviour of actual earnings in this sector against the trends that have emerged from the analysis of wage rates in this investigation.

3. Wage Trends and Patterns, 1949-1978 : An overview

3.1 Money Wages

Taking the period 1949-78 as a whole, a comparison of end-year figures points to a quadrupling of the Government unskilled Colombo rate (from an average figure of Rs.2.99 in 1949 to Rs.12.32 per day in 1978) and an over 500% aggregate increase in the Wages Board average minimum-wage (from Rs.1.44 to Rs.9.02 per day). In compounded average terms, these represent an increase of 5% and 6½% per annum respectively for the two groups - an appreciable increase in a labour surplus economy. If, instead of the unskilled wage, a combined wage index of employee grades below staff rank is taken to represent the Government sector, the level in 1978 amounts to more than three times the average for 1949, implying a compound average increase of about 4% per annum.

At the outset, thus, two interesting questions emerge: why did money wage rates increase in this manner, and, secondly, why were the rates of money wage advance dissimilar between the two sectors? Side by side with these increases, some levelling-up process is also observed to have been at work: the premium of around 100% which the government unskilled wage commanded over the Wages Board average minimum in 1949 had narrowed to some 37% by the end of our period.

A clarification may be added at this stage of the analysis before we proceed ahead. Within the sectoral indices examined above, the rate of wage advance would, no doubt, have been dissimilar between different individual worker categories, but, at this preliminary stage, we are concerned with broad aggregates and trends; further disaggregation may therefore be left to a subsequent occasion.

3.2 Real Wages

What is perhaps of greater concern is what these observed nominal wage increases imply relative to movements in prices or cost-of-living in the economy. The official cost-of-living index points over the same period to a 150% increase in consumer prices (or a compounded annual growth rate of 3.2%), suggesting that a substantial part of the gains implied by the money wage figures were eroded away by the upward trend in prices.

Using the Colombo Consumers' Price Index (despite its deficiencies) as the wage deflator, it would appear from end-year comparisons that real wages increased over this 29-year period by 150% in the Wages Boards sector and by a little over half this figure in the government sector. If annual averages compounded from these figures are any guide, these imply a real wage advance of 2 to 3 per cent per annum. The figures, taken on their face value, seem to contradict the contention of traditional theory that in a labour-surplus economy real wages tend to be held down at a subsistence level until the labour surplus is absorbed into employment. The improvement in real wages computed above took place against an average annual growth rate of not more than 2% in per capita real income over the span, and an increase in the numbers openly unemployed to reach the one million mark (or 20% of the total labour force) towards the close of the period covered by the study. In a situation of growing unemployment it is often asserted that the increment to real GDP ought to be used to finance additional employment rather than for improving income levels of those already enjoying employment. We thus have another interesting issue for investigation as to why and how real wage levels in the economy advanced at all in defiance of theory and the massive labour surplus.

3.3 Wage movements: year to year variations

End-year comparisons and growth rate averages derived from them can create a misleading picture if the increases took place at a markedly uneven pace. Hence, the course of wages over the span is traced in Fig.1 in both money, as well as real terms. The path of the Colombo Consumers' Price Index is traced in the same illustration to enable a comparison of wage and price trends at a glance.

The diagrammatic presentation brings out several interesting features. Firstly, it confirms the diversity in the rates of wage advance between the two sectors to which attention has already been drawn. Secondly, the presentation reveals that although the long term trend in money wages has been upwards for both sectors, the tempo of wage advance

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5. i.e. 3.2% per annum in the Wages Board sector and 2% per annum in the government unskilled commencing wage.

has been markedly uneven during different periods. A distinctive feature highlighted by the graphical illustration is the wage acceleration experienced towards the latter part of the period, with revisions coming in quick succession. Money wage rates which in both sectors took two decades to double from their 1949 levels seem to have doubled again within the next 7 to 10 years. In the Wages Board Sector this was followed by a further 50% increase during the last two years of the period.⁶

Another striking feature revealed by the illustration is the similarity in overall trends between wages and prices. Phases of high price increases in the economy also seem to coincide with phases of above-average increases in money wages.

Turning to real wages, the picture that seems to emerge indicates some improvement in the first two years of our period (i.e. the Korean boom phase) succeeded by a long spell of relative stagnation lasting about two decades, and some picking-up in the late 1970s. Looking at the phenomenon more closely, it appears that in the Wages Board sector the level of real wages even in 1972 was more or less the same as that reached during the height of the Korean boom 20 years ago, and it is only in respect of the mid and the late 1970s that one may speak of some sustained improvement in the real wage. Between 1972 and 1978 the figures point to a near doubling of real wages in the Wages Board sector, and a further breakdown of the manner in which this doubling took place reveals that a rise of some 50% occurred during the four-year period 1972-76, followed by an increase of another 25% or so within the next two years.

In the Government sector too, as in the Wages Board Sector, movements in real wages do not provide evidence of a secular long term trend as such. The improvements seem to have occurred in a jerky fashion with spells of stagnation/deterioration in the intervening years. An interesting feature observed in respect of movements in the real wage in this sector is the pattern of peaks and depressions in the 1960s and the 1970s; namely a deterioration in the first half of

6. To describe the same phenomenon in another form: the average minimum wage in the Wages Board sector trebled in 25 years and doubled again within the next 4 years.

each decade and a recovery in the second half. (This pattern, incidentally, was not repeated for the 1950s: instead one observed an improvement in the first half of the decade as well). In overall terms, however, it would be of interest to note that even by 1974 the level of real wages in this sector - as indicated by the indices - was not more than 10% above its 1952 level.

In interpreting these figures a word of clarification needs to be added, for, as mentioned already, the basic data used in the computations do not include supplementary earnings such as bonuses, overtime and over-poundage payments, increments etc. enjoyed by different sections of the paid workforce. Such extra earnings would have enabled some wage recipients to arrest - up to a point at least - the periodic stagnation/deterioration in real wages indicated by these calculations and, in the case of some others, to improve their real wage position. However, along with the bias resulting from this deficiency, due allowance has to be made for the distortions introduced in the opposite direction by the deficiencies of the Colombo Consumers' Price Index as an indicator of changes in prices and cost of living in the economy.⁷ The downward bias of this index as an indicator of the true nature of inflation in the economy is generally recognised.

The important inference, however, is that contrary to what a comparison of end-year figures seemed to suggest, the long term behaviour of real wages does not assume the form of a consistent (secular) upward movement of noteworthy proportions. The situation could instead be described as one of relative stagnation during most part of the period, with improvements occurring in a spasmodic fashion. Thus, from a comparative point of view, the trend in real wages observed above for Sri Lanka presents a striking contrast to what empirical research investigations have concluded for a

7. See Weerakoon (1976, pp.12 -13) for some comments on this index. Also, see Central Bank, Annual Report, (1974, p.253). It would be interesting to note here that the wholesale Price index (1974=100) constructed by the Central Bank estimates a 57% increase in wholesale prices between 1974 and 1978 as against the 23% increase implicit in the Colombo Consumer Price Index.

number of other Third World countries.⁸ It would thus be interesting to examine why this has been so. The issue may be broken down into two questions: How did Sri Lanka manage to maintain real wage levels within narrow limits for a large segment of the organised sector during most part of the period and secondly, what were the reasons for the observed picking-up in the late 1970s?

3.4 Wage movements: A disaggregation into sub-periods

The symmetrical pattern of periodic variation in wage and price movements revealed by the graphical presentation poses another interesting issue for the wage analyst. The span under review can be disaggregated on the basis of the sequence of wage and price movements into three distinct phases as summarised in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1 : Changes in Wages & Consumer Prices, 1949-1978
(% increases per annum)

Period	Prices	Money Wages		
		All Wages Boards	Govt. Unsk. Male (Colombo, daily paid)	Govt. Non-staff grades (combined)
1949-1978	3.2	6.5	5.0	n.a.* (estimated to be in the region of 4% per annum.)
1949-1951 (2 years)	4.5	18.3	7.2	n.a.*
1952-1967 (15 years)	0.9	1.3	2.0	1.8
1967-1978 (11 years)	6.4	12.4	9.3	7.0

n.a.* Not available since the index is calculated from 1952.

Source: Computed from data in Appendix Table A.

8. For instance, Turner and Jackson (1970, p.831) estimate an average real wage increase of 3.3% per annum for 35 Less Developed Countries during the 9-year period 1956-65; Jackson (1971, p.532) calculates an average real wage advancement of between 8 and 12.8% per annum in 4 African economies: Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania during the period 1960-67. Knight's calculations (1967) point to a growth rate of 10% in Ugandan real wages, 1957-64. Also see Turner (1965, pp.12-14), Reynolds and Gregory (1965), Smith (1969) and Berg (1966) on this issue.

Following the Korean boom phase (1949-51) during which both prices and money wages recorded a marked acceleration, the economy appears to have settled down to a pattern of price and wage stability (and comparative real wage stagnation) which lasted until the late 1960s. With the close of this decade, however, the economy appears to have entered another phase of marked acceleration in money wages and prices, in the course of which real wage levels of certain segments of the workforce seem to have steered substantially ahead by the close of the 70s.

The middle phase, or the phase of relative stagnation, may be further subdivided as far as the Government sector is concerned into two periods, with the late 1950s as the dividing line (Table 2). The government sector experienced money wage stagnation in the latter half of this phase as against the slow but upward movement observed in the first half of the period. This contrast is reflected in real wages as well, which slumped or stagnated in the second half compared with the slight improvement observed in the early years.

Table 2: Compounded Annual Percentage Rates of Change in Wages and Prices : 1952-1967

Period	Prices	Money Wages		
		All Wages Boards	Govt.Unsk. male rates	Govt.non-staff grades (comb)
1952-58	0.8	1.7	4.0	4.0
1958-67	0.96	1.0	0.6	0.4

Source : As for Table 1.

4. An explanation for the observed trends:
A wage-price link?

Having identified the broad trends and patterns of wage behaviour, it now remains to formulate an explanation for the observed phenomena. Following from our observations above, a pertinent question may be raised; namely as to why the two variables - prices and wages - have moved together in the particular fashion indicated by our analysis. This apparent similarity of movement between the two variables could perhaps provide us with a clue to understanding some of the characteristics of wage behaviour which we have singled out for closer study.

Theoretically, a two-way relationship or dependence is possible between the two variables :

- (a) wage increases initiating a round of price increases in the economy, and/or,
- (b) price increases provoking a round of wage increases.

In the export-import economy of Sri Lanka, factors operating on the domestic price level are of both domestic as well as external origin. Imported goods and services currently receive a weightage of as much as 35% in the official Consumers' Price Index calculations, and include some of the major items such as food, clothing and lighting fuel. Secondly, prices of certain major items in the index are insulated from fluctuations in world market prices and/or domestic costs of production through a structure of subsidies, price controls and import duties. This is not to argue that domestic wage revisions have had no impact whatsoever on domestic prices; in fact, currently, a number of Wages Boards trades in the non-plantation sector are observed to be shifting the incidence of escalating costs either to the consumer in form of price revisions or, in the export-processing sector, back to the primary suppliers by way of higher commissions and other service charges. As against this, however,

9. 44% up to 1968.

it is to be noted that as much as one-half or a little more of the paid workforce in the economy are employed in the export sector and in government service. Under these circumstances, the impact of variations in the wage variable on the overall price index appears to be rather limited.

What about a wage-price hypothesis of causation running in the opposite direction, i.e. of prices taking the lead and imparting movement to the other? The composition of an average employee's wage packet provides a clue towards establishing a causal relationship of this type. The legal minimum wage in the Wages Board sector comprises what is known as a 'basic wage' and a 'dearness' or 'living' allowance component, with certain items of the living allowance component linked in a number of trades to the official cost-of-living index to provide automatic monetary compensation for each specified unit-rate variation in the cost-of-living index.¹⁰

Although one could argue both for and against the logic of placing on the employer the burden of an escalating wage bill with each increase in the overall cost of living, this wage-price supplementation or 'indexation' principle has remained an accepted axiom of wage thinking in Sri Lanka since the war years. All Wages Board trades had this mechanism built into their wage formulae at the inception. With the trend towards consolidation of minimum wages since the late 1960s, the principle of automatic variation has been suspended in a number of urban trades but in the remaining trades, including the plantation sector which contains the overwhelming majority of Wages Board employees, automatic indexation remains a continuing feature.

In the government sector too, a similar built-in, wage-price compensating mechanism was in operation from 1941 up to March 1953, when on the recommendations of the Poulter Commission, the variable 'living allowance' component was

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10. i.e. for each 1.8 unit change in the Cost-of-living index, a variation of 3 cents in the 'special' allowance for males and a 2 cents variation for females and young persons.

frozen at its March 1953 level. The pay packet of the average government employee, as in the case of the Wages Board sector, comprises a 'base' rate augmented by a combination of allowances designed to insulate the incomes and standards of living of the recipients from upward movements in the general price level.¹¹ In the government sector during the period under review, overall revisions effected in the 'base rate' component were only two in number: the Poulter Commission recommendations which took effect from 1.4.1955 and the L.B.de Silva Commission proposals implemented from 1.10.69 and 1.4.75. All other major increases assumed the form of revisions to the dearness allowance component, as shown in Table B (Appendix). Having suspended the automatic wage-price compensation mechanism in respect of its employees in 1953, the wage adjustment strategy adopted by the Government appears to have been to make concessions on a periodic rather than on a continuing basis, albeit with the same objective of sheltering real incomes of employees from inflationary price increases.

Here then we see a possible explanation for the acceleration of money wage rates witnessed in the 1970s. As inflation gained momentum and reached a two-digit figure in the 1970s, such periodic revisions in living allowances appear to have come in quick succession and in significant proportions, causing thereby a substantial jump in nominal wages. The concessions, which were generally given by Cabinet directive, were sometimes preceded by employee agitation and, at other times, given by unilateral decision. Thus, in the structure that emerged, the 'cost-of-living' approach to wage issues constituted a major factor shaping the extent and nature of wage adjustments, while also providing an explanation for the observed similarity in

11. e.g. the C.L.A., the S.L.A., the Devaluation Allowances, the special allowances of the 1970s etc.

behaviour between wages and prices.¹² In the 'cost-of-living' approach, perhaps, one may also look for a possible explanation for the sluggishness/stagnation observed in real wages over most part of the period. Since the objective of the formulae was more or less to sustain individual workers incomes on par with the cost of living, it may be surmised that this policy had some 'toning-down' effect on wage demands and concessions, preventing too assymetrical a revision in money wages in relation to the cost-of-living variable. This agrees with Dudley Jackson's conclusions for India where he argues.

'Thus an important source of changes in wages has been the changes in dearness allowance, and overall, such changes appear to exercise a moderating influence on rises in wages due to rises in prices'. (Jackson, undated).

5. Sectoral assymetry in wage trends

Having examined some of the influences underlying the observed overall trends and cyclical rhythms, there now remains one other related feature to be investigated into; namely, the difference observed in the rate of wage advance between the two sectors - private and government. If a common cost-of-living index computed at the national level provided the anchor or guide for wage revisions, the question may be posed as to why the rate of wage advance was dissimilar between the two sectors. On careful observation one sees a possible clue. It is observed that most of the periodic increases given in the 1970s - to which reference has already been made - were not confined to government employees but extended by government decree to the private sector as well (Table B, Appendix), and this was despite the continuation of the automatic 'indexation' principle in certain areas of the private sector which

12. Our conclusions regarding the relationship between the two variables is confirmed by a regression of year to year percentage changes of money wages on that of the cost-of-living index. The regressions yielded a R^2 of 54 for the Wages Board sector. (In the Government Sector, however, the coefficient of correlation worked out to 38, reflecting the suspension of the wage-price escalating mechanism in March 1953.)

automatically compensated them for these price increases. What this extension meant, in effect, was that a segment of the private sector received - over and above their built-in dearness allowances linked to the cost-of-living index - more or less the same periodic increases that were granted to government employees in consideration of the fact that the latter's variable dearness allowance mechanism was suspended in 1953.

Built-in 'wage-price compensation' clauses (or escalator mechanisms as they are sometimes called) were a feature not only of the Wages Board pay formulae, but also of the major collective agreements negotiated during this period. On one or two occasions this feature was recognised and adjustments were made in extending certain government-decreed periodic allowances to the private sector but, on most occasions, - as Table B (Appendix) indicates - such considerations were overlooked, and flat, across-the-board extensions were made in the 1970s notwithstanding the protests of employers affected adversely by such decisions. From the government's own point of view, the extension of government sector wage awards to the private sector may have been the way out of a sensitive dilemma, but what is important to note here is that under this policy certain worker categories in the private sector appear to have been compensated not once but twice for the same increase in the cost-of-living index ! Thus, part of the explanation for the comparatively faster gains indicated by the private sector wage index seems to lie in this anomalous situation.

This anomaly, however, explains only part of the story. 'Permissive' influences also played their role. The recovery of export prices in the second half of the 1970s following a long spell of adverse price trends facilitated the payment of additional wage allowances in the plantations sector, including a wage supplement related to sale price, payable in tea and rubber plantations above 100 acres in extent. This price-wage supplement which was introduced in 1975 reached a record level of over Rs.5/- per day per worker in rubber plantations by the end of 1978, while in the tea industry which had an upper limit to the allowance imposed by law, it remained at a level of 30 cents per day during most part of the late 1970s.

The private sector wage indices used here, as already pointed out, are employment-weighted and, with an overwhelming weightage of as much as 92% assigned to the three plantations trades, it hardly needs to be repeated that the behaviour of the overall index is conditioned, by and large, by what happens in the plantations sector. One striking feature of the local labour market which got established with the very advent of plantation culture and which continued into the current century was the compartmentalisation of the market into a plantation enclave and a non-plantation segment. The dichotomy between the two segments was maintained, and labour mobility between the two sectors was constrained, by a variety of influences including ethnic factors, differences in cultural and social traditions and life styles, the traditional attitude of reluctance of local labour to commit themselves to plantation work, and recruitment policies which insisted on citizenship qualifications for employment in the public sector.

A silent transformation, however, has been taking place in the recent years. The Sirima-Sashtri Pact of 1964 which provided for the repatriation of a section of the immigrant Indian workforce and the conferment of citizenship to the remaining persons on an agreed formula contributed (along with its supplementary legislation of 1968 and 1971) to bring about changes of a far-reaching nature in the composition of the estate workforce as well as to remove certain disabilities (such as the citizenship problem) which had hitherto placed the estate worker in a weak bargaining position. The repatriation programme initiated by the Pact was also contributory in some degree to labour shortages experienced in certain plantation localities, which, together with the increase in the recruitment of local labour for plantation activities, constituted a source of upward pressure on wages in this sector in the current decade. Coinciding with these developments came another legislative measure - the Land Reforms of the 1970s. The land reform had similar far-reaching consequences, for it signified the transfer of the ownership and management of a substantial slice of the acquired estates to the State sector as well as the transformation of the status of the workforce in such establishments to that of State employees. Parallel developments observed over the recent years in social welfare services, education and trade union activity as well as in the attitude of the

native workforce towards plantation employment have also played their role in reducing the segregation and the barriers.

In the context of these developments, a trend in the direction of narrowing certain 'generation-old' disparities maintained hitherto between the estate and non-estate segments of the labour market has been more or less inevitable. The faster rate of increase observed in the plantation sector minimum wage - and hence in the aggregate Wages Board minimum wage index - hardly seems surprising, when interpreted in this perspective. It must be added however that, notwithstanding these developments, the government unskilled wage rate continued, even by the end of 1978, to command a premium over estate money-wage rates for parallel grades. This premium is partly a reflection of 'geographical' considerations - or differences in cost of living between regions - and partly intended as a compensating adjustment for certain fringe benefits such as Provident Fund contributions by employer, termination benefits, free accommodation, holidays with pay etc. which plantation workers enjoy over casual government employees (Sessional paper No.3, 1974)

6. Some policy implications

Following from the above observations in respect of wage determining procedures, we may, in conclusion, touch on one or two pertinent issues which seem important from the policy maker's point of view. Our investigations pointed to a new development in the wage scene in the recent years in the form of direct State intervention in wage determination in the private sector. Direct government involvement in the form observed since the turn of the 1960s reflects a deviation from the policy followed hitherto of leaving wage determination in the private sector, by and large, to the established wage-fixing machinery of Wages Boards, Remuneration Tribunals, Collective negotiation and Industrial Court procedures. When the government made concessions to its own employees in 1951 by the introduction of an additional allowance termed the SLA (Special Living Allowance) and in 1957 by way of revision in this allowance and in the CLA (Cost of Living Allowance), there was no deliberate extension of these awards by government decree to the private sector, although these government sector awards did set the pace or wage targets for employees in the private sector. Demands for the extension

of these allowances were canvassed by worker representatives before individual Wages Boards, at the collective bargaining table, and before other industrial dispute settlement bodies, and, in a number of instances, they were successful in winning their demands, albeit with varying lags. Starting from the 1970s - or rather the Devaluation Allowances of 1967 - a somewhat different trend is noticed away from this pattern towards more direct State involvement. Government-decreed pay adjustments seem to have become a feature of the contemporary private-sector wage scene, including Ministerial extension of individually negotiated Collective Agreements (such as in 1967 and 1972) to cover establishments which were not a party to the original agreements.

In a set-up where government sector pay awards generate a general expectation that such awards will be extended to the non-government sector, such extension may have helped on occasions to avert an immediate threat to industrial peace, but, in a structure with 'dual' or overlapping wage-fixing arrangements, indiscriminate generalisation of this nature could result in anomalous situations such as what we have observed above. What is more, such flat, 'across-the-board' extensions could raise critical problems relating to viability of enterprises and ability to pay, particularly when the wage adjustments so imposed on employers assume substantial proportions.

Paying capacity, though a controversial aspect, diverges from sector to sector, industry to industry, and from establishment to establishment as well. The advantage in a pattern of decentralised or industry-wise wage determination is the opportunity that such an arrangement affords for individual paying capacity to be assessed at a disaggregated level and taken into account before arriving at wage decisions. As against such decentralisation, a national system of wage revisions is said to have an advantage over a sectoral system in that it facilitates coordination of wage developments with general or overall development policies. Other arguments often cited in favour of wage-fixing at the aggregated or national level as against the sectoral level are ease of administration and avoidance of anomalous wage differentials. These arguments, however, should be assessed in the context of the realities of each individual case.

In a production structure which embraces employers at very different levels of prosperity, sophistication, and capacity—even within the same industry—complications arising from uneven paying capacity do come up, albeit on a limited scale, at the sectoral or individual Wages Board level as well. This is particularly so when the more 'sophisticated' employers make use of the Wages Board mechanism as an instrument for 'eliminating unfair competition' within the industry. When the approach is at an aggregated or national level, the problems are obviously magnified !

We may conclude our investigation on a constructive note. If industry-wise or decentralised wage determination is to be superceded by centralised wage fixing and/or a system of flat, across-the-board wage adjustments, careful assessment needs to be made, in advance, of the differential burden or impact that such legislation is likely to place on undertakings functioning at different levels of operation and productive efficiency. It would also require well-informed judgement in respect of the possible repercussions that such legislation could have, above all, on the general employment situation. Unless cost increases are recouped through upward revisions in sale prices or increased productivity/worker-efficiency, the reaction to 'externally-imposed' wage increases could as well take the form of a cut back in employment through substitution of machine power for human power in the long run, retrenchment of less essential labour, and/or outright bankruptcy of marginal establishments.

Finally, if centralised wage legislation of the form observed recently is to be a permanent feature of the private sector wage scene, it would also imply a need for a redefinition and reappraisal of the role and scope of the established, private-sector wage-determining machinery, including the Wages Board mechanism, in the light of the new developments.

Table A.

Indices of Wages and Prices in Sri Lanka, 1949-78

(1952 = 100)

Year	MONEY WAGES			PRICES (d)	REAL WAGES		
	Wages Boards (a)	Government Sector			Wages Boards (a)	Government Sector	
		Unskil led male (b)	All Govt. Emple yees (c)		Unskil led male (b)	All Govt. Emple yees (c)	
1949	70.6	86.7	n.a.	91.2	77.4	95.1	n.a.
1950	80.9	92.7	n.a.	96.1	84.2	96.5	n.a.
1951	98.5	100.0	n.a.	100.7	97.8	99.3	n.a.
1952	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953	101.5	101.4	101.6	101.6	99.9	99.8	100.0
1954	102.5	101.4	101.9	101.1	101.4	100.3	100.8
1955	105.9	105.8	108.7	100.5	105.4	105.2	108.2
1956	106.4	107.2	111.0	100.2	106.2	106.9	110.8
1957	107.8	110.4	113.8	102.8	104.9	107.4	110.7
1958	110.8	126.7	126.7	105.0	105.6	120.7	120.7
1959	112.3	126.7	126.7	105.2	106.7	120.4	120.4
1960	111.8	126.7	126.7	103.5	108.0	122.4	122.4
1961	112.3	126.7	126.7	104.8	107.2	120.9	120.9
1962	113.6	126.7	126.7	106.2	106.9	119.2	119.2
1963	115.2	126.7	126.7	108.8	105.9	116.4	116.5
1964	117.8	126.7	126.7	112.2	105.0	112.9	112.9
1965	118.2	126.7	126.7	112.5	105.0	112.6	112.6
1966	118.1	126.7	126.7	112.3	105.1	112.8	112.8
1967	122.2	134.0	131.3	114.8	106.4	116.4	114.5
1968	141.2	165.8	152.6	121.5	116.3	136.3	125.7
1969	141.2	167.8	157.3	130.5	108.2	128.5	120.4
1970	142.7	173.9	171.3	138.2	103.4	125.7	124.0
1971	145.6	173.9	171.3	141.9	102.3	122.5	120.8
1972	151.9	173.9	171.7	150.8	100.7	115.2	113.8
1973	169.9	178.3	180.1	165.4	102.7	107.7	108.8
1974	212.4	204.3	202.8	185.8	114.3	109.9	109.2
1975	263.8	224.6	224.2	198.3	133.0	113.3	113.0
1976	306.3	236.5	237.2	200.7	152.6	117.8	118.2
1977	319.1	241.4	240.4	203.2	157.0	118.8	118.3
1978	442.2	357.1	275.2	227.8	194.1	156.8	121.0

Notes

- (a) Combined minimum-wage index for workers in agriculture, industry and commerce
- (b) Unskilled daily-paid labour, Colombo.
- (c) Combined index for Clerical and Technical employees and Minor employees. (commencing wage)
- (d) Colombo Consumers' Price Index for 1952-1978. For 1949 to 1951, the Working Class Cost-of Living Index for Colombo (1938/39 = 100) adjusted.

Sources

Wages Boards sector: Money wage indices for 1952-78 from Department of Labour, Labour Gazettes. Figures for 1949-51 computed by author based on data on minimum wages obtained from Labour Gazettes. Real wage indices calculated using Col. 5 as deflator.

Government Sector: Government unskilled money wage index for 1949-1974 calculated from Labour Gazettes. Figures for 1975-78 computed by author in accordance with Ministry of Public Administration: Establishment Circular Letters No.176 of 14.2.1975, No.194 of 7.1.1976, No.251 of 6.12.1977 and No.292 of 29.12.1978. Real wage index computed as in Wages Board sector. Indices for all-Central Government employees from Central Bank of Ceylon: Annual Reports.

Index of COConsumer Prices: For 1952-78, from Central Bank of Ceylon, Annual Reports, For 1949-51, calculated as explained in notes above.

TABLE B - PAY REVISIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTION - 1949-1978

Effective Date	Nature of Revision and Source	Whether extended to private Sector or not, and nature of extension where applicable
1st. Oct. 1950	Institution of a graded supplementary allowance termed the SLA (Special Living Allowance) for those drawing monthly salaries upto Rs.2500/- Marginal adjustments in the upper pay brackets upto Rs.2525/-. The SLA ranges from Rs.5/- to Rs.42.50 in the case of unmarried employees and from Rs.5/- to Rs.85/- in the case of married employees. This allowance is in addition to the CLA (Cost of Living Allowance). (See Sessional Paper XII - 1953, P.170).	No direct extension to private sector by Government decree. The revision, however, was followed by a spate of wage demands in the private sector and in several cases the demand was conceded.
1st April, 1955	Implementation of the recommendations of the Poulter Commission. (Sessional Papers XII of 1953 & XI of 1955)	The Commission's recommendations were in respect of Government employees only. However, it 'provoked' revisions in some private sector trades.
1st November, 1957	<p>(1) Increase in the CLA by Rs.5 per month for employees receiving a monthly salary of Rs.300 or less.</p> <p>(2) Increase in the SLA by Rs.12.50 per month to those receiving a monthly pay of Rs.100 or less. (Treasury Circular No.423 of 14.12.1957)</p>	No direct extension by legislation but revision did set the pace for wage demands in the private sector which were acceded to in several instances (including some Urban Wages Board trades)

1st October,
1967

- Introduction of an Interim Allowance of
(a) Rs.20 for those drawing salaries not exceeding Rs.100 per month;
(b) Rs.10 for recipients of salaries in the range of Rs.100 - Rs.300 per month (Treasury Circular No.729 of 15.9.1967).

No direct extension. However, by IDA Act No.40 of 1968, Government grants from December 1967 an Interim Devaluation Allowance of 30 cts. per day (or Rs.7/50 p.m.) to estate employees and 40 cts per day (or Rs.10 p.m.) to non-plantation sector firms whose employees are covered by the EPF Scheme. With this adjustment, the escalator payment was to remain frozen until such time that the escalator payment according to the Cost-of-living Index exceeded the aggregate of such living allowances payable in November 1967 plus the Interim Devaluation Allowance (IDA).

1st December
1967

- Modification of the afore-mentioned allowances to
(a) Rs.35 p.m. for those in the pay range Rs.100 and below per month and
(b) Rs.25 p.m. in the case of salary groups drawing Rs.100 to Rs.300 p.m. (Treasury Circular No.734 of 2.12.1967)

1st October,
1969

Consolidation of salaries and overall salary revision on the lines recommended in the Interim Report of the L.B.de Silva Salaries Commission. (Sessional Paper No.VII of 1969)

No extension. The recommendations were only in respect of Government employees.

1st December,
1972

- (a) Introduction of a special allowance of Rs.7.50 per month to all monthly-paid employees drawing between Rs.180 and Rs.250 per month, with marginal adjustments in the pay range Rs.250 - 257.50.
- (b) All monthly-paid employees drawing below Rs.180 per month receive a special allowance bringing their monthly stipend to Rs.180 (subject to a minimum allowance of Rs.7.50 per month).
- (c) Provisions of the Circular do not apply to daily-paid workers. (Department of Public Administration: Establishment Circular Letter No.113 of 6.11.1972)

No direct extension. However, plantation employers were required by Government decree to pay an allowance of 18 cts. per day to male workers and 12 cts per day to female and child workers with effect from 1.11.72. These allowances are called the Plantation Workers' Additional Special Allowance (PWASA). No parallel adjustment imposed on non-plantation sector.

1st October,
1973

- (1) The afore-mentioned allowance of Rs.7.50 increased by Rs.20 per month. Payment of this allowance extended to employees drawing consolidated monthly salaries of Rs.400 and below, with marginal adjustments to those drawing above Rs.400 p.m.
- (2) Daily-paid employees drawing below Rs.16 per day to receive a special allowance of 10% of actual wages earned for the month, subject to a maximum of Rs.20/- per month. (Department of Public Administration: Establishment Circular Letter No.138 of 10.10.1973)

Extended to private sector in the form of an additional allowance of 10% of pay due for October, 1973, subject to a ceiling of Rs.20/- to all monthly and daily-rated employees drawing below Rs.400 per month. Emergency(Private Sector) Special Allowance Regulation No.1 of 1973.

- 1st April, 1974
- (1) Monthly-paid employees drawing consolidated monthly salaries* of Rs.800/- and below to receive, in place of the 1973 allowances above, a special allowance of 20% consolidated salary* subject to a maximum of Rs.50 per month.
- (2) The Rs.7.50 allowance of 1972 above to continue subject to the condition that the total of all such allowances does not exceed Rs.50 per month.
- (3) Daily-paid employees to receive, in place of the 1973 allowance above, a special allowance of 20% of wages subject to an upper limit of Rs.50 per month. (Ministry of Public Administration (My/PA): Establishment Circular Letter No.153 of 4.4.1974)
- Extended. Included in Minimum-wage calculations (i.e. 20% of salary subject to a ceiling of Rs.50 per month). It was envisaged, however, that this increase would be deductible from payments of non-recurring gratuities under any Collective Agreement or cost-of-living allowances payable according to the Consumers' Price Index. Emergency (Private Sector) Special Allowance Regulation (No.5) of 1974.
- 1st February, 1975
- (1) Monthly-paid employees drawing consolidated salaries* below Rs.800 per month to receive, in place of the 1974 allowance above, an enhanced allowance of 30% of consolidated salary* subject to a ceiling of Rs.75 p.m. as special allowance. Marginal relief for those in the salary range Rs.800 - 875 p.m.
- (2) The Rs.7.50 allowance of 1972 to continue subject to the condition that the aggregate of special allowances does not exceed Rs.75 p.m.
- Extended. Included in minimum-wage calculations. Private sector required to pay a 10% increase or Rs.25 (whichever is less) to employees drawing below Rs.800 p.m. Exemptions made in respect of
- (a) recipients of non-recurring cost-of-living gratuities under Coll.Ag. No.5 of 1967 (or of CL gratuities not less favourable than under this Coll.Ag.)

- (3) Daily-paid employees to receive in place of the 1974 allowance an enhanced special allowance of 30% of pay subject to a ceiling of Rs.75 per month as special allowances. (My/PA Establishment Circular Letter No.176 of 14.2.1975).
- (b) recipients of Cost-of-Living allowances determined in accordance with the cost-of-living index, and beneficiaries of the extension order on manual workers Coll. Ag.No.3 of 1971 where total number of employees is less than 25. The allowance is payable by original employers bound by the Manual workers Coll.Ag.No.3 of 1971.
- (c) The Commission's recommendations were in respect of Government employees only.

1st April,
1975

Implementation of the recommendations of the L.B.de Silva Salaries and Cadres Commission Report; Part I, and of the 1975 Anomalies Committee. (Sessional Paper III - 1974 and MY/PA & Establishment Circular Letters No.182 of 18.4.1975 No.292 of 29.12.1978 and No.191 of 6.12.1975)

1st January,
1976

- (1) Monthly-paid employees drawing all-inclusive salaries* of Rs.800 p.m. and below receive a further Rs.15 per month. The total of special allowances payable not to exceed Rs.90 p.m. or 36% of consolidated salary*, whichever is less. Marginal relief for those drawing all-inclusive salaries* between Rs.800 890 per month. The Rs.7.50 allowance of 1972 to continue subject to the condition that the total of special allowances does not exceed Rs.90 per month.
- Extended. Included in Minimum-wage calculations. Private Sector to pay an increase of 6% subject to a maximum of Rs.15 per month. Estate workers to get the maximum of 6% of wages irrespective of the number of workers, but outside the plantation sector, establishments with less than 25 workers exempted. Daily-rated or piece-rated workers to get

(2) For daily-paid employees, the total of special allowances enhanced to 36% of aggregate wage subject to a maximum of Rs.90 per month. (My/PA Establishment Circular Letter No.194 of 7.1.1976)

a maximum of 6% up to a limit of Rs.15. (Budgetary Relief allowance).

1st December,

1977

- (1) All monthly-paid employees to receive an allowance of Rs.50 per month in addition to the allowances of 1976 above.
- (2) Daily-rated employees to receive an additional 25% of their current daily wage, subject to a ceiling of Rs.50 per month.
(My/PA:Establishment Circular Letter No.251 of 6.12.1977)

Extended. Included in minimum-wage calculations. Modification permits establishments which pay a non-recurring cost-of-living gratuity or CLA based on the cost of living index to pay either the additional payment of Rs.50 or the increase in the non-recurring gratuity or CLA over the amount applicable to the rate as on 15th November, whichever is higher.

Notes: (1) The information presented here is in respect of revisions of an overall nature covering a cross section of Government employees. Ad hoc adjustments affected in respect of individual categories, covering small numbers - and which are not part of an overall revision (e.g. revision in the grading of manual employees and their increments adjustments in October 1964, revisions to salaries of Engineers in 1963, 1966 & 1971, revisions in the salaries of teachers in 1976, revisions in salaries of skilled workers in 1963 etc.) are not included.

- (2) With effect from 1.6.1977 the special allowances were extended to Government employees drawing consolidated salaries* in excess of Rs.800 per month. (My/PA; Establishment Circular Letter No.238 of 7.6.1977).
- (3) Attention is also drawn to (a) My/PA: Establishment Circular Letter No.285 of 8.12.1978 which grants an additional allowance amounting to 10% of consolidated salary subject to a minimum of Rs.50 with effect from 1st January 1979 and (b) My/PA: Establishment Circular Letter No.327 of 31.8.1979 which grants an additional allowance of Rs.55 to all monthly paid employees drawing a remuneration not exceeding Rs.1500 per month (with marginal adjustments for those drawing upto Rs.1555). Daily-paid employees also benefited from both revisions. The allowance of 1.1.79 was not extended to the private sector by direct Government decrees, instead the Wages Board machinery was invoked in regard to the revision of wages in the private sector. As for the Rs.55 allowance, legislation is being drafted to extend the allowance to employees in the private sector.
- (4) * Consolidated salary referred to here is exclusive of married allowances.

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VOCATIONAL PREFERENCES OF SECONDARY
SCHOOL GIRLS IN SRI LANKA

SWARNA JAYAWEERA

Although vocational preferences as expressed at school level have little long-term reliability or realism, investigations of such preferences have been made frequently in many countries including Sri Lanka as they help to provide some insight into prevailing values and social attitudes that may affect development and into educational outcomes of socio-economic policy and planning.

This particular study had two objectives and was carried out in two stages. In Sri Lanka extensive participation of girls in the education process has led to increasing numbers seeking employment despite restrictive employment opportunities and a high rate of unemployment among women. It was felt in this context that a study of the vocational preferences and attitudes of girls on the threshold of leaving secondary school could provide information relevant to the problem of the participation of women in the total development process.

The second objective was to attempt to assess the impact of education experience offered by the school curriculum on vocational preferences by comparing where possible the results of two surveys. The subjects of the first survey in 1973 were a sample of girls enrolled in the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (Grade 10) class¹. In 1976 a second survey was carried out among a sample of National Certificate of General Education (Grade 9) girls² to

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1. This survey was carried out as a part of a UNESCO study of Educational and Employment Opportunities for Girls and Women in Sri Lanka in 1973. (mimeographed).
 2. The 1976 survey was made possible by a Research grant from the University of Sri Lanka, Colombo Campus.

ascertain whether the 1972 curriculum reforms had had any success in changing vocational preferences and attitudes. Unlike the first group the second group of students had not been divided into streams differentiated on a subject area basis. They had had a common curriculum which included subjects such as pre-vocational studies which were intended to create wholesome attitudes to a broad range of occupations which were seen to be relevant to social needs.

Methodology

A stratified random sample from 5 districts - Colombo, Kandy, Jaffna, Matara and Polonnaruwa was used in each survey. In 1973 a thousand girls studying in the GCE (OL) class and in 1976 a thousand girls studying in the NCGE class were drawn from one class each in 26 schools (10 urban and 16 rural) randomly selected from urban and rural schools and from schools with Sinhala, Tamil and English medium classes. The same schools were selected in both years and the same questionnaire administered. Responses were received from 979 in 1973 and 875 in 1976.

Six areas were explored

- (i) the stage in education at which respondents expected to seek employment
- (ii) willingness to work after marriage
- (iii) the employment sector preferred by respondents
- (iv) vocational choice
- (v) reasons for vocational choice and
- (vi) rating of occupations.

The data was analysed to examine relationships with four variables:

- (i) urban/rural school environment
- (ii) language medium
- (iii) two socio-economic levels as determined by parental occupations:

- (a) upper and lower middle class occupations and
- (b) urban and rural low income occupations and
- (iv) in the 1973 sample, enrolment in science and arts courses.

Contingency tables were constructed and chi-square (χ^2) values computed to assess significant differences between sub-groups divided according to these variables, and Spearman's rank correlation coefficients calculated to compare vocation ratings.

Level of Education and entry to employment

Tables I and II present the distribution of responses regarding the level of education after which employment was envisaged by respondents. In 1973 the largest number (36.7%) wished to seek employment after the GCE (OL) but the proportion that expected to work after their tertiary education was almost as large (33.7%). A higher proportion of the urban, middle class and science students wished to complete tertiary education before seeking employment and a higher proportion of rural, less economically favoured and Arts students opted for employment after ten years schooling - a difference which can be attributed to economic circumstances and the stronger motivation of science students for further education.

In 1976 the proportion seeking to enter the work force after the first stage of secondary education, the NCGE (Grade 9) had by this time replaced the GCE (OL), had declined markedly in the whole group (13.6%), and in all sub-groups. Half or over half in each group now aspired to complete tertiary education before employment. There was no science stream as a result of the introduction of the common curriculum but aspirations regarding completing tertiary education were higher among Tamil medium students and middle class and urban students, due perhaps again to motivational and economic factors.

One fact that emerges is that the level of educational expectations has risen in spite of graduate unemployment. It is also possible that the NCGE did not receive the same

TABLE I

Educational Level and Entry to Employment 1973
(Percentage Distribution of Choices of Girls)

Educational Level	All		Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group			Arts
	Urban	Rural						Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts	
Total No.	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612	
Before completing G.C.E. (O.L.)	3.7	1.7	5.0	3.7	4.3	2.0	1.9	5.4	1.9	4.9	
After GCE (O.L.)	36.3	20.3	46.9	37.3	32.6	38.0	25.8	44.3	21.5	45.1	
After GCE (A.L.)	21.4	21.0	21.6	21.2	24.5	8.0	21.1	21.5	17.4	23.7	
After Tertiary Education	33.7	47.7	24.5	32.0	35.2	50.0	46.5	23.8	56.9	19.8	
Undecided	4.9	9.2	2.0	5.8	3.4	2.0	4.7	5.0	2.3	6.5	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

acceptance as the GCE (OL) as a terminal course and as a qualification for employment, while relatively more students were also able to qualify for higher education on the basis of performance at this examination. The GCE Advanced Level is viewed in Sri Lanka more as a passport to higher education than as a terminal point in the education system. In both groups the small percentage of "undecided" respondents do not perhaps need to seek employment or have no inclination to do so.

Employment after marriage

There was little divergence of opinion on this matter in either sample. Nearly 90% of both 1973 and 1976 groups expressed readiness to be employed after marriage (Tables III and IV). The rural and less affluent groups made the most positive response for obvious economic reasons and the English medium group the least.

These aspirations have implications for a labour market in which the women formed only a quarter of the labour force (26.2%) and had a labour force participation rate of 26% as shown in the 1971 Census, while at the same time their unemployment rate (31.1%) was double that of men (14.3%). In Sri Lankan agrarian society women have always been engaged in economic activities, and it is refreshing to note that the education system is assisting in eroding the middle class concept of a completely and exclusively housebound woman.

Employment sector

83.2% of the 1973 group and 81.7% of the 1976 group have opted for employment in the state sector (Tables V and VI), and this is consistent with the findings of other surveys over the last two decades such as the 1952 survey and the report of the ILO mission in 1971.

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3. Green, T.L., "Education and Social Needs", in University of Ceylon Review, Vol.X October 1952 and "Results of a questionnaire on Attitudes of Undergraduates" in Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations, Vol.II, ILO Geneva, 1971.

Further analysis shows that there are differences between the preferences of urban and rural, linguistic, and economic groups in both years and science and arts streams in 1973. A higher proportion of rural and less affluent students as well as of Sinhala medium students prefer government employment, evidently because they do not have the right connections to obtain employment in affluent organizations in the private sector nor the resources for self-employment. To disadvantaged groups government employment provides the greatest assurance of security, while the urban middle class has more access to the private sector, to land, and to credit and other infrastructural facilities necessary for entrepreneurial activities. This is reflected even more clearly in the responses of the English medium students who are largely urban group from metropolitan schools.

Vocational Choice

In response to a direct question as to the vacation they would select the most popular choices were the same ten occupations in both years (Tables VII and VIII). Thirty one other occupations in 1973 and thirty six in 1976 were selected by less than ten respondents each and in the majority of cases by one or two only⁴, and about 8% - 10% in each sample did not select any occupation.

It is interesting to note, however, that there have been significant changes in the order of popularity of the ten occupations. In 1973 teaching was the choice of the largest number (37.1%) and was displaced by "doctor" only by the science and English medium groups. In 1976 there was a significant increase in those who selected medicine as a career and the highest proportion in all groups except the rural, Sinhala medium and low income students selected this occupation as their first choice. There has been a marked

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4. These occupations include farmer, private secretary, administrator, cooperative stores manager, agricultural instructor, actress, artist, apothecary, radio artiste, musician, telephonist, architect, journalist, psychiatrist, surgeon, social service worker, politician, film star, receptionist, librarian, university lecturer.

decrease in the proportion selecting teaching as a vocation, and the numbers have declined even among the rural, Sinhala medium and low income groups in which it still ranks as the choice of the largest number.

Nursing has been selected by the third largest group in both years and is most popular among the rural middle class and Sinhala Medium students. There has been a decrease in the proportion electing to be clerks and stenographers and an increase in the numbers selecting the jobs of air hostess and engineer. The air hostess's job was an urban and western-oriented choice but those selecting engineering have increased in all groups including rural and low income groups. Accountancy and law are largely urban western-oriented middle class choices and aspirants to join the police force are confined chiefly to students from rural, Sinhala medium and low income groups.

In brief there has been no change in the range of occupations which the majority of students select and many of the old stereotypes survive. The most striking change has been the increase in the popularity of the medical and engineering professions among all groups. An explanation for this increase seems to lie in the curriculum changes since 1972 which made science education available for all NCGE students. In 1973 only science students could aspire to be doctors and engineers while arts students had perforce to be teachers, clerks and stenographers. With the removal of the curriculum differentiation the social status and economic benefits which gave such high prestige to medicine and engineering in Sri Lanka became 'attainable' goals for all aspirants to socio-economic mobility.

The fact that almost all these popular occupations belong to the service sector underscores

- (i) the age-old literary bias of the curriculum and its traditional economic value in Sri Lanka and
- (ii) the influence of sex stereotypes which have led to the concentration of women in industrialized countries and in the urban sector in economically developing countries in occupations in this sector of the economy.

It is also tantamount to a rejection of employment in the agricultural sector by young women in less economically developed countries where over half the women are actively engaged in agricultural activities. This dichotomy between aspirations and opportunities is a result of distortions in the development process in colonial societies and has significant implications for future directions in over-all policies.

Reasons for vocational choice

Positive or negative responses were obtained to a list of statement of reasons for choosing the occupation specified in the previous answer and Tables IX and X present the proportion of positive responses and significant differences. The conceptual scheme on which the list was based included the following areas:

- (i) influence of key persons
- (ii) material benefits
- (iii) practical considerations
- (iv) security
- (v) social attitudes - (a) status
(b) sex role stereotyping
- (vi) concept of service and
- (vii) personal predilection

Responses to (vi) and (vii) were conventional, but analysis of the other responses revealed interesting facets of values and aspirations as well as significant differences among some groups.

Parental occupations, peer choices and the advice of teachers have had minimal influence on all groups in both years. Parents' wishes, however, seem to have a stronger influence and the impact appears to be greater on Tamil medium and middle class students.

Where material benefits are concerned the 1976 group and its urban, middle class students in particular, showed a

higher degree of consciousness of the value of such incentives than the 1973 group. In both groups a high proportion of Tamil and English medium students attached importance to a 'good' income, promotional prospects and opportunity for going abroad. The only practical consideration which was adduced as a reason for choosing a vocation was availability of the type of occupation selected.

Concern with security as a motive for selecting a vocation was greater in 1976 than in 1973. In the latter year, more urban, middle class and science students were mindful of this need while rural students had a slightly higher degree of interest in this respect of employment in 1976. In both years security was a major concern with Tamil and English medium students.

The two social concepts in the list evoked different responses from the majority of respondents. While a considerable proportion of all groups were in agreement with sex role stereotyping of jobs, the status of a job or its "respectability" was of importance largely to the Tamil medium group. Those conditioned by traditional sex stereotypes with regard to employment had also declined slightly in proportion and those influenced by norms of prestige had increased in 1976.

On the whole the reasons most favoured by respondents were interest, service, availability, suitability for women, security, some material benefits and parents' wishes. In a society where education functions as an agent of mobility and where students were drawn from a broad spectrum of society it was inevitable that only 10% should have wished to follow their parents' occupation.

The use of chi-square test (see results in Tables IX and X) also showed that there was hardly any difference in reasons adduced for vocational choice between urban and rural students in both years, and between arts and science students in 1973. There were, however, very significant differences between:

- (i) students from low income and those from middle class homes and
- (ii) students from Sinhala medium and those from Tamil medium homes

with regard to the influence of parental wishes, material benefits, status and sex roles on selection of vocations.

Ratings of occupations

Ranking of occupations is a useful index to the socio-economic hierarchy of vocational aspirations as well as to the prestige scale of occupations in a society. Respondents were asked to rank 10 occupations in order of preference from a list of 33 randomly selected from high, middle and low income, and traditionally "feminine" and other employment. Occupations were ranked according to scores received.

It was found that the 10 occupations receiving the highest scores in both years (Tables XI and XII) were consistent with the ten most popular vocational choices given in Tables VII and VIII. Calculating Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for this data it was found that there was also high positive correlation in ranking between the 1973 and 1976 groups (.94), and between sub-groups in the two years - urban (.93), rural (.94), Sinhala Medium (.93), Tamil Medium (.84), English Medium (.87), middle class (.91) and low income (.90).

Nevertheless there were some noteworthy changes in preferences as in the case of vocational choice. In 1973 teaching was ranked first by the whole group as well as by the rural arts, Sinhala medium, Tamil medium and by both economic groups, air hostess by the urban and English medium groups and medicine only by the science group. In 1976 medicine was ranked first by all groups excepting English medium students who gave first place to accountancy, while airhostess was ranked second by the majority of groups. Teaching was ranked fourth, and received an even lower rating from urban and affluent groups. The clerical service too received a lower rank in 1976 but engineering had a higher rating than teaching, and law too improved its position in the list of preferences. Nursing, and the clerical and police services were rated higher by rural and less affluent respondents, and law and accountancy by urban and middle class students, but engineering was ranked high by all groups. There were, of course, some inter-group variations.

These changes indicate, once again, that the science-arts dichotomy has been somewhat resolved by curriculum changes since 1972 and that medicine and engineering were apparently felt to be feasible aspirations in 1976. The increasing number of girls entering the university for engineering courses has also perhaps helped to change the image of this profession as a "masculine" occupation.

The down-grading of teaching, however, seems to stem from more complex causes. An occupation which was preferred for its availability, the security it offered and its traditional appeal to women could have lost popularity as a result of graduate unemployment and steadily declining monetary rewards. Moreover, the doctor, engineer and even airhostess have opportunities of overseas employment or travelling which are denied to the teacher in the present context. The accountant has similar prospects but the fact that accountancy courses are not part of the free education system explains its higher rating by urban and middle class rather than by rural and less affluent respondents.

The other interesting feature is that while there is relatively high positive correlation in ranking in both years between students from urban and rural schools (.81 in 1973 and .88 in 1976), middle class and low income homes (.79 and .74), Sinhala and Tamil medium students (.84 and .83) and even science and arts students in 1973 (.80), there is low correlation between Sinhala and English medium (.44 and .40) and between Tamil and English medium students (.47 and .46) in both years. In fact, the vocational preferences of English medium students (all of whom are from Colombo) differ in many respects from that of other groups. English medium students rank accountancy, doctor, airhostess, engineer and nurse high in common with other groups but their other preferences such as private secretary, receptionist, hair-dresser and salesgirl are among those ranked relatively low by other groups. These occupations are essentially urban-based and are part of the cosmopolitan world of the metropolis to which these students belong. On the other hand this group gave a low rating to vocations such as cooperative manager and apothecary who have a more significant role in rural society.

The list of least popular occupations given in Tables XIII and XIV reflect negative attitudes to low income, low status and unfamiliar jobs. The trader is perhaps considered to be synonymous with petty retail trade in both organized and the informal sectors. Many school leavers end up as factory workers and salesgirls and often become a source of cheap labour. Hotel workers, hairdressers and receptionists are new metropolitan based avenues of employment. The mechanic and until recently the bus conductor, have been almost exclusively

male images. The farmer had a slightly higher rating in 1976 but the low popularity of this vocation in a largely agrarian society reflects the depressed state of the rural economy in which women have always been active participants in agricultural activities.

Some observations

This analysis of vocational preferences has helped to identify some aspects of the role of the education process, the environment and values in determining aspirations. Psychological factors affecting individual behaviour are outside the framework of this study but a Sri Lankan research study⁵ found that the vocational interests of rural secondary school girls were more influenced by environmental and non-intellectual factors, and those of urban girls by intellectual factors, while psychological factors were of less importance to both.

It has been seen that even in the brief period under review here (1973 - 1976) educational change has led to higher expectations and therefore to higher vocational aspirations since the age at which employment is sought is indicative of the level of vocational aspiration. In Sri Lanka lack of a pluralistic development in tertiary education and the narrow social hierarchy of university courses culminating in the goals of medicine and engineering have meant that the education process has exercised pressures towards social conformity to a very limited range of 'approved' jobs.

Environment and values are inter-linked and it is against this background that the oft-repeated claim that Sri Lankan youth are unrealistic in their vocational aspirations has to be examined. In most countries a much smaller proportion than that actually engaged in agriculture and industry express preference for these occupations, and manual and low income jobs are invariably at the bottom of any list of preferences.

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5. Muthulingam S. "An investigation of certain environmental and psychological factors involved in the vocational choice and scientific interests of a selected group of secondary school pupils in Ceylon". Ph.D. thesis, London (1971) - (unpublished).

Reasons for vocational choice in any country are usually material benefits, social approval and pleasant working conditions. In Sri Lanka where education is still viewed as an agent of socio-economic mobility despite the incidence of "educated" unemployment, students inevitably wish to escape from the drudgery and hardship of the living conditions of the majority to the most remunerative and socially rewarding occupation of which they are aware, and even to the glamour and fantasy they identify with the career of an airhostess.

As evident from this survey many of them, however, retain a sense of practicality at the same time, for the less prestigious occupations of clerk, nurse and policewoman are among the ten most popular choices and preferences. This may stem from what Rodman⁶ has termed 'stretch values' where the aspirations of the less affluent are also determined by an alternative set of values which enables them to adjust to their deprived circumstances and to accept lesser goals.

This survey has also revealed that vocational choices in Sri Lanka have not changed appreciably over decades, for T.L. Green in his study of vocational ambitions in 1952⁷ found that students preferred employment in the State sector and shunned occupations in 'production' such as in agriculture and industry, while the ten occupations rated most highly were those of doctor, teacher, engineer, farmer (which he felt was interpreted as landowner), advocate, air pilot, police, army, nurse and radio operator.

Education can neither create nor change vocational aspirations as these are in reality responses to socio-economic incentives. In Sri Lanka neither the economy nor the incentive structure has changed to any significant extent over the years.

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6. Rodman Hyman, "The Lower Class Value Stretch", Social Forces, Vol. 42 No. 1, Oct. 1963.
 7. Green, T.L., "Education and Social Needs", University of Ceylon Review, Vol. X, Oct. 1952.

In spite of all the pronouncements made during the last decade regarding the need to promote self-employment, successful entrepreneurship is with few exceptions still the privilege of the affluent, and clerical posts in the state sector have the aura of security even in a saturated labour market. Curriculum change has therefore little impact and extension of educational opportunities directs aspirations of a larger number to unchanged goals, particularly since the overseas labour market has always attracted the professional class. It would be interesting to see whether accessibility to skilled and unskilled employment in West Asia will have any influence on vocational aspirations or help to reduce the numbers seeking higher education.

Where women are specifically concerned the findings of this survey suggest an expanded women work force. The labour force participation of women increased from 13.9% in 1959 to 26.1% in 1970 but their unemployment rate also increased from 12.1% to 21.2% during the same period⁸. Whether the number of employed women will increase significantly or whether they will swell the existing 'labour reserve' of women will depend on the employment situation in the country. Currently the employment of women tends to be of marginal importance to many policy-makers and employers in view of the high incidence of unemployment in general.

Among more ambitious school leavers in many countries feminine vocational preferences do not differ markedly from male preferences in Sri Lanka, for instance, engineering is third in order of vocational preferences. On the whole, however, the acceptance of traditional sex stereotypes in employment by a considerable proportion of girls in Sri Lanka and the narrow range of their vocational preference offer little hope that their exclusion from some areas of employment will change significantly or that their participation in the total development process will be greatly accelerated.

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8. A Survey of Employment, Unemployment and Under-employment in Ceylon, I.L.O. Review, Vol. LXXXVII, No.3, March 1963. Socio-Economic Survey of Ceylon - Dept. of Census and Statistics 1969/70.

While vocational preference can only change meaningfully with rapid over-all development two related problems merit attention:

- (1) Since the compulsion to social conformity revealed in this survey implies that vocational preferences can run counter to individual abilities, aptitudes and interests, there is need for education and vocational guidance programmes to create awareness of a wider range of choice within even the existing structure, and thereby to reduce frustration and wastage of human resources.
- (2) The aspirations of the majority of girls to combine marriage and employment also has important implications. Women form half the human resources of a nation while their biological functions and their crucial role in the home are vital for national development. The need to assist women to reconcile their dual role in the home and in employment without detriment to either becomes therefore the social responsibility of all policy-makers.

TABLE II

Education Level and Entry to Employment 1976
(Percentage Distribution of Choices of Girls)

Educational Level	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
							341	534
Total Nos.	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
Before Completing NCGE	2.8	1.5	3.8	3.3	2.2	0.0	1.2	3.9
After NCGE	13.6	8.3	17.7	16.1	3.8	16.9	5.3	16.9
After HNCE	15.4	13.3	17.1	17.3	3.8	29.2	12.3	17.2
After Tertiary Education	58.5	63.3	54.8	52.4	84.2	46.2	71.8	49.5
Undecided	9.7	13.6	6.6	10.9	6.0	7.7	9.4	12.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: The NCGE replaced the GCE(O.L.) in 1975 and the HNCE replaced the GCE (A.L.) in 1976.

TABLE III

Employment after Marriage - 1973
(Percentage Distribution of Choices)

Employment after Marriage	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group	Sc.	Arts
Total Nos.	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
Willing	88.9	85.6	91.2	89.4	89.2	82.0	85.7	91.5	93.2	86.4
Unwilling	8.2	12.3	5.4	6.5	7.3	18.0	11.0	5.9	5.7	9.6
Uncertain	2.9	2.1	3.4	4.1	3.5	0.0	3.3	2.6	1.1	4.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE IV

Employment after Marriage - 1976
(Percentage Distribution of Choices)

Employment after Marriage	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534
Willing	89.6	88.0	90.8	91.4	87.9	76.9	87.1	91.2
Unwilling	5.7	6.5	5.1	4.6	7.7	10.8	7.0	4.9
Uncertain	4.7	5.5	4.1	4.0	4.4	12.3	5.9	3.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE V

Choice of Employment Sector - 1973
(Percentage Distribution of Choices)

Employment Sector	All			Rural		Sinh. Medium		Tamil Medium		Eng. Medium		Middle Class Group			Low Income Group		Arts		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Total Nos	390	589	979			696		233		50		426		533		367		612	
Govt. Sector	70.3	91.9	83.2			88.1		76.8		46.0		72.7		91.3		76.8		87.1	
Private Sector	12.6	1.4	5.8			3.0		8.2		34.0		11.5		1.4		7.9		4.6	
Self-Employment	11.2	3.9	6.9			5.7		7.7		18.0		10.3		4.1		9.0		5.6	
Undecided	5.9	2.8	4.1			3.2		7.3		2.0		5.5		3.2		6.3		2.7	
Total	100	100	100			100		100		100		100		100		100		100	

TABLE VI

Choice of Employment Sector - 1976
(Percentage Distribution of Choice)

Employment Sector	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group		Low Income Group
							341	534	
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534	
Govt. Sector	81.7	75.0	86.9	86.5	77.6	47.7	71.8	88.0	
Private Sector	6.9	9.4	4.9	5.7	1.6	32.3	9.9	4.9	
Self-Employment	7.2	12.8	2.9	3.9	16.9	12.3	14.7	2.4	
Undecided	4.2	2.8	5.3	3.9	3.9	7.7	3.6	4.7	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

TABLE VII

Vocational Choice - 1973 (By percentage)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle			Arts
							Class Group	Income Group	Sc.	
Total Nos.	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
Teacher	37.1	27.2	43.6	38.2	40.8	4.0	29.5	42.8	20.2	47.2
Doctor	17.8	24.6	13.2	14.0	25.3	34.0	26.5	11.0	43.1	2.6
Nurse	10.0	6.4	12.4	12.9	2.5	4.0	4.9	13.9	13.1	8.2
Clerk	6.4	4.1	7.9	8.2	2.1	2.0	3.3	8.8	1.6	9.3
Stenographer	4.6	4.9	4.4	4.0	1.3	28.0	5.9	3.8	0.5	7.0
Accountant	3.1	5.6	1.5	3.0	2.1	8.0	4.9	1.6	2.5	3.4
Lawyer	2.5	4.9	0.8	1.8	4.3	2.0	4.5	0.9	1.6	2.9
Engineer	2.0	3.8	1.5	1.4	4.3	0.0	3.5	0.9	5.2	0.2
Air Hostess	2.0	3.3	1.2	1.9	2.1	4.0	3.3	1.0	0.5	2.9
Police	1.8	0.0	3.1	2.4	0.4	0.0	0.2	3.0	2.2	1.6
Total	88.1	84.8	89.6	87.8	85.2	86.0	86.5	87.7	90.5	85.3

Only the ten most popular choices are included in this Table. Approximately 2% of the group selected 31 occupations, the majority of which were each chosen by 1-3 respondents. About 10% were undecided.

TABLE VIII

Vocational Choice - 1976 (By percentage)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle		Low
							Class Group	Income Group	
Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534	
Doctor	29.4	40.0	20.8	22.6	51.9	30.7	42.8	25.8	
Teacher	25.3	11.7	32.4	27.1	18.0	1.5	11.4	30.8	
Nurse	6.2	3.9	7.9	7.8	2.7	0.0	8.8	2.4	
Air hostess	4.9	8.6	2.0	3.2	6.0	12.3	8.8	2.4	
Engineer	4.7	4.2	5.0	5.1	4.9	0.0	5.3	4.3	
Clerk	3.7	2.8	4.2	4.6	0.5	3.0	1.7	4.8	
Police	2.5	1.5	3.2	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	3.9	
Accountant	2.4	2.8	2.0	1.8	2.2	9.2	3.2	1.8	
Lawyer	1.8	3.6	0.4	1.3	3.8	1.5	4.1	0.4	
Stenographer	1.7	2.6	1.0	0.8	1.0	12.3	2.6	1.1	
Total	80.6	81.7	78.9	77.8	91.0	70.5	88.9	77.7	

Only the ten most popular choices are included in this Table. The rest of the group selected 36 occupations, the majority of which were chosen by 1-3 respondents. About 8% were undecided.

TABLE IX

Reasons for Vocational Choice - 1973
(percentages of positive responses)

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group		Arts	
							Income Group	Sc.		
Total Nos	979	390	589	696	233	50	426	553	367	612
<u>Influences</u>										
Father's/Mother's	8.0	9.2	7.1	7.0	9.4	14.0	10.8	5.9	5.9	9.2
Job	47.5	42.5	50.7	38.5	72.1	58.0	51.2	44.7	46.9	52.6
Parent's wish	16.1	13.0	18.2	15.4	19.3	14.0	14.1	17.7	14.7	16.9
Teacher's advice	21.8	22.3	21.6	11.9	37.3	28.0	26.5	18.3	15.8	25.5
Friend's example										
<u>Material Benefits</u>										
'Good' Income	34.7	41.0	30.5	23.8	57.9	78.0	47.4	24.9	33.8	35.2
Fringe Benefits	10.3	7.9	11.9	7.8	17.2	14.0	13.6	4.2	9.8	10.6
Good Promotion- al prospects	41.9	35.3	46.4	34.1	62.2	58.0	42.0	43.3	40.3	42.9
Opportunity to go abroad	46.1	53.3	41.4	22.3	68.2	76.0	56.8	39.8	57.2	40.0
Opportunity to pursue higher education	29.8	29.2	30.2	17.4	63.5	46.0	35.7	25.3	35.4	26.5

TABLE X

Reasons for Vocational Choice - 1976
(Percentage of positive responses)

Reasons	All		Urban		Rural		Sinh. Medium		Tamil Medium		Eng. Medium		Middle Class Group		Low Income Group	
	Total Nos	875	384	491	627	183	65	341	534							
<u>Influences</u>																
Father's Mother's Job	10.3	9.6	10.8	7.9	21.9	7.7	11.4	10.5								
Parent's wish	42.1	45.8	39.1	35.2	76.5	40.0	52.5	38.9								
Teacher's advice	16.5	10.7	20.9	20.7	31.9	12.3	7.9	18.7								
Friend's example	21.9	18.5	24.6	22.4	13.2	13.8	20.5	24.9								
<u>Material benefits</u>																
'Good' Income	46.9	56.8	39.1	41.3	81.4	89.2	58.9	39.1								
Fringe benefits	10.7	13.0	20.6	19.1	28.4	13.8	13.5	20.4								
Good promotional prospects	45.1	46.6	43.9	45.2	79.8	69.2	29.9	43.8								
Opportunity to go abroad	50.4	54.9	46.8	43.7	77.6	67.7	57.5	46.1								
Opportunity to pursue higher education	26.3	27.1	25.7	14.2	68.3	53.8	34.0	24.9								

Reasons	Middle Class Group			Low Income Group		
	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium
<u>Practical considerations</u>						
No transfers	22.9	24.2	21.8	21.1	26.2	42.0
Availability of jobs	58.3	61.2	56.0	63.8	44.8	55.4
Urban location	24.8	30.2	20.6	19.8	33.3	29.2
<u>Security</u>						
'Safe' job	55.9	51.3	59.5	45.9	77.0	63.1
<u>Social Concepts</u>						
'Respectable' job	35.1	39.6	31.6	18.2	85.8	83.1
Suitable for women	53.6	54.9	52.5	49.4	87.4	73.8
<u>Concept of Service</u>						
Service to country	79.8	83.1	77.2	79.7	89.6	81.5

Reasons	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group		Low Income Group
							88.6	82.4	67.2
<u>Personal Preference</u>									
Interest	73.4	79.9	68.2	73.0	78.1	86.6	88.6	82.4	60.9
Challenging job	61.2	74.7	50.7	64.1	84.2	72.3	82.4	82.4	60.9
<u>Some significant differences</u>									
Significant differences were found between the groups specified below with regard to the reasons indicated in the bracketed figures since the values of χ^2 exceed the critical value of 9.210 at 1% level of significance for two degrees of freedom.									
(i) 1973 and 1976 $\chi^2 =$ in (5) 64.2 (8) 33.1 (13) 35.36 (14) 48.1 (15) 11.1									
(ii) urban and rural $\chi^2 =$ in (5) 23.1									
(iii) Sinhala medium and Tamil Medium $\chi^2 =$ in (2) 100.2 (5) 132.1 (13) 58.1 (14) 291.8 (15) 24.6									
(iv) Middle Class and Low income group $\chi^2 =$ in (2) 20.4 (5) 64.8 (14) 107.9 (15) 24.6									

TABLE XI

Vocational preference - Rank Order of Occupations - 1973
(first ten preferences)

Vocations	Middle Class Group										Arts
	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Income Group	Sc	Income Group	Arts	
Teacher	1	2	1	1	1	6	1	2	1	1	1
Air Hostess	2	1	6	2	3	1	4	3	3	4	4
Doctor	3	3	3	4	2	3	5	6	1	10	10
Govt. Clerk	4	8	2	6	5	2	7	6	6	3	3
Bank Clerk	5	4	4	5	4	11	9	9	9	2	2
Nurse	6	7	5	3	10	10	6	2	4	5	5
Police Woman	7	13	7	7	12	22	13	7	7	7	7
Accountant	8	6	10	10	6	2	4	12	10	6	6
Lawyer	9	5	12	8	8	13	5	11	8	11	11
Engineer	10	9	9	11	7	12	8	9	5	19	19
Stenographer		10				7		10		9	9
Cooperative Manager			8	9						8	8
Private Secretary						4					
Journalist						5					
Receptionist						8					
Hairdresser						9					

TABLE XII

Vocational Preference - Rank Order of Occupations - 1976
(first ten preferences)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle Class Group	Low Income Group
Doctor	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Air Hostess	2	2	3	2	4	2	3	2
Engineer	3	3	4	4	2	4	2	4
Teacher	4	5	2	3	3	11	6	3
Lawyer	5	4	9	5	5	10	4	9
Bank Clerk	6	8	5	6	8	9	7	5
Nurse	7	7	8	7	7	5	8	8
Accountant	8	6	10	10	6	1	5	10
Police Woman	9	10	6	8	12	21	16	6
Govt. Clerk	10	9	7	9	10	22	17	7
Stenographer						6		
Apothecary					9			
Hairdresser						7		
Private Secretary						8		

TABLE XIII

Vocational Preference - Rank Order of Occupation - 1973
(least popular preference)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle		Arts	
							Class Group	Income Group		
Trader	1	1	1	1	5	10	1	1	2	1
Hotel Worker	2	7	2	3	1	15	2	4	3	2
Farmer	3	3	5	2	10	11	5	5	9	3
Hairdresser	4	10	3	5	2	26	4	10	1	7
Factory Worker	5	5	8	10	3	2	11	3	4	6
Bus Conductor	6	2	11	8	4	1	12	2	6	5
Receptionist	7	13	4	4	6	20	3	11	5	9
Salesgirl	8	9	7	7	9	14	9	9	10	9
Weaving teacher	9	4	14	6	16	4	15	6	8	12
Politician	10	17	7	13	11	7	6	13	13	10

Note: Rank has been assigned to the least popular choice.

TABLE XIV

Vocational Preference - Rank Order of Occupation - 1973
(least popular preference)

Vocations	All	Urban	Rural	Sinh. Medium	Tamil Medium	Eng. Medium	Middle		Low
							Class Group	Income Group	
Trader	1	2	1	1	6	6	3	1	1
Salesgirl	2	4	3	2	3	21	5	5	5
Factory Worker	3	1	9	8	1	2	1	11	11
Hairdresser	4	6	4	3	4	37	8	7	7
Bus Conductor	5	3	10	10	2	1	1	12	12
Receptionist	6	11	2	4	7	22	13	4	4
Hotel Worker	7	7	6	10	5	4	6	9	9
Mechanic	8	9	7	7	10	17	11	8	8
Farmer	9	10	8	6	15	3	12	10	10
Weaving teacher	10	5	14	11	9	8	4	2	2

Note: Rank: has been assigned to the least popular choice.

R E V I E W

François Valentyn's Description of Ceylon, Trans. & Ed. by Sinnappah Arasaratnam, (London 1978), pp. xv, 395. Price £ 10 net. \$ 20 in U.S.A.

This is a translation and edition of part of the section relating to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in the first book of Volume V of the Rev. Francois Valentyn's monumental compilation entitled Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, ... (Dordrecht/Amsterdam 1724-26).

Before we take a closer look at this translation and edition, it is necessary to examine certain aspects of the original work itself. As to its contents, we may note that despite breaks in the narrative and what Professor Arasaratnam has rightly called "the highly disorderly arrangement of the whole book", Valentyn's account falls into three broad divisions. The first, starting with a valuable glossary on administrative offices and caste groups, gives the background as it were to the other two sections that are to follow. It gives information on the island's geography, its flora and fauna, ethnology and on certain linguistic and cultural features. The second part of the book is by far the largest, and it purports to deal with the history of the island from ancient times right up to Valentyn's own day. The third and final part relates to religious matters and ends at page 462 with a list of Dutch clergymen serving in Colombo up to the year 1725. (Arasaratnam's translation excludes this third part and a major portion of the second).

It is known that in giving all this information, Valentyn has utilised a variety of sources: official records, personal communications from certain Dutch officials who had some knowledge of the Island, and also

published and unpublished histories or compilations derived from Dutch and non-Dutch sources. In this connection, Arasaratnam has examined (pp.27-50 passim) the nature and extent of Valentyn's indebtedness to various writers and brings up additional information to support the established view that Valentyn has been guilty of plagiarism. But he is puzzled by Valentyn's copying of Couto ad verbum when the Dutch author had the knowledge and ability to have gone to the very originals used by Couto. He, therefore, concludes that in Valentyn's era "The printed word was public property and it did not matter if one repeated what someone else had said or where he got one's material" (p.46).

As against those ideas we have to note that in view of the magnitude of his entire project (which covered so much of Asia) Valentyn would seldom have had the time to set aside a secondary source and go to the relevant original himself. Besides, when copying from Couto's work he must have felt more confident of not being found out because most of this Portuguese writer's volumes had been published a century or so before and, in any case, they were far less likely to have been familiar to contemporaries than the more recent work (in Dutch) of Baldaeus and of Robert Knox (whose book was available in a Dutch translation too). The fact that Valentyn took such great pains to mask his copying from Baldaeus and Knox shows that even in his day plagiarism was not considered to be an irreproachable pastime.

Admiration for the stupendous achievement of Valentyn - which is natural - appears to have led Arasaratnam at times to miss the extent of the author's indebtedness to other writers. For instance, Valentyn is given credit (p.39) for "some pertinent observations on Sinhalese society and character". On analysis, however, it is found that Valentyn is only providing a paraphrase or rehash - along with some concoctions to give a veneer of originality - of Knox's observations (at pp.63-66 of Knox). Similarly, the "very interesting observation" attributed (p.53) to Valentyn (relating to ancient inscriptions) is found to have been entirely derived from Knox (pp.112-13).

Of the concoctions of Valentyn intended to give an impression of originality, we may mention one which gives an insight into some of his methods. This is his reference to Sinhalese "women ... doing nothing else other than eating arecanut the whole day and smoking tobacco or preparing this for their husbands". All these practices being unheard of in regard to Sinhalese women, one naturally turns to Knox. Then one finds that what the latter had really observed and noted (p.100) was only the following _

"Tobacco likewise they account a Vice, but yet is used both by Men and Women; but more eaten than drunk [sic.] in Pipes.

But above all things Betel leaves they are most fond of

The better sort of Women ... have no other Pastime but to sit and chew Betel ...

But whensoever they eat of the Betel-leaf, the Lime and the Nut [arecanut] accompany it."

As for Valentyn's general dependence on Baldaeus, it is heavy and unmistakable for the account of matters relating to the first half of the seventeenth century (pp.264 to 358 of the present translation). The extent of dependence is shown when Baldaeus' errors are found repeated by Valentyn himself (p.305) in regard to, for example, the date of the Treaty of March 1612 and the number of articles in it, or with regard to the Treaty of 1638 (p.323).

Of the material which Valentyn has incorporated into his work, indisputably one of the most valuable is the Glossary of Sinhalese terms (pp.65-86). Perhaps as valuable are the reproductions, extracts, or summaries of V.O.C. documents that are not available in other printed sources, and, sometimes, even in manuscript sources. It is for this reason that, as Arasaratnam points out, "Research students have used Valentyn as a public archive ...". But such use has to be made with great care, not only because of the

selective character of what he chooses to present but also because of serious inaccuracies in that presentation. In this respect we could cite the lists of the articles of trade and of the coins, weights and measures which Arasaratnam describes (p.40) as "comprehensive". It may be true that these lists are based on "the trade journals of the Company" (as the editor concludes). But the printed official handbook of the V.O.C. (Uytreckening van de ... Munts Waardye, Inhout der Maten en Swaarte der Gewigten .. van Indien, Middelburg 1691) which drew on those journals and which Valentyn is more likely to have utilized, clearly shows the danger of relying too much on the accuracy of his reproduction of official documents. For example, he (pp.185-88) has not adhered to all the careful distinctions maintained in the official records, which indicate that certain coins, weights or measures were not current, or had different values, in different places under the same administration based on Colombo. Moreover, other serious mistakes such as the statement that Tapi Sarassas were 20 (instead of 240) pieces in a pack, or that Sarassa Gobars (another variety of textiles) were 10 pieces in a pack when in reality each pack contained 100 pieces, indicate the type of pitfalls that one could get into by relying on his reproduction of documents. The accuracy of Valentyn's work in this respect, and, therefore, its value is even more limited than hitherto indicated. (See K.W. Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1638-1658 - Amsterdam 1958 - p.xv, p.137 n.40 and n.43, p.153 n.35 and p.183 n.16).

There is, however, yet another part of Valentyn's work which has to be considered here because of the serious claims advanced on its behalf by the editor. This relates to the account of the history of the island before the arrival of the Europeans - more particularly, to the list of kings provided by Valentyn. He describes this list as being "outstanding in depth and accuracy" (p.33) and also states that Valentyn has provided the names of kings 'which appear to have been omitted from many Sinhalese and Pali texts. ... Some of the names are probably extant only in the form given by Valentyn" (p.35).

As a matter of fact, much confusion has arisen on this subject because of the form in which the names are given by Valentyn. And that itself is partly due to Valentyn's ignorance of Sinhalese, a shortcoming which familiarity with Reland's Dissertationes could not have changed, (contrary to what Arasaratnam - p.24 - has assumed). It was also due in part to what appears to have certainly been transcriptions made from an oral account, by one who was not adequately knowledgeable in Sinhalese and/or errors made by Dutch copyists (on probably more than one occasion.) Thus, for example, "Vagoe Raja" is not the name of a king as Valentyn (and Arasaratnam, p.199) assumed but merely means the "King of Vanga", "Gilinitissa" (p.208) is a distortion of "Kēlanitissa", "Vacnelisinam" (p.212) is a distortion of "Vaṅkanāsika" and "Asnapa Raja" (p.212) of whom the editor says there are no parallels in the traditional chronicles, is the transformation which "Vasabha" has undergone in the course of reaching Valentyn's text; and "mila Jojada" (p.213) is the distortion which "Nīla Yodaya" has had to suffer. These and other such misconstructions have been added to by Valentyn (or, more likely, by his Dutch sources) by often taking the Sinhalese word "nam" which means "named" as part of the personal name.

In view of these facts, it is apparent that some of the names of kings which figure in Valentyn's list but do not seem to figure in the traditional works are really the result of distortion or confusion in the Dutch sources. On the other hand, the explanation for the absence (noted by the editor at p.219) of a name like "Lāminitissa" in the better-known chronicles lies in the fact that an alternative name "Chattagāhaka" has been used. As for the king "Mitsen Karalsora" ("Vissenan Caralsoo" in Valentyn), the absence of which ruler in the Mahāvamsa is referred to by Arasaratnam (p.219 n.6) it should be noted that "Karalsora" is a sobriquet meaning "rice thief" and together with that appellation in Pali the name Mittasena (the Pali equivalent of Mitsen) does indeed occur in the Mahāvamsa (Ch.38 verses 4-10). Valentyn's list of Sinhalese kings, therefore, does not possess quite the significance which Arasaratnam has attached to it.

There is another shortcoming in Valentyn's work to which attention has to be drawn. On at least two important matters, the position which he sets down as being contemporary to his times, is really one which had largely vanished half a century or so earlier. In regard to the territory occupied by the Dutch and the inland forts or watch-posts maintained by them (pp.122-47), and in regard to the Kandyan ruler and his administration (pp.149-53 and 188-93), Valentyn has more or less petrified the situation of the sixteen-seventies as described by Governor Rijckloff van Goens and Robert Knox respectively, and made it applicable for the seventeen-twenties. Moreover, Valentyn could not sometimes maintain the chronological sequence when stringing together material from diverse sources for his compilation. A good example of this is that in the midst of describing events of the sixteen-thirties, he inserts information regarding certain events that took place in February 1643, and in such fashion as to mislead even Arasaratnam (p.317) into believing that it must have been "a mistake for February 1633".

On the other hand, there is an aspect of Valentyn's work which perhaps deserves even more emphasis than has been accorded to it by the editor, namely, the maps and plans and illustrations, of which about half have been excellently reproduced in this volume. Though the value of the maps and plans has been fairly adequately discussed (pp.41-47 *passim*), more could have been said regarding the illustrations.

Of the illustrations, rather more than half are fanciful but the rest appear to be copies or adaptations of drawings of actual buildings or scenes. The illustration of an elephant hunt in 1717 (between pp.192 and 193) though more elaborate than a drawing on the same subject in Baldaeus' work, is undoubtedly based on an eye-witness's drawing. The illustrations of the Governor's Residence and of other buildings and gardens appertaining to the Governor - out of six in Valentyn, four are reproduced here (facing pp.118 and 119) - are likewise

authentic. They provide very interesting and valuable evidence relating to aspects of the life-style of Dutch Governors, and to architecture and landscape-gardening during the period.

The fanciful illustrations have their own particular significance. The Buddhist procession (between pp.192 and 193) is undoubtedly woven round an illustration of a monk in Knok's work (between pp.120 and 121). Whilst this and almost all other illustrations are such as would present exotic themes to European readers, one has also to note at the same time that the majority depict scenes of violence, actual or potential - such as five scenes of murder and strife, one of abduction and another of flight. A particularly significant illustration - not reproduced in the edition under review - is that relating to Kuveni, a female of ancient legend who was said to have possessed three breasts. The Reverend Valentyn's illustration indicates Kuveni attempting to cover her naked bosom with her hands whilst one of the male figures advancing towards her has a hand outstretched with unmistakable intent. (It is important to note that this was not a scene depicted in any way in the original legend). These fanciful illustrations seem often to mirror not only European conceptualisations of Asia, but also the tastes - or the presumed tastes - of the European reading public of the period. It may perhaps be no exaggeration to say that a study of the fanciful type of illustrations in all of the eight tomes of Valentyn's work is likely to yield more significant data for the history of ideas and of society in eighteenth century Europe than for aspects of Asian history.

Having considered some of the characteristics of Valentyn's original work, we can now look more specifically at the present translation and edition, certain elements of which, however, have unavoidably come up for discussion already.

At the outset we have to note that partly on account of limitations of space imposed on this publication,

Professor Arasaratnam has not only decided to leave out, quite legitimately, Valentyn's extracts from certain documents, which have been published by others in recent years, but also to leave untranslated about two-thirds of the volume. Though this untranslated section also contains several extracts from documents, which are available in translation, that does not provide justification for leaving untranslated many other documents, some of which are extremely valuable. Moreover, the last years of the 17th century and the first two decades of the 18th are, in comparison with the years before them, almost terra incognita in the history of the Island, particularly with regard to Dutch activities. In the circumstances even the "21 pages of Valentyn's narrative" which Arasaratnam refers to (p.47) acquire far greater importance than several score pages of his previous account based, so much as it is, on Baldaeus. Besides, as we have seen, the main value of Valentyn's work lies in the extracts from documents which are not otherwise available - or, at least, not easily accessible. From that point of view this latter section is very valuable. Particular attention may be drawn to the extracts from Hendrick Adriaan van Reede's Consideratien ... (at pp.246-285 in Valentyn's Dutch text) as it gives, amongst other things, information relating to the Kingdom of Kandy and to Dutch policy which is in many respects different from that given in other Dutch sources utilized by Valentyn.

It is a pity also that in this translation of Valentyn, no references are given to the corresponding pages in the original work. This is particularly unfortunate because in his extremely valuable introduction, Arasaratnam's citations and supporting references are invariably to the pagination in the original work only.

The confusion regarding people and events that we find so often in Valentyn has sometimes even confused the editor, as for example at pp.253-54 when there is a serious mix-up of Rājasimha of Sītāwaka and Karaliyadde Bandāra and Vimaladharmasūriya of Kandy. Similarly, the confusion or mutilation of place-names by Valentyn has

prevented the editor from identifying them. For example, on one page (108) there are three such place-names: "Deleswage" which refers to "Dolosbāge", "Jotta Kinde" which is "Yaṭikiṇḍa" and "Vilacem" which undoubtedly is meant to denote "Vellassa". The distortion of names has proved to be a stumbling-block even when the location details given by Valentyn are fairly accurate as, for example, with the name "Calane", which stands for "Kēlaniya", but which is wrongly identified by the editor (p.146) as being "probably Kolonne" (a place many miles off location).

It is also to be regretted that many errors in identification have occurred in regard to Valentyn's valuable glossary. In several instances, in fact, Valentyn's ascription of meaning and his orthography is nearer the mark than the version suggested by Arasaratnam by way of an improvement. For example, the word "andols" means "palanquins" whereas Arasaratnam's suggested improvement "randōla" (p.66) actually refers to a particular type of palanquin; "Ettelle" ("ethala") stands for "elephant-stall", whereas the word is wrongly corrected into "atto" and the meaning given as "people" (p.73) by him; "Audebadda" ("āyudhabadde) is incorrectly improved to "Handabadda" (p.75); likewise, he mistakenly suggests that Valentyn's "Caepajeme", which is relatively close to the relevant Sinhalese word "kuppāyama", should read as "probably kupāya" (p.78).

Outside the subject-matter of the glossary too we get several errors, a few examples of which are cited here. In note 5 at page 116, "Verberin" (Beruwela) is inaccurately identified as being "near Hikkaduwa". Moreover, it is said to have been "known later as Barberyn" when, in fact, the Portuguese had begun using that name or slight variants of it from at least the early 17th century and the Dutch had been imitating that practice long before Valentyn's time. "Kurulla" (p.181 n.3) is given as the Sinhalese for woodpecker when it is only a generic term for "bird"; "Ratel" is given (p.187 n.6) as derived from "rati" (Hindi) when its origin is more closely related to Arabic "ratl"; Valentyn's incorrect "Aira Vatta" (p.238 n.6) is corrected only by a rearrangement of the letters and a

diacritical mark, when the correct name should be "Airāvana". The name "Marasinga" (properly "Mārasin̄ha") is incorrectly changed (p.307 n.6) to "Amarasinha". The correction at page 353 note 4 should be "Karavanēlla" and not "Anakanvila" and "Oedampel" should read "Udugampola" and not "Udapola" (as in n.3 of p.245).

The attention drawn to such shortcomings should not blind us to the very great achievement of this translation and edition. The mere task of translation from early eighteenth century Dutch to English was formidable enough, especially on account of Valentyn's cumbersome sentence structure and style. In addition, other peculiarities such as, for example, gross inconsistency in the spelling of names of people and places must have made the task of editing tiresome and confusing. Moreover, as Professor Arasaratnam himself has pointed out, extraordinary linguistic skills have been called for both for the work of translation and for that of editing. Apart from a high competence in Dutch and English, some knowledge of Portuguese, Sinhalese, Tamil and Malay has been necessary. Professor Arasaratnam has met these requirements to an extent which hardly any other scholar could hope to achieve.

Turning more particularly to the editorial work in this volume, no one can fail to note the immense labour that has gone into it and the impressive erudition that is manifest throughout the work. Special mention has to be made of the sixty-page introduction in which all that is considered relevant about the life and career of Valentyn is ferreted out by a wide-ranging and intense search. In the latter part of this introduction he discusses, in similar manner, Valentyn's sources and the contents of the work, along with an assessment of its special merits and demerits. Not the least notable and valuable feature of these sixty pages is the way in which Arasaratnam's familiarity with the other volumes of Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien ... (as well as those parts of volume V that have not been translated) has helped him to make apposite comparisons and elucidations in order to enrich our understanding of a good many matters relating to the period.

Attention has been drawn in this review to the shortcomings in the Rev. Francois Valentyn's work on Sri Lanka and the question arises as to whether some other more dependable and, therefore, more valuable eighteenth century work could not have been taken up in its stead by the Hakluyt Society for publication. Such a question is all the more relevant because so little of what Valentyn has to say in the translated sections is new or unknown at the present time. If this question is set aside, however, we can note that we have a translation and edition which conforms to the highest standards set by Hakluyt Society publications. The quality of the paper and the print and the presentation in general too leaves nothing to be desired. The Society is to be congratulated for this as well as for its choice of editor and translator.

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