

Forward

THE VIEW FROM THE LEFT

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We Say.....

After the Polls

Before they swallow their own dead rope that last week's two by-election victories indicate mass popular support for themselves and their policies, the UNP leaders should ask themselves why even their own supporters did not greet these victories with the usual joyous firing of crackers.

Obviously even the party faithful were not over-impressed by the victory over a divided Opposition in specially handpicked constituencies. They know that after these polls both their party and government are back at square one.

The by-elections did not end but further dramatised the divisions in the government and the U.N.P. It was striking how the JR-loyalists concentrated on Minneriya and the Premadasa-loyalists on Kundasale, without the twain meeting except for protocol appearances of the two leaders in the other constituency.

The ethnic problem continues to tear the country apart. Last week's bomb explosions in Colombo indicate that it has entered a new and even more dangerous stage. But an agreed political settlement is not yet in sight. The only prospect is that the senseless and costly killing of participants and innocents in the struggle between state and individual terrorism will continue and multiply.

The new Budget that the government will introduce in the next few days is unlikely to bring any joy to the country or the people. The Sri Lanka rupee is targetted for yet another devaluation. Military expenditure will be the highest in our contemporary history. Economic development will continue to be frozen. Another dose of the World Bank's remedy of welfare cuts and more privatisation will be ladled out. Even the hint of wage increases cannot sweeten this bitter pill.

All this will be accompanied by more servile subordination to World Bank dictates in economic affairs and by greater integration of Sri Lanka in U.S. imperialism's global and regional war strategies.

Little wonder then that even the ranks of the U.N.P. were reluctant to cheer!

The by-election results must also start a process of serious re-thinking in the ranks of those opposed to the U.N.P. and its policies.

This is especially so among supporters of the S.L.F.P., which suffered the most. The debacle that its present leaders have brought on that party, as manifested in the almost fifty per cent drop in its vote in two constituencies which it has often represented in the past, must make them wonder what will become of them if the pro-UNP and anti-Left policies of Anura Bandaranaike and the efforts to make that party a part of family property are allowed to continue.

The SLMP and its allies will also need to make a serious study of the by-election results and draw appropriate conclusions from them, if they want to evolve from their initial creditable showing at Minneriya to acceptance as a viable alternative to the capitalist policies of the UNP and the present SLFP leaders.

This alliance will have to move from mere criticism of the U.N.P.'s policies and performance towards evolving agreed alternative perspectives that can attract, inspire and activate the anti-UNP forces. It will have to revamp its propaganda techniques to correspond more accurately to the real situation in our country in the 1980s. And it will have channel the smouldering mass dissatisfaction of the people into concrete struggles, both limited and general, against the adverse consequences of the UNP's policies and for the political defeat of the U.N.P. itself.

There are no short cuts in this struggle. Neither despair nor its off-spring, adventurism, provide any way out. It is hard thinking and, even more so, hard work that will count.

Shock, Grief, Wrath at Indira Killing

Shock, grief and wrath dominated world reaction to the news of the foul assassination, on the morning of October 31st, of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India and Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In Sri Lanka, too, all political and other public leaders made by these forces in Sri Lanka were unanimous in their condemnation of this outrage.

A state of national mourning has been declared until her funeral on Saturday, November 3.

Tributes to Shrimati Gandhi in Sri Lanka underscored her positive contributions to peace, detente, and international co-operation in world affairs and her illustrious role in the non-aligned movement.

Her unwavering friendship towards Sri Lanka and, most recently, her positive contributions towards assisting a negotiated political settlement of our ethnic crisis were also appreciated, together with her



Indira Gandhi

Left, radical and democratic forces in Sri Lanka also saw Shrimati Gandhi's assassination as something that went beyond a brutal act of treachery by some Sikh members of her personal security staff.

Its links with the sustained campaign of US imperialism to surround India with hostile states and to destabilise it internally through subversive support for fissiparous and anti-secular movements have been brought out in the statements

The facts that the separatist and extremist movement for Khalistan has its headquarters in the USA and that the hands of both the US and Pakistan were seen in the recent disturbances in the Punjab have also been noticed.

Parallels were also drawn with the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka, and Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh.

It has also been noted that the assassination took place when India is shortly to hold its next general election, whose outcome will be crucial for both that country and for world and regional developments.

Wide publicity has also been given to Indira Gandhi's statement shortly before her death that "Even if I die in the service of the nation, I would be proud of it".

In Sri Lanka, as in India, even those who had been critical of Shrimati Gandhi's handling of specific domestic affairs praised her stance in world affairs.

COMMENTS

Extracts from some of the comments of Sri Lanka's political leaders yesterday on Indira Gandhi's assassination were:

"The Communist Party condemns this brutal killing. It is clear that reactionary elements in India and outside are behind it". — K. P. Silva, CPSL General Secretary.

"The news is terrible. The consequence to the politics of not only India but of South East Asia generally and the world is also incalculable. Sri Lanka has lost a good friend". — Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, LSSP leader.

"... a big blow aimed at democracy" — T. B. Illangaratne, President SLMP

"India has lost her noblest daughter" — Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, SLFP President.

"... a loss to the people all over the world who love freedom, peace and progress" — TULF President M. Sivathamparam.

"An irreparable loss to India ... a grievous blow to the Non-Aligned movement and the international community" — President J. R. Jayawardene.

"A Monstrous Crime"

(Statement of Pieter Keuneman, Chairman of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka)

"All members of our Party, and myself personally, unequivocally condemn the brutal and despicable assassination of India's Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.

"This monstrous crime is the culmination of a long and sustained effort by domestic and international reaction to destabilise and encircle India and to put an end to Mrs. Gandhi's efforts to keep India as a united and secular state, as well as to her independent, non-aligned and peaceful policies in world and regional affairs.

"In a world where the CIA has admitted its attempts to assassinate Cuba's Fidel Castro and other foreign leaders whose policies the US does not like, and where its instructions to Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries on how to assassinate that country's leaders have recently been exposed, it should not be difficult to locate from where the inspiration for this vile act has come".

A New Stage in the Ethnic Crisis?

Do the bombs that exploded in many parts of Colombo on October 23 mark a new stage in Sri Lanka's deteriorating ethnic crisis?

The consensus among political observers is that they do.

Up to now the armed Tamil youth groups which the government brands as "terrorists" boasted that they had not killed or injured a single Sinhalese civilian and that their victims were only members of the armed services occupying the Tamil areas or Tamils whom they regarded as "traitors" to their cause.

They had also confined their struggle to the northern province and the areas of the eastern province where Tamils are in a majority.

But after the government decided on enforcing a military solution to the ethnic problem, launched a massive "search and destroy" operation whose principal victims were innocent civilians more than so-called "terrorists", inducted Israel's SHIN BETH and British SAS mercenaries to help train and guide a new force of para-military "commandos", and sought to cover this up by whipping up a massive anti-India campaign, things seem to have taken a turn for the worse.

SOUTH

The bomb campaign of the militant youth, hitherto confined to the north and targetted at convoys of the security services of the state, has started to move south.

Some weeks ago a bomb was exploded in Colombo's Hotel Oberoi. Another bomb,

HALF - STARVED

President J. R. Jayawardene, who normally boasts about the "development" and prosperity that his government's "open economy" policies have allegedly brought the people of Sri Lanka, spoke in a different vein at the ceremony to mark the opening of the new U.S. Chancery in Colombo last week.

Addressing U.S. Secretary of State Richard Murphy and several U.S. Ambassadors of the region who were present, the President, in renewing his plea for U.S. aid, said:

"Fifty per cent of the people living in this country are almost starving. They are living below the poverty line".

He also said that his family had "divided its property between the United States and China", selling his grandmother's house to the U.S. for its former embassy and his father's house to China for its embassy.

But while Mr. Richard Murphy, in his speech in reply, praised the present Sri Lankan government for its "private enterprise oriented economic policies" and its "moderate role" in the non-aligned movement, he avoided any reference to financial or other aid.

timed to explode in close proximity to the office of the National Security Minister at the CWE headquarters, was detected in time.

The only victim that time was a female member of the Oberoi's staff. None of the multifarious Tamil youth groups claimed that it had initiated the attack, and the Police are still searching for a spurious Tamil honeymoon couple whom they say had planted the explosives and decamped.

The bomb attack planned for October 23 in different parts of Colombo was not only more extensive but also even more indiscriminate. Three persons were killed and several more injured.

The security authorities, to judge from their contradictory statements to the press, are not certain what the purpose of this attack was.

But the known facts suggest that the plan, whatever it may have been, aborted when explosives went off prematurely at the Foreshore Police Station, alerting the authorities, and leading to others in the conspiracy abandoning their bombs wherever they could in different parts of the city.

Although the identity of the person who blew himself up in the attempt on the Foreshore Police Station has apparently been established, his political or other links have not. No group has yet claimed that it organised the attack or said what it was all about. But the attack bears all the hallmarks of an act of terrorism, mindless of the fact that many innocent persons would be victims.

DEBATE

In recent times, a major debate has apparently started within the ranks of the diverse militant Tamil youth groups over the strategy and tactics pursued so far.

Leading circles of the section led by Umma Maheswaran have begun to question the effectiveness and value of isolated "hit and run" tactics and to emphasise that it is only through mass political action, in unity with revolutionary forces among the Sinhalese, that the problems of the Tamils can be solved.

The other major group, led by Prabhakaran, has also begun to question the value "hit and run" actions. But it advocates instead the building up of a "revolutionary army" which will be able to "liberate the Tamils and establish Eelam" in open military engagements with the state security forces after a few years.

Both political observers and the security authorities seem to think that the reckless acts of violence in the south, the new round of "executions" in the north, and the cruel and revolting killing of the Japanese Buddhist monk, Ven. Yokutsoko, in Jaffna a few days ago—an act that has been condemned by all sections of the people of Sri Lanka, including the TULF—are the work of newer and smaller groups anxious to take advantage of the debates and consequent inaction among the major two groups to assert themselves and claim "leadership".

Their apparent decision to follow "Irish" tactics and explode bombs from time to time in the heartland of the "Sinhalese" areas is fraught with immense danger.

For it is not merely counter-productive but a constant source of provocation that could easily unleash a new round of racist violence.

This is why renewed efforts must be made NOW to achieve a negotiated political settlement. But all indications are that the UNP government is still more interested in a "settlement" it can dictate rather than one that will be accepted by at least some responsible sections of the Tamils.

An U. S. Enclave in Sri Lanka

Visiting U.S. Secretary RICHARD MURPHY told the press last week that the new Voice of America station that will be set up in Sri Lanka will be the biggest outside the U.S.A.

What he did not tell them is that, according to the agreement the Sri Lanka government has signed with V.O.A., the thousand acres of Sri Lanka territory on which the new station will be built will be a virtual U.S. enclave on our soil.

All U.S. personnel working there will have virtual DPL status. VOA equipment and their personal belongings will be free of customs duties and other taxes, and VOA personnel will enjoy several immunities from other Sri Lankan laws.

As there will be no inspection of the sophisticated radio equipment that can be brought in and installed in the enclave, the US will be free to use this portion of Sri Lanka territory not only to spread hostile propaganda against countries friendly to Sri Lanka, but also for naval communications for its Sixth Fleet.

In this respect, the new VOA station will be supplementary to the other facilities that the U.S. Sixth Fleet will receive at Trincomalee.

Mr. Murphy also said that the delay in starting work on the new VOA station was due to some "snags" in the acquisition of the land where it will be situated.

He was not merely referring to certain legal tangles between the three government agencies in whom the land is now vested.

The law which prevents the sale of land to non-Sri Lankans will also have to be amended.

When this is changed and VOA acquires outright ownership, the agreement prevents Sri Lanka from ever repossessing the land or inspecting what goes on there.

Though Sri Lanka formally retains the right to "vet" broadcast scripts, past experi-

ence with VOA shows that this can never be done. Nor is the present government likely to want to do so, apart from trying to slip in a piece of propaganda of its own.

If ever there was a sell-out of national interests, this is it. No wonder the government keeps on postponing its promise to table the VOA agreement before Parliament!

Soviet Book Fair

Several hundreds of people visited the exhibition of Soviet books at the Jubilee Hall at Union Place Colombo, organised by People's Publishing House in connection with the 67th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in what is now the USSR.

The exhibition also contained a large number of different Soviet books that have been translated into Sinhala and Tamil. They included many novels, scientific books, books for children, art books, books on political and economic themes, and works by V. I. Lenin.

Brisk sales took place at the exhibition, which was declared open by Sports Minister Vincent Perera. It received extensive press and T. V. coverage.

PLEASE NOTE

As we are shifting our printing press, there will be no issue of 'Forward' on November 15th.

Bankmen plan action

15,000 employees of commercial and state banks who are members of the Ceylon Bank Employees Union (CBEU) plan to stage a walk-out and protest meeting on November 7 in support of the struggle of their colleagues in the Commercial Bank of Ceylon.

All but 40 of the 1,000 employees of this bank have been on strike for the past three weeks, despite the insistence of the bank management that the strike is illegal.

CBEU members will also start a campaign next week when they will wear badges carrying union slogans during working hours and use the lunch hour break for mobilisation meetings.

In retaliation, the government has sought to help the bank managements by declaring banks as an "essential service", thus making strikes in this sector illegal.



Bank employees parade the Fort in solidarity with Commercial Bank strikers.

New Stage in Israel's Comeback

A new stage in Israel's come back to Asia, from which it was expelled and which started with our government granting it an "interests section" in the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, has begun with the arrival of Mr. AZRAIL KARNI, who will be the permanent head of the "interests section"

Mr. Karni arrived about a fortnight ago and his presence in Sri Lanka has been played down by the official media at the request of the government, in view of domestic opposition and the estranged and deteriorating relations between the Arab states and Sri Lanka as a result of the UNP government's original decision to permit the "interests section".

A highly experienced diplomat, 61-year-old Mr. Karni is well versed in Asian affairs.

Mr. Karni's arrival has been followed by the arrival in Colombo of Assistant Secretary of the U.S. State Department, Mr. RICHARD W. MURPHY last week.

A senior member of the U.S. Foreign Service, Mr. Murphy heads the department for South Asia and the Near East in the U.S. State Department. He had earlier gained wide experience of Middle Eastern and Asian affairs while serving as a political and economic counsellor in several Arab and Asian countries and, later, as U.S. Ambassador in Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Philippines.

PURPOSE

An official communique issued by the United State Information Service (U.S.I.S) in Colombo says that the purpose of Mr. Murphy's visit is "to participate in the dedication of the new Chancery of the U.S. Embassy in Colombo on October 26, 1984".

It has also been announced that he will preside over a meeting of U.S. Ambassadors of the region which will be held in Colombo to co-ordinate U.S. strategy for the region.

But Mr. Murphy's visit has yet another-and still unrevealed-purpose. He seeks to prod the Jayawardene government to act more speedily and decisively in fulfilling its obligation to raise the level of Israel's representation in Sri Lanka.

As is known, it was President Reagan's special envoy, General Walters, who last year suggested and put through the establishment of the Israeli "interests section" in Colombo.

At the time this happened, General Walters' visit was presented by the media as a routine stop en route from Pakistan to the Maldives during which he had "a cup of tea" with President J. R. Jayawardene. It was only much later that the full story was revealed in the British press, and never denied.

QUID PRO QUO

The Israeli 'interests section' was the first step of a quid pro quo deal for sending SHIN BETH officers to Sri Lanka to train the special para-military commando force that the Jayawardene government has started, and to re-vamp the regular security services.

General Walter's initiative was followed up by another U.S. officer, Mr. CHRIS SHELDON. Two agreements were signed in this connection last year. One was between Sri Lanka and Israel and the other between Israel and the U.S.A.

Although the Sri Lanka government has committed itself to continuously raising the level of Israel's representation here from the present "interests section" level, it has failed to do so owing to the strong opposition at home from anti-imperialist forces and the Muslims, and to disapproving steps taken by several Arab states.

Saudi Arabia, for instance, has failed to make good on a loan promised earlier for the Madura Oya project. Kuwait and some other Arab states have shaded off or stopped recruitment of Sri Lanka labour. Egypt has kept away from the tea auctions. Iraq has downgraded

its representation here, and other Arab states may follow suit.

SLOWLY

As a result, the Sri Lanka government has been moving slowly in honouring its agreement, sticking to the "interests section" level and denying that it has any immediate intention to raise the level of Israel's representation.

This, however, does not suit either the U.S. or Israel, who fear that mounting opposition in Sri Lanka, from the Arab states and from India and other states of the Indian sub-continent who are alarmed at the consequences of the induction of Israel and its military services back to the region, may compel the Jayawardene government to renege on its undertaking.

One of Mr. Murphy's special tasks in his current visit to Colombo is therefore to insist that the UNP government take more active steps to implement in full its agreements vis-a-vis Israel's presence and level of representation in Sri Lanka.

In anticipation of this, the Sri Lankan government has sent the President's brother, Mr. H. W. Jayawardene Q.C., on yet another "secret mission" abroad to explain its difficulties. Mr. Jayawardene's mission has been officially described as a "routine" health check-up.

LONG STAY

Meanwhile, Israel's 'interests section' is settling in for a long stay.

Among the initial steps taken by Mr. David Matnai, who set up the section and then left, was to engage three suites at the super-luxury Liberty Plaza in Kollupitiya, Colombo, from which the section will operate.

After the bombing of Colombo's Hotel Oberoi, where Mr. Matnai and aides had been accommodated, the interests section operated from the house of a Scandinavian architect with long-standing Sri Lankan connections, first with a leading architectural firm and later on his own.

A recent statement from the U.S. Embassy in Colombo takes pains to point out, lest history should repeat itself, that the Israel interests

section, although attached to the US Embassy, will not function from the new Chancery.

As reported in the last issue of FORWARD, the number of Israelis in Sri Lanka, following the setting-up of the 'interests section', has been increasing sharply.

Immigration circles put the figure at between 40 and 50. But many Arab embassies estimate it as closer to 200.

Several of them do not travel on Israeli passports. South Africa, with which Israel has special arrangements in this matter, is a prominent source from which Israeli immigration is routed to Sri Lanka.

"OUR BEST ALLY"

The following extracts are taken from a report of the speech made by Prime Minister Premadasa at Menikhinna in the Minneriya electorate, and published under the title "Anura our best ally: P.M." in the Daily News (24/10):

- (1) "Anura Bandaranaike has proved himself to be the best Leader of the Opposition for the UNP"
- (2) "I think Anura is praying for the victory of the UNP in both these by-elections".
- (3) "Every statement that Mr. Bandaranaike has made has always helped the UNP".
- (4) "We are happy and contented that Anura is the Leader of the Opposition. He has become a great asset to the UNP. The longer he remains in his position the better".
- (5) "Anura loves himself most and, after that, the UNP".

Hard Facts on Housing

The canard started by Prime Minister Premadasa, and repeated by other UNP MP's, that his predecessor as Minister of Housing, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, had only built about 400 houses in his five year term, was laid bare in the course of keynote address on "Housing and Infrastructural Development" made by Mr. L. R. L. Perera, President of the Ceylon Institution of Engineers, to a national symposium on housing.

Mr. Perera, in the course of his address, said that over 100 housing schemes were started in the period of 1970 to 1976, and about 10,000 houses or flats had been built in urban areas.

Mr. Perera was, of course, referring only to the volume of direct construction of houses by the National Housing Department, Buildings Department and the State Engineering Corporation. But more than double this number of houses were constructed under the "self-help" housing schemes outside the urban areas, and through housing loans and state-aided housing

projects, during this period as well.

In Parliament, Mr. Keuneman put the total figure of houses built directly or through assistance during this period at over 30,000. This had been done on state allocations at least ten times LESS than those given to Mr. Premadasa for housing.

It has also been pointed out on repeated occasions that, although Mr. Premadasa claims to be building one million houses at a time when budgetary allocations for housing have been sharply cut and when the construction industry is in the doldrums with little hope of immediate recovery, his original target of building 100,000 houses between 1977 and 1983 had not been even three-quarters fulfilled, despite the considerable funds available for housing during this period.

The 60,000 odd houses built in his period include those built by direct construction, by private sector agencies, and through loans and other assistance.

The more we are together..

The growing rapprochement between the UNP and the SLFP leadership was underlined at a meeting at Riverside Colony in Kotmale, as reported in the SUN (23/10).

Minister Gamini Dissanayake "said that the SLFP M.P. for Kotmale, Ananda Dassanayake, had given the Mahaweli Development Project programme his "praiseworthy support". S. D. Bandaranaike and Anura Bandaranaike have co-operated with the government in its work"

Calling the SLFP "a party dedicated to serve the people", the Minister said: "The time has come... to forget their particular political allegiances and unite as one".

In reply, Mr. Ananda Dassanayake, SLFP M.P., said "he had given his fullest support to the Mahaweli development programme".

C.I.A. man for V.O.A.

Sri Lankans, whose current government has allowed the Voice of America to make our country its main propaganda base in the Indian Ocean region, should note that the new director of the VOA appointed recently by the Reagan administration is EUGENE PELL, a diehard crusader against the socialist and developing countries.

Mr. Pell is notorious for his long and close associations with the C.I.A.

A tool in the U.S. cold war, the V.O.A. has been used to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, poison the international atmosphere by actively promoting tensions between states, spread disinformation and calumny, and promote destabilisation and subversion of governments of which the U.S. does not approve.

Mr. Pell's appointment will ensure greater co-ordination between the U.S. main propaganda arm (VOA) and subversive arm (CIA) in the international arena.

Main Event Of This Century

The triumphant October Socialist Revolution became a turning point in the destinies not only of Russia but of the whole of mankind.

The world - historic significance of the Great October Revolution and its growing impact on the course of world history are primarily due to the fact that it was led by the working class, whose mission is to build a society of justice.

At the same time, it was the first victorious anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, and anti-militarist revolution, which brought together under the banner of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist Party all who held dear the bright ideals of mankind, who linked its future only with one alternative-social progress.

Lastly, it was the first victorious internationalist revolution whose participants sought to liberate not only their class, their nation and their country, but also with all humanity, all classes who were opposed to exploitation of man, and who advocated the triumph of genuine humanism, freedom and the happiness of working people.

Herein lie, above all, the sources and ever growing influence of the October Revolution on the fate of the peoples.

POPULAR

The truly popular nature of the October Revolution also determined its consistent democratism. As far as the conscious participation of masses in the struggle for a new life was concerned, the Great October Socialist revolution was well ahead of all the other revolutions ever undertaken in the world.

It was the broadest, most open and truly free expression of the will of the working people, including workers, peasants, intellectuals, members of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the army, and oppressed nations and ethnic minorities.

The Russian revolution was sympathised with and supported by millions of working people abroad, which helped the victorious peoples of Russia to hold out against the attacks of domestic and international counter-revolution.

The opponents of socialism are inclined to see in the Great October Revolution only its destructive aspect.

Of course, to cleanse human life of all the filth accumulated by capitalism, bourgeois politics, ideology and morals, it was necessary to destroy the old administration, outdated traditions and customs, and reactionary ideas.

But the most important thing about the October Revolution was its constructive aspect, construction of a new way of life based on all that was honest and progressive in what society had created through millennia of its existence.

Lenin used to say that a new culture can be built only when the superior cultural achievements of all times and peoples are mastered.

This also applies to new morals: they shape themselves from universal morals cleansed of encrusted layers of old exploiting society's depravity.

The new mode of life arose from collectivist customs and traditions typical of the working people.

SOCIALISM

The basis of new society's ideology was provided by scientific socialism - the acme of the scientific social sciences and advanced social thought.

In the economic field, the task raised by the socialist revolution was not that of destruction, but of improving and enriching the old productive forces, of bringing relations of production in line with them.

Even the political superstructure of bourgeois society had quite a lot of things that could be adopted to serve the needs of the triumphant working class and to be placed at the service of the working people's interests.

These things were, above all, some democratic institutions created by the bourgeoisie to camouflage its absolute power and some elements of the economic management system formed by monopoly capital.

And lastly, most important of all, socialism was to be fashioned out of the human material that existed under capitalism.

Lenin believed that the construction of a new society should involve not only all working people, that is, workers, peasants and intellectuals, but also former

exploiters: expropriated capitalists, landlords, old officials, and clergy, and these were no abstract utopian dreams or pious wishes.

The triumphant working class and its party were doing everything in their power to preserve for the people the economic experience of the bourgeoisie, the intellectual potential of the bourgeois intelligentsia, and the cultural values of the aristocracy.

BY
Prof. VSEVOLD IVANOV

In 1918 Lenin wrote a special article to explain to workers and peasants the need for learning in a most painstaking way from the overthrown exploiters and the importance of early experience accumulated in that significant field.

On Lenin's initiative, the proletarian state allowed former capitalists and landlords not only to retain their personal property, but also to draw higher wages if they worked for the proletarian state.

They also enjoyed a number of other privileges bearing on their personal inviolability and better living standards than the rest of the population.

The proletarian state guaranteed the bourgeoisie the right to political and entrepreneurial activities. Erstwhile exploiters were even trusted with high post in the state machinery and bodies responsible for economic and cultural management. And many of them not only reconciled themselves to the proletarian revolution, but also served it honestly to the end of their lives.

CIVIL WAR

It was not the working class and its allies that unleashed the destructive civil war in Russia. This was done by the upper crust of the toppled monopoly bourgeoisie, feudal reactionaries and bureaucratic officials, incited against their own people by world imperialism.

The October Revolution triumphed under the slogans "Down with the war; Freedom and brotherhood for all nations". The early decrees that of the Soviet government introduced an 8-hour working day and workers' control over production and distribution; provided the landless and land-starved peasants with land; freed them from mortgage debts; emancipated women; liberated oppressed nations (giving some of them political independence); made all citizens equal in rights and duties; emptied prisons, abrogated capital punishment, allowed political parties and public organisations to function freely within the framework of Soviet legality, etc.

Yet to all these measures, supported by the whole people, domestic and international reaction responded with plots and assassinations, sabotage and military mutinies, civil war and foreign military intervention.

In our days imperialism is showing the same degree of cruelty and consistency in trying to strangle freedom and social justice, to deprive people of their human rights, to enslave whole nations, and to force on the world one system, one way of life, one morality - that of capitalism.

To these ends it is using, as it did 67 years ago, state-sponsored terrorism, is flagrantly interfering in the

internal affairs of other countries and is advocating "dictate and fist" law in international relations.

To the appeal by the Great October Revolution to strike out the word "war" from the popular lexicon once and for all, the imperialists responded and continue to respond with intensified military preparations and unbridled man-hating propaganda for not only war on earth, but even star wars in space, able to destroy all life on earth. The unprecedented arms race they have unleashed, predatory exploitation of natural resources,

wanton and selfless pollution of the human environment encouraged by capitalist business, and the preaching of individualism, brutality, violence and uselessness of human life - all this is posing a direct threat to the existence of mankind even in peacetime.

In 1977 the working people of Russia saved their country from a disaster that was threatening it. Supported by all peoples in the world, they were the first to blaze the trail to a society of justice which will sooner or later be established all over the world.

Soviet people cherish the radiant future of mankind, they are for the creation of conditions conducive to free and peaceful labour of all nations, against the arms race, against local and world wars, limited and global conflicts. All that is being, or can be, devoured by the insatiable moloch of war must be channelled to the needs of economic and cultural development of people, to abolition of poverty, unemployment, hunger, diseases, ignorance and illiteracy all over the world, to preserving and protecting the natural environment because humans can exist only in close and intimate relationship with it. (A. P. N.)

BIG DEVALUATION ON THE CARDS

Political circles predict a further and substantial devaluation of the Sri Lanka rupee when the new budget is presented this month.

This will be the culmination of a series of economic steps to which the Sri Lankan government has agreed in order to obtain loans from the World Bank and the U.S.A.

The government has already begun to act on other parts of this agreement in regard to closing down "non-viable" state corporations and privatising others.

It has also started to implement its agreements to allow an expanded VOA station here, to bring back the expelled US Peace Corps, and to provide naval facilities to the U.S. at Trincomalee.

As far as the promised devaluation of the rupee is concerned, this has already been partially done through manipulations of Sri Lanka's "floating rupee" in the last six months.

But while the Sri Lanka rupee was thus artificially devalued vis-a-vis the U.S. dollar, no adjustment was made in relation to parity rates with other major western currencies, which are themselves in trouble as a result of pressures from the US dollar.

Thus, while depreciating vis-a-vis the dollar, the Sri Lanka rupee appreciated in the same period by 14 per cent vis-a-vis West Germany's DM, 12.4 per cent against sterling, and between 10 to 20 per cent against the French franc and some other West European currencies.

HEAT ON

Now the heat is on to devalue the rupee against these currencies and also to make a further devaluation vis-a-vis the U.S. dollar.

A powerful section of the Cabinet, backed by the Central Bank and the Treasury, are pressing for an immediate devaluation of the rupee to "realistic" levels, as demanded by the World Bank and guaranteed by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the government.

But certain Ministers are still too nervous to agree. They argue that such a move will make imports more expensive, threaten the "open economy", and shoot up the already intolerable cost of living still further.

The editorial in the DAILY NEWS of October 29, which comes down heavily on the side of the devaluers, has brought the conflict in the government out into the open.

Insisting that devaluation must take place, it says that any increase in prices could be partially compensated for by increased wages and salaries. But opponents say that even this will be inflationary and push prices up still further, undermining whatever political benefit the government has got from its by-election victories.

Lanka Celebrates 67th Anniversary

The Lanka-Soviet Friendship Association plans an extensive celebration of the 67th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which falls on November 7th.

Its main meeting will be held on that day at the John de Silva Memorial Theatre, Green Path, Colombo.

Follow-up meetings will also be held at Balangoda (8th), Badulla (9th), Embilipitiya (10th), Ratnapura (11th) and Kotte (12th).

The cultural ensemble "Voronezh", which is visiting Sri Lanka in connection with the 67th anniversary, will perform after all these meetings.

The Communist Party of Sri Lanka, the Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, and a number of other public organisations have also organised several seminars and lectures in connection with this anniversary.

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The D. S. Senanayake Centenary

Were it not for the special problem that the J.R. Jayawardene UNP government faced during the Minneriya by-election campaign, it is doubtful whether it would have celebrated the birth centenary of the late D. S. Senanayake with such fanfare.

For ever since Mr. J. R. Jayawardene emerged as the new leader out of the UNP's inner-party struggle, he has made no secret of his determination to erase what he has called the "family bandyism" of the Senanayakes from that party.

Although the UNP had proclaimed D. S. as "the father of the nation" and his son, Dudley, had been the UNP's Prime Minister on four occasions, they had been systematically relegated by the UNP's present leader to the category of forgotten men.

And in eliminating the latent challenge from Robert Senanayake and his son, Rukman, Mr. Jayawardene sought to give the Senanayakes and the myths woven around them by the UNP media the final coup d'grace.

BANDYISM

Mr. Jayawardene was not entirely wrong about the "family bandyism" of the Senanayakes in the UNP.

One has only to read Sir John Kotalawala's ghost-written monograph, "The Premier Stakes" to realise that:

Its colourful description of the Senanayake family deciding round a dinner-table at "Woodlands" which member of the family should replace the late "Uncle Stephen" as Premier reminds one forcibly of how Britain's Tory party decided these matters in the 18th and 19th centuries!

Nor can one forget D. S. Senanayake's secret arrangements with the then Governor General, Lord Soulbury, to have his son Dudley appointed as Premier in the event of his death, irrespective of other claimants or party nominees.

Incidentally, the new family bandyism in the UNP that has started after Mr. J. R. Jayawardene became party and state leader is no second to anything in the Senanayake era.

IMPORTANT

Nonetheless, the late D. S. Senanayake was an important figure in contemporary Sri Lanka history, particularly in the period of transition from colonialism to political independence, as well as in our country's socio-political development.

That is why all the efforts of the leaders of the party he created to erase his name from the record have never fully succeeded.

As a political personality, D. S. was strikingly different from the other political "leaders" of the capitalist class in the first half of this century.

He may have admired but strikingly lacked the suavity and elegance of the Colombo-based elite, to whom everything British was the work of God.

He obviously had little time for the socio-religious mystique of nationalist reformers like Anagarika Dharmapala, who preached the same goal of capitalist development although in a different way.

His real strength lay in the way in which he understood the needs and shared the values-and, indeed, in many ways personified-both the "arrived" Sri Lankan bourgeoisie in the

plantation economy and trade, as well as the rising mudalalis of town and village, who saw in him a figure with whom they could identify themselves more than with any other political leader of that time.

"KALAY JOHN"

The Colombo-based and British-oriented elite tried to laugh D. S. off as an uncouth "Kalay John".

But he was clever enough to make a virtue out of this weakness, claiming to be a "son of the soil" and boasting that the only way in which he passed examinations at St. Thomas' College was by carrying the bag of the visiting school inspector!

by Pieter Keuneman

All the same, he was second to none of them in aping the dress and outlook of the British colonialists.

His contempt for the 'national dress', which many politicians of the time had begun to wear as a badge of patriotism, the relish with which he donned top hat and tail-coat on ceremonial occasions, and his insistence on being painted in the ceremonial garb of a Privy Councillor of the British monarch, were indicative of his values in these matters.

HOSTILITY

His politics also followed the same model. To him, British imperialism was not merely the centre of the world, but the world itself, the acme of political development. Although the British colonialist had put him in jail at the start of this century, this did not deflect him from his pro-British orientation.

None the less, D. S. Senanayake was perhaps the most astute politician that the capitalist class of Sri Lanka has produced so far and certainly, until J. R. Jayawardene, the most class-conscious.

Although by no means as dictatorial as J. R. Jayawardene has been or as Sir John Kotalawala tried to be, D. S. Senanayake's hostility to the working class, the Left parties and democratic and anti-imperialist movements was as implacable.

Even before political independence, he had, as leader of the Ceylon National Congress, rejected the demand for national independence as premature and unrealistic. He resigned from the Congress when, shortly afterwards, it decided to admit Communists as members.

It was D. S. who, for instance, got the British government of the day to include Article 13(3)(f) into the Soulbury Constitution to disqualify Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe from entering the State Council and Parliament and later used it to disqualify Philip Gunawardene.

I still recall how D. S. Senanayake sat in Parliament, unmoved even by the pleas of more liberal members of his

own administration, while this was being done.

And, of course, it was D. S. who disenfranchised tens of thousands of plantation workers of Indian origin merely because they had voted against the UNP in the 1947 general elections.

CLASS SENSE

D. S. Senanayake's class sense was often instinctive.

I remember how, in a Parliamentary Committee over which he presided, I once introduced a seemingly innocent but actually "googly" amendment to a labour law which would have helped the workers.

After all others had agreed and we were ready to pass on to next business, D. S. who had remained silent, suddenly said "No". When asked why, he replied: "I can't say now, but it doesn't smell right."

Perhaps the greatest service that D. S. did to the Sri Lankan capitalist class-especially among the Sinhalese-was when he set up the Bank of Ceylon.

Impoverished by the depression of the 1930s and heavily and often irretrievably mortgaged to the Chettis due to their inability to get loans from the British banks, this section was able to recover, consolidate and develop due to the Bank of Ceylon, which D. S. set up.

D. S. Senanayake is most publicised as a pioneer in the fields of irrigation and agriculture. While the importance of his initiatives in providing irrigation facilities to re-open the dry zone for paddy cultivation must be acknowledged, his motives were by no means purely altruistic.

Through his so-called "colonisation" policies, he sought to avoid land reform in the wet zone by transferring its problems to the dry zone.

As he often indicated, he also hoped to create a class of kulaks, which would be an effective barrier to this country ever becoming socialist.

NEGATIVE

We are now experiencing the negative results of his choice of "colonisation" as the method of land development and settlement.

The social problems of wet zone paddy farming have been transferred to the dry zone, together with its populations.

Many "independent" colonists have, while retaining their land in name and law, become in reality and cultivators for a set of more prosperous kulaks.

The decreasing size of allotments coupled with the increase of the population, has magnified pressures on, and demands for, land in the new areas.

As most of the important colonisation schemes were also situated on the borders of so-called "Sinhala" and "Tamil" territory, the competition for

land among the landless peasants of both communities has made the "colonisation areas" centres of communal strife in all the recent racial disturbances of the past three decades.

Moreover, the restrictive framework of the "colonies" has made intensive cultivation difficult and kept most colonists at the levels of subsistence farming.

NO MAJORITY

Although the bourgeoisie called D. S. the "father of the nation", he did not - "actually, as a matter of fact", as he was wont to say-ever command the support of the majority of the people.

In the 1947 elections, he emerged with insufficient seats to form a UNP government and was only able to do so after a sordid horse-deal with nearly twenty "independents" who had defeated the UNP candidates at the general elections.

If sections of the Left had displayed greater skill at the historic "Yamuna" conference of the time, they might, as proposed by the CPSL at the time, have formed an alternative government and thus significantly changed the direction of subsequent Sri Lankan history.

D. S. Senanayake's unquestioned leadership of the Sinhalese bourgeoisie of the time was due to two main factors.

First, this bourgeoisie was still united as a class.

It was only in the last two years of his regime that the breach in the bourgeois united front, led by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, took place. But D. S. Senanayake fell off his horse and died while still at the height of power. It was left to his son, Dudley, and other successors to face the real consequences of that split. Realisation of this is probably why President Jayawardene today seeks a UNP-SLFP "national" government as part of his grand strategy.

The other reason for D. S. Senanayake's unchallenged leadership was his undoubted skill and craftiness in political manoeuvre.

This was shown in the adroit way he "kicked upstairs" the more cultured and scholarly Sir D. B. Jayatileke; played out both Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Sir John Kotalawala in regard to the succession; won over Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam; and outmanoeuvred Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam by inserting the Amparai wedge in the Eastern Province to make the demand for federalism or Eelam more difficult to achieve.

In this, he differed from other leaders of his class, in knowing exactly what he wanted, pursuing it without vacillation, and keeping his mouth shut while he put it into effect.

As these aspects of the late D. S. Senanayake have been ignored in the eulogies in the capitalist media, I thought it worth-while to use the occasion to put them back on the record.

What they said about Minneriya

"My sole aim is to defeat the actor and we are achieving it".

—Anura Bandaranaike (CDN, 26/10)

"Mr. Vijaya Kumaratunge will lose his deposit. It is a one-horse race for me.

—SLFP candidate, Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake (Island, 21/10)

"I expect the S.L.F.P. to run second and the S.L.M.P. to finish third".

—President J. R. Jayawardene (CDN, 24/10)

"If Mr. Kumaratunge pushes the SLFP into third position, it will not only bruise that party but also democracy in Sri Lanka".

—Minister E. L. B. Hurulle, who led the UNP's Minneriya campaign.

"The UNP for its part is not merely campaigning to win this election but is also campaigning to push Mr. Kumaratunge into third place".

—Island, (21/10)

"The outcome appears to cast serious doubts on the future of the country's premier opposition grouping, the SLFP.

"Both (i.e. Mrs. Bandaranaike and Anura Bandaranaike) expressed the view that the by-elections would see the beginning of the end of the SLMP.

"To the contrary, the talk in political circles yesterday was whether the SLMP was emerging as a new force in the opposition".

—Sun, (27/10)

SURVEILLANCE ZONE CURFEW

Is this curfew in the naval Surveillance Zone official or unofficial?

If the curfew is unofficial, is a member of the armed forces liable to prosecution if he injures or kills a person?

K. R. B. Ratnayake

285/5, Maradana Road,
Colombo 10.

Senanayakes

Mr Robert Senanayake and his son, Rukman, must have had a hearty laugh over the antics of the UNP, and President J. R. Jayawardene in particular, in resurrecting memories of the late Mr. D. S. Senanayake and his other son, Dudley, when the UNP found the going difficult at Minneriya.

After all, wasn't it J. R. who drove both Robert and Rukman out of the leading circles of the UNP and then boasted that he had purged that party of Senanayake family bandyism?

And neither they nor we can forget what J. R. said about Dudley Senanayake in the affidavit he presented to court in the case he filed against his then leader in the leadership struggle in the UNP.

Both D. S. and Dudley must be turning in their graves.

L. S. Atukorale

Rajagiriya

Land

I never had a very high opinion of the late D. S. Senanayake, whose birth centenary was celebrated last week with much ado by this government.

But at least when he distributed state-developed land to colonists, he did so to Sri Lankan peasants and landless.

The present government, which now claims to be following his example, distributes state-developed land to foreign transnational companies instead.

Padmasiri Rajakuruwa

Moneragala

Disclosure

Mr. Harris Hulugalle's reminiscences in the new journal FORWARD have some interesting disclosures.

In the issue of August 1st Mr. Hulugalle describes "the early '70s, when Anura of his own accord, using common friends to introduce us, had come for assistance to spearhead the expulsion of the left from the government because they were moving in diverse and therefore debilitating directions. We had started a newspaper together called the 'Adha.....'"

Is any more proof needed that Anura Bandaranaike has been pursuing an actively anti-left policy from earliest times and is as responsible as his mother for breaking the United Front alliance—the major cause of our present woes.

President Jayawardene spotted early how useful Anura could be to the UNP and himself. Hence his offer, when Anura was still a political fledgling, to allow him to be returned to Parliament unopposed at the Kalawewa by-election over a decade ago,

Anura may be the late S. W. R. D.'s only son—but as long as the SLFP has him as one of its main leaders, no other political party will take it seriously as an anti-UNP force.

D. N. Rodrigo

Kochchikadde.

Gal Oya

A front-page story in the government-owned DAILY NEWS (22/10) has this interesting comment:



"Hardly two decades after its inauguration, observers began openly to doubt the success of the country's first major irrigation undertaking—Gal Oya, and statistics were proving that performance was not measuring up to expectations."

Yet when the late Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe warned, two decades ago, about the defects and shortcomings of the Gal Oya scheme in concept, execution and management, he was derided as an "alarmist" and "communist disruptor" by the very same DAILY NEWS and the UNP which now controls its destinies!

While continuing to attack Dr. Wickremasinghe, the UNP government secretly made several adjustments in the Gal Oya scheme to accommodate and offset his criticisms. But their failure to heed what he mainly pointed out lies at the root of the problems that the Gal Oya scheme continues to face today.

Samson Dahanayake

Galle.

Promises

According to the government's DAILY NEWS (23/10), "Prime Minister Premadasa told the voters of Kundasale on Sunday that this government was determined to banish poverty from this country within the next five years."

Voters have still not forgotten Mr. Premadasa's equally

dramatic promise during the 1977 general election that, whereas the previous government provided two halves of a coconut at 35 cents each, the UNP government would provide a whole coconut for 35 cents.

After seven years, we are still waiting for the 35 cents coconut (now between Rs. 3 and Rs. 4.50 each), not to mention the 8 lbs of cereal a week for each person that we were also promised then.

Selina Hapuarachchi

Avissawella.

United vs. Unitary

Many who oppose division of our country assert that Sri Lanka should be a unitary state.

But a unitary state is not the only alternative to the division of Sri Lanka into separate (and may be opposed) states.

We can have federalism, regional autonomy or provincial assemblies without dis-

rupting Sri Lanka's territorial integrity, which is the main thing.

Many who talk about a unitary state really want to deny the Tamils their right to self-determination—even within the framework of Sri Lanka remaining a united country.

We should not allow a loose use of political concepts to perpetuate ethnic injustice.

Nihal Wanigasekera

Kurunegala.

Nicaragua

In the US election campaign, President Reagan and his apologists have often dismissed the charge that the US is about to invade Nicaragua as "ridiculous".

But history shows that US imperialism has invaded Nicaragua 11 times before this—in 1857, 1860, 1861, 1895, 1898, 1903-4, 1914, 1923-4, and 1929 (twice).

Now, even the US press has exposed the extensive preparations of the Reagan administration to attack Nicaragua directly and its covert use of the CIA and the overthrown capitalist and feudal forces of Nicaragua to carry on an undeclared war against the radical and anti-imperialist regime that holds power in that country for nearly five years.

Reagan's CIA, as has now been revealed, even trains Nicaragua's "contras" on how

to assassinate and murder Nicaragua's leaders, just as it did earlier in the case of Cuba and Fidel Castro.

Naked military intervention in central and southern America to protect and further the interests of US companies is a well-established tradition of US imperialist policy.

Apart from its eleven invasions of Nicaragua, the US, has militarily intervened four times in Cuba, three times in Mexico and Honduras respectively, twice in Panama and the Dominican Republic, and at least once in Peru, Uruguay, Guatemala, Haiti and, most recently, Grenada.

President Reagan's "mental alertness" has now become an issue in the current US Presidential elections. But even if he and his supporters cannot remember past history, the rest of us can,

Stanley Ranasinghe

Colombo 8.

Canard

Some days ago, when confronted in Parliament with the Opposition charge that the present government had scrapped the agreement of the previous government with the Soviet Union over the Samanlawewa hydro-power scheme for political reasons, Minister Gamini Dissanayake wriggled out by saying that it had done so because Soviet interest rates—8.5 per cent—were "too high".

Now the DAILY NEWS (23/11) and other newspapers publish a statement made by Mr. Golovin, the acting head of the economic department of the Soviet Embassy in Colombo, in the course of a press conference, that the Soviet Union's commitment for the Samanlawewa project was "Rs. 1.2 billion at 2.5 per cent interest", which is the usual Soviet interest for "economic assistance" projects.

The USSR had also offered to provide any additional money needed over and above the Rs. 1.2 billion (equal to about Rs. 6 billion in to-day's devalued rupee terms) at 3 per cent, Mr. Golovin added.

Minister Gamini Dissanayake is now hoist with his own canard.

Decency demands that he should retract his inaccurate statement to Parliament and set the record straight. After all, misinforming Parliament is a serious breach of its privileges!

Gnana Hemasiri

Colombo 8.

Misnomers

It is reported in the "Ceylon Daily News" of 8.10.13 that President Jayawardene, in an interview with the "Financial Times" of London, had "reacted sharply" to a question regarding whether

he would like to be remembered for creating a Singapore-type economy in Sri-Lanka.

He has also asserted that the government had not denationalised anything in Sri-Lanka and stressed that Sri-Lanka is democratic and socialist.

It is unfortunate that President Jayawardene has entirely forgotten about the contemplated denationalisation of the National Milk Board and the privatisation of insurance. These are two sectors that affect the general public vitally. We are told that many other corporations are on line waiting to be handed over to the private sector on the flimsiest of excuses.

Only the very naive will be taken in by these hollow pronouncements of the "Highest" in the land. To call present Sri Lanka democratic and socialist is not only a big misnomer but also an insult to the intelligence of the people.

D. B. Ekanayake

180, Watapuluwa Housing Scheme,
Kandy.

Playing Safe

President Jayawardene certainly likes to play safe.

Lest he experience any opposition to what he will propose to the R. T. C. (especially from his own side) he imposed a blanket censorship on news and views about the R.T.C. or anything connected with it.

As an added precaution he packed Minister Cyril Mathew off to New York as part of our delegation to the U.N.

Prime Minister Premadasa (who was absent when J. R. got the UNP's Exco to authorise him to proceed with his proposals) had better look sharp!

Norbet de Alwis

Chilaw

Firemen

What a bitter commentary on the values that our "open economy" inculcates that Colombo firemen, called in to put out a fire in the Duty Free Complex, should have broken into and looted shops they were supposed to save!

The imported goodies so brazenly displayed within and outside this complex are a constant temptation to those who are reared on the consumerist values encouraged by the government and its media but who lack the money to possess legally what they are taught to admire and want.

We had our first taste of this sickness during the racial disturbances of July 1983. I hope that our errant firemen did not pick up these habits then.

Sarojini Balasooriya
Dematagoda.

Soviet - Sri Lanka Economic Relations

(The following extract is taken from a speech made by the Acting Counsellor for Economic Affairs, USSR Embassy, Colombo at a recent seminar in connection with the current Business Information Exhibition of the USSR at the BMICH).

"USSR-Sri Lanka economic and technical co-operation has been in effect since 1958.

Under the agreements of 25 February 1958 and of 28 January 1975, the USSR extended to Sri Lanka 67 million roubles in credits for the construction of industrial enterprises and other projects, out of which 23.2 million roubles has been used and 18.7 million roubles disbursed.

Besides, commercial loans and grants under individual contracts totalled 18.6 million roubles. Out of this, grants accounted for 2 million roubles.

1958 Agreement

Under the Agreement of 25 February 1958, Sri Lanka received a credit of 27 million roubles at 2.5 per cent interest which had to be repaid within 12 years from the date of completing the deliveries and work items envisaged by contracts for particular projects.

In accordance with the Agreement, eight projects in various economic sectors were built, including the Iron and Steel Plants, the Tyre Factory and a Flour Mill.

All of them were commissioned long ago and have served the industrial development of Sri Lanka.

Tyre Factory

Take the Tyre Factory for an example.

The state-owned Tyre Factory was commissioned on 23 March 1967. The factory comprises stock preparation, calendaring, assembly,

Who gains from Iran-Iraq war?

The countries of the West, especially the United States, profit from the escalation of the war between Iran and Iraq as both these countries, and other Gulf states for their own protection, were using their oil revenues to buy arms.

This opinion was expressed by JASSAM AL KNARAFI, President of the Kuwait Parliamentary Committee for economic and financial affairs, in an interview published in the Middle Eastern magazine "Al Taqadimon".

He added that the Iran-Iraq war endangered the financial situation in the Gulf states, whose economic fortunes depend on oil.

In the same magazine, the secretary-general of the Co-operative Council for the Arab states of the Gulf, ABDULLAH BUHARA, has stated that the Iran-Iraq war has already begun to affect world economic development and will change the structure of the international monetary order.

curing tube and machine repair shops, as well as ancillary services.

The total cost of the project was 12.4 million roubles.

Assistance of the USSR organisations amounted to 7.4 million roubles.

The factory is one of the major enterprises in Sri Lanka and utilises locally available natural rubber. The factory meets domestic tyre and tube requirements (85 - and 90 - respectively) and has started selling abroad.

Practically ever since the factory was commissioned it has had no losses.

Although the repayment period was 12 years, the factory managed to repay all capital investments in 10 years.

In 1979, the export of tyres to the countries of South East Asia was initiated on a small scale.

1975 Agreement

In accordance with the USSR-SRI LANKA Agreement of 28 January 1975 it had been agreed that the Soviet side renders its assistance to

Sri Lanka organisations in the design and construction of the Samanala Wewa Hydro Scheme, incorporating hydro-power plant of about 120 megawatt capacity and a 20 km. long power transmission line.

To cover the expenses of the Soviet organisations for the supply of equipment, machinery and technical knowhow, the Soviet side agreed to extend credit of 40 million roubles to be repaid in 15 years, beginning from the year following the year of the first unit commissioning, at a 2.5 per cent annual interest.

By

S. E. Golovin

While signing this Agreement both sides proceeded from an understanding that the Samanala Wewa Hydro Scheme was to become a major hydro-plant, increasing by 30 per cent the total capacity of all power stations operating at that time in this country.

The construction of two water reservoirs of a total storage capacity of 290 million cubic metres would have made

it possible to irrigate close to 860 hectares of new land.

No specific date of the Hydro Scheme construction, however, has been set in the Agreement of 28 January 1975.

Fisheries

In the field of sea fishing, a joint venture is planned to deal with the packing of sea fish and other sea products as well as their marketing.

There is also an idea of developing fresh water fishing, a fresh water nursery properly equipped and with a specialised training of the Lankans.

In the field of research, it is envisaged to implement joint experimental work, personnel training, and supplies of research equipment.

Being guided by the principles of technico-economic co-operation with developing countries, aimed at rendering them the necessary assistance in their economic progress and upliftment of the living standards of the people, the Soviet Union is prepared to co-operate with the state, as well as the private, sectors of the Sri Lankan economy.

(N. B. a rouble is roughly equivalent to Rs. 27.)

Murphy Thanks Government

Richard W. Murphy, the US Assistant Secretary for South Asia and the Near East in the US State Department, said a big "thank you" to the J. R. Jayawardene UNP government for allowing its warships (irrespective of whether they carried nuclear weapons or not) free use of Sri Lanka's ports.

At a conference for selected and specially invited newsmen just before his departure on October 27, after a three day visit in which he met President Jayawardene twice, Mr. Murphy said:

"America is pleased about Lanka's policy in allowing ships of the US and friendly nations facilities in her ports". (SUN, 27/10)

He repeated the usual theme of visiting US bigwigs that the "US does not want bases in the South Asian region", but explained that this was "because the defence strategies of the United States do not necessitate such bases". (Island, 28/11)

The ISLAND (ibid) continued: "Mr. Murphy explained that the structure of the United States forces was such that such bases were not needed. Besides bases at times were a liability", he explained.

This was Mr. Murphy's way of explaining that Diego Garcia and other fixed bases that the US had in South Asia were sufficient and that what it was really after were facilities at ports in the region for the servicing and supply of its nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines and warships.

It was also why the US is so "pleased" at the facilities that the Jayawardene government has given it at Sri Lanka ports, especially Trincomalee.

V. O. A.

Regarding the new and expanded Voice of America radio station to be set up in Sri Lanka, Mr. Murphy boasted that it "would be the biggest VOA station outside the United States".

He denied that there were any "snags" in the agreement that the US had signed with the Jayawardene government in this regard. There were some legal problems about the lease of the land and construction work would start as soon as these were sorted out.

He also told newsmen that the tripartite agreements between the US, Sri Lankan and Israeli governments concerning the setting up of an Israeli "interests section" in the US Embassy in Colombo were done at the request of the Sri Lankan government.

Mr. Murphy also sought to play down, but did not deny, statements attributed to the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Dean Hinton, that the US would help Pakistan in any armed conflict with India. This statement, he said, had been "pulled out of context and allowed to snowball into a diplomatic furore". However, he gave Ambassador Hinton a good certificate as a "very responsible and diligent diplomat".

Meanwhile, a report from Ron Tempest to the LOS ANGELES TIMES, re-published in the SUN (29/11), says that the conference in Colombo of US Ambassadors of the states of the Indian sub-continent, over which Mr. Murphy presided last week, had as its "central concern" India's "increasingly dominant role in South Asia" and how to counter it.

The US Ambassadors, the report says, presented "rosy pictures" of growing US influence in five of these states, as shown by their "serious on-going conflicts with New Delhi" and their readiness to "experiment with free market theories and open up their economies".

More support for striking British miners

International support for the heroic British miners, whose strike has continued for seven months despite unparalleled state persecution, is swelling every day.

The main matter for which the British miners are on strike is to prevent hundreds of them from being thrown out of work due to the Thatcher Government's decision to close down a number of mines.

Police have used violence against picketlines; strikers' wives and children have been harassed; and now British courts have seized all the funds of the miners' union and threaten to jail their leaders.

Hundreds of strikers have been imprisoned or beaten up by the Police.

The miners strike has the support of the Labour Party, the British TUC, and all left-wing and democratic forces of Britain.

The miners continue their fight despite acute hardship, poverty and even starvation.

Single-man strikers are even denied the dole. A married couple gets only enough to pay their food bills for ten days in the month, while a family of four gets enough to last a fortnight.

Recently coalminers in the Donbas area of the Soviet Ukraine, the USSR's main mining area, held several

mass meetings in solidarity with the striking British miners. Over 70,000 dollars were collected at these meetings to be sent to the hardship fund of Britain's National Union of Mine-workers. This is in addition to sums raised at workers meetings elsewhere in the USSR for the same purpose. Soviet miners have also invited 150 families of striking British miners to the USSR for free summer holidays.

USSR workers have now decided to embargo oil supplies to Britain as a solidarity action with the miners.

Workers, and especially coalminers, in France, Italy, Canada, the USA, the Scandinavian countries and other parts of western Europe, as well as those in socialist countries, have collected tens of thousands of dollars for the striking British miners and also sent their families several shiploads of food and clothing.

International Photo Competition

To mark the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students, the International Union of Students has launched an International Photographic Exhibition for amateur and professional photographers.

It is open to all photographers up to 40 years of age and is aimed primarily at university students.

Entries should have a minimum format of 13 x 18 cms and depict the theme "Sports-Friendship-Peace." Negatives should also be sent.

Prizes for the winning entries will include participation

in the 12th World Festival of Youth and students in Moscow in the summer of 1985; in one of the IUS sports camps in Czechoslovakia; cameras and photographic equipment; and diplomas and souvenirs.

Entries with captions and particulars of the senders' full name, address and date of birth should be sent before 10th May 1985 to the Sri Lanka National Union of Students, 91, Cotta Road, Colombo 8.

Inquiries for further particulars may also be made to this address.

Lessons of the By-elections

Neither the UNP which won the two by-elections at Minneriya and Kundasale, nor the Opposition political forces that lost, have yet come out with a serious public analysis of what the results indicate.

The jubilant claims of the UNP leaders and their kept press that the people have endorsed their policies and demonstrated the nation-wide support for the government can hardly be sustained.

As a shrewd commentator on the BBC asked last week, why does the UNP fear to hold a general election if it is so sure that the majority of the people support it and its policies?

Why, one may add, does it prefer instead to adopt the strategy of holding occasional by-elections in carefully selected constituencies while relying on appointment in others?

Why is it not even ready to accept the Opposition demand that by-elections should be held to fill every vacancy that arises?



Reasons

As this column has pointed out earlier, President Jayawadene had probably a mixed bag of reasons for deciding to hold by-elections in these two out of the 20-odd vacant constituencies. In this connection, it should not be forgotten that he first announced four by-elections and then reduced the number by half.

The President was obviously keen to try and defuse the impression abroad that the situation in Sri Lanka was unstable and that he, personally, had little respect for democratic processes. As such an impression had adversely affected the investment climate and the inflow of tourists, he had already dispatched Minister Anandatissa de Alwis to western capitals to counter these notions. He obviously hoped to re-inforce this by chalking up victories in hand-picked by-elections.

Domestically, the President saw the by-elections as a safety valve. In a crucial period, they could concentrate Opposition activities on a localised area. Moreover, they provided a convenient diversion of nation-wide public attention from pressing social and economic problems. Such a diversion had become necessary as the earlier diversion—namely, the bogey of an imminent Indian invasion—had begun to wear thin and lose credibility.



Confident

Apart from the division in the ranks of its opponents, the UNP had other strong reasons for picking these particular electorates for its exercise.

It had won both with fairly comfortable majorities in 1977 and followed this up in the

Presidential election and the referendum. Its traditional opponent in these two constituencies—one the oldest agricultural 'colony' and the other a Kandyan rural one—had been the SLFP, now badly split, while the Left had little support or familiarity in these areas. The SLMP was barely eight months old and, despite its popularity, had still to consolidate itself programmatically and organisationally.

On top of this was the fact that, as things stood, the UNP government was set to rule until 1989, no matter what the by-election results were.

UNP spokesmen, including Ministers and Deputy Ministers, rubbed in this fact, stressing that the government would not heed any collective or individual request from political opponents or unless they were routed thorough an UNP MP.

Tamil plantation workers at Kundasale, many of whom had their homes burnt in previous ethnic riots and were forced to take shelter in the surrounding forest for many days, were bluntly told that, if such riots should re-occur, they could only rely on state protection if an UNP MP represented them in Parliament.



In these circumstances, and knowing how the UNP government has terrorised, victimised and discriminated against those who openly opposed it, it was not surprising that the unorganised farmers should here thought it a risky business to try to use the by-elections to demonstrate a theoretical opposition to the government without any tangible return.

This is also probably why the UNP did not resort in these by-elections and in any big way to physical terrorism of the kind it unleashed at the Mahara and earther by-elections or at the spurious referendum.



Defeat

None the less, it would be foolish for the anti-UNP forces, and especially those which supported the SLMP candidates, to refuse to accept the fact that they have been defeated, or to try to find excuses rather than reasons for the result.

For the stark fact is that, in a situation of growing nation-wide disenchantment with the UNP government and its policies, it has been able not merely to maintain but also

to improve on its past performances in 1977 and thereafter.

This cannot be due entirely, as some think, to the division among the UNP forces.

Although a single anti-UNP candidate would undoubtedly have had a more galvanising effect and led to a qualitatively different result, the fact remains that, in both constituencies, the UNP candidates polled more votes than all Opposition candidates combined, including the hundred odd "independents" that the SLFP claims to have fielded to confuse matters further but who polled a total of less than 300 votes in each constituency.

A notable fact that influenced the by-elections is that the euphoria and illusions about the UNP's "open economy", which have begun to wear off in the urban and more developed areas of the country, have not merely started to penetrate the rural areas but are still dominant there. The many negative features of the "open economy" are still not apparent.

For instance, a study made by CPSL election workers of the position in a selected Minneriya "track" (the substitute for a village in the colonisation areas) revealed that one in

every five households had a hand tractor, one in every ten a motor bicycle, and a little more than one in fifteen a T.V set (mostly black and white). Almost every house had a radio and a pedal-bicycle. The Ministry of Trade took care to see that shops and boutiques were stocked with both imported and local goods, thereby creating the impression that, although prices were high, goods were available.

The fact that the tanks and irrigation channels at Minneriya were brimming with water from the recent rains—thereby promising an excellent harvest—also had its effect. For it is the availability or lack of water, even more than the enhanced irrigation rates, that is the issue here.

The result of the by-election may have been different if it had been held earlier, when the widespread drought in these areas discouraged the illusions of relative prosperity and better times ahead.

At Kundasale, the UNP made full use of the construction activity in connection with the Maheveli scheme that has become a dominant feature of the Digana area of the constituency.

The coming and going of heavy earth-moving machinery,

the re-housing of families whose former homes will be inundated, the visible approach of the impounded waters, the spill-over of ancillary employment to the village folk, and the increased value of adjoining land—all helped, as it did at Kotte when the new Parliamentary complex was being built, to create an impression that temporary economic activity is the same as permanent economic development.

But even more than this, the UNP's big majority in the Kundasale was due to a clever combination of social and political forces.

In selecting Mr. R. P. Wijesiri as its candidate, the UNP successfully added the essentially anti-feudal caste bloc with he symbolised and which constituted 40 per cent of the registered voters, to its own political bloc vote.

This process was facilitated by Anura Bandaranaike, who led the SLFP's campaign.

He successfully alienated this anti-feudal vote, that had supported the SLFP in earlier elections, and made it easy for the UNP to portray its opponents as the defenders of feudal privilege.

The SLMP candidate, who alone fought on political issues, was submerged in the process.



Overkill

The main weakness of the SLMP campaign at Minneriya was over-kill.

Starting with a bang on nomination day, it found it difficult to keep up the momentum until polling day. Also its surfeit of speakers and election workers was not matched by sufficient organisational work at grass-roots levels.

While it broke the UNP vote at Hingurakgoda, Minneriya and Giritale to no small extent, it started its offensive in the SLFP strongholds at Bakamuna and Elahera a little too late.

Obviously, the Left and radical alliance must also now settle down to working out policies that it can present as alternatives to those of the UNP. Merely negative criticism of the UNP's obvious defects will not carry sufficient weight with the people.

The SLFP was not the only opposition force to help the UNP to defeat the SLMP.

While other left parties worked actively for the victory of their SLMP ally, the JVP, which had polled 3,000 odd votes in the constituency during the Presidential elections, indulged in a typical last-minute, eve-of-poll disruption.

It distributed leaflets in the areas where it had support, calling on its supporters not to vote for any candidate unless he undertook to resign immediately after being elected and to demand a general election. It must however be said that many rank-and-file JVPers refused to follow this advice!

The Left and radical alliance will, no doubt, both individually and collectively, consider the reasons for the election result and what remedial steps should be taken for the future.



S.L.M.P.

The SLMP and its allies, however, did quite well at Minneriya. Although both the UNP and SLFP combined to force him into third place, the 10,568 votes that Vijaya Kumaratunge polled comfortably exceeded the SLFP's 6,200 by over 4,000 votes.

Apart from being an eight-month old party, supported by a six month old alliance, the SLMP and its candidate (apart from his fame as a film star) were newcomers to the electorate, unlike both the UNP and the SLFP candidates. The SLFP's candidate had represented the electorate earlier both as an MP and Deputy Minister. And traditionally, the electorate had been used to regarding the SLFP as the main force opposed to the UNP.

Both the UNP and SLFP sought to exploit the ethnic problem against the SLMP.

The SLFP claimed that it was the sole force capable of saving the Sinhalese, whose interests were being betrayed by the UNP and ignored by the SLMP and its allies.

The UNP sought to brand the SLMP, whom it had earlier dubbed as "Naxalites", as representatives of "southern terrorism" that was allied with "northern terrorism". It made full use of the bomb scare in Colombo on the eve of the polls. But to the credit of the SLMP and its allies, they refused to bow before these slanderous attacks.



S.L.F.P.

The biggest casualty of the by-elections is undoubtedly the SLFP.

Not even Mrs B's "bodhi pooja" to influence votes against Vijaya Kumaratunge at Minneriya, cut much ice.

It was noticeable that she did not undertake a similar pilgrimage for her candidate at Kundasale.

As Prime Minister Premadasa has remarked, the by-elections also proved that Anura Bandaranaike, who led the SLFP campaign, is one of the biggest assets that the UNP has.

Although the SLFP maintains that it is the only viable alternative to the UNP, its vote at Minneriya dropped from 9,930 in 1977 to 6,260 in 1984. At Kundasale, the drop was from 11,732 to 7,788. And this drop took place in rural constituencies which the SLFP claims are strongly with it and which it has represented several times on earlier occasions.

If there was real inner-party democracy in the SLFP, the role of Anura and his pro-UNP, anti-left orientation would become a matter of active debate. But this is unlikely to happen!