

LANKA

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GUARDIAN

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LANKA

GUARDIAN

LETTER TO THE READER

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Lanka Guardian is published fortnightly by Lanka Guardian Publishers, South Asia Media Representatives, 3rd Floor, YMBA building, 290, Main Street, Colombo 1.

Editor: Mervyn de Silva

Other news, Another opinion

The Lanka Guardian is primarily a journal of opinion. The proper functioning of a pluralist democracy presupposes the free interplay of diverse opinions. The freer and more active, the better.

Given the structure of the major media, the dominance of the official and the conventional view is no aberration. What is unnatural, and therefore unhealthy, is the conspicuous absence of other opinions and perspectives which by calling into question or openly challenging the all-too easily accepted orthodoxies stimulate intelligent discussion.

If a colourless conformism has gradually overtaken the mainstream media this is only the smallest price we have to pay. In an educated politically-conscious society, poor ventilation could be a dangerous health hazard.

This should not be read as an unsparing stricture on our colleagues in the press or on their competence. The constraints on their professional practice are visible even to the least vigilant eye. But the issues involved are far larger than journalism.

We are neither politicians nor academics although we shall probably have need of both. We do not belong to any political party nor are we backed by any big business. We are a group of journalists striving to do what we think we know best.

We shall have to rely heavily on the enthusiastic participation of those who will join us in turning this Journal into an open and lively forum. It will respond more promptly of course to those views that are not often heard and to the kind of thinking which is poorly or insufficiently projected in the media.

If we may dignify this exploratory venture in Sri Lankan journalism and embellish our ordinary wish with the formal ostentation of a motto, it is: OTHER news, and ANOTHER opinion.

This perspective is by no means confined to domestic issues and events. On the contrary, we are deeply concerned with the world outside if for no other reason than a plain recognition of a poor nation's essential condition of dependence. If the word means anything, that is what Third Worldism is all about. An informed interest in world affairs ought not to be a private occupation of the privileged nor regarded as an irrelevance for the people. In its bizarre and often frightening fecundity, the argot of latter-day internationalism has slipped into the common currency a term called "intellectual property." We believe that knowledge is the property that should be least private. The dissemination of informed opinion is a kind of sharing.

We have been advised to be lamps unto ourselves. The press in particular has been invited to light the path of our leaders. For common humanity the possibilities of personal salvation, so freely given to the artist and the saint, can only be enhanced by the larger endeavour of social emancipation. The act of informed discussion is itself a source of illumination.

SLFP revamp talks begin

The SLFP's Working Committee has its first meeting after May Day to discuss an experts report on party re-organisation. The report, still a top secret, was handed over to party president, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike MP last month. She will preside at the meeting.

The experts who took several months to prepare the report consisted of Mr. K. Shinya, Dr. Rohanadeera, Mr. S. S. Wijeratne, Dr. Premadasa Udagama and Mr. K. Shanmugalingam. Party secretary, Mr. S. K. K. Sooriyarachchi, and Mr. Anura Bandaranaike MP chief organiser of the youth league, were also co-opted to this committee.

Some findings

While the report has not been circulated some of the main findings of the experts and their recommendations include:

- party needs stricter structures for both policy-making and inner-party discipline because during the 7 years in office there were too many centres of power—official and unofficial.
- danger of *ad hoc* and arbitrary decisions can be avoided by creating a policy-making body (politburo) which will discuss, democratically debate and decide ALL major policy issues, whether the party is in opposition or forms a government.
- District organisations must be strengthened and there must be genuinely democratic elections to the main controlling bodies of the party in order to make them truly representative, especially of grass-roots thinking.
- The party must be democratised and modernised too. While day-to-day decisions

can be taken by the key officials, major decisions must be reached after open deliberations.

- Discipline must not only be effective but equally meted.

While these are the broad lines of thinking on re-organisation, a decision to appoint another committee for a re-appraisal of policy has been laid by. A party source summed up: "Broken promises, cost of living, and the disappointment among the UNP's own supporters, especially those who expected jobs, have resulted in a nationwide upsurge of support for us. This is not wishful thinking...we feel it, and we think that the UNP also knows it. But we cannot remain idle. We must



mobilise this support and start by re-organising the party from the village itself".

TBI re-emerges, tilts at Anura

Though this general renewal of SLFP self-confidence is evident, new strains have also appeared at the party level. These stresses are caused by (a) many 'stalwarts' being under a cloud of unpopularity within and outside (b) a generational in-fight with Anura leading part of the youth faction and making controversial statements about future nomination of candidates (60 to 70 percent should be young men) and asking for radical policies (c) speculation about the famous 'Ilangaratne letter' (to Mrs. Banda-

ranaike) which mysteriously surfaced in the LSSP paper (d) Aththa-Dinakara polemics have re-introduced Sino-Soviet issues.

Citizen Felix Dias Bandaranaike seems to be sulking in the shadows (a party intellectual said "The ex-Law minister is non-est") with ex-Speaker Stanley Tillekeratne and Ratne Desapriya Senanayake making a bid to fill the void. Hector Kobbekaduwe, after a long absence re-appeared at the Kandy meeting. It is T. B. Ilangaratne who is engaged in a strong fight-back for his due place as "founder-member". Leading an unusually pugnacious attack on the leadership, on the conduct of certain youth leaguers and trade unionists, and on certain prominent personalities. TBI who was hooted at during some party seminars, believes, it could be "organised".

TBI has made several direct (and hostile) references to Anura.

May Day (I)

Fireworks — and fireworks!

Veteran observers of May Day will be filled by a sense of *deja vu* if they are drawn to the government-sponsored show at Galle Face Green. The *Daily News* of May 2, 1933, reports how the country's first May Day was celebrated by Mr. A. E. Goonesingha, the Labour pioneer, in a "brightly illuminated" Victoria Park, with "a display of fireworks and all-night carnival".

While fireworks of a different variety will be seen at other places this May Day, a government party leader stated that the UNP's intention is NOT to accentuate differences but the unity of the people. Music, Cultural events and a well orchestrated display by the armed services will hold



May Day demonstration — longer the march bigger the rally.

the huge crowd expected at Galle Face Green enthralled.

May Day (2)

Mr. Alavi Moulana, the SLFP's trade union boss, is confident that the SLFP's rally will draw the biggest crowd. For all of us, transport will be a big obstacle but the SLFP procession will demonstrate that the party has a strong trade union base, he said. Our main slogans will be working class unity to defend existing worker rights, condemnation of anti-democratic acts and economic burdens on the people, and the political victimisation of trade unionists, workers, teachers and students.

May Day (3)

A polit-buro member of the LSSP told this journal: "Whatever anybody may say or claim, the ULF commands the most solid, organised politically-conscious sections of our working class. That should be very clear to anyone who see our demonstration on Monday".

A total rejection of the so-called White Paper, he added, will figure prominently in our demands. Also demand for an immediate stop to further burdens on the masses at the dictation of the IMF, and a halt to the assault on civil liberties.

May Day (4)

Mr. N. Sanmugathan, a member of the Left movement's Old Guard, has been accorded the un-

sual privilege of presiding over the rally of the 'New' Left. A Maoist now following the Albanian line in opposing Peking's present foreign policies, he will chair a meeting in which Messrs Vasudeva Nanayakara, Nanda Ellawela, Maoists, Trotskyists and assorted radicals, are billed to speak.

If the PDP's General Secretary, Nanda Ellawela speaks at the Kirilapone rally what happens to the U. L. F.'s troika?

May Day (5)

Mr. Rohana Wijeweera is expected to produce one of his Castro like talkathons at the Town Hall grounds.

Sri Lanka's Lee - ward lurch

Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and his unusually large entourage has come and gone. Hospitable, friendly and non-aligned Sri Lanka customarily extends a warm welcome to most visiting dignitaries. But no visit so forcefully surfaced the widely divergent views of government and opposition on fundamental questions: a socio-political model, economic strategies, and foreign policy.

"Welcome to Mr. Lee" said a front-page boxed item in the government-owned TIMES and the rest was an avalanche of praise bor-

dering on a starry-eyed homage worthy of a Third World hero or non-aligned champion. The media coverage (page 1 news, pictures, feature articles, profiles and editorials) would have made the leader of a major power proud. And all this for what wasn't even an "official visit".

Nonetheless, its significance ought not to be under-stated precisely because the Lee visit brought into the open contrary currents of Sri Lankan thinking both at the level of organised parties and within the wider intellectual debate.

Dominant view

The official or dominant view, as reflected in the press, reveals itself in certain key words and repetitive phrases. Singapore is a "success story" (and ought to be a "model" for us) because Mr. Lee's "pragmatic" policies and his governments "dynamism" and "efficiency" have not only made the country "stable" and "secure" but won "foreign confidence" and achieved "economic growth" and "prosperity". This mainstream argument is accompanied by some fuss and fizz about FTZ, ASEAN etc.

For a generation of exchange-starved upper-middle class Sri Lankans, Singapore is 'Change Alley', the shopper's paradise with all the 'imported goodies', we hardly see. This middle-class psychology nurtured in conditions of an exchange crisis, travel restrictions and

the exaggerated desires for the scarce item, supports an arcadian vision of Sri Lanka as a larger Singapore. Hence that ardent refrain heard so often in upper-middle class drawing rooms "Why can't we be like Singapore?" or the rhetorical question "How did Singapore develop, ah?"

Mr. Lee himself once used the word "Shangrila" to describe the ideal fulfilment (in his vision of human needs) of all the suppressed desires of the Third World poor. His remark at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's meeting in Ottawa earned an acerbic riposte from Mr. Gough Whitlam, then Australian Prime Minister. "I thought" said Mr. Whitlam "that Shangrila was a 5-star hotel in Singapore!"

PAP quits

To the Sri Lankan opposition, and to all those not so dazzled by Singapore's "success story", Singapore is a near-police state which has outlawed the Opposition (keeping its leaders under detention without trial for 10 to 12 years), muzzled the press and all criticism, tyrannizes intellectuals, academics, trade unionists and all "dissenters" with frightening efficiency. For the opposition parties (to judge by their newspapers) Singapore is a neo-colonial outpost, and its non-alignment as phoney, as its "socialism".

The Socialist International which includes West Germany's Willy Brandt and the West German Social Democrats, Mr. Mitterand's Socialists, the ruling party in Israel up to last year, the Portuguese & Spanish socialist parties, and the Scandinavian socialists etc threatened to expel Mr. Lee's PAP for what it described as the PAP's "shameless record" in the suppression of human rights. The PAP quit before it was sacked.

Mr. Lee's visit was important for another reason. Mr. Rajaratnam and Mr. Hameed regretted the "differences" within the non-aligned movement. Those differences were already evident at the Colombo Summit. In fact, Mr. Lee who sent a message represented one extreme while another leader who did not attend the conference stood at the other end, Dr. Fidel Castro.

In his message to the Chairman, Mrs. Bandaranaike, Mr. Lee did concede that Sri Lanka's credentials in genuine non-alignment were "impeccable", but he questioned the credentials of many others. So did Dr. Castro's spokesman and Colonel Gaddafi, from the other standpoint. These two men—Lee of Singapore and Castro of Cuba—are the most brilliant and articulate spokesmen of these two tendencies within the non-aligned group. In short, both men know where they stand, and who their friends are, and who their enemies. There's a difference, though. The next conference is in Havana. (It is never likely to be in Singapore). And though Cuba is an island with a small population, Cuba is already a factor of considerable importance in the calculations of the major powers.

Lee's 'message'

Besides, an investment guarantee agreement and soluble taxation (minor, routine matters) nothing of hard substance emerged. Yet, Mr. Lee's final statement was extremely interesting—particularly if one read between the lines, and Mr. Lee is a master of the tossaway aside, and the deflationary phrase. What was his 'message'?

- a) Our FTZ sites will be ready early next year.
- b) Things will get off the ground in 12-to-18 months.
- c) Some Singaporeans will have a look-see then, and if they are satisfied, they'll invest.
- d) If they succeed, others are likely to come.
- e) Whatever incentives you may offer, big investors base their calculations on political stability, and the strength of the Opposition, if it is hostile to the FTZ. I have no problems with the Opposition; I don't know about.
- f) I have "motivated" my bureaucracy. Yours don't look too good in my eyes and I am a specialist.

TUs' issue statement

Major trade unions which comprise the Action Committee of the joint council of trade unions have issued a joint statement on the closure of training colleges, the mass transfer of teachers, the campus closures, police raids, and armed assaults and threats of revenge against students. The unions include the Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, Ceylon Federation of Labour, the Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation, the Public Service Federation, the Ceylon Mercantile Union, Ceylon Teachers Union, the Government Clerical Services Union, the Government Workers Trade Union, the Ceylon Trade Union Federation, and the Bank Employees Union.

The statement deplures policies that would "put an end to free education" for the poor while providing higher education for the affluent.

It condemns the closure of teacher training colleges and the indiscriminate transfer of teachers. Describing how the boycott of classes at Peradeniya followed the interdiction of a teacher and the suspension of several students, including the student president of Peradeniya led to token strikes at Katubedde, Vidyalkara and Colombo, the statement says that armed thugs from outside assaulted students at Vidyalkara, attacked students at the Aesthetic Studies School in Colombo, and how three students were kidnapped in a hijacked CTB bus.

The statement calls for opening of all teacher training colleges, the cancellation of all interdictions and suspensions, the restoration of residential facilities and police restraint.

It further states that the "organized working class should not stand aside from the teachers and students" and declares their "complete solidarity" with students and teacher organisations.

Young Tigers strike

The month's most dramatic news story was the assassination of the CID team on the track of the men behind the attempted murder in January of Mr. M. Canagaratnam MP, the Tamil United Liberation Front member who had crossed over to the government after the November budget, the UNP's first. Of the three Tamil officers killed one was Inspector Bastiampillai, the CID's chief investigator of Tamil terrorism.

The 'Sun' which led off with the story followed it up with another well-informed report on a Tamil youth group called 'Liberation Tigers'.

We republish some excerpts from an article that appeared in the FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW (Feb. 24) entitled "TIGERS ON THE PROWL". (Material useful only to the foreign reader have been excised).

After the 1958 race riots many educated Colombo Tamils (and some Jaffnese) severed all links with the country and found refuge in international agencies or in Britain, the US, Canada, Malaysia and some new African states which needed trained manpower. Those who did not flee were of two kinds. First, the really rich, succoured by that special feeling of security which goes with wealth. The Tamil aristocracy, with property inherited in Colombo was an accepted partner of the Sinhala Establishment. The Tamil new rich, successful businessmen and professionals, have ready access to the charms of Colombo cosmopolitanism. Neither group was physically touched or felt the horrors of last August.

August was the cruellest month for the other group, the Tamil middle class—public officials,

teachers, bank clerks and small traders. Over 100 were killed, and 30,000 left homeless. Should they remain in Colombo knowing that they are helpless hostages but hoping that the next wave of communalism will not hit them for 20 years?

Superiority: The Eastern province (EP) Tamil is a product of the social and educational backwardness of one of the most underdeveloped provinces. While the north shares some of the characteristics of Tamil Nadu, or Kerala or Bengal, the EP has no distinctive tradition or culture and only a limited indigenous intelligentsia. Jaffna's essential superiority guarantees its dominance within the Tamil movement. This had bred sub-regional resentments which make the EP Tamil in a poorly developed periphery even more tempted by the lure of patronage of the Sinhala centre.

Thus, the heart and mind of Tamil nationalism that nourishes the separatist idea lie in its natural northern habitat. But are there two hearts and two minds? The attempt on Canagaratnam's life and, if it is a political act, its implications raise a question which seriously worried Mrs. Bandaranaike and her National Security Council.

"Liberation" could be just a rhetorical cry raised by the middle-class TULF leadership at election time. "Separatism" may be mere bravura or, at its most serious, tactical pressure on the Sinhala Establishment and the Government. TULF leaders, most of them lawyers, know that Jayewardene, even as all-powerful President, will not retreat on "Sinhala only", though the Tamil language may be granted greater recognition, perhaps constitutionally. Neither Jayawardene nor Mrs. Bandaranaike nor any Sinhala leader of the foreseeable future will accept the notion of a Tamil homeland. If these are non negotiable, TULF may be readier to accept other concessions even if they cling on to their maximum demand of a separate state.

What of the Tamil youth and the militant activists within TULF's youth wing? The police say that a clue left behind by Canagaratnam's attackers points to a radical underground organisation.

For the Tamil youth, there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Nothing could be worse. Separation may be an escape. A fierce commitment to what is perceived as the last option must feed not only a reckless rage against the system but a cold anger against all collaborators, even those whose commitment is shown up as false or half-hearted.

Unsolved: In July 1975, Alfred Durayappah, the Tamil Mayor of Jaffna, was gunned down as he walked out of a Hindu temple after his morning prayers. Durayappah, a one-time Jaffna MP was a prominent member of Mrs. Bandaranaike's then ruling Freedom Party. Arrests were made but the murder remains unsolved. The name Young Tigers was first heard in Colombo at this time. Apparently, it was a band of tough young militants who, working under the umbrella of TULF, ran an independent IRA-type outfit.

Several months later, a Tamil CID sleuth on the case was mysteriously murdered. Last May, two policemen investigating the murder were trapped by a group of young men on bicycles. It was 9.30 am and the incident occurred near a busy bus station on the main Jaffna road. They were killed on the spot. The cyclists rode away calmly. The police could not find a single witness although at least 20 people saw it happening.

Earlier, there was an attempt to blow up the car in which Chelliah Kumarasuriy, Mrs. Bandaranaike's only Tamil minister, was travelling. One of Mrs. Bandaranaike's top party organisers, also a Tamil, was shot at and his home set on fire. A bullet whistled past the ear of Dr. Kailasapathy, President of the Jaffna campus. A Tamil, he was a sympathiser of the Janavegaya

செனமூட்டி தமிழ்ச் செய்தி (To page 9)

Lebanon

Religious war or social upheaval?

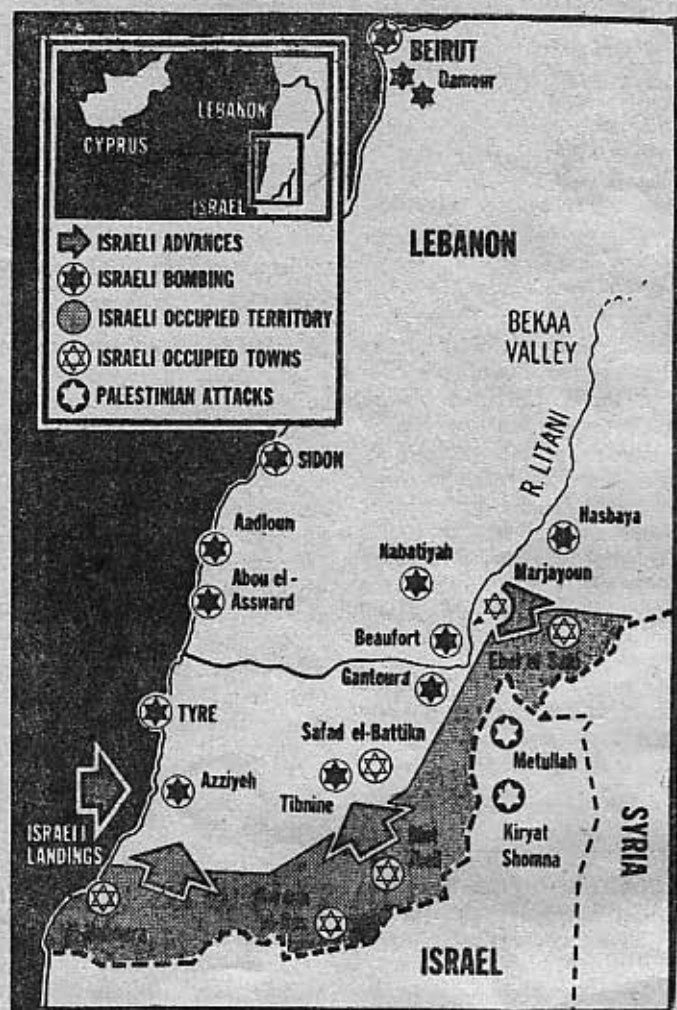
The civil strife in Lebanon widely and misleadingly portrayed as a simple religious conflict, is reaching a new phase. Seemingly insulated from the flames of the protracted Arab-Israeli war, Lebanon saw her splendid isolation shattered by the civil war of late 1976-77. A bustling commercial and banking centre, and delightful Mediterranean pleasure resort, Lebanon was an eccentric middle-eastern enclave whose much-vaunted 'stability' was supposedly embodied in a covenant signed with the blessings of the French, the departing colonial power, before its post-war independence.

This facade could not forever conceal the social realities, where the dividing lines of economic power and privilege became increasingly clear. If the rich Arabs had their wealth in Lebanese banks (this money fled Beirut to Zurich just as the multinationals moved out to Athens and Nicosia after the civil war) it was the Christians who had a stranglehold on the national economy. Their material interest, ideological outlook and life-style made them pro-western, less overtly pro-Israel but always nervous that geography together with Islamic loyalties and Arab unity would drag the country into the Arab-Israeli imbroglio.

Armed bands

In the face of an ill-equipped, inept Lebanese army, itself of mixed composition, Christian power and privilege was protected by armed bands, notably the Phalangist militia.

The seeds of future conflict lay as much in the contrived constitutional system as in the emerging tensions between the haves and have-nots.



Surgery or butchery?

The Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, proclaimed to the world as a move to "wipe out the PLO once and for all", has apparently achieved no such thing. Days after the invasion newsmen reporting from Israeli-occupied Lebanon were aghast at the death and destruction caused by the 25,000 strong Israeli army which penetrated six miles of Lebanese land.

The attack on the Palestinians of southern Lebanon described by the Israeli army as a 'surgical strike' ended up by being one bloody mess of mindless devastation which had newspapermen calling back to the worst days of the Vietnamese adventure. As H.D.S. Greenway of the Herald

Tribune described it, "It is clear that the Israelis used the same tactic that the United States used in Vietnam: concentrated shelling to hold down your own casualties but the Devil take anyone in the way, be they enemies or civilians."

From that devastation fled an estimated 200,000 Palestinian refugees who had seen their homes reduced to shell holes, their belongings destroyed. One group of Muslims, about 70 of them, were slaughtered inside a mosque not by the Israelis but by the Christian Lebanese of southern Lebanon who were earlier living with the Palestinians. Now they prefer an Israeli occupation to the return of the Palestinians. ●

The large influx of armed Palestinians immediately after King Hussein's Bedouin troops massacred the guerrillas in Jordan in the infamous 'Black September' not only altered the correlation of forces inside Lebanon but helped the maturation of these latent conflicts, accelerating the processes of political and social change.

This Israeli doctrine of massive retaliation makes no distinction between the Palestinian guerrilla enemy and those that afford it sanctuary, whether country, government, or people.

Applied cleverly against Jordan in 1968-1970, the Israelis prodded King Hussein, in any case no sincere supporter of the Palestinians, to turn his murderous guns on the guerrillas, who then found their last refuge in Lebanon. The last sanctuary was also the only operational base (southern Lebanon) which could offer the minimum logistical support for commando raids on Israel proper.

Reprisal raids

In cross-border reprisal raids in the recent past, Israel has hit back with indiscriminate fury. Their so-called surgical strikes has been more butchery than surgery, and the victims have been guerrillas, Palestinian refugees and poor Lebanese Moslem villagers. Only the Maronite Christians with whom the Israeli border forces have direct dealings are treated as 'friends'. The Christian militia was also an active ally of the Israeli invaders.

In any war, the poor suffer most. The vast majority of the Lebanese poor are Moslems. Today 500,000 are 'refugees'—just like the Palestinians have been homeless for 30 years. Their homes and farms have been destroyed. Thus the divisions between rich and poor, Christian and Moslem are being widened, with the Moslem villagers joining the Palestinian refugees as the wretched of the earth in what was once the Switzerland of the Middle East.

As the Israeli pull-back goes on, Israel may be satisfied that

it achieved the immediate military objective of smashing up the guerrilla bases south of the Litani River to establish a so-called 'security belt' even if Israel failed in its ultimate aim of breaking the back of the Palestinian resistance. The exacerbation of tensions with Lebanese society however is a non-military result that Israel may not have anticipated. If that process is advanced the unresolved future of a people without a country is proved once more to be the most radicalizing factor in Arab world politics—the fear common to Israel, the west and the Arab conservatives.

India

Opening for the Left

By an unusual coincidence, both the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) held their respective congresses in the same State (Punjab) and at the same time (the entire first week of April). Within a week of the conclusion of their respective deliberations top-level delegations of the two parties, led by their General Secretaries, met in New Delhi.

An official statement issued after the talks said that, while there were undoubted differences on several issues, there was a large area of agreement on how the CPM and CPI could, along with other Left and democratic parties, organisations and groups, take up burning issues affecting the people. There would be frequent exchanges of views in future to follow unity in action with better understanding of each other's position and to narrow their differences.

Irreconcilable

Though the actual split that gave birth to two Communist Parties in India took place as recently as 1964, there were two irreconcilable political tendencies within the former CPI from as far back as the Madurai congress of the party in 1953. The severe repression to

which the CPI was subject after the collapse of the agrarian revolution in Telengana had intensified factional conflicts in the illegal party. The clever conciliation of its General Secretary at the time, Ajoy Ghosh, averted a split at its each succeeding crisis. But the Sino-Indian border war of 1962 sharpened internal antagonisms further and linked them with doctrinal issues of an explosive character. The split followed almost immediately.

Since the CPI fashioned its policies in the light of the perspective of National Democracy and the non-capitalist path of advance towards Socialism, as adopted by the gathering of world Communist Parties in 1960, it was natural to expect a certain sectarian leaning towards China on the part of the CPM initially. But by 1967 these Maoist tendencies had already broken loose to take the path of Naxalite adventures and float a separate CPI (Marxist-Leninist) in some areas of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

The eighth congress of the CPM, held at Cochin in December 1968, shed what remained of its Maoist sectarianism on a number of vital national and international issues. When the Congress party split in two in 1969, the CPM was able to evaluate it objectively. In contrast, the CPI became more and more uncritical in its support of the Congress party and Government under Mrs. Indira Gandhi and endorsed her resort to dictatorial rule in 1975.

Notable step

There had been declarations on both sides, after the rout of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Congress party by the Janata whirlwind early last year, that the CPM and CPI should move towards mutual co-operation. A notable step in that direction was the self-critical resolution of the CPI's National Committee in December 1977. On the side of the CPM, its General Secretary, P. Sundarayya, resigned his post immediately after the 1977 General Election in protest against the party's general support of the Janata Party and Government.

The congresses of the two parties have now taken these tendencies much further. At Bhatinda, the CPI congress has declared that "our main mistake was in supporting the Emergency itself." 1,122 delegates (with none against and 111 abstentions) endorsed this "Review Report".

At Jullundur, the demand was made by ex-General Secretary Sundarayya that there should be no political partnership of the CPM with the Janata Party. Though this was not conceded, the Political Resolution referred to "the anti-democratic and reactionary" antecedents of "the main constituents of the Janata Party" and the need for a "persistent ideological struggle" against its "Gandhian bourgeois ideology."

Agreement

There is a far-reaching identity between the positions taken by the CPM and CPI at Jullundur and Bhatinda in the first week of April. Both of them agree that there is no basic difference between Congress and Janata, which are bourgeois parties. Both of them call for the setting up of a Front of Left and Democratic Forces through a succession of mass struggles. Both of them accord a position of the highest priority in the programme of such a Front to a re-structuring of relationships between the Centre and the States, in which greater powers and expanded revenues will be enjoyed by the State Governments in terms of genuine federal principles.

It should be noted here that the demand for greater autonomy for State Governments is the main slogan that the Left Front Government of West Bengal has inscribed on its banner. The support extended to it by the CPI congress will mean both further strength to its campaign in West Bengal and direct support from within the Government of Kerala, if not from the whole Government.

EMIS Namboodripad, General Secretary of the CPM has repeatedly stressed that the test of the CPI's sincerity about a new Left and Democratic Front will be its policy in Kerala. The CPI has 23

members in the State legislature and is today the biggest party in the Assembly. Since the CPM has 17 members, the basis exists for a re-alignment of parties and groups in the State of Kerala and the formation of a Left Democratic Front Government. This would mean a base for the Front in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, in two of which the Left Front led by the CPI already is in power.

At a time when the power of the Janata Party is rapidly dwindling and the Indira Congress party persists in the defence of its past actions, the coming together of the two Communist Parties will provide a powerful opening for the Left in India.

Pakistan

Bhutto hangs on

General Zia is a caricature come to life, a Colonel Blimp with a Punjabi accent whose bluff and bluster, whiff-of-grapeshot, flog the fuzzy-wuzzies, got to teach the natives who's top dog and all that may have made an agreeable British film comedy with Terry Thomas as the lead. But now the man who came to restore order—and did so in the customary soldier's fashion—while preparing Pakistan for a rapid return to civilian politics and democracy has tarried long enough to see himself as a saviour. "I want to cleanse the country" is the burden he has placed on his broad shoulders.

How long this Bonapartist buffoonery will last, nobody knows for Pakistan is in a mess, economically and politically. Meanwhile Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his death cell holds the centre stage for he is still Pakistan's most formidable figure. Which is precisely what worries General Zia.

A brilliant, aggressively arrogant man Mr. Bhutto was a bundle of contradictions. He played international Islamic politics while trying to make his country more secular. Though he swore by the Koran, especially when he faced the popular pressures generated by strong religious sentiment, yet he was a moderniser. As such he fell foul of the mullahs, the powerful priesthood. He gave a nation long accustomed to military rule, a civilian government and a semblance of democracy. yet, he was cunning, conspiratorial and in the end repressive in dealing with political opponents like Wali Khan.

Mr. Bhutto's appeal was to come before the Supreme Court on May 6. His lawyers have asked for time for work on the 2000 page record of evidence. The earlier trial has been criticised on many grounds. Before the trial began General Zia had already pronounced Mr. Bhutto a murderer. Much of the damning evidence was one man's testimony—the world of Mr. Mahmud, head of the hated Federal police (a Bhutto creation) who had been detained and later released apparently on the promise of total immunity.

Neither law nor morality will decide Bhutto's fate. It will be decided by General Zia's fears about his own future if Bhutto lives, and the attitude of Pakistan's influential aid-givers. Colonel Gaddafi and the Arab Emirates have appealed on Bhutto's behalf. The Shah of Iran has kept silent and King Khalid's feelings are not yet known.

There is a third factor, a great imponderable. There could be factions in the Army that think General Zia has put himself in the corner he cannot get out of. Zia still talks of elections and civilian government, but the main opposition is not taking the bait. Will such officer groups decide that Zia has over-stayed his welcome, make a martyr out of Mr. Bhutto, and use that very issue to oust the General?

L. G.

Portugal

Food rationing in offing?

Portugal may become the first country in Western Europe to introduce food rationing since the 1950's. Announcing large increases in subsidised food prices, Trade Minister Horta said recently that Portugal can no longer import or subsidise food at present levels. Already transport, electricity and gas charges have gone up by 50% while the housewife's "shopping basket" has seen a rise of 10% to 38% in certain essential items. These increases, cuts in social costs and higher taxes are part of an IMF

package to rescue Portugal's sick economy.

The IMF recommendations led to a political crisis in Lisbon with some of the parliamentary groups, including the Communists which supported Dr. Mario Soares' socialist party, withdrawing their support. The IMF called off the negotiations and resumed talks after Premier Soares formed a new coalition with the conservative CDS. In an obvious attempt to please the E.E.C. (Portugal has applied for membership) Dr. Soares appointed a conservative as Foreign Minister, Senor Machado, restored many collective farms to private landowners and promised full compensation to foreign owners.

In a recent interview with the TIMES London, Dr. Soares explained Portugal's current strategy:

(Q) Do you still think it will be possible to reduce the current

account deficit for 1978 by 800 million dollars as demanded by the IMF?

- (A) That is our wager. We know it's difficult but we are gambling on it, not because it is the recipe of the IMF but because it is a veritable patriotic imperative.
- (Q) That means a reduction of 500 million dollars this year?
- (A) Yes, it is going to be a big shock for the country, and will oblige us to adopt a very severe austerity policy, with enormous social costs.
- (Q) Could you define the main lines of the strategy?
- (A) It's mainly this determination to reduce the balance of payments deficit, accepting the consequences of this reduction, for expansion, for employment and for inflation.

V. J.

Young Tigers

(From page 5)

(People's Force) group of Kumar Rupasinghe.

Then the National Security Council concluded:

* All the targets were Tamils. The attackers were scrupulously avoiding any confrontation with the Sinhalese. The victims would be branded by their assailants as "traitors" or "collaborators";

* If collaboration must be forcefully discouraged in the first phase of planned terrorism, the next target would be the infrastructure of the "occupation" — probably the police;

* Out of a shared antipathy to the police-occupation force or from a sense of racial kinship or ordinary fear, witnesses would not talk;

* The Indian connection had to be carefully watched.

In a burst of bravado, Amirthalingam told a Colombo seminar just before the election that any Sinhala government should learn the lessons of Northern Ireland.



Strange bedfellows

At 65 Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe is perhaps Sri Lanka's oldest civil servant, but the secret of his long success is the envy of many a younger man. His rise to the top did not take him right up to the 38th floor, to the office of the United Nations Secretary General, but he has managed to make UN history by being elected President of the Law of the Sea Conference without being a member of his country's delegation.

With a rose in his button hole and silver on his hair, Shirley does cut quite a figure in his 300 dollar suits. But in his case it is not only the clothes that help to make the man, his speech, too, bespeaks him well. His wit, not caustic like Menon's, has won him many a round of applause. Once he told Abba Eban, Israel's multilingual Foreign Minister (he is fluent in eleven languages) that his 9 point "peace plan" presented soon after the six day war did not come up to his country's best traditions—"Moses had 10 Commandments, Mr. Eban is modest enough to give the Arabs only 9."

His calm and patience in moments of crises has helped him to smooth out many a ravelled conference. In Caracas he scored a signal success in bringing the stormy Law of the Sea Conference to order when it met for the first time and gave himself the chance to tell the delegates that the "sea bed can make strange bedfellows."

Prize acquisition

At Maharajah's where the boast is that they get "the best man at any price" a prize acquisition is a former Minister of Communications and the top man in the LSSP's organising bureau,

Anil Moonesingha. Anil, a bustling and active trade union leader is the founding father of the United Ceylon Mercantile Union. With Maharajah's looking for a man to keep their widening economic empire trim, particularly on the labour front, the choice of Anil is not exactly for labour busting as for labour boosting.



Anil - for labour boosting?

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party's great white hope for the future will now direct his attention on the Maharajah-Renault link-up and tell the Management how to keep the workers happy. Also working for the Maharajah Group is the former SLBC boss Susil Moonesingha, a blue-eyed boy of the Bandaranaike regime and Anil's younger brother, Likewise Susil's wife.

Sikh joke

The 'Observer', renowned for its mixed-up captions (Peter Fonda was presented as our Foreign Minister Hameed) continues to make the readers' heart grow fonda with its delectable faux pas. When Indian High Commissioner Gurban Singh was featured by the **Sunday Observer** the article began "All Singhs are sheiks (sic) but not all sheiks are Singhs". Did His Excellency to whom this remark was attributed have his own tongue in his cheek

or was this another Observer tongue-twister?

As his turban proclaims the Indian High Commissioner who says farewell next week after a three year stint is a Sikh. Doubtless he'll take this gaffe with perfect aplomb and may even turn the other cheek. To avoid such mistakes in the future, Observer feature writers should be told that His Excellency is a Sikh but definitely not a sheik (as far as we know). And it is his wife who is chic.

Trouble shooter

In Delhi's Defence colony where clannish Sri Lankans often get together for a **kaha buth** and **kukul mus** on Sundays whispers are afloat of a hush-hush visit to Indira Gandhi by a local V.I.P. The description of the mysterious visitor fits the UNP's top trouble-shooter (free-lance) and charming globe-trotter Esmond Wickremasinghe last in the news with his polemical broadside on the I.M.F. negotiations.

Tempted by the obvious local parallel, the UNP got plenty of propaganda mileage from the mother-son, cow-and-calf slogan at the July polls.

When Big Chief J.R. was attending the Commonwealth confab, Esmond was in Sydney for the IPI meeting. He stopped over in Delhi for the UNESCO-sponsored (news agencies) experts' group discussions on his way back to Colombo on his way to Cairo (for the Edward R. Murrow Foundation seminar on non-aligned news) en route to Stockholm on his way back to Colombo... on his way to China leading a gang of five media men.

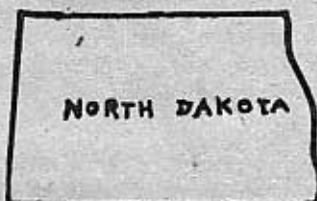
Noble not Nobel

The Noble Prize, — not the Nobel Prize, — came the way of John Kenneth Galbraith famed economist and former US Ambassador last month. If it was being awarded by APHIA they were really being funny because APHIA stands for the Associa-

tion for the Promotion of Humour in International Affairs.

A joke now and then, APHIA believes, could relieve much of the grim determination with which nations pursue their ambitions. So the members of APHIA thought Galbraith was a scream when he suggested that international frontiers be redrawn much as North Dakota has been into the shape of something like a trapezium.

Galbraith's suggestion that "straight, unmistakable frontiers (as in the case of North Dakota) which would cut right through



Is this the shape of the future?

every animosity, however cherished," did not quite draw gales of laughter from the 600 members and guests who turned up in Paris for the luncheon award, but it was generally thought that it would "remove great power rivalry by liquidating the great powers."

But the funnier remark that Galbraith made concerned the latest position about the American dollar. "People used to come to our place in Gstaad," Galbraith said referring to his Swiss ski-slope winter home, "and ask me, 'Ken what's going to happen to the dollar?'. Now they don't come any more. It's happened."

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Press opinion

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Protecting May Day

It is clear that government has had to bow to the voice of protest even though its media carried on a propaganda to the effect that this time there will be no May Day demonstrations. Of course, the May Day holiday and the commemoration of this day has no significance for the United National Party. For them the day is only an occasion to make political capital. Even the little importance this day had for the UNP when it was out of power is not to be seen now that it is in power.

As for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party this party, too, when it was in power was unable to generate enthusiasm for this occasion because it is unable to give leadership to the working class. But it has to be said that with the setting up of the United Front May Day has grown in importance and to a certain extent has become a threat to the UNP.

-Janadina



A fine example!

Recently the Observer carried a policy statement made in South Korea by Mr. B. J. Fernando while he was on his way to take up office as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the United Nations. According to the Observer Mr. Fernando is reported to have said "It is our opinion that the best way to develop our country is to follow the example of South Korea. In two months time Sri Lanka will open an embassy in South Korea. We too adopted a presidential system to quicken the pace of development as South

Korea has done. Developing countries cannot depend on the parliamentary system for national development. Sri Lanka will support the policies adopted by South Korea at non-aligned conferences and international gatherings."

What Mr. B. J. Fernando is saying, in other words, is that Mr. Jayawardena of Sri Lanka is also following South Korea. That he has made himself President to become a dictator like Park Chung Hee. That he has no faith in the parliamentary system.

Mr. B. J. Fernando's statement appeared on the 14th of March. To date Mr. Fernando has not denied his statement. The fact that the government has remained silent for a month compels us to infer that this is the policy of the government. In that case it is a dangerous thing.

-Aththa



Tamil needs

In the spheres of education and transport the Tamil speaking people are confronted with insurmountable obstacles and hardships. Whether it is the farmer or the worker, the teacher or the trader or any other section of the Tamil community their leaders have repeatedly pointed out that the facilities and opportunities extended to the majority community are denied to them. Only after meeting the needs of the majority community the authorities make a vain attempt to inquire what the needs of the minorities are.

From the distribution of essential consumer goods to the various services rendered by state agencies no one can deny there is blatant discrimination. As this situation has gone on from year to year serious political issues have arisen and revolutionary remedies are suggested.

-Virakesari

Storm clouds over White Paper

The widespread trade union protest over the "White Paper on Employment Relations" has apparently eased. Or is it just the calm before the real storm? The government seems to have made a significant concession when the Labour Minister told the N. S. A. that the proposed law would apply only to state sector employees and not to the private sector. Yet the rumblings of discontent have by no means died down.

The White Paper, in its original British and HMG sense, is in itself a misnomer. What has been published by the Ministry of Labour is no document broadly outlining government thinking on a given question in order to promote public and parliamentary discussion. It is a draft law of four chapters and 127 sections with a preamble and the standard opening "Be it enacted by the National State Assembly....."

No proposed legislation has provoked so many protests from so many relevant quarters so quickly as this 'White Paper'.

Mr. S. Thondaman MP is the President of the island's biggest single trade union, the Ceylon Workers Congress, which controls a large segment of plantation labour in an area of economic life vital to Sri Lanka's interests. Nor is he an inveterate critic of the government or a blind supporter. Asked for his reactions, he made this pithy observation: "I wonder whether some enemy of this government helped to draft this document". He told this correspondent that he had addressed the government at the highest level urging many important modifications.

'Black paper'

Mr. Bala Tampoe, General Secretary of the well-organised independent Ceylon Mercantile Union which has a strong base among clerks, described it as a 'black paper'.

The CMU leadership has argued that some sections of the White Paper could be regarded as violations of ILO conventions on workers' rights.

The Christian Workers Fellowship says that certain 'new' ideas incorporated in the draft law not only violate papal encyclicals on the basic rights of workers but would lead inevitably to the extinction of the trade union movement.

The position of the major unions and federations affiliated to opposition parties, whether of the SLFP, the ULF or any other, is even more uncompromising in its criticism of the provisions of the White Paper and its ultimate aims.

What is the real substance of the proposed measure? The Research Division of the Centre for Society and Religion produced recently a study which analyses the contents of the White Paper in the perspective of labour legislation in this country, notions of fundamental rights and natural justice, the trade union movement, social welfare and democracy. This article is based largely on its conclusions.

Hire and fire

In effect, the provisions of the White Paper 'reduces human labour to a mere commodity that can be bought and sold, hired and fired in the market'.

An employer is empowered to terminate the services of any employee on the payment of fixed compensation, and such termination cannot be questioned under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act.

The compensation is computed thus:

- * Less than 1 year's employment — 6 months wages
- * Less than 10 years — 24 months
- * Less than 20 years — 30 months
- * Over 20 years — 36 months.

If the salary is over 2000/- per month, the compensation will be calculated on the basis of 2000/-

This 'new' power is vested in the employer under Section 23.

Domestic inquiries

The White paper seeks to institutionalize 'domestic inquiries' (a welcome feature) but if an employer sacks a worker for breach of obligations or alleged misconduct, the decision of the domestic inquiry cannot be questioned under the Industrial Disputes Act unless the employee can prove bad faith on the part of the employer. In short, the burden of proof has shifted from the employer to the employee, from accuser to accused. This is a clear reversal of the law as it now stands.

Right to strike

While many unions claim that the White Paper attempts to impose what in reality is a total ban on strikes, other critics of the draft law say that the right to strike has been severely abridged.

At present, there are restrictions on this right now regarded universally as part of the worker's right of association and collective action in the protection of his legitimate interests. These restrictions include: (a) 21 days notice in the case of an essential industry; (b) any strike that seeks to alter by pressure a collective agreement, award or settlement under the Industrial Disputes Act is an offence; (c) a strike to alter a labour tribunal award is an offence; (d) a strike concerning a dispute referred to an Industrial court is illegal; (e) no strikes in police, armed forces etc.

The new restriction outlaw strikes in essential services, and make it an offence to seek to alter any decisions made by Employees Councils or Conciliation Commission. There can be no strike anywhere without 21 days notice as stipulated in Clause 29. Nor can there be any strike over a dispute that has been referred to an Employees Council or Conciliation Commission.

Welcoming features

The relevance of this, according to the Centre's study, is that a new industrial relations system is being installed in which the role now played by the trade unions is vested in Employees Councils and Conciliation Committees a system which in practice, will vastly enhance the power of the employer making a mockery of the conciliation process. The conciliation device is in fact being used to divert, delay and toward collective action by workers.

High-level commissions of inquiry, lawyers and academics have presented considered judgments on the Right To Strike. While there has been criticism of irresponsible unionism, and the economic cost of strikes has been deplored, the right itself has been recognised as a basic and cherished liberty. (See boxed items)

Citizen's right

It is an offence to aid or abet any person who is a party to an illegal strike or lock-out. Technically, if you give five rupees or a packet of rice to such a person, you will be committing an offence unless you prove that you did not intend to so aid or abet.

The Centre's study enumerates the following positive features:

- * Definition of casual and temporary labour and measures to stop abuse.
- * Limitation of period of probation.
- * Extension of Wages Board terms and conditions to those not specifically covered.
- * Equal wages irrespective of sex.

A sacred right

The Industrial Disputes Commission which submitted its report in 1970 consisted of a distinguished panel of lawyers and judges, Mr. H. W. Jaywardene QC, Mr. S. R. Wijayatillake and Mr. T. P. P. Goonetilleke. It observed:

"We are fairly convinced that as a general rule strikes are founded on some grievance, real or fancied, but the unfortunate aspect of these strikes is the failure of the parties to make use of existing machinery to settle grievances without causing damage to the economy of the country. The right to strike which labour considers as almost a 'sacred right' should be left inviolate. But that should not preclude the due implementation of the existing legal provisions, themselves built round that concept, so as to avoid strikes, minimise their effects, and to settle these".

The one weapon

"The right to strike is one of the most fundamental rights enjoyed by employees and their unions and is an integral part of their right to defend their collective economic and social interests. The right generally follows from the right of workers to organise for trade union purposes and the right to bargain collectively... The justification for the right to strike is the fact that it is the one weapon which can correct the unequal bargaining position of employer and employee"

— "The Legal Framework of Industrial Relations in Ceylon" by S. R. de Silva

- * Termination of wife's/children's services on husband's termination stopped in plantation sector.
- * Acceptance of the principle of employees participation in management through Employees Councils and worker representatives on Boards.
- * Half-wages during suspension.
- * Acceptance of principle of employees participation in profits. ●

Opinion

Understanding educational change

E. H. de Alwis

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

The public has not yet fully realised, for instance, that the recent devaluation (or whatever it is called) will drastically reduce the foreign exchange component of the appropriations for such services. The import of books, periodicals, science equipment etc will have to be cut sharply. Text books in medicine, engineering accountancy etc (even in the cheaper paper-back editions) have risen in price far beyond the reach of all except the affluent—a fact to which I shall revert later.

Purpose

My purpose, however, is not to examine economic policies (a task, in any case, outside my competence) but to interpret the implications of recent official utterances on educational change. The manifesto of the ruling party offers us no clear clue to what the future holds for us in this respect, unless we are guided by the theory of “contraries” in the popular interpretation of dreams, and take the promise of 8 lbs of cereals as a pointer.

We have then only ministerial and official pronouncements as

What does the closing of training colleges mean? E. H. de Alwis who examines the implications completed his long public service career as Director of Education. We have invited, among others, Prof. Stanley Kalpage, the Secretary of the new Ministry of Higher Education, and Mr. Bogoda Premaratne, former Principal of Royal College, to comment on this article.

reported in the daily press and recent actions like the closing down of Training Colleges to go by. But their true significance I venture to think cannot be properly gauged unless we note the shadow cast upon the whole welfare state by the IMF and the IBRD. I do not wish to imply without stronger evidence that the government has staked all that the welfare state connotes in a sort of ‘double or quits’ gamble with international agencies.

Costs

But we must not forget that it is not the policy of such institutions to grant massive or substantial help or financial accommodations to countries that have committed themselves to welfare measures which only a socialist economy or advanced capitalist economy, like the Scandinavian, can sustain. It is therefore not unrealistic to presume that the rising cost of free education is a factor that looms large in the thinking of these agencies and the prescriptive counsel they offer their aspiring clients.

The recent unrest has thus prompted those in charge of education to remind us constantly of how much it costs the nation to train a teacher or educate a student at the university. What does the country get in return for this vast expenditure?

Every teacher in training is on full pay for two years during which a substitute has to be employed. Thus the cadre has to carry six to seven thousand teachers in excess of the actual needs of the schools. The minister apparently thinks that the same results can be achieved through in-service training, by releasing teachers for short periods of 3 months. In this way, a considerable saving could be attained. Besides, such teachers need not then be paid the higher trained teachers salary, a further cut in expenditure. Finally, it is not clear whether the Training Colleges would be scrapped altogether. The cost of education, not its quality, seems to be the paramount consideration.

The history of education affords us an example of how “our masters” set about the business of ‘education’ at minimum cost. It is a story worth recalling. Dr. Andrew Bell, head of the Male Orphans Asylum in Madras was faced with a strike by his staff. A resourceful man he had a few of his senior pupils teach the brats. The experiment was so successful that he was soon able to dispense with much of his regular staff!

Monitorial system

Joseph Lancaster adopted a plan in England whereby it was possible to educate children at an annual cost of 5 shillings, per head. In introducing a Bill in the House of Commons a minister asserted: “there has been discovered a plan for the instruction of youth which is now brought to a state of perfection, happily combining rules by which the object of learning is infallibly attained with expedition and cheapness”

This is the famous “monitorial system” to which we are not

strangers. Indeed it cost only Rs. 5/- annually to educate a child in the vernacular schools in the early years of this century.

An in-service training of 3 months is all that is necessary for would-be monitors to learn 'the tricks of the trade'. In fact, in-service training is a necessary corollary of the monitorial system. Its re-introduction would certainly close the hearts of foreign pundits who say we are "over-educated" and of our financial agencies which say we are wasting resources.

First casualty

Rightly or wrongly, universities all over the world earn the reputation of being "hot-beds of subversion" where young intellectuals who dream of remoulding the world are fascinated by "foreign" ideologies. Thus, universities become the first casualty of political upheaval, particularly in countries which come under the sway of military dictators and repressive rulers. Fortunately, we have not seen in recent months any unrest of that sort or any excesses that justify drastic action.

Why then the decision to do away with residential universities? Is it just an aberration or an act of educational vandalism? Surely the explanation lies in the ever-rising cost of maintaining residential universities?

Once the campuses are scattered and present resources distributed, two objectives can be served to make the whole plan truly attractive. Costs can be reduced while student-teacher communities are dispersed in a way that will make them 'manageable' units.

While the quality of education will suffer on account of the dispersal and diffusion of resources, material and human, the affluent need not be unduly perturbed.

I have already alluded to the high cost of imported journals, textbooks etc. The re-introduction of the London A level has absolutely no significance to those who cannot proceed for higher

studies abroad. And that is precisely why it is significant in the context of liberalised foreign exchange for travel and education. But what percentage can afford it?

Yet another 'democratic' change will be hailed by the upper classes whose children go to urban schools where English teaching standards have been maintained and for whom English is not so "foreign" a language in their homes. They can now choose English as their medium of instruction. I am certain that in the campuses of Colombo

Books

Not all the quotes from Lenin

Reggie Siriwardena

April 1971: *A Foredoomed Ultra-Leftist Adventure*, by Colvin R. de Silva. (Janadina Rs. 2/- Ananda Press)

It was once said of a certain English literary critic that he "shared with the Pope the privilege of changing his mind and yet of believing himself to be equally infallible at all times". Dr. Colvin R. de Silva's familiar pompous and pontifical tone in this pamphlet leaves us in no doubt that he has the same opinion of himself.

Yet the very title of the pamphlet announces a hundred-and-eighty degrees turn, a wholesale revision, on the part of Dr. de Silva and his party, in characterising the events of 1971, which, in anyone less egotistically cocksure than its

Mr. Siriwardena is the well known literary, art and drama critic. He is also the Founder Secretary of the Civil Rights Movement in Sri Lanka

and Jaffna, large numbers will opt for English as their medium of instruction.

Slowly but surely the "best talents" will choose English and enter the Colombo campus (if they have not found openings abroad) and some campuses will be "more equal" than others. Soon, these few campuses will be elitist preserves as surely as the primary schools of Colombo 7 are the nurseries of the affluent. They too will take on the 'colouring' of the area, the social environment. ●

author, would call for an explanation, if not an apologia. 'Ultra-leftist'? One rubs one's eyes incredulously. Between mid-1970, when the JVP surfaced publicly, and post-April 1971, the recurrent burden of the LSSP's propaganda was that the JVP was not ultra-leftist but ultra-rightist—in fact "the criminal and fascist arm of the UNP". The phrase comes from the LSSP-directed *Nation* of 16th March 1971, which went on to say, "Behind it stands the UNP, ready with funds, transport and personnel. Behind the UNP stands the CIA, dreaming of another Indonesia."

A week later (this was barely a fortnight before the insurrection) the *Nation* returned to the subject with the question, "What is to be done?" The question has Leninist echoes, but the answer the *Nation* gave was very different from Lenin's. "The Security Forces must strain every nerve to bring the true organisers of this dastardly plot into the light of day, and supporters of the Government must give them all the assistance possible. We would suggest once again that it is high time the Government set up a secret service to combat political conspiracy."

Ultra-right or ultra-left? Much more than a difference of a syllable was involved. It was precisely by labelling the JVP "fascist agents of the UNP and the CIA" that the LSSP leader-

ship was able to convince its following that any methods were permissible and legitimate in order to crush the 'fascist threat'. The sinister implications of the last quotation (an invitation to the party following to turn police informers) were realised a fortnight later in the erosion of conscience—not merely of socialist conscience but of plain humanitarian feeling—in the ranks of the LSSP in the face of the massacres and tortures of April. Hence Dr. N.M. Perera's notorious "no-mercy" broadcast at the height of the insurrection; hence his 1971 May Day call to "smash this reactionary terrorist movement, Fascist in intent and content"; hence (on the same May Day) the Nation's white-washing of "excesses": "If the truth is to be told, the Government has not only been humane but has shown the most extraordinary forbearance under very difficult circumstances."

As for Dr. Colvin R. de Silva himself, one episode will suffice to show how far the erosion of conscience went in his own particular case. Early in 1972 the Civil Rights Movement announced that it was setting up a fund to assist families who were destitute on account of the breadwinner being under detention (it must be remembered that these detainees were not even convicted persons but only suspects, and that the great majority of them were ultimately released without being charged). Dr. de Silva used the occasion of the debate on the CJC Bill to attack CRM for this proposal, comparing it to the action of anybody who collected money to help wives and children of foreign enemy soldiers when their country was at war!

As CRM said in a Press reply to Dr. de Silva at the time: "We believe that nobody whose natural human feelings have not been completely blunted will want innocent wives and children to suffer for the actions or supposed actions of their husbands or parents." Dr. de Silva, not inappropriately, was—next to Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike—the most vehement supporter during



Fighting the insurgency — Security service strained every nerve

the same debate of the CJC Bill, which (among other monstrous provisions) made confessions admissible even if they had been extorted by force.

When the same gentleman, in the pamphlet now under review, talks of "the sheer determination and the most heroic sacrifices of the insurrectionists" and "the strength of their revolutionary spirit and fervour", one feels more than a little sick, as if one had been listening to Mr. Pecksniff or Mr. Chadband.

I have said enough to suggest that the questions raised by this pamphlet are 'more elementary than political questions—they concern simple good taste and human decency. But something needs to be said about the political argument in it too. With a battery of quotations from Lenin, Dr. de Silva argues that insurrection "must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people", that there was no such upsurge in April 1971, and that what the JVP tried to do was to substitute a conspiratorially organised party for the working class.

Moreover, Dr. de Silva goes on to put the blame on the insurrectionists for the fact that they "disarmed and disoriented the masses politically, pushing them to the Right and Reaction for a whole period, as has been

amply demonstrated anew and on a decisive scale in the results of the 1977 General Election."

There are two things that need to be said about these arguments. They ignore the fact that the insurrection was a reaction—a desperate reaction—to the opportunism of the LSSP (and CP) in and after 1964. If, on the authority of Lenin, we are to condemn the JVP for substituting a conspiratorial party for the working class, what are we to say, on that same authority, of those who sought to substitute for the working class—Mrs. Bandaranaike? And as for Dr. de Silva shuffling off on the insurrectionists the responsibility for the electoral rout of the left in 1977, the only appropriate comment would seem to be a Biblical one: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye."

All this does not mean that the tragic experience of April 1971 should not be sifted and its portentous lessons for the future underlined. But that is a task for those who are unstained by political complicity in the repression and the horrors of 1971. Here's the smell of the blood still: not all the quotations from Lenin will sweeten these hands.

India observed

India Watching: The Media Game -
Amita Malik. Vikas Publishing House;
1977

Sarath Amunugama

As every Sri Lankan who has lived abroad will know, the image of India is of more than passing interest to us. For all our patriotic fervour Sri Lankans abroad are often taken to be Indians. No amount of heated debate really convinces the average westerner otherwise. On the road, in the underground, at all 'social gatherings' we are taken to be representative of the four hundred odd million Indians whom Westerners like to believe, live on the brink of starvation. I remember winning a long argument with a professor's wife on a Vancouver Campus on this very subject only to be reminded that, after all, our ancestors came from Bengal!

Amita Malik, the well known Indian journalist and broadcaster, has attempted to examine the way in which India is perceived by media people in several countries. Her odyssey has taken her to the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe, U.S.A. and Canada. She has talked to journalists, radio, T.V. and advertising people. She has also met influential personalities like Yehudi Menuhin, Jack Anderson, Roberto Rossellini, John Grigg and Abe Rosenthal who have shown a special interest and concern about India. What do the people who control the media in these countries—the manipulators of information in this electronic age—think of India?

According to Malik the conventional view of India—"a big somnolent giant, unable to stir itself. It is steeped in poverty, superstition and prejudice and goes about with a begging bowl" is no longer widely held. Instead

she is "convinced that India has emerged as a great civilisation and our Watergate has resulted in a catharsis which is likely to lift our media to greater heights. The endearing Indian values have not deteriorated and the peaceful manner in which the Indian electorate gave answer to totalitarianism has proved that India is, indeed, the largest democracy in the world. Foreign media, with all their faults have now recognised this. And the Indian image abroad now shines very bright indeed".

Too naive: Frankly, this is much too naive and optimistic. Even a good friend of India is taken aback by this assessment. Perhaps Amita Malik has been swept off her feet by the journalistic euphoria which followed the Indian elections of 1977. But I think there is a more fundamental reason for this misjudgement. She has concentrated her attention exclusively on her interviews with some people associated with mass media in the countries mentioned earlier. It is a classic example of "self selection". In reality, the Indian image abroad is formed by a much more complex combination of factors.

Malik has some useful insights. For instance, she writes of the place of Krishna Menon. In the United States Menon was a favourite "whipping boy" of the press. His stand on Israel, his supposedly pro-China leanings and his enthusiasm for the liberation of Goa rankled especially with press owners who had diametrically opposite views on these subjects. *Time* magazine put him on its cover but attacked him mercilessly in the cover story. Even John Galbraith in his diaries depicts Krishna Menon as an arch-villain and a sinister influence on Nehru. The pro-Israel, anti-Communist and SEATO lobbies made a monster out of the old London borough Councillor.

Sarath Amunugama studied Sociology at Peradeniya and McGill. He is now Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

It is quite possible that some of these resentments still linger on, particularly among the 'establishment' media people. The degree of antipathy to India among these decision makers was clearly shown during the Indo-Pakistan war when Nixon and his advisors, including Kissinger who in his Harvard days claimed to be a friend of India, decided to 'tilt' towards Pakistan. The degree of commitment to Pakistan especially among American "Asia hands" is very high. Notwithstanding all this, I think Malik over emphasises Krishna Menon's role. After all Kashmir and Goa are now a distant memory. After India's disastrous 'China war' Menon was driven out of politics and died a frustrated and embittered man. Many more proximate issues have come up. If anything Bangladesh, and Biafra—especially the pictures of starving children artfully served up by top advertising agencies—burned themselves into the contemporary public mind. No, the picture is much more complex than depicted by Malik.

Colonial rule: Long before Krishna Menon, there was the image of the Raj—centuries of Colonial rule celebrated by Kipling and Orwell. From T.E. Lawrence and Morgan Foster to Malcolm Muggeridge, India had a special place in the Western, especially the English, imagination. If it was not the world of Kim and Mowgli, it was at least a land in which western values and sensibilities had no bearing. No thorough-going study of the image of India in the West can ignore this literary tradition. Today, Naipaul fashions the views of a large number of readers of English on India. Surely it is this literary tradition which influences the feelings of a large number of top-level journalists and media men, (The "mimic men").

Amita Malik also rightly draws attention to the role of Bombay and Madras movies. Together they constitute one of the biggest film industries in the world. Their markets are expanding from Asia, the Middle East

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Song and the singer

Charles Abeysekere

Amaradeva, said Lester James Pieris, is the finest musical instrument we have. When Amaradeva reached 50 years recently, his recital marking the occasion brought acclaim from all critics. Though full of praise for Amaradeva's outstanding contribution to the growth of Sinhala music, Charles Abeysekere offers a critical assessment of his achievement. This is adapted from a talk originally made over the SLBC. He was until recently Chairman of the National Institute of Management.

W. D. Amaradeva, who can with justice be described as Sri Lanka's most accomplished musician, recently completed 50 years of age; of this he has devoted 30 years to the study and practice of music. The occasion was celebrated with a programme of vocal and instrumental music, entitled *Sravana Ramani* held at the BMICH.

Amaradeva has recently made only rare concert appearances, even though he had a hand in the birth of the song recitals that are so popular now when he, together with Nanda Malini Gokula, put together a programme called *Sravana Aradhana* about seven years ago. He dropped out of the programme after some performances; Nanda Malini carried on alone under the same title and since then many other singers have staged their own recitals. These have now become a very popular feature of the Sinhala entertainment scene with no doubt a greater adjustment to mass taste.

Began early

Amaradeva's serious interest in music began early and one of his first demonstrations of ability was on the score for Premakumar's ballet *Selahihini Sandesaya*, on which he worked with Mohamed Ghouse. Some time after that he went to India and perfected his knowledge of Indian classical music, choosing as his instrument, rather unusually, the violin. Since his return he has been one of the seminal influences on Sinhala song.

Even though Amaradeva likes to present himself primarily as a classical violinist, his fame among us and indeed his greatest contribution to Sinhala music is in the field of song where he has excelled as composer and singer and sometimes even as lyric writer.

Song in Sri Lanka up to about the forties consisted of two disparate streams — the relatively unsophisticated folk-songs associated primarily with the work situations of the peasantry and an urban song-form drawing its inspiration primarily from the Hindustani music brought into the Nurti theatre by musicians from Bombay. These songs dealt with two or three main themes — devotion to the Buddha and the gods, patriotism and romantic love. This lyric literature too was under the influence of the nurti tradition which had in turn felt the impact of the national, cultural and religious revival of that period.

It was during the forties that, under the influence of the same national revival, attempts were made to fuse these two forms, or rather, to develop an indigenous musical form basing itself more on the extent folk idiom. These efforts also received some impetus from Bengal where Rabindranath Tagore and his school at Shantiniketan had spearheaded a similar cultural revival and where many of our musicians had begun to go for their musical studies. The first fruits of their attempts were the songs of Ananda Samarakoon, Surya Shanker

Molligoda and at a later stage of Sunil Santha.

First attempts

Amaradeva's first attempts in the same genre were to be found in his Janagayana radio programmes these based themselves largely, both musically and thematically, on the folk song; but Amaradeva's experimentation, unlike those of some other musicians, did not stop there. Feeling almost instinctively that the simple melodic resources of the folk idiom were not enough of a secure foundation, Amaradeva experimented with the classical ragas and often succeeded in achieving a solid and harmonious fusion of their strong musical base with the lilt and spontaneity of the native folk music. These experiments, to my mind, reached a certain degree of perfection in the best of his *Svara Varna* radio programmes.

Amaradeva found the ideal collaborators for these experiments in a number of lyric writers chief among whom were Mahagama Sekera and Madawela Ratnayake. And it was a choice selection of their songs that was presented to us in the *Sravana Ramani* programme. Amaradeva was in beautiful voice, the orchestrations were designed to throw the voice into relief, and the whole presentation was satisfying though at times one felt that the amplified balance was rather in favour of the orchestra than of the singer.

If there was one disappointing factor, it was the selection of the songs themselves. It was as I have said, a choice selection but a selection of perennial favourites. However, even with such songs, Amaradeva was able to evoke in the hearers a fresh response but the fact that they were over-familiar rather detracted from the sense of occasion. While an audience would naturally like to hear some of their favourites, such an occasion also demands something new, something not quite familiar, which would expand the musical horizons

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Bedroom at the top

'Sumithra Peiris' debut in film-making, 'Gehenu Lamai' (Girls) based on Karunasena Jayalath's best-seller, is both cinematic and defeatist, artistic and static, elitist and distorting.

A predominantly feminist film as the title suggests, it projects the virtuousness of an ingenuous girl, Kusum (Wasanthi Chaturani). The eldest child of a poor peasant family, Kusum functions as a kind of unpaid domestic at the home of Nimal, a member of the village bourgeoisie. She accepts Nimal's love when he declares it but capitulates when his mother (Chitra Vakista), a true matriarchal despot, intervenes. On grounds of pure moral virtues she spurns her sister Some (Jenita Samaraweera), who wants to make it to the (bed) room at the top. But Kusum herself does not want to transcend the prevailing social relationships and accepts her place in the social hierarchy without ever struggling against it or even questioning it.

Can we then admire a girl who surrenders so readily and adopts a kind of fatalistic passivity?

Conflict is the essence of drama and there is no conflict of any depth or seriousness in the film. While Kusum capitulates openly to Nimal's mother, Nimal himself vacillates like the typical middle-class youth he is. The film thus lacks a pivotal alternative relationship and ends up on a thoroughly defeatist note.

Why was Gunapala, the rebel student in Kusum's class who protests against the status-quo flushed out in the middle of the film? In the book of course, he throws his lot with Kusum's struggle, and thus offers a dramatic contrast. The other relationships add little to the film's limited vision.



Scene from *Gehenu Lamai*.

Some, the sister, is bent on individual redemption through timid adherence to bourgeois values and finds herself in trouble, a victim of the showbiz world of Colombo.

Her mother, Jane Nona (Trillicia Gunawardene) is the bread-winner of the family—reversal of traditional roles, and a welcome positive feature of the movie.

Madhuri, Nimal's cousin who is diametrically opposed to Kusum plays a brief but functional role representing bourgeois life-style and behaviour patterns.

Nimal is the weakest character, while Ajit Jinadasa is the weakest actor in the film. The university student who is cowed by matriarchal domination he is as gormless and immature as ever even after he graduates. Even his love affair with Kusum makes a poor contribution to the dramatic development.

India observed...

(From Page 17)

and Eastern European countries to the heart of Europe. Some one should analyse the formulae—music, dancing and fighting—which emerge from these dream factories as perfect escapist entertainment. Malik as a leading film critic was ideally suited for the undertaking. But in this book she disappoints.

Perhaps more than all these, the image of India is fashioned by the Indians who live abroad. An occasional visitor cannot understand the depth of feeling—be it affection or revulsion—that

Director Peiris who has written the screenplay herself and edited the film as well, I fear cannot be pardoned for emasculating the book without having any positive standpoint of her own to offer. This, I think, in due to the fact that Sumithra herself is groping for a creative contact with a social reality she doesn't know well.

Though *Gehenu Lamai* does possess a cinematic quality and a certain lyricism—(the camera was especially successful in capturing Kusum's micro-physiognomy, her expressions and nuances) its essentially defeatist content has got the better of the film.

Gamini Dissanaikie

The writer was literary correspondent of the 'Lankadipa' and a former editor of 'Mawatha'. He writes to the 'Sunday Times' as 'Pataka'.

expatriate groups evoke in a foreign community. My experience of the Indian community in Canada is that they are clannish and generally reluctant to identify themselves with the larger community. This however is no apologia for Enoch Powell and, lately, Margaret Thatcher. In fact the latest news from Wolverhampton suggests, contra the optimism of writers like Amita Malik, that the Indian image will soon be, literally, a matter of life and death.

War games

Police undertook a massive sweep of the sprawling Vidyodaya campus between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. today and arrested five unauthorised persons who were found in a men's hostel. Search parties also found several wooden clubs and a knuckle duster inside cubicles and a kris knife in a shed. The sweep was the result of a tip-off that there were weapons, inflammable posters, and a cache of subversive literature.

"It was a complete sweep. We used a complement of five gazetted officers, 35 inspectors, 35 sergeants, and 200 constables for the operation. Our men moved in 30 vehicles and split up into twenty search parties" said the police. "Once the search was over and we pulled out, the girls gave us the biggest hoot" he added.

It was the biggest ever sweep undertaken... the operation was meticulously planned.

(Lead story Observer)

The Colombo Police today undertook a massive sweep of the university premises. They found posters placards and other propaganda material protesting against the rice cut and 2 women described as twilight ladies

(Front page 10 days latter)

○-six hundred hours (0600). Somewhere in the central hills, with Colonel Sam Hamudapitiya's Headquarters, reports our Defence correspondent.

Operation: New Broom

Target: Gonawela Kanishta Polytechnic

Objective: Search and destroy.

"You are in command of this operation, Major...?"

"Colonel... if you don't mind... yes, I am in charge, but it's a joint operation, army, navy and the air force..."

"And it is the biggest ever operation undertaken...?"

"Correction. It is the single biggest operation undertaken against a higher educational institution by the newly established COMSOP... that's Combined Special Operations... it is certainly not, repeat not, the biggest joint op undertaken by JOKAR, the Joint Command for All Kinds of Retaliation..."

"How do you spell that...?"

"J - O - K - A - R"

"Why the 'K' and not a 'C'?"

"One of the Intelligence boys who's studying Deutsch at the German Kultur Institute thought we'll spell it with the German 'K' and fool the enemy..."

"The enemy being...?"

"Any stupid civilian like you..."

"You said that the biggest operation was...?"

"Back in '68 at Karainagar, against Double Eye..."

"That sounds like a Red Indian Chief..."

"You are not far wrong... Double Eye means I.I. or illicit immigrant, meaning bloody Injuns"

"General, now what's your...?"

"Please, not so fast just Colonel..."

In fact, Colonel Hamudapitiya known as the best tactical

commander in the force is just back from a special course at Fort Bragg... that's spelt with 2 G's and is a town in America. He is expected to see his first star soon.

(He'll see several if he botches up this operation.)

"Colonel, what's your battle plan...? How long will this action take...? I want to file something for the first edition..."

"It's going to be a clean, smooth job... we've planned this so meticulously that unless there's some damn snag we should be in and out in less than 2 hours..."

"You anticipate some snags...?"

"In war, my friend, anything is possible... the Petroleum Corp. bowzers may not make it through the picket lines...remember EL AL?"

"You mean the Israeli Airline?"

"Idiot... Rommel's tanks at El Alamein..."

"Any other snags likely...?"

"Well we have to move without air cover, if the damn jets don't get here before the enemy takes the field..."

"You actually expect the students to take the field...?"

"Yes, sharp at 9 o'clock for their annual under-16 cricket match."

"My god, colonel, you are really going to fire on them."

"Look, intelligence says they have anything up to 2000 boys and girls there, and all I've got is about 600 men... that's a three to one against... I'll be satisfied if the kill ratio is reversed... of course, we got the superior fire-power, meticulous and the tactical planning..."

"Colonel, could you give me a few details...?"

(Laying open a map)... "I throw a bridge across the river, here... that's where Gerry comes in with his APC's..."

"Jerry...? Good heavens, the Germans in on this...?"

"Not the Jerries... just Major Gerry Pattonasuriya, commanding the 2nd Armoured Corps... look, who sent you here... you're sure you are a military correspondent...?"

"Actually, I usually cover the Departmental Sub-Committee Inquiry into Political Victimisation in the Brinjal Corporation but the defence reporter was on short-leave for his sister-in-law's home-coming, and the editor told the news desk to send any damn fool..."

"And your news editor carries out orders to the letter... ha! ha!... Anyway, Gerry's chaps should cross the river by 0720 and take up position behind the canteen... then Captain Gunnerwardena will open up with the big guns, giving enough artillery support for the navy's landing forces, the first assault troops to get the library and the science lab and hold them till the MIG's strafe the volleyball court, giving my men just enough time to reach the hostels... of course, I'll start with a few probes in a short while... but between you and me, it's a deceptive action... the main thrust comes later, naturally..."

"Naturally" I answered weakly.

"We'll catch them like fish in a barrel..."

"You mean you are going to kill them...?"

"Not at all... minimum casualties... those are my orders but if there is resistance I can't help it, can I? Man, don't look so stunned. I don't hate students... sure, I had two shies at the GCE and the Varsity Entrance was a bloody massacre but I was one of the few survivors, remember...? Look, man, I got kids too, but this is war..."

Despatch 2

0715 hours. Sound of small-arms fire across the river... generally silent. Suddenly the sound of planes

overhead... "Ah" says the Colonel brightening up, the MIGs, right on time..."

It turns out to be the Air Ceylon Trident..."

"Ser...geant...! Get hq on line... I was assured there were no damn civilian aircraft in these skies this morning..."

The sergeant returns after a few minutes..."

"Sir, headquarters say that was yesterday's Air Ceylon flight taking off on schedule..."

The Colonel is kind enough to offer me a cup of tea, he himself settling down to a light breakfast of 2 egg hoppers, some mus curry and lunumiris, followed by 14 stringhoppers with kiri hodi, ambuthial and seeni sambol... supplies taken, without a shot being fired, in a night raid on a local eating-house.

Despatch 3

This time it's the MIGs all right, and the Colonel is jet propelled into action... "Let's go men... let's go... and careful of those inflammable posters... they could be booby trapped... use napalm if you have to..."

Despatch 4

Three unauthorised persons were taken prisoner after this morning's massive sweep which went off with clockwork precision. Two of the men confessed that they were brothers of two resident students and had been sharing their subsidised rice meals after their own ration cards had been surrendered.

The other man was an army corporal on his way to see his ailing grandmother at Matale. The CTB bus had crashed into a mara tree, and he had (using his military training) infiltrated behind enemy lines and taken shelter for the night in the carpentry shed. A stack of subversive literature cast aside with apparent indifference to deceive everybody but the trained eye was also discovered.

The cache included Pham Van Dong's banquet speech in Colombo, distributed by the Vietnam

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Embassy, President Carter's inflammatory address on Human Rights (a USIS bulletin) and some election manifestos.

"The girls gave me the biggest hoot I got since I got out for nought first ball, way back in '57 in the Battle of the Blues....."

Two women described by a poetry-loving policeman later as 'twilight ladies' were discovered to be members of the Piliyandala Women's Lubrication Front, an under-covers organisation. They will be sent for a re-orientation course and de-carb to the German aided CTB Workshop.

War is hell.

Song...

(From page 18)

of the listeners. And Amaradeva's repertory is quite filled with beautiful but less familiar songs which might well have been used on this occasion.

There was one song from the the ballet *Nala Damayanti* and this was merely an indication of another facet of Amaradeva's genius which cannot be adequately presented in a programme of this nature. The scores which he composed for the ballets *Karadiya* and *Nala Damayanti* as well as for the films *Gamperaliya* and *Ransalu* are outstanding in their several fields.

Looking back at Amaradeva's achievement, one can marvel at the musical fusion that the composer had achieved between the folk idiom and classical ragadharai music, and one can admire the skill and sensivity of the singer—Lester James Pieris' comment that Amaradeva's voice is the finest musical instrument we have is accurate and appropriate.

But having said this, it is also necessary to look with a critical eye at the lyrics at whose service the skills of the composer and the singer are placed. These lyrics still seem to be frozen in a past that has disappeared. They are redolent of a kind of patriotism based on a very simplistic vision of past glories, of a yearning for a pastoral form of life—waving paddy fields,

tanks and dagobas, peasants happily at their work, the only pain they feel being the pain of separation from a loved one—a reliance on the age-old redeeming powers of the Buddhist religion. These are the symbols round which emotional responses to foreign domination were clustered; they were the hall-marks of the patriotism of a certain period.

We have outgrown this period, but a large part of Sinhala literature including most of the lyrics seems frozen in the postures and attitudes of the period. I have no doubt that this idiom satisfies the nostalgic craving for the past, a simple past that many of them have never known, that pervades a large section of the Sinhala petty-bourgeoisie which makes up the audience for Amaradeva. But these lyrics, their themes and their language are now no more than demagogic symbols of our own backwardness, the false consciousness of an ill-remembered feudal past, of a failure to understand the present, of a reluctance to look ahead.

Something of this feeling was probably behind a recent seminar held on the theme "Amaradeva—the voice of our age". While there was generous acknowledgement of the significance of his role in the growth of contemporary music, there was also expressed the feeling that he did not really give voice to this age, to its dominant sense, to its anxieties as well as its hopes and aspirations.

So, while celebrating with Amaradeva 30 years of successful endeavour, while paying due tribute to his many accomplishments, while recalling with delight the many beautiful compositions with which he has given voice to our yearnings and emotions, I would venture to hope that, past this milestone in his career, he would exert his tremendous influence over the lyric to become the singer of our present and our future, reflecting in his music and song, the realities of our life and in so doing, make himself the voice not only of a particular class but of the large mass of the people of this country.

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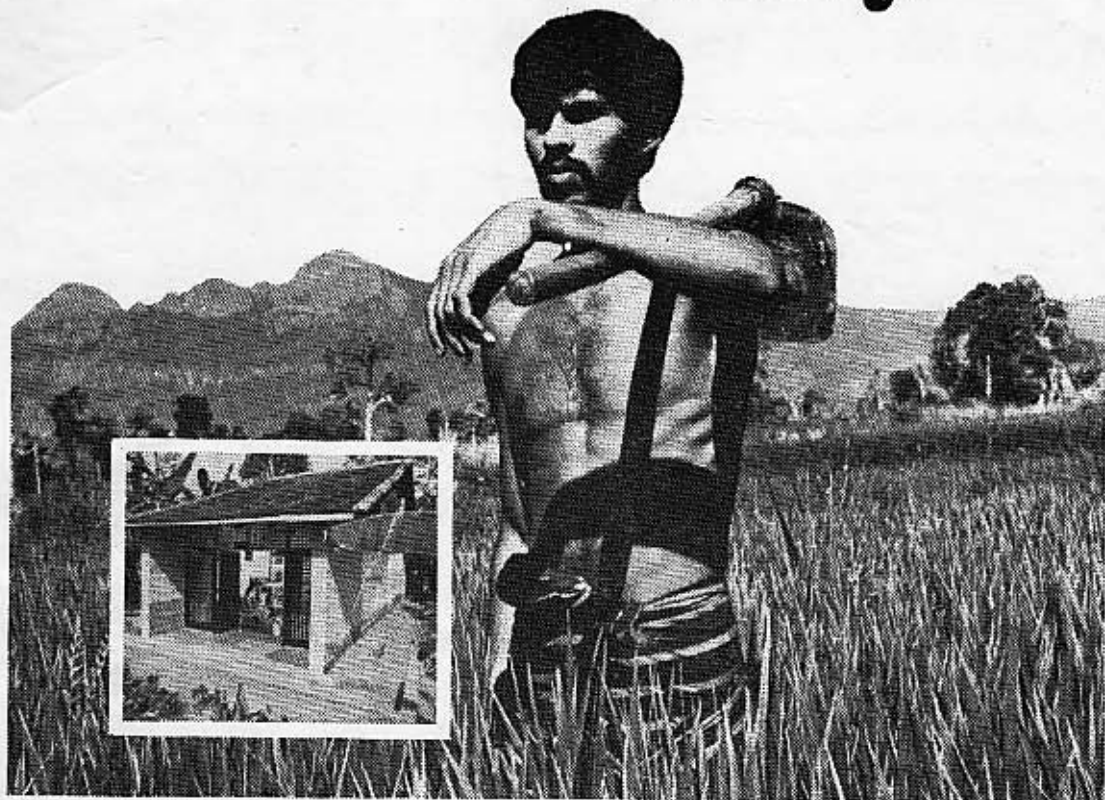
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