

Exclusive THE LEFT IN INDIA — *Gail Omvedt*

LANKA

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THE SLFP — A PARTY PARALYSED

Mervyn de Silva



IS GUNADASA A

MARXIST? — *Nihal Perera*

Reggie Siriwardena on Vessantara

Flood Protection — S. A. Wickremasinghe

Tamil Theatre — S. Sivasegaram

● J. V. P. and Gulf War

● Film and Race

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JR: THE LAST HOPE

"We must go nuke..." said a trendy young Minister at a conference recently. The idiom may be trendy but "going nuke" is far from fashionable in the West. Prohibitive costs, environmental dangers and other perils, and mounting public protest have forced the industrialised nations to look to the Third World, the great dumping ground, as an easy escape-hatch.

Is the government being hustled into a decision which almost the entire body of scientific opinion in this country opposes? In the SLAAS, National Academy of Sciences, the universities, the Institute of Engineers, the CEB and even in the Atomic Energy Authority, the proposal has been received with scepticism, dismay and angry hostility. Yet a few 'experts' and 'wheeler dealers' appear to have cut some sharp corners and forced through a decision that demands the most careful consideration.

In their indignation and despair, Sri Lanka's top scientists find only a single glimmer of hope that President Jayewardene conscious of the gigantic and incalculable implications of such a project, will invite the island's best talent to advise him in a matter which involves this country's future.

THE SLFP 'NEUTRALIZED'

Mrs. Bandaranaike's trip to the North has obviously agitated the UNP. While top party spokesman fired away angrily at the TULF, reminding it of Mrs. B's treatment of the Tamils and their leaders, the state controlled media have exploded in venomous ire. The friendly dispute over the size of the Jaffna rally (slightly less or as big as the crowd which greeted Mr. Chelvanayagam in 1972) is a sure sign that the reports which reached Colombo of a reception which surpassed the expectations of the organizers, were by no means exaggerated. It is also a reflection on the irony

of politics for it was the UF after all which effectively deprived the Tamil leader of his civil rights!

And politics, quite often, is the recognition of need. Mrs. B needs allies and the TULF is stronger than any other opposition party in parliament and second in strength only to the SLFP. The TULF, for its part needed to demonstrate to the UNP that its options were not limited. Perhaps, it also needed to show to its own supporters that their arch Sinhala Buddhist opponent had been "neutralized" The government is now ready to discuss the future of "the stateless" with the TULF. It may also resolve some residual differences with the TULF on district councils.

NO FLOWERS FOR MRS. B.

In parliament, Mr. Amiathalingam took pains to point out that the meeting had been scheduled long before Mrs. B was expelled from the house; that it was the TULF's turn to play host to its partners in the five party bloc. If Eelam had not been renounced by the TULF neither had it won new converts in the SLFP, LSSP etc. The rebel "Sutantiran" group pounced on the occasion to have some mischievous fun at the expense of both the TULF and the SLFP. It reported that Eelam had hosted a distinguished visitor (Mrs. B.) from the neighbouring state of Sri Lanka.

When a Colombo businessman (pro-UNP Tamil) twitted a TULF stalwart for "paying poaja" to Mrs. B, the latter snapped back "yes, we gave her a microphone and a crowd but remember no garlands".

(Continued on page 7)

Another Record?

Since Sri Lanka has started to establish so many world records in so many different fields, could one of your readers please tell us whether the latest announcement to create 21 assistant district ministers will mean another glorious record. We will now have cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, district ministers, project ministers and assistant district ministers. Can we look forward to the day when all the government benches are occupied by ministers and the back benchers will be confined to the opposition? Then Mr. Wijesiri MP who has been asking in parliament questions about the money spent by district ministers on travelling, fuel etc will have many more questions to ask.

D. C. Gunawardena

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50 YEARS OF UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE TO BE COMMEMORATED WITH AN ISLAND-WIDE POSTER COMPETITION Rs. 54,000 IN PRIZES

The Department of Information of the Ministry of State in association with the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Department of Education sponsors this island-wide POSTER COMPETITION in Sinhala and Tamil to mark the significance of this historic event.

The benefits of UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE for the greater good of the common man is the theme of the poster competition. All entries should depict this and the people must be made to cherish their right to vote so much so that they will never compromise it.

The three best entries in Sinhala and the three best entries in Tamil in the Open Competition as well as in the Senior and Junior Schools Competition will be awarded separate prizes.

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2nd Prize — Rs. 2,500/-
3rd Prize — Rs. 1,500/-

(Three prizes for Sinhala and three Prizes for Tamil)

Schools Competition

- Junior Competition — 1st Prize — Rs. 5,000/-
2nd Prize — Rs. 2,500/-
3rd Prize — Rs. 1,500/-

(Three prizes for Sinhala and three prizes for Tamil)

- Senior Competition — 1st Prize — Rs. 5,000/-
2nd Prize — Rs. 2,500/-
3rd Prize — Rs. 1,500/-

(Three prizes for Sinhala and three prizes for Tamil)

Free hand to artists

Artists have a free hand in making full use of their imaginative faculties to depict the theme. Posters may be created in black-and-white or in colour, using whatever technique or shade of colour most suitable to his or her concept. Water colours, oils, pastels, crayons, chalk, Indian ink, can be used.

Size: The poster should be 22" x 17" in size and should be drawn on white board or paper.

Legend: Each poster can have a legend of not more than 25 words in Sinhala or Tamil.

Name and Address: The name and the address of the person submitting the entry should be clearly written or typed on the reverse of the poster.

Open Competition: Citizens of Sri Lanka are eligible to take part in the Open Competition. There's no age limit. Any number of entries can be submitted.

Schools Competition: There will be a Junior and Senior Schools Competition. School children under fourteen

years, born on or after 1st December, 1966, will be eligible for the Junior Competition. Those born on or before 30th November 1966, that is, over fourteen years of age, will be eligible for the Senior Competition.

Children in all schools, both Government and private, can take part.

Further details about the schools competition can be obtained from the Ministry of Education or from the Principals of Schools.

All entries from school children should carry the following endorsement from the Class Teacher or Principal Preferably on the reverse of the poster:

This poster was designed and drawn by
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.....
Signature of Principal/Class Teacher
Name of School:

Judges: A jury appointed by the Director of Information, Ministry of State, in consultation with the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Ministry of Education will judge the entries and select the prize winning entries. The decision of the jury will be final and shall not be questioned or canvassed.

All rights in respect of the publication or reproduction of the prize-winning entries shall be vested in the Department of Information. One or more of these posters will be selected by the jury for printing and distribution.

Opening and Closing Dates

The Poster Competition shall commence on the 1st December, 1980, and close on the 31st December 1980.

All entries should be received before the 31st December, 1980, by the:

Director of Information
P. O. Box 1416
Colombo 1.

SLFP: Crippled by crisis

Mervyn de Silva

In the SLFP's inner circles, code-words are in fashion. Since Colombo, a small town on the world map, is both an open and an open-mouthed society and hangs its secrets on a loose tongue, it takes no trained code-breaker or cryptanalyst to decipher these apparently cryptic communications. One SLFP "secret" however was surprisingly well kept — for more than a week. Even the CDN which beat the usually more alert SUN on Mrs. B's walk-out (Dec. 2) did not publish any news on how this meeting came to be held. It was forced on Mrs. B. who had cancelled the scheduled session of the politbureau (Nov. 26) on her return from Jaffna. General Secretary Ratnasiri Wikremanyake summoned the P. B. which was requisitioned by a letter sent to him by 12 P. B. members.

Hence 'The Dirty Dozen', the title of an old American movie which was screened recently in Colombo. 'The Dirty Dozen', confronts 'The Gang of Four'. The second code is misleading, but not intentionally. Originally, G4 referred to that loose but large group of pro-China SLFP'ers and sympathisers who were more aptly described as "Siri-maoists". It embraced everybody from Ratna Deshapriya, the all-weather Peking-liner and the Pol Pot-ist 'Janavegaya' group (before it was disbanded, along with other more formal alliances) to China loyalists like Walpita, Karawita, Alagiyawanna etc.

New Balance

17 (the P. B.'s total strength) minus 12 (The Dirty Dozen) leaves 5. But Ratnasiri Wikremanyake, whether aligned or non-aligned, has declared a 'strict neutrality' in keeping with his office. The four then are Mrs. B., TBI, Hector Kobbekaduwe and K. Shanmugalingum — the Andy Young or token Tamil in the congenitally S(Inhala).L. F. P.

Chinese puzzles, and Boys' Own Paper cloak-and-dagger games

apart, the move by the D. D. is a turning-point in recent SLFP history.

12 to 4 Numbers matter. But it is the composition of the 12 which reflects more meaningfully the dramatic shift in the internal balance of power.

The 12 include all the MP's who are in the PB, the two leading figures in the trade union federation, the representatives of the Women's section and the Youth League.

The student of SLFP politics however finds the act itself, the act of challenge, more significant than anything else. The headline to Migara's predictably well-informed Sunday summary "(SLFP's 'tyranny of the majority') was a solecism as unpardonable as Gerald Ford's singularly inapt application of de Tocqueville. Far from being a new tyranny, this is not even a slave's revolt. The serfs are just restless. What is more, it has taken the full fire-power of the Supreme Commander (combined air-sea-and-land operations), 'Patton' Premadasa's tank assaults in Parliament, the propaganda blitzkrieg of the state-owned press, radio and TV, and his own regular tour of the front, from Kotte and Polonnaruwa to Kelaniya, Galigamuwa and Mawanella, to rouse some sort of 'resistance' behind the SLFP lines. This is not well organised 'partisan' or 'guerrilla' activity either. It is still low-intensity insurgent action.

The SLFP has had defections — rightwards, the CP de Silva group, and leftwards, Subasinghe and the PDP. But there has never been a direct challenge to Mrs. B. at the command level from a group which intends to stay with the party.

Kalawewa

The Kalawewa by-election crisis was a minor one, and of another order. Mrs. B.'s heart lay where it always is — with her son, the heir-apparent. But this was

no challenge to her. On the contrary, it was Anura, impelled by youthful impatience and over-eager to answer the summons of what he believes is his destiny, who was challenging the party's deputy leader and his regional hegemony.

The stakes were low, the risks of personal intervention high. Besides, Mrs. B. realised that Anura's rash move was actively encouraged by the UNP since it fitted a characteristic exercise by its leader in divisive tactics. She kept aloof, letting the Nomination Board handle the matter.

The PB letter however, was an act of defiance to which she is totally unaccustomed; it could be the first signs of open rebellion, a situation which she cannot cope with, psychologically. Thus, the walk-out from the PB, and the hurried exit from her own house.

Tainted Trio

If all things are impermanent, alignments in the SLFP are an object lesson in Buddhist metaphysics. Factions vanish overnight and 'blocs' can be washed away by the next monsoon; today's ally is tomorrow's foe and the neutralist day after. It the very first post-elections meeting of Ex. Co. (the "politburo" is the ersatz product of party academics trying to help the SLFP Bandas to keep up with the uppity Comrade Jones's) all blame for the defeat was laid at the feet of FDB, Hector and TBI. So much so that Mr. Ilangaratne stayed away from rallies for months. A man of letters with a fine grasp of the native idiom, TBI spoke, at first public appearance, of a Sinhala habit. "Dinuwama mama; paredunama thopi..." The choice of the socially superior "thopi" made it clear who the target was.

While Hector and TBI stood out as the strongest supporters of Chandrika, Mrs. B.'s candidate, Felix is known to be hovering in the shadows at a time when

legal advisors are in high demand. The LSSP, the keenest of FDB-watchers, claims that "Felix's fingerprints are all over the place"! This was prompted by a reported remark of Mrs. B. that "my position would be untenable" if Chandrika was rejected. "That", observed an LSSP don, "is a very felicitous expression."

The Sun read the situation in the same way when it said that the rejection of Mrs. B.'s nominee would be "tantamount to a vote of no-confidence".

The SLFP crisis surfaced with the 1977 debacle. It became acute and urgent after Oct. 16, when Mrs. B. lost her civic rights.

Whatever its partisan critics say, the UNP has shown that it abhors the law's delays. And whatever motives may be attributed to the UNP when it amends the law and constitution, it must be conceded that it has the only steam-roller in the world which moves like a speed-fiend. On Oct. 17, it imposed more disabilities on persons like Mrs. B. But if it made things more difficult for Mrs. B. it also made the resultant problems less easy for the SLFP to settle.

In the overweening vanity which is given to some professions, lawyers, (even intelligent ones) tend to believe that the constitution and the law can resolve fundamental questions of politics. That is an illusion.

Law and Politics

Politics, the old adage goes, is the art of the possible. The law, particularly newly introduced amendments, is open to interpretation at least until it is finally tested in the courts. Both propositions create areas of doubt. The basic issue here involves both questions and therefore makes matters even less certain. How openly and effectively can Mrs. B. function as party president? The recent change in the balance of power within the party has narrowed the limits of action, already circumscribed by the law where it is clear, and by fear of possible consequences where it is not. While the party leader is crippled by such circumstance, the

dissidents and the defiant ones are stricken by paralysis too because they are neither rebels nor putschists prepared for a seizure of power by whatever means and ready to pay the price. Ironically, a shared interest in not splitting the party has immobilised both. That is the real crisis of the SLFP.

The roots of this crisis go far back, perhaps 20 years. It has very much to do with party history, organisational structures, leadership styles, and personalities.

In the SLFP and UNP, party activity is substantially reduced, once the party wins the elections. When the party takes office, the government takes over the party which suffers from near-suffocation. In any case, the dominant figure of the leader is the major factor in decision-making. Decisions are made, controlled or manipulated by him/her.

The LSSP and the CP have not formed government of their own, only shared governmental power. Although the relationship between party and government did show strains in the 1970-1977 period, the Left is committed to the concept of the 'leading role of the party'. The party itself functions in a way that promotes a high degree of 'internal democracy'. Their recurrent crises testify to this fact best—the Sino-Soviet schism, the prolonged and acrimonious debates which spilt the LSSP's CC three ways in 1963 and later, the 'Vasu' group's defection; the CP divisions in 1972 and the removal of Pieter Keuneman as Gen. Secretary after 25 years, in the wake of the post-election 'self criticism'.

SWRD, the founder, was held in high regard bordering on awe by the membership. His easy-going intimacy with the rank-and-file and ministerial colleagues, his disinclination for intrigue, his liberal outlook, and evident indifference to such considerations as the concentration of personal power and its perpetuation, combined to create a democratic climate within the party: The vitality of the social forces released in 1956 nurtured continuous and spirited, if often chaotic, debates.

C. P. de Silva led a party which won only few seats less than the

UNP in March '60. In the quest for total victory, the SLFP 'veterans' played the Sirima card. They hoped she would be a rallying symbol, a popular banner... and once in power, something of a figurehead. They were right, at first... and very very wrong later.

Sirima's style

A nominated Senator rather than an elected MP, S. W. R. D.'s widow remained aloof from and above the party, and undertook politics, at first, only in terms of governmental power. This attitude was shaped by personal circumstance, social background, the total lack of experience in mass organisation, and most of all, by temperament.

The passage of time did not change these qualities. On the contrary, the exercise of power only fortified them until a wholly new style of leadership and government was created.

Far from remaining a symbolic figurehead, she revealed an amazing and awesome instinct and taste for power. She was not Elizabeth 2 but the first Elizabeth. She did not lead, but reigned. She was not elected but born to rule.

The party structure, how the party functioned, the relationship within the party, between party and government—all these were influenced and shaped by the sheer force of her personality.

The Indian editor, Nihal Singh has written: "Mrs. Gandhi has succeeded in superimposing a royal family structure and a personalised party on democratic framework... doesn't the attachment to one family bring out yearning for a feudal relationship in which the lord and master, knows best?"

Twenty years later, the ruler's sovereign will has been challenged. The result is a traumatic shock. The party seems paralysed. Is the guilt wholly Mrs. B.'s? Or is it shared by those who for 2 decades acquiesced in and helped sustain this scheme of things, this absurd anachronism of contemporary, democratic Sri Lanka? The guilt must be borne by the princes and princelings, the clans, the courtiers, the conspirators and clowns, who allowed a popular, democratic political party to be converted into a fiefdom.

Devaluation—gently as she goes...

The IMF's three wise men who slipped into town quietly just after the budget have returned to Washington. They were on a 'fact-finding mission'. Another IMF mission, at a higher level, will be here early next year. Only then will it be known whether Mr. de Mel's balanced budget has resolved those differences between Sri Lanka and the IMF which led to the 'freezing' of disbursements six months ago. These disbursements were made under a 3 year agreement signed in Jan. 1979 by which the IMF would release approximately 350 million US dollars in SDR's.

Minister de Mel seems confident that the government is now in a much stronger position to re-negotiate the matter. An across-the-board cut of 22% in government spending and a balanced budget may meet the IMF's main criteria of non-expansionary financing and controlled inflation.

What of devaluation? This is a standard IMF demand (advice). The rupee has slipped from about 15 to the dollar to 18 during this

same six month period. It is supposed to be 'floating'. But is this the real value of the rupee or has the Central Bank shored it up? It is widely held that if there was a 'free float' the rupee would come down to 24 to the dollar. The IMF will probably be content to see it 'fixed' at about 20.

The restoration of good relations with the IMF is critically important to the government which still relies heavily on foreign financing and faces an acute payments problem. Besides the money from the IMF under the Extended Fund Facility, Sri Lanka can borrow from foreign banks more freely and on better terms if the IMF's credit rating is good. "When the IMF gets cool, Third World countries get the cold shoulder from the commercial banks" says a seasoned 'aid' negotiator.

With cost escalation playing havoc with project estimates—especially big ones like the Mahaveli—and donors, hit by recession, refusing to compensate for much higher prices of machinery

etc, the government has to go to the banks. This month, Sri Lanka raised 20 million from the Hannover Trust in London to buy equipment for the Victoria project, and a few weeks before that raised a Euro-dollar loan in Hong Kong through Lloyds to make down payment for ships from South Korea and Argentine.

Will the IMF be as 'gentle' to Sri Lanka as it has been to Pakistan? In spite of the fact that Pakistan has an utterly unpopular and increasingly isolated military regime run by a uniformed usurper, the IMF which doesn't bother to parade its concern for 'human rights' gave Pakistan this month 1.7 billion dollars in SDR's. According to the Financial Times, the conditions (growth rate, inflation, balance of payments deficit) amounted to 'gentle treatment'. The loan is the largest made to a Third World country in the IMF's history. With the Gulf war and Afghanistan, Pakistan of course is so vital to western interests that Dr. Kissinger recently proposed that Pakistan should be equipped by the US and made the chief defender of western interests in the area.

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Film and communalism

In July 1979 twenty-five people signed a public appeal calling for the formation of a voluntary body to promote the furtherance of communal understanding through the mass media and to counteract undesirable communal manifestations in the media. (The appeal appeared at that time in the LG.) This voluntary body — the Council for Communal Harmony through the Media — is now functioning. It uses office space kindly provided by the Marga Institute, but it is an independent body controlled by its own committee and not a section of Marga. The Council proposes shortly to bring out the first of a series of newsletters which will appear from time to time and will present the material gathered from a periodical monitoring of the mass media in respect of communal relations. The Council is also engaged on two research studies: one, on the reporting of the Sansoni Commission's proceedings by the Press; the other, on school text-books from the standpoint of communal relations.

Last month the Council organised a seminar on the subject of 'The Film as a Medium of Cross-Cultural Communication'. Participants in the seminar heard a paper by Reggie Siriwardena on the theme (reproduced in the **Sunday Observer** of December 7), watched a screening of the film **Sarungale**, and engaged in a lively discussion which elicited many different opinions, particularly on the possible effect of **Sarungale** on communal attitudes. These were some of the views expressed during the discussion:

Prof. K. Indrapala: Although the makers of **Sarungale** must have intended to project an anti-communalist attitude, certain elements in the film run counter to this aim. They have concentrated in the figure of Nadarajah all the stock characteristics Sinhalese attribute to a Tamil government officer — the potty, coat, tie, hat, cigar, and an exaggerated

Tamil accent in speaking Sinhala; he is also portrayed as very religious, caste-minded and conservative. This image will not provoke sympathy or respect. It emphasises the ways in which Tamils are different from Sinhalese rather than the similarities. Moreover, the same Nadarajah who becomes the victim of communal violence had resorted to caste violence against his sister's lover, and the audience may therefore consider that his fate at the end of the film is retribution for what he had done to his sister.

Reggie Siriwardena: To awaken sympathy for a victim of communal violence does not involve seeing him as a perfect character; nor, in order to promote communal understanding, need we see Tamil society as free of imperfections. If the film had presented an idealised view of Tamil life it would have been rejected by the audience as unreal and would have failed in its purpose. By treating caste distinctions side by side with ethnic and linguistic, the film-makers have brought in another kind of inhumanity of man to man and broadened the scope of the film.

Dr. Newton Gunasinghe: Nadarajah is a complex character. The social constraints are too powerful for him, and in spite of his love for a Sinhala girl, he would never have had the guts to marry her.

S. M. Kamaldeen: What the film brings out is that the sense of humanity is stronger in the lower levels of society, as it is in Simon, the kasippu-seller.

E. Rathinam: There is no improbability in a person being above racial feelings and yet being subject to caste prejudices. Caste is as important a theme in the film as race.

Sunil Bastian: There are two themes in the film which are important — caste and race — and

the director uses two different techniques to present them — flashbacks for the first, and action in present time for the second. The censors' cutting of the scene where Nadarajah is attacked by the thugs, to which Reggie Siriwardena had referred, was a big loss. If the actual violence had been shown, the audience's horror of it would have been greater. The explanation of communal conflict as due entirely to 'dirty politics' was naive.

M. J. Perera: The film tries to do too many things in too little time. It is more the personal tragedy of Nadarajah rather than communal relations which is the subject. However, films like **Sarungale** should be shown on TV. The stage could also be used to explore similar themes, as G. D. L. Perera did very successfully in **Thotupola** in the sixties.

D. Asirvatham: The Sinhala people are portrayed very unfavourably in the film, and Sinhala national pride would have been hurt; therefore the film would have failed in its purpose of influencing opinion.

Q. Ismail: The film will compel the Sinhala people to realise that a few among them behave badly, and will make the non-communal want to do something about it.

Dr. K. S. Nadarajah: Nadarajah is a contradictory character; in Jaffna he is sympathetic to nobody, but in Colombo, where he has to have dealings with people of another community, he is more humane. Although the film has weaknesses, it is on the whole very successful.

N. Shanmugalingam: A film is a work of art, but in considering it from the present point of view, we have to consider its practical effect. The film did not run long either in Colombo or in Jaffna, and therefore its practical effect would have been small. The audience would have identified themselves with Simon and not with Nadarajah.

Unconditional support for Iraq says J. V. P.

We unconditionally support Iraq and the Arab Baath Socialist party" says Lionel Bopage, Acting Gen. Secretary of the JVP in a statement to the **Lanka Guardian**. He adds: "The JVP and the Arab Baath Socialist party have no differences at all in the just struggle to regain the sovereignty of the Iraqi territory against the reactionary regime of Iran."

Commenting on the item in the CMU paper **Vanguard** republished in the L. G. under the headline "No JVP Salute" the JVP spokesman says:

"Regarding the Polish workers struggle we are with the Polish workers in their just struggle to win their rights. But we clearly oppose any attempt to overthrow the already established socialist production relations in order to establish a capitalist economy.

In local as well as in International politics we have supported and are supporting the just struggles of the proletariat and the oppressed, against opportunism, capitalism, imperialism and its agents like Zionism and accordingly we have taken the side on the Iraqi-Iranian war. Our stand is very clear, although the Iranian regime has an issue with the United States regime over the hostage issue, the Zionists and the imperialists are on their side directly and indirectly supporting the regime of Mullahs trying to plunge the Iranian Society back into a state of Clerico-Feudalism. On the other hand the Baath Socialist Party regime in Iraq has manifested its strong anti-Imperialist policy in its practice over the Palestine issue and the reunification of the Arab land divided by the United States Imperialists and its agents."

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

ENGLISH

'Every child will be taught English, says the President,' ran the headline of the front page lead story in the **Daily News** of November 28. Meanwhile, however, the University Grants Commission has decided that the English departments at the Universities of Jaffna and Sri Jayewardhanapura should be closed down! One would suppose that in order to teach every child English, as the President promises, there would be the fullest encouragement for the teaching of English on every campus so as to produce competent teachers. In the south, there will be at any rate three campuses with English departments. But the closure of the only English department in the north - a region where there has been a certain tradition of English studies -- would be not only detrimental to the teaching of English but also discriminatory.

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The IMF / IBRD sponsored development strategy

by Kethesh Loganathan

The "achievements" of the UNP Government since 1977, referred to in the Budget Speech and critically examined in Part I of this article, is officially attributed to the viability of the 'IMF Package' supported export-oriented development strategy. Before proceeding to highlight the 1981 Budget Speech has a manifestation of the contradictions that have begun to emerge out of the implementation of this "strategy", let me briefly summarize the theoretical premise of the, Export-Led Growth Model and the role of the 'IMF Package.'

The theoretical premise of the Export-Led Growth Model is basically an affirmation of the neo-classical sentiments pertaining to the free inter-play of the market forces and free trade. Thus, it is argued that the uninhibited play of the market forces will lead to a more efficient allocation of resources, thereby, also enabling the economy to direct the excess of production over and above its absorptive capacity to the international market. Participation in international trade based on the "new" international division of labour, it is then argued, makes it possible for the economy to gain access to inputs which the domestic sector is not geared to produce and utilize them for the further expansion of the productive capacity and, onwards, towards the "take-off" point and self-sustained growth and development.

The role played by the IMF is in providing the peripheral capitalist States which adopt the export-led Growth Model with a package of proposals which, in essence, constitute the economic and political pre-conditions for implementation of the export-oriented development strategy. This package of proposals is what is popularly notoriously known as the 'IMF Package'. The basic

ingredients of the 'IMF Package' and their theoretical rationale can be summarized as follows:

(i) The liberalization of imports so as to ensure accessibility to inputs necessary for export-oriented industrialization.

(ii) Devaluation of the currency as a device to increase the competitiveness of exports in the international market and also as a remedial measure against possible deterioration in the terms of trade during the 'transitory' period following import liberalization.

(iii) The elimination of price controls, subsidies and other components of state welfarism so as to give full expression to the free inter-play of the market forces which, ostensibly, will lead to a greater mobilization of the domestic resources and a more efficient allocation of resources in favour of "production-oriented" investments.

(iv) The provision of infrastructural facilities, investment guarantees, fiscal incentives, a cheap and docile labour force and overall "political stability" by the State.

The above measures are deemed necessary to attract foreign investors who, ostensibly, will inject into the economy capital and technological know-how required for the setting-up of export-oriented manufacturing and agricultural enterprises. It must be mentioned, however, that the measures cited above are considered equally necessary for the promotion of domestic private direct investments.

(v) The prop to the entire package will be the conventional balance of payments "support" from the IMF, the not too conventional borrowings from the International money market and long-term official loans and foreign aid.

It is beyond the scope of this article to present a theoretical critique of the Export-Led Growth Model or to conduct an inquiry into the "scientificity" of the IMF package. For the purpose of this article, I wish to focus on the complete bankruptcy of the IMF/IBRD sponsored export oriented development strategy as it has operated in the case of Sri Lanka since 1977.

Let us take the first component of the 'IMF Package' — namely, import-liberalization. The rationale behind the liberalization of imports, to reiterate, is that it would enable the economy to improve its capacity utilization by ensuring access to inputs which the domestic manufacturing sector is incapable of providing. We have already seen in Part I of this article as to how import-liberalization of the type witnessed in Sri Lanka has undermined the domestic manufacturing sector catering to the internal market. This in effect makes the argument in favour of liberalization of imports based on the limitations of the domestic manufacturing sector, a self-fulfilling prophesy! Further, it is also clear that the opening of the economy has failed to provide the impetus to export-oriented industrialization. For instance, in 1979 the export volume index showed an increase of only 1% over the previous year while import volume rose by 23%. Now, a break-down of the imports does not reflect any significant change in favour of 'authentic' investment and intermediate goods, despite statistical jugglery and general confusion regarding definitions. Further, a break-down of exports clearly reveal that despite an increase in the share of industrial exports were made up of petroleum products and textile garments. Since the import content of

(Continued on page 28)

THE LEFT in INDIA

by Gail Omvedt

Even as anti-price rise movements, Hindu-Muslim riots, struggles against national oppression and a widening spectrum of popular turmoil are mounting in India, the country's Communist movement seems more divided than ever and for the present incapable of posing a revolutionary alternative to Indira Gandhi's increasingly authoritarian movement.

India's two major parliamentary communist parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) came together in the last half of 1979 in a communist-led front that not only held governmental power in three Indian states but also seemed the best national alternative to Indira Gandhi. Yet, hardly a year later, these hopes seem belied and the "left and democratic front" is stalled and faced by communist opposition to its policies from both the right and left.

To the right of the CPI-CPM combine is a new party, the All-India Communist Party (AICP), which professes its loyalty to S. A. Dange, the one-time chairman of the CPI who has stood most unswervingly for the line of supporting Mrs. Gandhi and all her actions, including the Emergency itself. Curiously enough Dange himself is still in the CPI with many of his followers carrying on a ferocious internal battle to gain control of as many of its cadres and mass organisations as possible. But others have split, following his daughter Roza Deshpande, with tens of thousands of members from each of several states and control of many party journals and union units. It is expected that when the AICP holds its official founding convention in November that a substantial proportion of the old CPI's trade union and other mass base will follow it.

To the left of the CPI-CPM group are various factions of Naxalites and a number of diverse other

Marxist-Leninist organisations and parties. This is a grouping with crucial diversities of political line and practice, but united by perhaps two things — First, they consider that the CPI-CPM front offers only a bogus opposition to Gandhi and the Indian state and they do not agree with policies of alliance with bourgeois parties (though from different theoretical perspectives) — Second, they themselves have in many rural areas and sections of the urban working class a fairly stable and genuine mass base.

The "left and democratic front" led by the CPI and CPI(M) includes now some other smaller Marxist parties and varying groups of socialists as well as the most important remnants of India's other bourgeois parties — the Congress (U), that is the anti-Indira remnants of the old Congress Party, Charan Singh's Lok Dal; and the Janata Party which has now excluded the former Hindu-chavinist elements (who are now grouped into the Bharatiya Janata Party). But the main problem with this front is not much, at present, the communist split and its left-right opponents, but the fact that it seems unable to find a way to lead the popular movement forward.

Exactly why the Indian communist movement remains so split, with no one formation able to gain a decisive lead, and why what looked like a promising "left democratic" opposition is now so stalled are perhaps the crucial issues for the Indian revolutionary movement today.

Pro-Indira Communists

For some years the old pro-Moscow CPI, India's biggest Communist party (with some 600,000 members at the time of the recent split) had followed the line of supporting Indira Gandhi's government as representing a "progressive national bourgeoisie." Now the CPI itself has rejected this support after a long internal stru-

ggle and self-criticism, but the result has been a new, breakaway party founded on this principle.

Even though the CPI was widely discredited in much of India's left circles for its support of the Emergency, the position still has some impressive, widespread support. The AICP, once it is decisively established, may in fact be able to exercise some real influence — aiding what the majority of the Marxist left considers the most dangerous enemy of the Indian working class today.

The AICP's support among old communist cadres follows from two things. First, support for Indira Gandhi and her Congress Party is simply a logical conclusion from the old CPI party programme which calls for a "national democratic revolution" taking a non-capitalist path. According to it, the main enemies of the revolution are imperialism (especially the U. S.), feudalism (big landlords) and the monopoly bourgeoisie. A "national bourgeoisie" which fights these and sides with the "socialist bloc" can be an ally of the communists and even share in governmental power in the "national democratic state."

By the CPI's criteria, Indira Gandhi and the general policy of the Congress party for the last 30 years does in fact look progressive. It has opposed big landlordism by pushing through limited antifeudal land reforms, it has instituted a public sector with Soviet aid to provide a support for industrialisation (a public sector which as Dange is eager to point out controls the "commanding heights" of the economy: steel, mining, railroads, electricity and power generation etc); and it follows a generally pro-Soviet foreign policy. In the last months Gandhi has refused to criticize Soviet presence in Afghanistan and recently India became the first major third world country to recognise the Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea.

FOREIGN
NEWS

Of course, it is clear that the Gandhi government is not really opposing imperialism; the Emergency did nothing to attack foreign economic interests and with Indira's return to power multinational corporations are being given a freer hand than ever. But just why mere "anti-feudalism", a growing state sector and a pro-Soviet foreign policy are quite compatible with the solidification of capitalist relations and the growing hold of imperialism is something the basic CPI line is simply not capable of comprehending.

The other reason for the hold of the AICP is that while most of the old communist cadres joining it are petty bourgeois themselves, they have been involved in work among sections of the masses who in fact are being won over in part by Indira's "progressive" facade, by the 20-point programme, announcement of minimum wages, building of houses for the rural poor etc. The party has a long history in independent India of subordinating struggles of the rural poor to the interests of rich peasants, of orchestrating working class fights to the needs of alliance with bourgeois parties, and of gearing its entire party structure to the parliamentary framework. This historical practice simply leads logically to such things as an alliance with Indira Gandhi.

With all of this, it is quite understandable that Indira has gained a new communist party — and that the Soviet Union itself is keeping its options open by supporting both this communist tail and the CPI-CPM communist opposition.

Anti-Indira Communists

Currently the major opposition political force in India is the Left and Democratic Front (LDF) a conglomeration of bourgeois parties led by the CPI and CPM. This section has been making a bid to take the leadership or mass discontent by organising huge struggles against price-rise, involving themselves in rich pea-

sant demands for higher food-grain prices as well as agricultural labourer demands for higher wages, and leading working class strikes.

But the CPI and CPM are facing some major dilemmas in leading the LDF. One of them is that in fact both parties have major areas of agreement with the Indira government on important policy issues, such as opposition to the movement in Assam and the national liberation struggles in the northeast and have been quite willing to join with Indira in calling for "national integration". More basically, due to the needs of their alliance with bourgeois parties and their own perspective of the Indian revolution, they have accepted crucial limitations to their way of leading the current popular struggles. Thus, there is no conception of leading the masses in any "illegal" activities, or of challenging the Indian constitution or the state itself, with the still powerful presence of the bourgeois opposition this means that the movement politically comes to little more than a call to throw Indira out of the government.

The current LDF-popular movement follows what is by now a set procedure in India for such affairs: meetings, demonstrations, marches, short strikes and **bandhs** (shut-downs) at local levels, satyagrahas or 'fill the jail' days, huge joint marches of workers and peasants, and finally as its climax a massive **bandh** throughout a whole state or if possible the entire country. By American standards the level of such organised mass struggles is quite high.

The **bandh** itself can be called even a "political general strike" which involves millions of people and includes the shutdown of offices, factories, shops and all transport. The fact is, however, that such movements do not lead to the destruction of state power or a movement towards the establishment of peoples' power in any alternative form, but are simply a way of putting pressure on the existing government. At

various points violence may break out as enflamed masses confront the state power, but this is never organised by the leaders. Once the climatic **bandh** has been reached in such a campaign, there are no plans to go forward, and so "after the **bandh** — what next?" has become real question.

The fact is that the current anti-price rise movement has reached the **bandh** stage without much effect. Two major states, Andhra and Maharashtra, have had state-wide **bandhs** in which there was almost total support and the closure of everything, but little else: people supported the action but without enthusiasm. The fact is that opposition is **not** posing any real alternative; the LDF itself is in an entirely different framework from the kind of revolutionary, insurrection-oriented fronts that are being formed from an equally wide range of parties in the Latin American context; and the CPI and CPM are not gaining that much support among the masses.

To understand why this is happening, it is necessary to understand the politics and history of the CPM which is clearly the leading force within the LDF.

When the original Communist Party of India split down the middle in 1964, the CPM emerged as the more-pro-China and more militant section, with its base where the original communist movement had been the strongest, in Kerala and West Bengal. Its programme, like the CPI's called for an anti-imperialism; and it insisted that the "peoples' democratic front" and state should be under the leadership of the working class, not a joint leadership.

This program, the continuing opposition to the Congress government, and the militancy of its cadres in trade union and the rural areas give the party a more militant character, even though it maintained a parliamentary approach. In 1967 this parliamentarism was tested when its own

cadres in the Naxalbari area of north Bengal led a peasant revolt and the CPM (then in power in Bengal state) temporized and then finally decided to crush the revolt. There were massive breakaways from the party all over India and many of these came together to form the CPI (ML) and other po-Chinese groups. For these "Naxalites" the CPM had failed its decisive test, had made a "historic choice" against the revolutionary movement and for the parliamentary road, and was irrevocably revisionist as the CPI. For the CPM hardliners in contrast, the Naxalites by their adventurism were only dangerously exposing an immature movement to state repression, and CPM and Naxalite cadres engaged in often murderous infighting. Whatever the justice of these arguments, for several years it was the Naxalites for all their faults who won the imagination of the revolutionary-minded youth, while the CPM remained discredited and stagnant.

This situation changed decisively in 1977. The fact was that the CPM did energetically oppose Indira Gandhi and suffered heavy repression itself during 1970-74 in West Bengal when the Congress government tried to curb the mass base of the party. Even though it was unsuccessful in organizing any real underground during the Emergency, it emerged in 1977 after the defeat of Indira with a good deal of prestige and with new freedom to operate now that its bourgeois ally, the Janata Party, was in governmental power at the center. With the Naxalite movement in disarray is looked even better.

The party began once again to attract new activists. Its student wing, the Students Federation of India (SFI) grew to become the biggest in the country and its trade union wing, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) began to expand in many new areas, including the industrial belt around

Delhi and new states such as Karnataka and Rajasthan. In 1977-78 the party was increasingly looked up to as a political force, and as a "third alternative" to the Congress and Janata Party. Its party conference in the Punjab at the beginning of 1978 was held in an atmosphere of superb self-confidence; its party office was shifted to Delhi in a symbolic challenge at the capitol itself; and plans were laid for a massive party expansion in the north India heartland or "Hindi belt" When at the end of 1979 the CPI joined it and agreed to let the CPM in to lead a governmental front also in the state of Kerala, the party's upswing seemed at its height.

Yet this expansion seems to have stopped. The fact is that the greatest membership in the party's mass fronts (both the CITU and its peasant) come from west Bengal and Kerala state; CITU itself remains only the 5th largest trade union central organisation in India and has been declining not growing, in India's industrial capital of Bombay. On the student level, the persistence of Naxalite organisations in spite of their disunity as well as the renewed growth of Indira Congress and Hindu-rightist student groups has checked the influence of the SFI; and there has been no decisive breakthrough in the rural areas in spite of increasing revolts of agricultural labourers and dalits all over India.

The plans for a Hindi-belt expansion have been quietly laid aside, and the CPM has retreated to a defensive posture regarding its Best Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, fearing that too much "provocation" will increase what they already see as plans to topple the state governments they control.

To be continued

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SOME SOLUTIONS

by Anil Moonesinghe

The present price hike is not a practicable proposition and will lead to increasing misery and unemployment. The tendency will be for workers to move in to Colombo and other cities and build shanties. The price of cement, timber and other building materials have become prohibitive. Even a housing loan is no answer as the interest on 100,000 is itself Rs. 1000 per month. How many even from the middle class can afford that! Travelling and housing are intimately connected and between these two the increasing misery of the masses and even the middle class is now more than obvious.

Is there a solution to this very serious problem? As indicated earlier Sri Lanka has to turn in a big way towards electrification of transport. Instead of multiplying the waste of foreign exchange in bringing in small-sized vehicles, public transport must be geared to large vehicles and hydro-power. The small electric car that is now being produced by General Motors must be imported without duty whilst the other vehicles are phased out over the next 20 years.

Electrification of transport will mean a favourable shift economically and industrially. Electric vehicles have very few moving parts in their engines. Thus the technology of upkeep is easily within the reach of Less Developed Countries like Sri Lanka and a gradual shift towards manufacture of these vehicles could be made. Furthermore electric driven cars will run on batteries of the conventional lead-acid variety. Those too could be manufactured in Sri Lanka on a mass-scale. Using hydro-electric, solar-electric and battery-powered vehicles will result in a substantial cut-down of the outflow of our scarce foreign exchange. It will also bring Sri Lanka into the electric

and electronic age of transport, away from the 20th (hydro-carbon) century.

Already in Europe all deliveries of milk, bread etc in the cities are being made by battery-powered vehicles. Thus a rational transport system within the cities using this type of vehicle will lead to a cut-down on fossil fuels. Within cities private vehicles of this type should be encouraged as an electric battery can provide about 100 miles per day on a charge. Transport of goods and passengers within the city has another obvious advantage. During road-blocks — a situation which requires a vehicle to be stationary — no power need be used on an electric vehicle unlike in the fossil fuelled vehicle.

However the electric age requires a planned ushering-in in Sri Lanka. The magnitudes of the operation are so complex that it must be handled at the highest level of authority. It means an exercise that will involve multiple ministries and the periods of several governments. Thus it will be an all party exercise — government and opposition. It is an exercise that will involve the working class in a big way and therefore self-management incentive techniques, increase in productivity are all involved. Thus the organisations of this class must be actively brought into participation.

The disastrous policy of an open market combined with constant devaluation should be replaced with a planned and selective system of imports to encourage local manufacture and a revaluation of the rupee to be on par with the Indian rupee. The government should declare its aim of having a common monetary system and market with India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These measures will slow down inflation and also bring our

people's income more in line with other developing countries. Such measures will reduce the stresses placed on our transport and housing conditions and prepare them to be more viable and satisfactory.

A change in the macro economic policies must be accompanied by a planned transport policy. The basic elements of that policy should be:

1. Electrification of main rail and bus routes and creation of suburban electrified transport.

2. Transitionally state transport must be provided with sufficient vehicles; shortages of skilled personnel be provided for by training schools on the line of the Sri Lanka Technical Training Institute. All employees dismissed for strike activity be taken back.

Shortages in supplies that now hold up engineering work should be eliminated. The present disgraceful administrations be replaced with managements which do not bend to undue trade union pressure. The management of the SLTB and the CGR be given over to elected representatives of all employees — with in the first phase 50-50 sharing of power between the Executive grades and all other grades with a Manager appointed by the staff. Incentives for production should be instituted.

3. Only rural routes be given over to the private sector or cooperatives.

4. Local manufacture of spares both by the public and private sectors.

5. Instead of one State Transport Corporation provision be allowed for two or more to provide for competition.

The fault of State Transport can be basically traced to management and organisation. If this area is properly handled costs will considerably reduce. The reduction in fares will and must come due to the changes in macro-economic policies.

Is Gunadasa Amarasekera a Marxist?

by Nihal Perera

The book clearly shows that, to Amarasekera, the difference between a patriot and a Marxist is somewhat of a puzzle. (This question is of course not relevant to Trotskyists and other 'one-stageists'). Even though he quotes the Ven. Udakandewela Sri Saranankara Thero, Amarasekera does not seem to have understood the context of the quotation. The Ven. Saranankara has said "Dharmapala is the greatest patriot to be born in our country in this age." He goes on to say, 'affirming his patriotic ideas, we should dedicate ourselves to travelling towards scientific socialism' speaking with a correct understanding of a journey of two stages which are different and yet integral. A Marxist should be aware of the interconnections as well as the differences of the anti-imperialist struggle and the struggle for socialism.

It is justifiable to name those who talk of the liberation of the people of this country without a deep awareness of the national liberation movement that sprang up in Sri Lanka against British imperialism as being 'up-rooted' persons. Some historians see three trends in the movement for political independence. Since one of them is openly committed to the 'foreigner masters', it is indeed incorrect to even classify it as a trend for independence. What they wanted was to lap up the scraps from their white masters' table and fatten themselves. The De Mels, James Pieris, Obeysekeras are in this category. The second group, which was more cunning but nevertheless fell into a similar category, consisted of those who attempted to take over the reins of political power through a series of reforms. D. B. Jayatilleke, E. W. Perera and the Senanayakes come within this group.

Gunadasa Amarasekera's book, 'Is Anagarika Dharmapala a Marxist?' has created quite a furore among certain sections of our society. Several intellectuals have already contributed to this debate. The following note has been written with these too in mind.

Even though at certain times they engaged in some agitational activities, they were always fearful of directing the masses on to the path of real struggle against the British imperialists. The masks of this group were most clearly torn down in the era of Sinhala-Muslim riots in 1915. Taken into custody, all of them immediately abandoned all 'struggles'. They crept into the shell of peaceful and constitutional action and never again ventured forth.

It was only Anagarika Dharmapala and Ponnambalam Arunachalam who strove to create a truly national liberation struggle outside these trends. (The reasons for their disillusionment before long has to be sought in the socio-economic background of that age.) Of these two the Anagarika Dharmapala is of concern to us in the present context, and his contribution to the national liberation movement cannot be under-estimated. The I. G. P. of that time, Dowbiggin, has reported, on the meetings organised by the Temperance Movement under the guidance of Anagarika Dharmapala as follows: 'nationalism and politics generally figured largely in these temperance meetings, in fact they were political meetings held under the cloak of temperance.'

The high point of the movement he organised against the 'pariah whites' together with the Theosophists, was the agitation carried on through the newspaper, Sinhala Bauddhaya.' The British

imperialists, who were terrified of the cry raised through this newspaper, even attempted to ban its publication but this did not deter the Anagarika. He carried his anti-imperialist struggle even to the sphere of workers struggles. The public rally at the end of the railway strike in 1921 was held in the premises of the Mahabodhi Vidyalaya, of which he was Director. There while reformists made lukewarm speeches, he praised the strikers, saying that they showed 'strength and power in the face of hard and merciless treatment'. Labour organisers such as A. E. Goonesinghe were followers of the Anagarika in their early stages of struggle. This is only a brief sketch of the Anagarika's anti-imperialist struggle. The British were so afraid of him that they exiled him from the country and even thereafter continued to keep him under strict surveillance. All this cannot be erased from history.

Yet, because of these very facts, it would be unscientific to go to the other extreme, deify him or try to pin a 'Marxist' label on the Anagarika. To identify an individual as a representative of the national bourgeoisie is not necessarily as Amarasekera seems to think, an insult to that person. (It is only those with an incorrect understanding of Marxism that consider the tag 'petit-bourgeois' an obscenity today.) It is only natural that Anagarika Dharmapala, who had the consciousness of the national bourgeoisie, (his wide travels may have greatly contributed to the formation of this consciousness) should find himself in opposition to imperialists. Yet, at the same time, his leanings towards them should also not surprise us. The imperialist leanings revealed by Prof. Ralph Pieris through some of Dharmapala's writing should not disturb a true Marxist. Do we not know

this vacillating class nature? In fact, it was Dr. Kumari Jayawardene, upon whom Amarasekera has heaped lavish praise in his book, first directed my attention to a very significant letter of Dharmapala in this context. Writing to the British Government from Calcutta on the 8th May 1917, Dharmapala says 'Although I have been greatly persecuted by the authorities, I have done my duty to the British Government at this time of trial by contributing Rs. 1,000/- to the War Fund and Investing all my resources in War Bonds as well as of the 'M. B. Society's amounting to Rs. 32,000/-'.

How many leaders have we seen in history, who stood with the people in the anti-imperialist struggle but were not able to go beyond this? It is definitely Trotskyist to single out their weak points and reject their actions, in toto, as having no progressive content.

See what **Mao Tse-tung** has said about the Chinese patriotic leader **Dr. Sun Yat Sen** a full seven years after the Chinese Revolution. "Like many great figures in history who stood in the forefront guiding the march of events, Dr. Sun too had his shortcomings. These shortcomings should be explained in the light of the historical conditions so that people can understand; we should not be too critical of our predecessors'.

In trying to explain Dharmapala's political disillusionment, Amarasekera gets himself tied up in knots. This wholly scientific exercise amply reveals the author's unfamiliarity with the basic Marxist teachings regarding the economic base and super-structure. Amarasekera sees 'the transition of the leaders in the political sphere into a wealthy compradore class' to be the cause for the 'sudden' change in the anti-imperialist struggle which was developing until 1915. He says that Dharmapala's hopes were all dashed as a result of these leaders 'suddenly becoming wealth-owning'. Amarasekera sorrowfully points out that when the Anagarika returned to this country in 1922,

the only follower left to him as a result of this 'sudden' change was his doctor brother (C. A. Hewavitarane). Is this Marxist?

The real situation is clear. By this point in time, a national bourgeoisie had not yet evolved in this country. The 'compradore' was not created 'suddenly' but was built up together with the plantation economy that spread under British rule. By 1915, it already had a fair history. It was a part of this bourgeoisie which, although it launched the Temperance Movement along with Anagarika Dharmapala, withdrew from the struggle at the first clash with the British rulers for fear of seeing their economic base shattered. Their existence was closely linked to the British plantation economy. They either developed by supplying service to this sector, or else, as in the case of owners of coconut plantations or graphite mines, were dependent on British markets. Their existence was completely controlled by the British.

Earlier on, we spoke of Anagarika Dharmapala as having a national bourgeois consciousness. From this point of view, he stood far ahead of his time. Yet, a national bourgeoisie with an economy that came into conflict with the imperialists was an essential factor in transforming this movement into a long-term struggle. Such a class did not exist in the country at that time. (In India, Mahatma Gandhi had such a base. There was for example a section of the bourgeoisie which was ready to struggle against the British textile industry.) Is it not natural that the Anagarika's struggle should be a temporary one, given these circumstances? How long can a super-structural anti-imperialist struggle survive?

It is not that the Anagarika Dharmapala was not aware of this fact. In his lectures and writings, he repeatedly referred to this matter: 'We consume, but we do not produce fresh wealth.... We are blindly following the white man.... We purchase 'Pears' soap and eat coconut biscuits manufactured by Huntley & Palmer.... Our weavers are starving and we

are purchasing cloth manufactured elsewhere''.

Not only did he often speak of the Industrial development of Japan, an Asiatic country, he even sent youth there in order to teach them textile weaving. He opened technical schools to train youth. All this, however, was fruitless. A national industrial class did not come forth in this era. Is it then surprising that his anti-imperialistic struggle evaporated?

In his book, Amarasekera censures "uprooted" socialists. This must be done. This is probably why the "Janadina", which first published (free?) advertisements for the book later on referred to it as a "sugar-coated bullet".

There were two incorrect tendencies in our old left movement. The actions of our 'left' leaders who returned to the island after receiving a Western education, especially after falling into Trotskyist clutches, fall under the classification of Left-Extremism. The policies followed by them in the 1940s, ignoring and rejecting the democratic forces within the country, paved the way for the birth and growth of the SLFP in the 1950s. Thereafter, going to the other extreme, from the end of the 50s, the old left began to gradually orient itself to a position of sharing ruling power with this party. This is a tendency which falls into the category of Right-Opportunism. It was this incorrect orientation, that led to the birth of the JVP and other New left organisations in the 60s.

Even though Amaresekera correctly attacks the first tendency, he falls on his knees before the second one. It is one thing to join hands with the SLFP in certain actions against the principal enemy, while recognising its class base and utilising the minute contradictions within the bourgeoisie. Entering into coalition governments with this party is quite another. This is why one writer has slated Amarasekera for cooking up 'theories' for a certain opportunist politician who is stranded between Trotsky and the Anagarika.

Another 'strong' and 'new' theory put forward by Gunadasa Amarasekera in his book is that of the 'Ashokist Righteous Buddhist State'. Commencing from an analysis of Marx's writings on the Asiatic mode of production, the author plods along to air his magnificent discovery in no uncertain terms. Speaking of 'a new Interpretation of Marxism from the most inspired Third World region', he ends the book saying 'It may be that this interpretation would be common not only to us but even to other Asian countries like Burma and India, already rich with a philosophical superstructure'. Well... well...

Egypt, Ghana and Indonesia are among those countries which gave birth to strong anti-imperialist leaders. Patriotic leaders like **Nasser, Nkrumah and Sukarno** gave unstinting leadership to their national liberation movements. These leaders, who all came from the petit bourgeoisie, became popular as anti-imperialist leaders not only in their own countries but throughout the Third World. Making full use of the hon-Marxist notion that nationalising private enterprise automatically led to socialism (see the **Leslie Gunawardene theory in Amarasekera's book: pages 8 and 9**), these leaders strengthened their economic base by expanding the state sector. Taking of a non-aligned foreign policy they aim at obtaining the foreign resources necessary for their growth from all possible sources. The big bourgeois tendencies begin to surface with the growth of this economic base. The repressive state machine in Egypt today is the best example of this pattern. Out tactics should be prepared only with an awareness of the phases and nature of development of these ruling classes and devoid of any illusions regarding them. It is as unscientific to push them into the category of the traditional 'compradores' disregarding their stage of development, as it is to consider them forever to be the 'middle-class'.

These tendencies are relevant to our subject because as in all other countries, in our country

too, these sections created special brands of 'socialism' in order to rationalise their actions. Accordingly, at one point in time you see the birth of theories such as 'Arab Socialism' 'African Socialism', 'Ram Rajya' etc, in these countries. Yet Marxists are well aware of these theories. What else, if not the path of repression, does this 'Middle Path' represent? Amarasekera's 'Ashokist Righteous Buddhist Society' is also one such weakly structured theory. There is one difference, however, **This theory also contains a streak of outright communalism. This is a brand of "socialism" reserved for the Sinhala Buddhists of our country.**

It has been the practise of some yesterday and today, to attempt to capturing artists and writers by offering them diplomatic places etc. Certain "left-wingers" to whom this path was not open, began to make such attempts when they were close to governmental power. Gunadasa Amarasekera has been blown up as a Marxist theoretician by the "Nation" (today the Socialist Nation) group. If such a writer then imagines himself to be a Lankan Tolstoy etc; it is not only he who has to be blamed. Those who contributed to the growth of such a sense of importance are also partners in this. Now is the time for all those around him to stop beating about the bush and write another book or two. "Is Gunadasa Amarasekera Marxist?" is a title suggested for one of them.

(The author's translation of an article published in *Desha Vimukthi*)

Next issue

Sanmugathas.in on "Mao on trial"

H. N. Fernando on the J. V. P.

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FOOD AID and DUMPING

by Lal Wijenaiké (The author has done post-graduate work in Australia and New Zealand)

Commenting on the policy of the 'development of markets' the informative journal *WORLD DEVELOPMENT* (1979, No. 6) speaks of the conscious change in consumer tastes in the Third World in favour of imported products. On a brief visit home after several years, I was reminded of this when friends and family members were talking — some of them very enthusiastically — of the new liberal import policy. From the ads, in the paper and TV, and the goods in the shops I noticed that all 'the good things of life' from biscuits and jams to cheese and cod liver oil were back. The most interesting is the return of **Nestlé's**, a name involved in much controversy abroad, including in WHO etc. So another generation will be brought up believing in the irreplaceable virtues of powdered milk.

Import liberalisation is the licence given by the IMF, World Bank and our 'donors' to the dumping of goods that are not essential to us, but for which we soon acquire a taste and begin to believe that life without them is 'backwardness'. The advertising creates the taste which opens the market. Why shouldn't these agencies do so when they represent the interests of these multinational manufacturers and the governments they influence, if not control?

The most glaring example of 'camouflaged' dumping is PL 480 Food aid.

The US Government advertises its food aid to the developing countries as promoting their own food production, strengthening their economies in general and helping them to achieve eventual self-sufficiency in food. The experience has shown however that far from promoting development the American food aid has hindered progress.

In 1977 an American economist, Shuman, wrote that it was one of the express purposes of Public

Law 480 to help others to achieve self-sufficiency. That goal has never been reached. In effect the dumping within the framework of PL 480 depressed grain prices and negatively affected production in recipient countries.

It is recognized in a report issued by the budget office of the U. S. Congress that by depressing food prices in recipient countries the US food aid worked against local food production and consequently hampered rather than accelerated development.

The US **Foreign Affairs** magazine noted: Many countries feel that they have neglected their agricultural development to a degree as a result of the demobilizing effect of food imports.

Practice has shown that the American food aid — camouflaged dumping in fact — seriously erodes the positions of local agricultural producers. According to Prof. Shenoy of India, US food shipments depressed India's domestic wheat and other grain prices and discouraged farmers from producing enough wheat to feed the Indian people. They have ceded that function to the American farmer. The prices forced Indian peasants to start growing non-food crops. Prof. Shenoy notes that the US food aid reduced prices and that served as a brake on grain production. That undermined the very purpose of PL 480 food imports to promote self-sufficiency.

Not only have grain imports to India under US food aid programs failed to resolve India's food problem, but they have negatively affected the food sector and thus greatly aggravated it. In 1972 when India made its first attempt to do without US food assistance, the total grain shortage was about 16.7 million tons, exceeding one fifth of the country's production. To make up the deficit India had to import annually about 17 million tons of grain, which was twice as much as the overall US

grain exports under PL 480 in 1972. Throughout the period of the food aid operation it had no significant effect either on India's level of food consumption or per capita income.

The U. S. food aid serves a host of American economic purposes, including the establishment of commercial markets in the recipient countries for US agricultural produce. First the Americans give food as a grant (Article II of PL 480), then through concessionary sales (Article I of PL 480) they come to direct commercial exports. It is that factor to a considerable degree that helped to turn India in the seventies into a largest commercial market for US agricultural produce. While in 1974 India was the world's 18th commercial customer for US food, in 1976 it ranked already the 8th.

The story of food aid to Bangladesh is a glaring example in this respect. The country has been receiving aid since the mid-fifties (earlier it was territorially and politically part of India and later of Pakistan). The aid reached its peak in 1972/73 when it amounted to one quarter of the country's entire consumption. Throughout all this period food items, first of all wheat, which are alien to the country's production and consumption patterns made up the bulk of all food delivered through US aid programs. The **Food Policy** magazine wrote of Bangladesh in 1979: wheat has become an important food component, particularly among low-income urban and rural groups. Bangladesh has become greatly dependent on wheat imports.

Thus, the problem of national self-sufficiency in food is considerably complicated. The 1977/78 fiscal year is the last year of Bangladesh's first five-year plan, which strived among other things for food self-sufficiency. And though the production of grain reached 13.1 million tons (12.8 million tons of rice and 0.35

million tons of wheat) Bangladesh still had to import 1.67 million tons of grain, of which wheat amounted to 82 percent. While 4/5 of the entire grain imports were concessionary, the threat for the economy in general and for food self-sufficiency is obvious, particularly if the main donor countries, above all the USA as well as the EEC and Australia, continue to take advantage of food shipments to further their selfish ends, as was the case in the past.

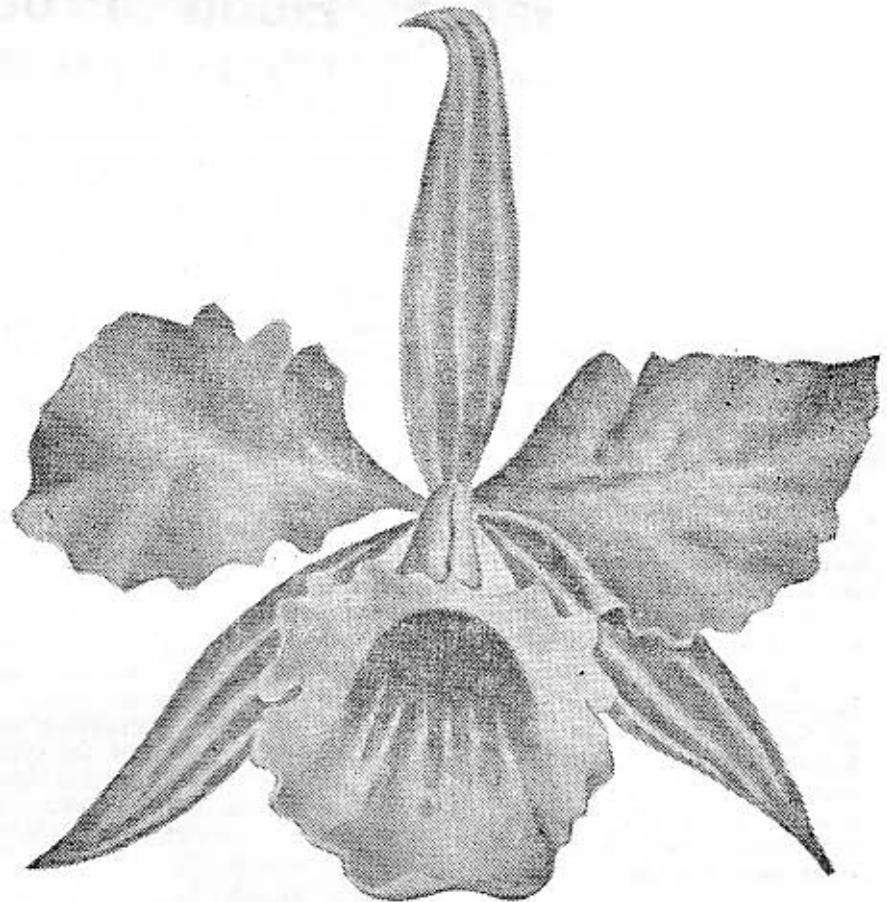
The USA is using new forms of economic interaction to enslave Third World countries. It stimulates their production of agricultural goods needed by the USA and in such cases provides means of production as well. Thus, without alleviating in any substantial way the food situation of the developing countries the USA expands the market for its goods and ties such countries to its external agrarian policies and to its economy in general.

The following conclusions therefore can be drawn from the US food aid to South Asia over the last two decades:

1. Throughout the period the food aid was a tool of flagrant interference and an instrument of political pressures and blackmail. That trend continued in the seventies though in more camouflaged and devious forms.

2. The food aid as it is extended today is extremely unfavourable for the economies of the developing countries (terms of deliveries stipulate payments in dollars; the assortment of supplied food items negatively affect local production).

3. Throughout the seventies the domestic production in India and Bangladesh was demonstratively very unstable. On the other hand, since 1978 food grain surpluses have been again stockpiling in the USA. In early 1980 the surplus reached record proportions. The EEC countries have also increased their food export capabilities. Thus the basis for an unequal food dialogue between the developed industrial nations and the developing countries of South Asia is there. ●



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Nilwala Ganga Flood Protection Scheme

by S. A. Wickremasinghe

Our local experts appear to have approved this scheme, the implementation of which will result in irretrievable damage to the river basin and colossal wasteful expenditure both for capital construction and for maintenance thereafter. The scheme is intended to protect from flood damage some 12,000 acres of paddy fields now yielding about 15,000 tons of paddy in spite of periodical floods.

The total cost of the scheme is estimated at Rs. 25,65,000,000 and maintenance to cost annually Rs. 36,866,000. The cost of power to operate 14000 Kw of installed capacity is Rs. 8,737,000.

The foreign share of the cost is 74% of the total; pumping equipment alone will cost Rs. 500,000,000 which involves 16 pumping stations and 57 pumping units to pump out flood waters from the paddy fields to the river over the flood bunds.

The low yields in Matara district and in all the other rain-fed cultivation areas are not due to flood damage but due to lack of water during the cultivation seasons. The remedy is to provide irrigation water through water conservation and water control which in turn would eliminate the tendency for floods and soil erosion. The French experts appear to work on the hypothesis that flood waters are a major evil and that modern technology must be harnessed to drain all the flood waters and the displaced alluvial soil, as rapidly as possible to the sea.

This French plan includes:-

(a) deepening and broadening the river bed for about 20 miles.

(b) construction of 15 miles of high flood bunds to prevent the river from overflowing the banks.

(c) mechanised pumping of flood water over the banks into the river.

(d) constructing a by-pass channel near the river mouth about half a mile long, 150 ft broad and 10 feet deep. This channel through Pallimulla and Kotuwegoda will displace a large number of families. About half the flood volume is expected to flow through this channel to the sea thereby preventing flood levels upstream from rising to dangerous levels, for example to ten feet in Akuressa town.

(e) a rock-fill weir to divert water to the by-pass.

(f) sea works to build a jetty at the mouth to prevent sand-bar formation.

(g) Readjustment of the river bed, starting from the weir and extending upstream for about 3 miles, and regular dredging and checking every 2 years in order to prevent blocking of the flood outlets to the Indian Ocean by large scale erosion and deposits at the mouth.

The French experts envisage the grave possibility of heavy erosion and deposit formation when attempts are made to increase the volume and velocity of discharge of flood water. The only way to prevent obstruction is to encourage the discharge of displaced soil to the Indian Ocean. This process of erosion and deposit formation and dredging will continue indefinitely adding to the already existing washing away of soil by wave action round the entire sea coast.

The proposed elaborate and prohibitively extravagant flood protection scheme with bunds and a by-pass will not effectively increase paddy yields. The determining factor for poor yields is the lack of irrigation facilities during the cultivation season.

The ideal solution is the damming of the main river and Hulanda Ganga at Bimhamara for hydro-power, irrigation and partial elimination of floods. With dams across the Digili Ganga and Kirama Ara the elimination of

floods will be complete. The government has obviously rejected this proposal because of the problem of the catchment area that will be inundated by the reservoir. In the circumstances the alternative method to increase paddy yields is not flood bunds but reservoirs on all the 4 tributaries and also on the main river at a higher elevation, where the inundation will make much less displacement of settlements. With such an alternative the hydropower potential will be very much reduced but irrigation facilities can be improved and uncertainties of rain-fed cultivation will be eliminated and flood damage effectively reduced.

Surveys were carried out on Siyambalaganga, Hulandaganga and Digili Ganga several years ago. It is very strange that the Kirama Ara has escaped the attention of both foreign and local experts in the past although this tributary drains nearly half of the catchment area of the entire river basin. Nilwala Ganga basin has 45,000 acres of paddy fields and the average yield is about 57,000 metric tons per year. The yield can be doubled by improving cultivation practices. This is possible only by providing water control through proper irrigation facilities.

The ideal solution with maximum benefit to the national power supply is the Binhamara Dam across the Nilwala Ganga and Hulandaganga which will yield about 50,000 kilo watts of electric power. With the harnessing of Kirama Ara and Digili Ganga flood damage will be completely eliminated. The decision to inundate Teldeniya for the Victoria High dam has set the example for others to follow. Maskeli Oya and Mahaveli Scheme have demonstrated that flood waters are the greatest national asset provided they are harnessed for hydropower generation and irrigation. It is criminal to allow flood water to flow into the sea untapped for human welfare.

Appreciation

SHIRLEY AMERASINGHE

Shirley Amerasinghe suffered some unpleasant shocks in the last few years of his life. The experience would have left a lesser man embittered to the end. But a kindly fate had already armed him well to face such ordeals. The saddest moment of his career was also his crowing glory. When the Law of the Sea Conference convened, he was an Ambassador renounced by his own country. When formal business was held up for several days, some other countries offered to 'adopt' him. This rarest of gestures was a sign of the regard in which he was always held in the U. N.'s extended family.

Dr. Kurt Waldheim has placed on record Shirley Amerasinghe's indefatigable and devoted labours in the demanding cause of UNCLOS, one of the UN's truly epic endeavours.

Less publicised and certainly worthy of a more permanent record than this appreciation was the prodigious effort which preceded, and made possible, the Sirima-Shastri Pact. As the link-man between Colombo and Delhi, he had patiently prepared the ground for this historic agreement on the island's most vexed question. He was the right man in the right place at the right time. His perfect self-assurance, his intellectual and verbal dexterity could match the sinuous skills of the most arrogant civil service Brahmin in Delhi. And India's uneasy sense of isolation after the India-China war was just the right time to persuade the Indian government to win over disappointed neighbours. Shastri's conversa-

tions with Mrs. Bandaranaike in Cairo in September '64, and his personal intervention in Delhi a month later, were to confirm the shrewdness of Shirley's judgment.

The U. N. milieu, however, was the ideal scene for the full and free display of his personality and his outstanding gifts.

The man who picked the morning rose for his coat as carefully as he selected his shirts at Harvey and Hudson, was described by NEWSWEEK as having 'an eye for the ladies'. All this was part of his image; an image cultivated so stylishly that it showed no trace of affectation.

He did not suffer fools gladly nor did he allow rank or title to overawe him. He did not confuse his ambassadorial duties with the airport receptionist or porter, and he certainly didn't escort VIP's wives on shopping expeditions. In the eyes of his peers, his arrogance was redeemed by so many talents and graces that there was no need to be other than himself.

The seasoned diplomats and hard-bitten journalists in the Glass Menagerie in NY think more highly of able speakers and debaters than of magniloquent orator. Well schooled in fact and precedent, skilled in argument, and blessed with a fine turn of phrase Shirley feared no opponent. When the cock-a-hoop Israelis presented a 9-point peace plan after their scintillating 6-day victory, Ceylon's representative congratulated the redoubtable Abba Eban for improving on the Prophet Moses and reducing his Ten Commandments by ten percent.

He could also be mischievously humorous but to good purpose. He asked his house guest, a formidable SLFP Minister, why Sri Lankan schoolboys were yelling 'Addo Pathirana!' whenever an umpire gave a doubtful decision. "I don't see the humour of it"

said the Minister. "Nor do I... that's why I asked you..." replied Shirley.

The press corps thought he was one of the finest Presidents of the General Assembly. But he over-rated his chances as Secretary-General. He was also inclined to play the prima donna, concentrating on Amerasinghe and not the Song, and making policy on his own. When the CDN wrote a scorching editorial along those lines, his only reaction was: "Thank you, Mr. Editor, for a premature obituary...."

It is fortunate, said Paul Claudel, the poet and diplomat, that most diplomats have long noses since they usually cannot see beyond them'. Shirley often looked down from his long nose at men who didn't quite measure up to his stature but he always saw far beyond it. Sir Lanka will be lucky to produce another diplomat of his calibre.

— M de S

G. V. S. de Silva

QUIET, self-effacing and studious, G. V. S. de Silva was undoubtedly one of the finest minds produced by the Ceylon University. He had a razor-sharp mind which worked with cool precision. Even the briefest of his interventions at a seminar was an intellectual delight.

As an economist, he had few equals. "Those bright boys in the Central Bank play their silly econometric games....G. V. S. de Silva is a thinker" said the editor of a reputed British journal after a study tour of Sri Lanka.

Fellow teachers and students regarded him as the most knowledgeable Marxist economist in this country, and many a Left politician relied on him for advice. His devotion to whatever task he undertook was total. His death is an immense loss to the progressive movement.

The global crisis and the New International Economic Order

by Cader Muhammed Muzammil

A few months ago United Nations Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim called for an urgent international commitment to help least developed countries including Sri Lanka, "which cannot wait till the New International Economic Order is realised."

THE GLOBAL CRISIS

What is this New International Economic Order and how is it going to benefit the developing and the 'third world' countries? This is a major question raised in every corner of the world. Many say that this Economic Order is aimed at saving the world from the gathering crisis. Today there are many crisis in this world, which have become related problems of world development. They are the crisis of food, population, unemployment, urbanization, violence and the environment.

The United Nations had made an intensive effort in the last decade to study and understand these crises. It has held a World Food Conference and a World Population Conference in 1974, a world employment Conference in 1976 and earlier a World Environment Conference in 1972. The lesson which has been learned from these Conferences is that **all these crises are not unrelated but are bound up with the other and that there is a need to venture for common solutions.** It has been realised that the real solution should be interdependent. **Collectively these crises constitute a single global**

The author, aged 26, is an employee of the K. T. I. (Pallekelle-Kandy). A trade unionist, he is presently deemed to have vacated his post for having participated in the recent general strike.

crisis of World development. A United Nations study of this 'single crisis of world development', concluded that, "The first point to be underlined is that the failure of world society to provide a safe and happy life for all is not caused by any present lack of physical resources, but by economic and social maldistribution and misuse; mankind's predicament is rooted primarily in economic and social structure and behaviour within and between countries". (UNDP/UNCTAD Seminar, COCOYOI 1974).

It is here that hope begins, because these structures (economic and social) are made by people and therefore there is a possibility of them being unmade by people. Therefore let us see how these crises are rooted in the unequal distribution of world's resources.

Thousands of men, women and children in many parts of the world are dying from weakness and disease induced by malnutrition. It has been estimated by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) that 460 million people are 'actually starving' now. The impact on the physical and mental health of present and future generations is incalculable. But in fact, there is no shortage of food in the world. In both, rich and poor nations there is surplus food. But the fact is, it is not equally divided. The poor who need it cannot afford to buy it because the economic demand is greater than human demand. Millions of tons of human food are disposed of in the oceans every year, by the rich world, while protein of the same weight from the poor world are exported to feed animals in this part of the world itself. Therefore, the food crisis lies in the unequal distribution of world's resources.

*A view from
below*

Before many of us die, there is a possibility of the number of people living in this planet to double. It means a demand for another world equal to that of the present one. But if the world's wealth could support the world's increasing number of people, this question of population will not become real problem. A study on world population, has shown that **in countries where the benefits of development have been shared more equally, population growth has begun to slow significantly.** Both in the rich and the poor nations, it is the poorest people who have the largest families, because they reckon that a multitude of children give them security in ill-health and old age, help in their occupations and homes. In this way the population crisis is also rooted in the unequal distribution of the world's resources. The unemployment crisis is so wide that about 1/3rd of the people in the developing world are deprived from earning a living for themselves and their families, and unable to contribute to, or benefit from, their nation's development. There are an estimated 350,000 new job seekers **every week** in South Asia alone! The rich nations have the investment capacity and purchasing power, which can create and sustain industries, markets, long production runs, cheap unit costs, subscribers, competitive exports and jobs. Still for all, the rate of unemployment in these countries is increasing day by day. On the other hand what the poor nations have is only unemployment. An I. L. O study has correctly concluded that the unemployment problem cannot be solved, unless wealth and income is redistributed. Therefore it is in the maldistribution of resources that the crisis of unemployment too is rooted.

Next is the crisis of the cities. It has been estimated that 75,000 people are now leaving the rural

areas of the poor world each day in search of paid work and better living conditions. But most of them end up in slums, bustees, colampas, and shanty towns—without jobs, health care, education, food, clean water, sanitation or hope. In India, 44% of the city families live in one room. In Latin America alone, there are now an estimated 44 Million squatters. Once again it is the unequal distribution of world resources, (where the rural areas are less developed than the cities) which is causing this crisis of the cities.

Violence is another major crisis phenomenon. From the muggings in the streets to the build-up of nuclear arsenals, violence is all pervasive. The world as a whole is now spending more on weapons—instruments of death and destruction—than on health and education which are instruments of life and creativity. Further, a world in which one half of the people consume more than they need whilst the other half lack basic necessities, is already a violent world. "Morally it makes no difference whether a man is killed by war or condemned to starve to death by the indifference of others" said Willy Brandt. **Therefore the parents of violence are inequality, and indifference.**

Nuclear power stations, the increased use of fossil fuels, the use of the seas as the worlds dustbins, the erosion of the soil, the destruction of trees, the pumping of 1000 new man-made chemicals into the atmosphere every year are all creating serious risks to the health and well-being of the planet and all its people. These destructive elements have forced the natural systems which sustains all life in this planet to reach the outer limits of their tolerance, thus causing the environmental crisis. The authors of 'Only One World' said "we are heading for ecological disaster". An United Nations study also concluded that "Unequal economic relationships contribute directly to environmental pressure". In the developing countries, the environmental ills are rooted in poverty. And, behind every issue of the

environment lies the issue of economic redistribution and social justice. That is why the question of a more equal distribution of the world's resources is now the most vital issue of our times. Professor Christopher Freeman writes "At the centre of the world political stage over the next century is likely to be the issue of relationships between rich and poor nations and the problem of income distribution within nations. The central problem, as I see it, is this 'two-tiered world' and our central task is to explore paths by which inequalities between and within nations might be reduced."

Although it has long been a moral ideal to end poverty and inequality, today it has become a practical necessity. It is the only way of solving the great crises of food, population, unemployment, violence, urbanisation and the environment, which now threaten the world today.

While some countries live in unprecedented abundance, an increasing part of humanity lives constantly in poverty. Similarly while some people within the same nation live in luxury, the majority of its population lives in hunger. Such a state of affairs cannot be accepted. This is not only for moral and ethical reasons but also because it creates conditions of instability which, in an increasingly interdependent world, presents a military as well as an economic danger to all.

THE NIEO

In the path of solving these world crises, a major step was taken in April 1974 when the Governments of the world, meeting at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, approved a 'Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.' The aim of this Economic Order, according to the United Nations is "to correct inequalities and redress injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing nations and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future

generations". At the same time the developed nations filed 230 pages of reservations on the 'Declaration'.

The drive for the New Economic order comes from the developing world itself. Their main argument is that the present world economic order, devised by and for the rich nations during the colonial period, still serves to link affluence and poverty in a cause and effect relationship and precipitates global crisis by failing to meet the basic needs of two thirds of the World's people. Therefore in the interest of the world community as a whole, it is argued, a N. I. E. O is necessary. According to an U. N. Symposium "The world market system has continually operated to increase the power and wealth of the rich and maintain the relative deprivation of the poor." The Rich Nations control at least three-quarters of the world's income, investments and technology, enabling them to lay down the rules of world trade, regulate the world's monetary system, determine the progress of science, dominate the economies of developing countries, and purchase cheaply the world's raw materials.

Considering the above causes which have led to the 'Declaration of the NEO, it is bound on us to consider which part of the worlds people this New Economic Order would serve most. To this end we shall first and foremost consider its principles.

The first principle of the NEO is self-determination. That is the right of the developing countries to control their own affairs in their own interest and to share equally in re-creating the international economic order which so vitally affects those interests. Presently, the prices of the raw materials they sell, the value of the foreign currency they use, the cost of the industrial goods they import, the nature of the investments and technology they seek, the amount and kind of aid they receive, are largely determined by processes which they cannot initiate or control. To escape this, the developing nations seek an end to dependence.

Competitive not Complementary

by N. M. M. I. Hussein

There seems to be a growing consciousness in South Asia of the regional potential for economic co-operation. The South Asian countries are seen as having a common background in that all of them have felt the impact of Western imperialism, though all were not subject to colonialism, and this common background.

Given their common background and outlook, the problems they have in common and the aggravation of their problems in consequence of the Western economic recession, it is to be expected that there will be an increasing recognition of the need to realise the potential for regional economic co-operation.

It remains, however, that the South Asian economies are competitive, not complementary, and therefore the actual potential for regional co-operation has to be established and not assumed.

A useful study has been made by the Marga Institute, National Development Strategies and Complementarities, of the opportunities for intra-regional trade and economic co-operation provided by the Sri Lanka Government's programme of economic development for the five years-period 1979-83. The study points out that Sri Lanka's trade with neighbouring countries has constituted only a small share of its external trade during the past five years, between 8 to 9 percent of its exports and between 12 to 15 percent of its imports. It refers to Joint Commissions for economic co-operation established with India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and explores in detail the possible lines for trade between Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan as well. Furthermore, it is recognised that the resources of the Indian Ocean could become an important factor in regional co-operation covering

some of the South Asian countries.

Indian Technology

There is a consciousness of the exceptional role that can be played by Indian technology in regional co-operation. India is unusual among developing countries in having technological expertise advanced enough to place the country in the twenty first century.

While there is a consciousness of the potential for South Asian economic co-operation, there is at the same time a recognition in the divergences of economic interest between the South Asian countries. This recognition of divergent economic interests appears to have been sharpened as a consequence of attempts to formulate a common strategy for the countries of the South as a whole in dealing with problems arising out of the North-South economic relationship. The South Asian countries are at different stages of economic development, consisting of the semi-industrialized countries, India and Pakistan, the developing countries, Iran and Sri Lanka, and the least developed countries Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal. In addition, there are three landlocked countries in the region, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan, which causes further divergences of interest. It has been noted that in formulating a common strategy the most important fact that there is a divergence of interest between countries for whom commodities are a top priority, such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan, some countries for and other South Asian countries. The Investment Promotion Zone of Sri Lanka is seen as providing investment opportunities for other South Asian countries, some of which could invest their surplus on their balance of payments accounts in industrial ventures in the Invest-

ment Promotion Zone and export the products to their home-markets. Some South Asian countries could export their capital and technology to Sri Lanka, a sphere of co-operation in which India could play a particularly significant role. The study points out that there is considerable potential for co-operation between Sri Lanka and other countries in the region in shipping, civil aviation, tourism, construction of economic infrastructures, fishery exploration and research.

There is need also for detailed studies of the South Asian potential for regional projects, of a multilateral as distinct from bilateral character. It has been suggested that the Ganges waters could have the potential for the transformation of the economies of South Asia through the provision of hydro-electric power and water resources. This would require co-operation between Bangladesh, Nepal and India. The resources of the Himalayan region are seen as providing opportunities for regional co-operation involving whom manufactures are more important than commodities, such as India and Pakistan, while others are in an intermediate position. It has been noted further that while some countries could have common interests in issues relating to manufacture, there has nevertheless divergences on the specific issues involved. While, therefore, the South Asian countries share common interests with other countries of the South in confronting North-South economic problems, they have among themselves the divergences of interest that are to be found in Group 77 as a whole.

Myrdal's Thesis

What seems feasible for the foreseeable future is only a modest degree of South Asian economic co-operation. As a way of dispelling over-optimistic expectations

which could prove to be counter-productive in leading to disillusionment, it should be useful to recall some of the observations made in the Chapter "Foreign Trade and Capital Flows" in Volume I of Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama* (1968). It has to be explained that Myrdal used the term "South Asia" to include South East Asia as well, but his observations are relevant to South Asia as defined in this paper. He noted that concomitant with the growing importance of the Western countries in South Asia's foreign trade, there had been a decline in trade within the region. Although there was a potential for expansion of trade among the South Asian countries, the past trends had been away from such a development and the immediate prospects for significant increases in intra-regional trade appeared slim. While the growing importance of South Asia's trade with the Western countries was the most important trend discernible at the time Myrdal wrote, exports to the West had not grown rapidly enough for the purposes of the South Asian countries and that meant that emphasis had to be placed on import substitution and the search for alternative markets. But import substitution had functioned for the region as a whole as a beggar-thy-neighbour policy, and intra-regional trade had not grown.

The desideratum, in Myrdal's view, for the realisation of the potential for regional economic co-operation was the willingness of South Asian countries to engage in joint planning, which required the transcending of a narrow and ultimately self-defeating nationalist approach to the problems of each country. He argued that increased intra-regional trade required much more

than the lowering of tariffs and other trade barriers, unlike in the West where every country was developed enough to face competition against each other. The situation in South Asia was quite different because of an inefficient market mechanism and the problems posed by the bigger and industrially more developed countries, in the first place, India. A rational division of labour, covering both industry and agriculture, has to be brought about as the basic economic problem in the way of regional co-operation in that the South Asian economies are non-complementary, and for this joint planning is essential.

Myrdal was quite realistic in looking at the prospects for joint planning, which he recognised required a political climate that was absent in a region 'marked by many deeply rooted animosities.' He forecast that 'whatever progress there may be will be restricted to special arrangements involving only two or a few countries.' These could be beneficial provided they led to an improved division of labour. 'But the strivings have so much to recommend them that they will probably not be given up', and he thought that the countries of South Asia 'may be driven towards a closer economic association by the trends in world trade and the emerging pattern of international economic relations'.

Myrdal's forecast has proved to be accurate, except that the actual record of South Asia economic co-operation has been even more dismal than anticipated by him in 1968. The trends in world trade, and the emerging pattern of international economic relations to which he referred, have not driven the South Asian countries towards a closer economic association.

One approach to the problem of North-South economic relations seems to be mistaken as it postulates a cohesion in the South, and within the regions of the South, that does not in fact exist. It cannot be presumed either that cohesion will come about as a consequence of economic deve-

lopment. The dynamics of the development process suggest rather that while some countries make economic headway and approach the take-off stage of self-sustained growth they will feel the gravitational pull of the developed economies to an even greater extent than at present, and this will militate against cohesion in the South. They may lose what common ground they have with other countries in the South, and with countries in their region, and join the club of the rich.

Some of the observations in Ralf Dahrendorf's 'The New Liberty' are relevant in this connection. He opposes Marx's notion that the oppressed of one epoch are the potential rulers of the next. It is not accurate to describe the early industrial bourgeoisie as the oppressed of the feudal social order. Rather they constituted a competing elite, not a poor and oppressed group. An international class struggle, if there is such a thing, will not mean that the poor and oppressed of today will replace the present leaders.

NEXT: Great Powers

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Vessantara, morality and melodrama

by Reggie Siriwardena

A quarter-century after **Maname** Dr. Sarachchandra has returned to Tower Hall. That is the main impression I brought back from his new play, **Vessantara**. This is not the place to attempt a re-assessment, in the perspective of twenty-five years, of the achievement and the limitations of **Maname** and **Sinhabahu**, but I see no reason to alter one part of the judgement that I, in common with several other critics at the time, made of these plays that in creating a consistent poetic stylisation Dr. Sarachchandra had made a fruitful departure from the hybrid and incoherent dramatic mode of the **nurthiya**. Now Dr. Sarachchandra has chosen to go back on his own theatrical innovation. Mercifully, there is no return to the high-flown rhetoric that he caricatured in **Pabavati**, but otherwise **Vessantara** follows the Tower Hall tradition in teetering between a heightened and formalised language in some episodes and an everyday middle-class idiom in others. Sanda Maha Raja and his queen might have been any suburban couple, and the ministers could have come out of a less brilliant version of **Subhasaha Yasa**. I see that one Sunday critic has called the costumes 'gorgeous'. Gawdy, to my mind, is the more appropriate word — gawdy, and in plain bad taste.

In choosing the story for his new play, Dr. Sarachchandra was also seeking reconciliation with tradition. 'The absence of a Sinhala "Vessantara" which has either lasting literary qualities or which reflects the folk imagination,' says the programme note, 'appears to be an unaccountable fact, in view of the importance as well as the vast popularity of this Jataka in the context of our culture.' Dr. Sarachchandra goes on to say later in the same note: 'The ethics of the Vessantara Jataka is bound

to trouble westerners because of their background of Christian ethical thinking that stresses the love of wife and children and kindred as a means towards the attainment of perfection. The ideal that Vessantara attempts to achieve is that of the submersion of one's personal love and attachments in the universal goal of the love of humanity.'

The problem posed by the Vessantara story for any writer who seeks to make drama of it is not in my opinion, that of the difference between Christian and Buddhist ethics, but one which is rooted in the dramatic material itself. What is the dramatic high point of the play—whether in the old John de Silva or in the new Sarachchandra? It is the giving away of the children, the spectacle of their physical suffering and emotional anguish, which un-faillingly has the audience reaching for their handkerchiefs. But if one accepts the ethics which the play enforces — that the Bodhisattva is indeed justified in giving his children away into slavery and brutal torment in order to win spiritual deliverance — then the tears the playwright wrings from his audience are a total irrelevance. This fatal inner contradiction between the play's ethics and its emotional appeal — that it exploits feelings which are denied by its own morality — means that the climax — in Sarachchandra just as in John de Silva — remains pure sensationalism, melodrama. And the melodrama is crowned by the fact that the legend allows the playwright to have it both ways when the children are rescued in the happy ending. Thus the collision between the audience's normal human reactions and the transcendental ethics which the play preaches is averted, and the audience is given the luxury of having had a good cry and feeling

at the same time that they have been spiritually uplifted.

It seems to me that the only way in which a playwright can make tragedy rather than melodrama out of the Vessantara story is by taking a less idealising attitude towards the central character. The motto for a good play on the Vessantara theme might come from George Orwell's remark in his 'Reflections on Gandhi': 'Sainthood is a thing that human beings must avoid.' This, however, is very far from Dr. Sarachchandra's intention. No breath of criticism or questioning is allowed to disturb the idealisation of Vessantara at the climax. As the playwright remarks in his programme note: 'Nor have I disturbed the image of Madri Devi, as the devoted wife who is prepared to make any sacrifice to help her husband to attain his ideal in which she herself believes.' Here again the play has it both ways, because Madri Devi can retain in the audience's eyes the image both of the loving mother and of the submissive wife who subordinates herself to her husband's spiritual goal only because she is never submitted to the test of knowing and witnessing the torments of her children.

In this evasion of the human conflicts which the play inevitably brings to mind but never honestly faces, Dr. Sarachchandra has come a long way from the poignant family drama of **Sinhabahu**. Looking back on that play, it seems to me now that its force lay in the communication of the pain and loss of the older generation rather than of the will to freedom of the young. But in the moments of greatest intensity in **Sinhabahu** — in the lion's cry of anguish over the loss of his children or the mother's lament over the parting from her son, — there

was unmistakably a deep personal involvement on the part of the dramatist. (Dr. Sarachchandra's touching dedication of the published text of the play to his daughter seemed a confirmation of what one might have concluded from the play itself.) The journey from **Sinhabahu** to **Vessantara** may be a spiritual progress, for those who are interested in such matters. I can see it only as a human and dramatic impoverishment. And the play prompts the same question that is raised by other dramatic attempts to portray on the stage complete sainthood — whether one can ever do this without making the hero seem a solemn, inhuman prig.

Finally, there is the claim made for the play by its author himself — that it is a 'Vessantara for our time'. He writes: 'I have chosen to dramatise this story afresh because I feel it to be singularly relevant to today, when we are witnessing rapid changes

in our society which threaten traditional values. At a time when self-interest and hedonism are being recommended as values which would lead our country to prosperity, it is good to remind ourselves that the values that our culture has held in esteem over the centuries are the exact opposite of these.' Judged by this declared intention of the playwright too, the play is a failure.

In his attempt at contemporary significance, Dr. Sarachchandra has made the Vessantara of the first half of the play a welfarist gone mad, distributing the wealth of the state indiscriminately to all comers in the conviction that only so can he alleviate the sufferings of the poor. In the play Vessantara's giving comes out not as a traditional ethic but as a personal aberration which shocks even other people in his own society, and the consequences

of his random giving seem so chaotic that we cannot help agreeing with the worldly-wise judgments of the ministers. Even the giving away of the children is made to seem, in the first place, an act of distributive justice in favour of the childless Jajuka; it is only as an afterthought that Vessantara is made to voice the aspiration to deliverance through the casting off all attachments. In his anxiety to create a contemporary Vessantara Dr. Sarachchandra has destroyed whatever internal consistency the traditional character (single-mindedly moved by the aspiration to Buddhahood) had, and he has offered in his place a figure seeking social justice, yet so innocent of the realities of politics and economics that only the naivest of spectators will take him as a hero for our time.

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The Tamil Theatre that never was

by S. Sivasegaram

The views expressed in the article by Sundaralingam in Lanka Guardian (Nov 1 1980) are not entirely new to me since I have already read them in Tamil some months ago. I have also read Balendra's reply which I thought brought the 'debate' to an end. Now it appears as if Sundaralingam wants to start it all over again in English.

As Sundaralingam himself is of the view that it was in the late sixties and early seventies that a serious Tamil Theatre Movement really blossomed, I will dismiss as prehistory his comments on the developments up to this period.

He has listed some nine plays staged between 1970 and 1980 as illustrations of what he calls 'a good admixture of old traditional forms and the modern theatre techniques'. Of these nine, Murugaiyan's *katuuliam*, the revised version of *kantan karunai*, Sivanandan's *kaalam civakkiratu*, and *apacuram* received some detailed comments. I was rather pleased to see that *putiyatoru viitu* by the late Mahakavi (an outstanding poet) also found its way into the list; what pleased me even more was the author's modesty in not commenting on his own production *Vilippu*, which was, of course, listed among the 'famous nine'.

I suppose that it will not be entirely out of place for me to comment on some of these great plays.

Apacuram allegedly uses the 'absurd theatre style'. Somehow I was inclined to think that it belonged to the ridiculous theatre style. A rather sympathetic reviewer (Sasi Krishnamoorthy in *Nati*, 5, 1976) complained that the non-intellectuals could not understand the play. But none of the intellectuals I met either could figure out what the play was all about. The theme was shallow and the production bad. All what the producer succeeded in

doing was the total destruction of any form of subtlety.

Kantan karunai, supposedly in the *kaattan kuuttu* tradition, was first produced in the late '60s and the revised version appeared in 1974. Until I saw this play I was under the 'illusion' that it was necessary for the performers of any *kuuttu* to observe some sense of rhythm on stage. Besides me there were several others in Peradeniya who seemed to think that the 'message' was unclear and, that in any event, the stage performance made sure that it was completely lost.

I do not remember reading any review which hailed *kaalam civakkiratu* as a great play. The most favourable review of *vilippu* was by Sundaralingam himself. According to him this play served (and still serves) some kind of a guide to all subsequent Sri Lankan Tamil plays! Other reviewers like Sivanayagam, Sivakumaran and, recently, Niththiyananthan appear to have a somewhat different opinion.

Of the nine plays listed by Sundaralingam *poruttatu pootum* by Tarcisius certainly provided the best theatre. As one of my colleagues at Peradeniya put it, it was very good theatre, and very bad drama, mainly because of the crudeness of the emotions and the total lack of subtlety in the handling of the theme.

It is interesting that Sundaralingam who refrains from making any critical assessment of the epoch-making plays listed by him shows little hesitation in denouncing Balendra's plays as 'painting poor portraits of Tennessee Williams, Lorca, Brecht and Arbusov, and the rest' (?). It will help all of us and Mr Sundaralingam if he can be more specific in his criticism.

If Sundaralingam is serious about drama and his 'search for a truly National Tamil Theatre' he can

Comments on N. Sundaralingam's article in Lanka Guardian, 3 (12), Nov. 1, 1980.

go ahead and produce some more masterpieces like *vilippu* instead of hurling abuse at those who are making their humble contributions. All the talk about the political instability in 1971 and 1977 (?) and about the cultural vacuum created after 1977 August is sham. What a progressive artist needs above all is intellectual honesty and a sense of integrity.

Finally, I would like to make some observations about the notion that 'a truly National Tamil Theatre' will be based on the *kuuttu* and other traditional forms. The traditional theatre, although poor by modern standards and on the basis of the demands of modern society, has something to offer. But it certainly cannot serve as the starting point for the powerful theatre tradition which the Tamil dramatists are seeking to build. The Tamil Theatre should not restrict itself to one or two forms of experiences. The fact modern Tamil drama owes much to foreign experiences is not something that we need to be ashamed of; in fact the first modern Tamil play was a translation and many of the successful themes for Tamil Ballet, based on *bharatha naatyam*, are from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, which are certainly not of Tamil origin. Modern Tamil society is undergoing rapid changes under forces of modernism, and confining the arts to feudal and pre-feudal forms, which have suffered centuries of stagnation under colonial rule, will not help in the development of the Tamil Theatre, truly national or otherwise.

The IMF / IBRD...

(Continued from page 8)

these two sectors are extremely high, the potential for value added is, by the same token, extremely low. In short, the existing pattern of trade simply cannot be the basis for any meaningful industrialization. On the contrary, what we do have is an import-led "unbalanced" growth with trade, commerce, banking and other service and an highly import-based construction as the leading sectors and not export-oriented industrialization.

The sharp deterioration in the terms of trade referred to in the Budget Speech is the direct outcome of the trend cited above. The balance of payments surplus, despite deterioration in the terms of trade, was largely due to a substantial inflow of long-term official loans and balance of payments support from the IMF supplemented by borrowings from the international money market. However, increasing deficits in merchandise trade and the net outflow of capital in the form of returns on investments and the servicing and repayment of debt will subsequently manifest itself in balance of payments deficit—an inevitability which even the World Bank had highlighted in its report to the Sri Lanka Aid Consortium. It is conceivable, therefore, that borrowings from the international money market monopolized by the Transnational banks will increase. There is already in existence a bank syndicate headed by Manufacturers Hanover Trust which is being tapped regularly for loans by the Sri Lankan government. The consequence, of course, is the well known 'debt trap' and Sri Lanka is fast heading towards it.

Let us now take devaluation another integral component of the 'IMF Package'. The theoretical rationale behind devaluation is that it would make exports from Sri Lanka more competitive in the international market. Devaluation is further deemed necessary as a remedial measure against "temporary" dislocations arising out of the liberalization of imports. The

contradiction here lies in the fact that in the absence of a viable domestic capital goods sector, devaluation merely leads to an increase in the cost of production of import-based export-oriented commodities, thereby, actually undermining their price competitiveness. And where the production system is characterized by supply bottlenecks and a low mobility of the factors of production. The above scenario applies to most "peripheral" social formations and Sri Lanka is no exception. Furthermore, since a large component of import consist of wage goods, devaluation also has a direct bearing on the cost of living.

The massive public investment Programme with the major portion of the outlay directed at the three "lead projects" — the Mahaweli Development Programme, the Urban and Housing Development Programme and the GCEC — could be characterized as the basic "infrastructure" essential for the operation of the Export-Led Growth Model. However, the following extract from the World Bank Report which was placed before the Aid Consortium highlights the immense strain that the "lead projects" has placed on the resources of the economy. To quote: "The lead projects are effectively preempting real and financial resources that could be used far more productively elsewhere in the economy. These projects will, therefore, need to bear brunt of any further effort to restore balance to the program, although cuts in public investment will probably be needed across the board." The 1981 Budget Speech is a clear indication that the government had taken the World Bank advice to heart.

It is within the context of the scenario depicted above that the 1981 Budget should be examined. An attempt will be made in this regard in Part III of this article. An attempt will also be made to trace the continuity in the economic orientation of the two bourgeois parliamentary parties and the myth of the import-substitution vs export-orientation argument.

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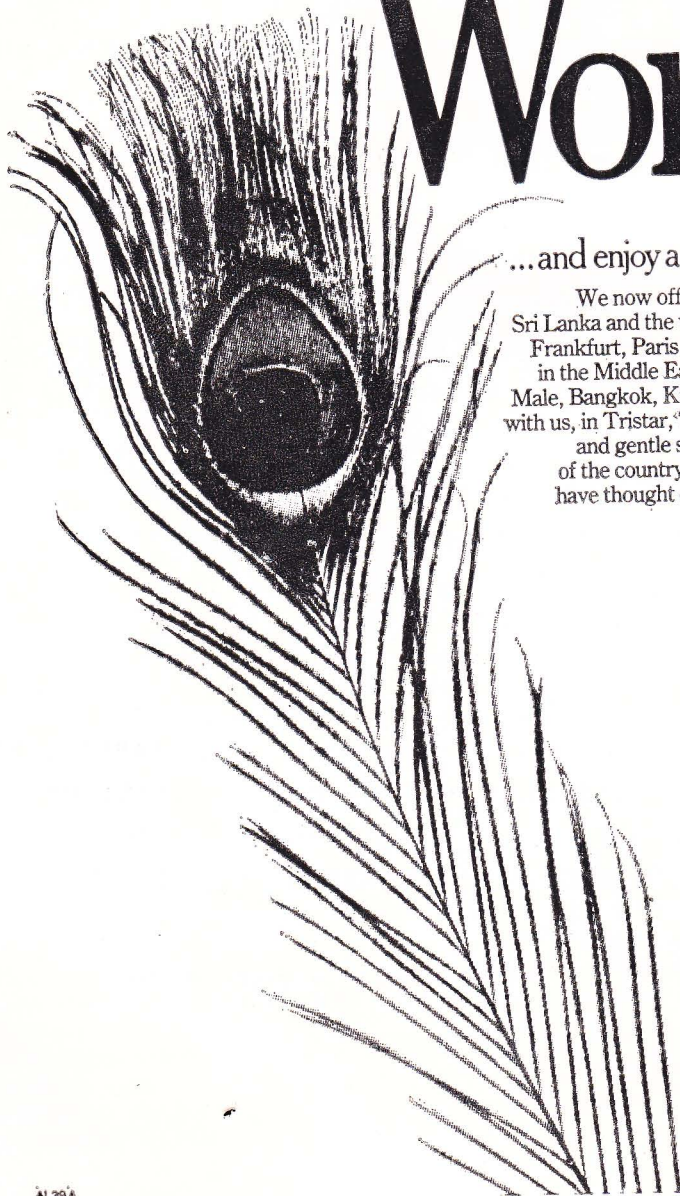
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