

1980-
SLFP's SECRET WAR GOES ON

LANKA

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NAM AT 20

A

RIGHTWARD

SHIFT

— *Mervyn de Silva*
(Delhi Report)



What happened at Madurai

The Dostoevsky Centenary

International Relations

'NM' Film — A Reply

— *Sachi. Sri Kantha*

— *Reggie Siriwardena*

— *Dayan Jayatilleka*

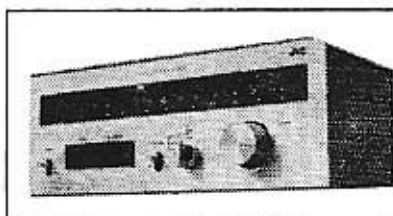
— *Carlo Fonseka*

● STRIKER'S SUICIDE

● SCHOOL SYSTEM



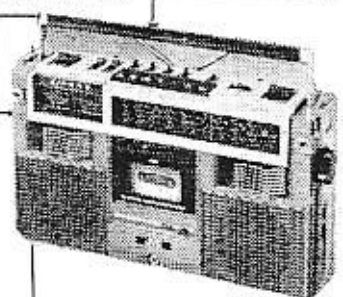
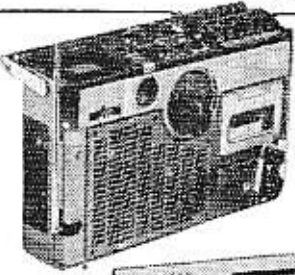
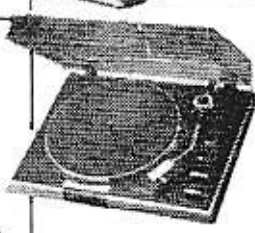
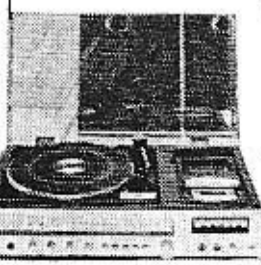
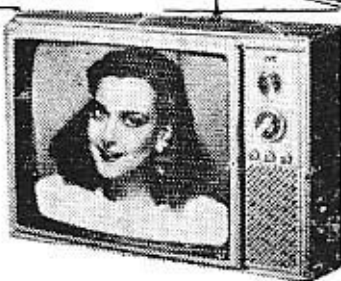
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C. P. — COMING IN FROM THE COLD?

The decision of the 5 party bloc to invite the CPSL for their joint May Day rally is another step in the general direction of anti-UNP unity which was the most significant trend of politics in 1980. In fact, in a leading article entitled "MAY DAY 1981: Left Projections", the L. G. predicted a 7 party bloc by May Day. But Vasudeva's NSSP is still out in the cold while the C. P. is inching towards the old familiar "coalition of anti-UNP forces". This however has cost the party a price which cannot be fully gauged right now. Two young radicals from the Central Committee have quit, and the debate inside on tactics goes on.

ABORTIVE MOVE

The demonstration of Maoists outside the Chinese embassy prompted frantic efforts to cobble together some little 'front' of ex-Maoists who would support the official Peking line. The Maoists led by the veteran Shan have their own bloc and are now in business with their own paper. Besides, Shan has a much bigger public profile as representative of this group in the 5 party bloc of SLFP-LSSP-TULF-MEP-CPC.

But the pro-Peking liners, (mostly remnants of the Pol Potist Janavegaya) are now a loose group of sundry individuals scattered between Hulftsdorp and the 'Dinakara'. The 'front' has yet to make a public appearance. (Contd. on page 10)

Parliamentary Democracy in peril

Although I cannot but be amused at the spectacle of a Trotter working up a lather about "our great and precious heritage of parliamentary democracy" being in peril (Sri Lanka Trotters always did have a passion for the Westminster model of government and even its finical procedures — "Your old House of Commons rules" Philip used to sneer).

I do agree that Dr Colvin R de Silva's article is on a subject we must all be concerned about. But why is it his article treats of practically everything other than the threat to our parliamentary democracy? He does spell out the vast powers vested in the executive president but on the face of it these do not appear wider or more conducive to dictatorship than the very similar powers vested in e.g. the US president. Dr. Colvin must say much more to explain why such powers in our executive president are a danger to parliamentary democracy. Instead he inexplicably veers off on a different tack. He discourses on such matters as the taking away of the poor man's ration book, devaluation, inflation, denationalisation etc. all of which are no doubt deplorable but they do not pose a threat to parliamentary democracy as such unless Dr Colvin means they are likely to lead to the kind of revolution he has been alternately advocating and prophesying all his life.

TRENDS + LETTERS

In a recent issue of the Nation I saw Dr Colvin's subject treated much more relevantly and cogently — and in just a few words: "The essence of parliamentary democracy is that a government holds office only while it enjoys the confidence of parliament. Traditionally the way a loss of such confidence is expressed is by members crossing the floor. Under JR's new dispensation (government members) crossing the floor is no longer possible because any rebels would find themselves deprived of their parliamentary seats and replaced by nominees of the ruling party. The UNP machine is controlled with an iron hand by JR himself. This in the context of a 5/6 UNP majority means that one who is not a member of parliament decides what parliament shall and shall not do".

I think these few comments serve much better to explain why the president's vast powers have imperilled parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka than do Dr Colvin's maunderings.

Dr. Costain de Vos
Kollupitiya

An appeal

This letter is penned to focus attention on a political question which some have forgotten and others are in the process of forgetting. The Secretary of the Democratic National Front and the ULF's candidate for the Beruwela seat at the 1977 General Elections, Comrade G. I. D. Dharmasekera, today languishes in the Magazine Remand prison after having being taken into custody in connection with the incidents in the city of Colombo on the 8th of August last year. As of Feb. 24th Comrade Dharmasekera has been in remand for a period of 200 days.

Comrade Dharmasekera was taken into custody while participating in the Satyagraha protesting against the dismissal from work

(Continued on page 24)

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Delhi diplomacy and semantics

Mervyn de Silva

The anti-US leftward trend, a dominant tendency in the NAM from its early anti-colonial beginnings, reached its peak at Havana, the sixth summit, in 1979. With the United States successfully marshalling all the basically pro-West forces within the movement—albeit an unwieldy coalition whose unity may prove quite tenuous in the next few years—the Delhi meeting marked a perceptible rightward shift.

While this remains the first and most important point to be made about the Delhi conference, the actual content of this "shift" requires much closer examination in terms, first of all, of internal and external factors, and then in relation to each of the principal issues.

Understandably, the transnational news agencies which have been long accustomed to regard a nonaligned convention as a theatrical exhibition in US-baiting have eagerly saluted the conference as "a victory for the moderates" "an amazing blow to the Cuban era" etc. (This, having confidently predicted at first an open split in the NAM.) To their immense delight, they now saw some Big Bear-baiting. Hence the commotion.

When the last hurrah has been shouted and the excitement dies down, a careful study of the Delhi Declaration and Appeal may prove quite disappointing to those who so impulsively joined the cheer-gangs of the western media.

To the average Western correspondent, a Third World conference is pure theatre. That is his outlook and his style.

The curtain falls and he passes on to another 'newsy' event having

taken in the 'personalities' 'the colour' 'the scene' 'the backstage gossip'. It is part of the inherently ephemeral nature of his trade.

Students of nonalignment who are seriously interested in its current problems cannot of course approach the event in this fashion.

Semantic exercise

If this was a triumph for anything, it was a victory for semantic skill. That is what the final document will demonstrate. If one must personalise the point, it was a glorious display of Delhi diplomacy; the singular achievement of a small team of able Indian officials led by such gifted practitioners as R. D. Sathe and Eric Goncalves.

Delhi diplomacy, one is tempted to say, is a deadly combination of Kautilyan statecraft and English education. Kautilya furnishes the strategy and the tactics; the rest of diplomacy is word-play. And the British foreign office, the traditional nursery of diplomats in the former colonies, houses many a master of the arcane art of super-fine linguistics in the not always ennobling service of diplomacy which itself is only politics in striped pants.

And English is the undisputed international language today.

So, night after night (often till five in the morning) Indian officials worked in the drafting committees, especially in the main political committee, re-arranging paragraphs, altering phrases, re-writing sentences, re-setting clauses and commas. To what purpose? Of course, this Patching-up process was aimed at composing differences, satisfying opposing schools of thought, and reconciling the sharper disagreements which stood in the way of

The Editor of the *Lanka Guardian* spent a fortnight in India on the invitation of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The nonaligned officials' meeting (Feb. 4-8) and Foreign Ministers' conference (Feb. 9-12) prepared the ground for the 7th Summit scheduled for 1982 in Baghdad. On Feb. 11th, a special commemorative meeting was held at the Vigyan Bhavan to mark the 20th anniversary of the Belgrade conference. The chief speakers were the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and Dr. Kurt Waldheim, UN Secretary-General.

In a fortnight crowded with events commemorating the 20th anniversary of Belgrade, Mr. Venkataraman, Indian Minister of Finance and Mr. Tiwari, Indian Minister of Planning, participated in a symposium on "The New International Economic Order" sponsored by the Indian Institute of Nonaligned Studies.

The School of International Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University also organised a discussion on "The New International Information Order". Among those who participated were Prof. K. P. Mishra, Dean of the School for International Studies, Sabeth Ramirez former Chief Information officer of OPEC, Vienna, and Mervyn de Silva of the *Lanka Guardian*.

"consensus", that nonaligned piety of pieties.

How do these differences on specific or general issues, bilateral or regional, reflect wider global conflicts? Have they been introduced from outside or merely aggravated and exploited by external forces? How finally do the responses of

individual members and identifiable groups demarcate the broad line-up of forces within the movement? Therein lies the politics of this conference.

Neat move

On the opening day, revolutionary Nicaragua from which the new Reagan administration has threatened to withdraw the aid pledged by President Carter had its powers as Chairman of the Political Committee effectively clipped. By a neat manoeuvre a special drafting group was created to help revise the Indian draft Declaration on all "contentious issues"...the suspension of Egypt, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, the Indian ocean, the Iran-Iraq war etc.

In both behind-the-scenes exchanges and public comments Indian officials took great pains to point out that the "Indian draft" was not necessarily the Indian view on every issue but a carefully crafted synthesis of nonaligned opinions expressed to India during the long drawn out consultations that preceded the Delhi conference.

While the great majority of delegations thought that the draft prepared by India was basically acceptable, there was also a feeling that it needed 'improvement' 'strengthening' and 'firming up' on certain controversial questions.

The Indian draft, still others felt; was too much of a "conceptual paper", re-stating basic principles even in regard to particularly contentious issues rather than declaring a position. Those with strong group interests and regional issues preferred to return to the old practice of having at least a few paragraphs on each of these matters included ('stapled' was the wearily cynical word chosen by a veteran participant) in the final document.

Once these ticklish issues were identified and isolated, it was decided that the work of the main political committee would move more smoothly if a smaller group (task force) concentrated on these questions while the political committee as a whole went through the larger, though less trying, exercise of studying and revising, if necessary, the long list of other items.

GENUINE NONALIGNMENT

(Singapore Style)

On what was described as a 'private visit' to the US, Singapore's Deputy Premier Mr. S. Rajaratnam had talks with Gen. Alexander Haig, Secretary of State, on Jan. 29, a week before the Delhi conference. According to the **International Herald Tribune** he told reporters that Haig had accepted his "plan for a credible non-communist alternative in Kampuchea". He added that his plan was also supported by ASEAN and China. The US, China and ASEAN would help forge links between all groups

hostile to the present Kampuchean regime and then form a new government that would have their recognition.

Richard Nations (**Far Eastern Economic Review**) writes: "He (Rajaratnam) told reporters that the US should openly support anti-Soviet forces in the Third World and take a more active position on Indo-China. The US, he said, should give political and material support to anti-Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea and increase arms aid to Thailand".

Ambassador J. B. Clarke of Nigeria was chosen as Chairman of this smaller group. He in turn selected three others to assist him. With the full approval of the main committee he chose Argentina, Tanzania and the PLO. The manoeuvre itself and the composition of this special group were both revealed. There were 2 Africans, one Latin American and one Arab. No Asians. While it was a tribute to the PLO that a liberation organisation rather than a sovereign state was elected to represent the 20 member strong Arab League, the inclusion of 2 Africans was a sign that African preponderance in the OAU, the largest single unit within the NAM (and the UN) had become a crucial political factor.

Again, Cuba would have seen a natural Latin American choice. It was a founder member of the movement and now its Chairman. Yet, Cuba was ignored. So was the whole continent of Asia, where if you trace the evolution of the movement from Delhi, Colombo and Bandung, nonalignment was born. Asia and the Indian Ocean, it was clear to those who observed the opening session, was the crisis area; the region which had produced those critical situations that had now become the "contentious issues" facing the movement today, and had attracted to itself international, and external conflicts from which neither

the movement nor this conference was free.

The strategem aimed at Nicaragua had of course a much larger objective. Effective control of the conference (the direction of the debate and the revision of the draft on the critical issues) was taken away from Nicaragua Chairman of the Political Committee. That this was no mere professional exhibition in conferencemanship but a calculated political move was to become transparently obvious with each passing day.

Since Havana, the west had mobilised its forces remarkably well. With the Reagan victory this ongoing effort must have been redoubled. The Western news agencies have hailed the Delhi conference as a "victory for the moderates", and doubtless the thousand "Third World" commentators, academics and intellectuals will accept this verdict and the terminology tamely and circulate them as revealed wisdom.

(In a surprisingly refreshing comment, the **Sunday Observer** wrote editorially: "If anybody needs to be convinced of the need for a new information order, he has only to read agency coverage of the conference of foreign ministers of nonaligned countries in New Delhi The details of disagreement and recalcitrance, almost gleefully reported by traditional suppliers of news, brings us back to where we started. The

world, and especially the developing, non-aligned world, can do without newsmen and others who fish in troubled waters".)

Singapore's role

Who is a moderate? For the Western press, Singapore for instance is a pillar of non-aligned rectitude, perhaps even a paragon of democracy. For others it is a supra,—efficient laundramat: a city state-cum-supermarket and not a Third World country. (Incidentally, President Jayawardene, one notes with great interest, has referred to Sri Lanka's culture and civilisation apropos the Sri Lanka - Singapore connection).

Those who saw the Delhi conference through the eyes of the Western news agencies could be excused, if they were convinced that the dominant personality was Singapore's Foreign Minister Mr. S. Dhanabalan. But those who have known that at the UN each year his more distinguished predecessor, Mr. S. Rajaratnam was always presented as the "model Third World spokesman" by the self same media would be far less convinced. After the Singaporean Minister had finished his swash—buckling act to the resounding cheers of the Western press (and the quiet satisfaction no doubt of more powerful patrons) I asked an Indonesian delegate for his reaction. Indonesia after all is the "big power" within Asean. His answer was a smile of sweetly benign tolerance. Pressed for a reply he said "small fellow, you". A veteran Australian journalist who has covered the region for 20 years and was the first to describe Singapore as a laundramat said "Singapore gives same-day service but does it have to make a foreign policy out of washing other peoples dirty linen?".

In short, Singapore is what an honest-to-goodness American would call an 'Uncle Tom' or a 'house nigger'.

Havana and after

While the perspective of the Western media, basically reflecting as they do western interests and prejudices, is perfectly understandable, Singapore's standpoint is no more representative of Third World opinion than say Egypt's view is

ZONE OF PEACE

While Nonaligned foreign ministers were discussing the proposed Colombo conference on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the **Indian Express** carried this report from its Washington correspondent T. V. Parasuram:

"The Pentagon is asking Congress for 418 million dollars for fiscal year 1982 (beginning Oct. 1981) to upgrade foreign bases that could be used to assemble US forces for action in the Persian Gulf.

The requests included the following:

Diego Garcia: 159.9 million.

Egypt: 79.5 million together with 96.8 million US army facilities and the rest for air force needs, with airfields at Ras Banas base.

Kenya: 17.6 million dollars to improve port facilities for the US navy at Mombasa.

Oman: 61.4 million for air force facilities, all earmarked probably for the base at Masira but this is not stated in the document made public.

a fair example of Arab thinking on the Middle east.

Equally, the Havana conference was not a typical nonaligned summit. However, since we are studying a political movement and seeking to identify and measure significant changes and trends, the last summit must necessarily be the starting point and yardstick.

It was not just the Caribbean ambience or Castro's charisma which made Havana an exceptional occasion. World events had helped to set the scene and create the mood.

The Iranian revolution had swept away the King of Kings, America's powerful ally and regional policeman. CENTO, the last of old US-sponsored military alliances involving Third World nations, had collapsed. Pakistan, another long-standing US ally, joined Iran in successfully seeking membership in the NAM. If Iran had been the severest blow to US prestige and power since Vietnam, another bitter blow had been struck nearer

home. Somoza, a tin-pot Shah, had been overthrown by the young Sandinistas in a revolution which seemed to have drawn its inspiration from Cuba.

As the Sandinistas, still in their green fatigues and red-and-black armbands strode confidently into the Palace of Conventions the Latin American revolution which had taken such a brutal beating after the death of Che looked on the move once more.

Of the six new members, four were from the 'third continent', and it is in Latin America, the backyard of the American titan that the conflict between the US and the Third World is the intensest. Economics, the transnational corporations, US-supported oligarchies, exploitative and oppressive, spell out that relationship. The blood from 'the open veins of Latin America' (Eduardo Galleano's colourful expression) pours into the blood-banks of Wall Street.

Nearly a hundred delegations, including liberation fronts, meeting in Havana, just 90 miles from Miami, provided the audience and the platform for America's most defiant challenger, Fidel Castro.

New climate

Plans for the Rapid Deployment Force as part of a stronger US military presence in the strategic and turbulent Middle-east were given a higher priority with the Iranian revolution and consequent 'threat' to the sheikdoms in the region. The future of Saudi Arabia became a nagging anxiety.

But it was the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan which gave a stronger rationale for these US and western moves, and, more importantly, allowed the US a much greater opportunity to mobilise forces within the NAM. The broad coalition I referred to earlier consisted of (a) the Islamic group (b) the French-speaking African countries and (c) ASEAN.

It was this 'working alliance' which we saw in action in New Delhi, helped by a small minority of Arab states led by Egypt which faced its own unique problem of 'suspension'.

(To be continued)

SLFP's SECRET WAR

Mr. Gopallawa's death, which surely deserved more respectful attention by the government and the press, was a blessing in disguise for the SLFP. The big battle on February 1st between the "gang of four" and "the dirty dozen" was duly postponed as a mark of respect to the former Governor General and President. The all-island Committee and the Working committee (the two projected battle-fields) did not meet. The meetings had been requisitioned by key party members throughout the country. But the initiative was that of Mrs. Bandaranaike herself. Isolated in the 17 member polit-buro Mrs. B. and her loyalists decided to "bombard the headquarters" in true Maoist fashion. The fact that no fresh dates have been fixed for these meetings does suggest that a later assessment of the balance of forces right down the line

recommended a total abandonment of that tactical move.

Now, publicly at least, an uneasy truce prevails. How long will it last? Behind the scenes, however, a secret war goes on. Scurrilous pamphlets and leaflets are being widely circulated. A new "gang of four" was the first target of attack Messrs Maithripala Senanayake, Stanley Thilakaratne, R. P. Wijesiri and J. R. P. Sooriyaperuma. The next batch of leaflets spread the fire wider to denounce and vilify M/s Kalugalla, Haleem Ishak, Alavi Moulana and others. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike was honoured with a special leaflet. Within days, there was a furious rattle of machine-gun fire aimed at "the dogs let loose from the kennels of the walauwa". At a Trade Union meeting, an embarrassed SLFP representative was told by a prominent

left organiser "J. R. has enough problems but you fellows in the SLFP must be keeping him in fits of laughter".

Meanwhile reports of a speech at Amparai by Mrs. Bandaranaike published in the "SUN" and "LANKADEEPA" have provoked speculation once more about Mrs. B's future as party leader. She is reported to have said that she would step down from the post of President if "legal impediments compelled her to do so". Various legal opinions have been sought and some have been received in writing. The law, as a leading Q. C. has soberly observed, is arguable. Matters may be clearer when the amendments to the election law and the new disabilities imposed by parliament on October 17th are promulgated.



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Kampuchea: situation irreversible

The visit by Mr. Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Premier, to Thailand in early February, was almost certain to renew military and diplomatic pressure on Vietnam to pull its troops out of Kampuchea. But the irregular Khmer guerrillas have little chance of loosening the grip of the Vietnam backed Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh, unless another food crisis leads to widespread civil unrest. This is the view expressed by Kathryn Davies and David Housego in an article in the Financial Times London

As Mr. Zhao himself made clear in Bangkok, the South-East Asians have managed to persuade China to endorse a leadership change which would place either Prince Sihanouk, the former head of state, or Son Sann at the head of Democratic Kampuchea. This would not only provide a more

acceptable international image to the ousted Kampuchean Government, helping it to retain its seat at the UN but it could also conceivably strengthen the guerrilla forces.

In an effort to harass the Vietnamese further, Mr. Zhao has won the South-East Asians' backing for more arms supplies to the Khmer guerrillas. But few diplomats believe even a re-equipped and united "third force" — and its unity is much in doubt — could dislodge the Vietnamese.

FOREIGN
NEWS

"Whatever the diplomatic manoeuvring, even those who admit to anti-Vietnamese bias concede that Heng Samrin's Kampuchea is well on the way to feeding itself, and is now sustainable as a political entity," concludes the Financial Times article.

Private Medical Colleges: Retrograde step

The question of private, fee-levying medical colleges has become a controversial one in the Indian state of Karnataka.

The Indian Medical Association has written to the Union Health Minister, Mr. B. Sankaranand, with copies to the Prime Minister and the Medical Council of India, requesting the Centre to use its good offices with the Karnataka Government to "thwart the retrograde step of permitting new medical colleges based on capitation fees".

The letter followed reports from its Karnataka branch about the opening of three new medical colleges recently in Bangalore, based on capitation fees ranging from Rs.1.5 lakhs to Rs. 2 lakhs for a seat.

The IMA recalled that already 10 medical colleges were in the State and the opening of three more has led to genuine agitation because of under-employment and unemployment among medical graduates.

"Medical profession should have a missionary spirit and those who have paid huge sums cannot be expected to work with missionary zeal. Obviously, this will force commercialisation of the medical profession," the IMA said.

The IMA General Secretary, Dr. Garg has also reiterated this view at the meeting of the executive committee of the Medical Council of India held on December 17.

The discussion at the meeting was based on a representation made by the Karnataka Medical Students'

and Junior Doctors' Association and by the Indian Medical Association. The Director-General of Health Services, Dr. B. Sankaran, and the Director of Medical Education of Karnataka, Dr. Rudrappa, who were present, were reported to have kept silent. The IMA representative regretted that the scourge of capitation fees continued in Karnataka while in all other States it had been got rid of.

So far as the Union Government is concerned, its policy continues to be against medical colleges charging capitation fees. This was reiterated on December 19 in the Rajya Sabha in an answer by the Union Health Minister.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Union Minister himself had participated in the foundation-stone laying function of one of the three medical colleges, he informed the Rajya Sabha that efforts were being made by the Government to impress upon the State Governments to do away with the unhealthy practice of charging capitation fees.

He confirmed that Karnataka had issued an order in June 1980 permitting private colleges in the State inter alia to charge special tuition fees of \$20,000 payable in foreign exchange or in rupee equivalent in respect of certain specified number of seats in each such college.

"To this extent this practice operates against the interests of the less affluent students," he said. He, however, did not indicate what steps the Centre was taking to remedy the situation.

HAIGIOGRAPHY

GENERAL Alexander Haig has contexted the Polish watchpot somewhat nuancely. How, though, if the situation decontrols can he stoppage it mountingly conflagrating? Haig, in Congressional hearings before his confrimatory, paradoxed his auditioners by abnormalling his responds so that verbs were nouned, nouns verbed and adjectives adverbised. He techniqued a new way to vocabulary his thoughts so as to informationally uncertain anybody listening about what he had actually implicationed. At first it seemed that the General was impenetrabbling what at basic was clear. This, it was suppositioned, was a new linguistic harbingered by NATO during the time he bell-weathered it. But close observers have alternated that idea. What Haig is doing, they concept, is to decouple the Russians from everything they are moded to An example was to obstacle Soviet ambassador Dobrynin from personalising the private elevator at Foggy Bottom. Now he has to communal like everybody else. Experts in the Kremlin thought they could recognition the word-forms of American diplomacy. Now they have to afreshly language themselves up before they know what the Americans are subtiling. They are like chess grandmasters suddenly told to knight their bishops and rook their pawns. If that is how General Haig wants to nervous breakdown the Russian leadership he may be shrewding his way to the biggest diplomatic invent since Clausewitz. Unless, that is, he schizophrenes his allies first.

(GUARDIAN, London)

Iraq's French Connection

In Iran, the newspaper of the Islamic Republican Party, which dominates the country's politics, said that France had entered a war against Iran with its delivery of four French built Mirage F-1 fighter bombers to Iraq.

France is to continue blocking the delivery of three missile boats to the Iranian navy, despite Iranian demands for their release. Handover of the boats will depend on the outcome of discussions on outstanding French claims against the revolutionary Government running to several hundred million dollars.

Following announcement of the Mirage deal, Iraq has resumed shipments of crude oil to France. These were suspended in December following renewed attacks on oil installations by the Iranian air force.

Before the Gulf war Iraq was France's second largest supplier of crude with about 24 per cent of total imports.

Meanwhile Iraq has issued a veiled attack on the Soviet Union, its

chief weapons supplier, when Mr. Taha Yassin Ramadan, the country's First Deputy Premier, claimed that Moscow had "stopped implementing pre war (arms) contracts signed with Iraq."

Moscow cut off direct arms supplies to Iraq at the beginning of the war with Iran in September, but Soviet arms have continued to reach Iraq through Eastern Europe.

The Iraqi government has also accused the pro-Soviet Iraqi Communist Party of being an anti-national force conspiring with the Iranians in the context of the present conflict. In Beirut, Bassam Abu Sharif, a prominent spokesman for the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), has called for the formation of a broad national front in Jordan for the armed overthrow of King Hussein who is one of the staunchest supporters of the Iraqi regime in the war against Iran.

In another development the Foreign Ministers of six conservative

Gulf States met in Saudi Arabia in early February to discuss cooperation against internal and external threats. The conference is the latest in a series of moves towards greater regional coordination by the Gulf oil States, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which started after the fall of the Shah but have so far failed to produce much more, than rhetoric.

The Gulf States at the meeting, which will not be attended by Iraq, are eager not to give the impression to Teheran that the group is specifically aimed against a potential threat from Iran.

The plan being discussed in Riyadh involves greater cooperation between the armies and police forces of the six States as well as increased economic cooperation. It appears to be partly based on a security scheme put forward by Saudi Arabia last year to increase internal security and prevent great power intervention in the Gulf. Oman has also put forward a plan to secure free navigation for shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Sunil Bastian

Problems around higher education and university admission hit the headlines of the daily press in next to no time. In the '70s the question of standardisation dominated not only the media, but also many seminars and discussions on education. This question was so important that it became a fundamental issue in the formation of a political party. Now the admission scheme to enter into the university is once again in focus. Some aspects of the scheme had been challenged in the Supreme Court, which had upheld that the scheme violates provisions on fundamental rights in the constitution.

While the questions of university admissions become a topic of discussion, some of the more fundamental issues of education remain unnoticed. What I have in mind is the simple question of how many or what proportion of our children of school going age really get an education in the present set up. In other words, the question of the effectiveness of education in terms of its ability to give an education to the children of school going age. What can be more fundamental to a discussion on education? In this respect let me quote Dr. Swarna Jayaweera, Professor of Education, University of Colombo, to give an idea of the prevailing situation. Talking about the level of participation in education she said, "While the participation in primary education did increase from 57.6% in 1946 to 74.4% in 1963 and in secondary education from 11.2% in 1953 to 43.3% in 1963, there has been a decline in enrolment ratios in both primary and secondary education since then. This decline has been largely ignored although the Consumer Finance Survey of 1973 drew attention to the increasing proportion of non-school going children in both urban and rural areas. Estimates made in the mid-seventies indicate a participation rate of 54.4% in 1974 for the age group

6-19 yrs. (the age of admission to schools was raised to 6 in 1972) as compared with 65.2% in 1963 and 56.7% in 1971 for the 5-19 age group"¹. The same fact is brought home to us when we observe the increasing drop out rates in our education system.

What all this means is that a large proportion, in fact a majority, of our children of school going age, do not get an education beyond grade five. In an estimation of this question Dr. Jayaweera states that, "Educational opportunity in Sri Lanka has to be viewed in the context that 40% of school entrants do not yet receive any secondary level education, 60% leave without reaching the G.C.E. ordinary level classes which lead to basic qualification for at least middle level employment and 80% fail to proceed to grades 11 and 12 which determine access to higher education"².

(1) Swarna Jayaweera — Educational opportunity and school age population in Sri Lanka.

(2) Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences Vol. No. 2 December 1979.

To complete the picture what we have to add is that there is at least 10% of our school going age population who do not get any education at all. From a cohort entering grade 1 in any particular year, on an average only 1-2% manage to get into higher education. Despite this stark reality, as I have mentioned earlier, these are questions related to our education system ignored very much by those who discuss education. In contrast the problems of higher education become 'social issues' and they are widely discussed, challenged in the Supreme courts and made corner stones in forming political parties. This to my mind clearly reflects the class nature of our society and how class ideology dominates the popular consciousness in our country. Higher

education in reality is largely a problem of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie in the sense that it is they who are directly affected by the questions related to higher education. It is their children who manage to reach a level in the schools so that entry into the universities becomes a problem that is crucial for their upward mobility. And since they dominate the power structures of this society, they are able to draw attention to those issues which are dear to them and this creates a false consciousness among the masses. An extreme manifestation of this phenomena was the way how the question about overseas student fees in Britain dominated the Commonwealth Education Ministers Conference held in Colombo which is a problem of a small minority in any part of the Commonwealth.

The false consciousness on any question is created by emphasizing certain aspects of a question, which automatically leads to a deemphasizing of some other aspects. This I hope to illustrate taking as an example the problem of heavy drop out rates in our education. There had been a number of studies and reports on this question and one thing that all these reports emphasize as the main reason for dropping out is connected with the economic deprivations that the drop out children's families undergo. This may be supplemented by reasons like 'traditional views' on education among parents, specially in relation to girls, etc. It is not my contention that these reasons are not important. Obviously in a class society if the education system allows children from different social strata equal chance in education it will be undermining its own existence. Hence the society sees that only those of a certain economic class get an education and therefore economic and social factors do play a role in deciding who are in schools and who are not. But my objection is, by emphasizing only the

economic factors and social factors for the drop out situation this reasoning deemphasizes the reasons within the schools itself which displace the children of the deprived classes out of the schools. **That means there are features both in the structure and ideology of school model that prevails in our society, which go against the children from the poorer classes.** These features work hand in glove with the economic and social factors that lie 'outside' the school and complement each other in the task of keeping certain sections of children away from the schools. I shall describe below, some of these key elements that go against the poorer classes in order to make my point clearer.

First let us look at the way our school are organised. As we know a good school in our society is not just a building with desks, chairs, blackboards, etc. with a teacher. Every good school in Sri Lanka has a host of other facilities. This includes libraries, sports facilities, dental clinics, photographic clubs, farms, etc., etc. We call a principal a 'good principal' one who is able to develop all this for his school. A school band is an addition to this list in the case of girls schools. All schools attempt to 'develop' in this way making use of resources, influences and power that they can wield. What is important to note is, in our society, the schools attempt to do this individually or as separate units. **In contrast to this it is possible to visualise a system where most of these facilities are communally owned and belong to the entire community of a particular area, region etc., and the school can use them.** If we try to do this in our society we can see how the material base of the prestige of "our" schools crumbles, because this amounts to socialisation of all those possessions which give our schools their identities as Royal, Ananda, S. Thomas's, etc.

In this fundamental principle of individual ownership of facilities, which is a key element in the manner how our schools are organised lies a root cause for the drop out situation that I described earlier. The individual ownership

creates the name, or prestige for the school on which in turn depends the confidence that a parent or a child can have on school as a means of social mobility. Specially for those from the poorer classes this confidence plays a very important role in deciding to keep the child in school or not. The facilities of the schools that the poorer children have to attend, do not in anyway evoke the confidence in parents or in the child so as to be in schools despite the deprivations that constantly beseege them. This is specially true when they compare the deprived schools with the more prestigious schools. It is quite clear that the principle of individual ownership or facilities on which basis our schools are organised lay the base for this situation to arise.

Secondly there are features in the arrangement that we have for the process of transfer of knowledge, that go against the poor in their attempt to be in schools. As we know, in our schools, the material of syllabus is covered in the class room according to a time table. Each day when the subject is taught a certain portion of the material is covered and this leads on to the next portion and so on. This arrangement demands a certain type of continuity in attendance. In order to get the benefit of the education a pupil has to conform to this demand of continuous attendance of a certain degree. If there is a break, the student will find it difficult to catch up and this would lead to dropping out. My contention is the type of continuity of attendance demanded by our school model can be satisfied only by a certain class of people. It is not possible to everyone to do it and those who cannot, drop out. If we are keen on keeping the poor in schools we have to change this system so as to adopt the possibilities of attendance by them rather than expect them to satisfy the demands put out by the school model.

The third aspect of the school model that leads to the 'dropping out' of the children of the deprived classes is connected with the ideology and the values that prevail in our school model. How often have we heard the complaints of the teachers, who are mostly from the middle

class or aspire to be in that class, about the behaviour of the children of a different social background whom they teach. In my own experience I have heard and seen this in relation to the schools of slum areas of Colombo. This principally reflect the class differences and the value differences of the school and the social background of the pupil. Our schools dominated by the middle class values of our society act as a repulsion to the pupils from the deprived classes. These values are expressed not only through the individual teachers but also through the behaviour patterns (usually called discipline) expected of the child in school.

These features of the school model supplement the economic and social factors of the society in causing the heavy drop out rates among the poor. The school model therefore reflects the socio-economic relation that prevail in the society.

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

IMF TALKS

The IMF's back. Technically for 'consultations under Article Four' of the agreement between Sri Lanka and the IMF. The truth is the IMF wants to be sure that the budgetary cuts introduced by the Finance Minister will not prove another optical illusion. The 1979-80 budget was swollen by supplementary estimates to the tune of Rs. 6,000 million.

Sri Lanka is learning to live with the omnipotent IMF. So much that the newspapers and SLBC reporting the Cabinet spokesman on government decisions said that the FRG had granted 400 million D. M. "subject to IMF approval" (sic) and "that Yugoslavia and Romania may enter joint ventures here "subject to IMF approval" (sic)!

The IMF suspended disbursements to Sri Lanka in July last year. The disbursements were made under a 3 year agreement signed in January 1979 for more than 300 million US dollars in SDR's under the Extended Fund Facility. Payments support will be forthcoming if the government satisfies the IMF on "financial discipline" to control rampant inflation. (Contd p. 23)

Towards an alternate general theory

Dayan Jayatilaka

In theory as in praxis, the destructive function precedes the constructive, and the critique of what exists, is the point of departure. Such is the scientific, dialectical method of inquiry, adopted by Marx in the domains of philosophy, politics and political economy. 'Capital' after all was, among other things, founded upon a critique of Ricardo just as the criticism of Hegel, Feurbach and the Utopian Socialists provided the point of departure for Marx's philosophical and political thought respectively. Likewise, the 'weapon of criticism' must be levelled squarely at the fundamental bases of the dominant 'theories' of international relations, if one is to attempt the construction of a genuinely scientific alternate general theory.

At the outset it is necessary to identify and isolate the interrelated set of problems that constitute the theoretical framework of the conventional international relationists. That is to say, we must identify their basic **problematique**. A glance at the history and evolution of the discipline of international relations will help. Though the very genesis of the discipline could be traced back to the writings of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Dante, Rousseau, Bentham and Kant, no systematic development of the discipline really took place before World War I. **J. David Singer** among others, is correct therefore when he speaks of "the relative infancy of the discipline of international relations".

Until 1914, and indeed even upto the 1930s, international relations was almost uniformly perceived as being predominantly concerned with international law, international organisations and diplomatic history. It was during the pre-World War II decade that scholars from both sides of the Atlantic really attempted to grapple with the nature and scope of the discipline of international relations. Consensus was no

easy task. For instance in 1935, Sir Alfred Zimmern, professor of International relations at Oxford stated that: "the study of international relations extends from the natural sciences at one end to moral philosophy....at the other." He defined the field "not as a single subject but rather as a bundle of subjects....viewed from a common angle." It was Nicholas J. Spykman who first articulated a definition around which a broad consensus was subsequently reached. In **Spykman's** view international relations was primarily concerned with "interstate relations", and this definition was implicitly accepted in the host of literature that abounded on the subject in the post war decades. In a text that could be described as having had the greatest impact on the university teaching of international relations, **Hans. J. Morgenthau** concerned himself principally with 'politics among nations.' In setting forth an explanation of nation state behaviour, the key category of his conceptual framework was 'national-interest'. France's **Raymond Aron**, in his major work 'Peace and War' also maintains that the action of states is "at the heart of international relations". According to Aron, international relations comprises relations among the political units into which the world is divided at any given time, ranging from the Greek city states to the modern nation-states. The case for the distinctiveness of the discipline of International Relations as against the study of politics or philosophy resides, in his view, in that International Relations deals with "relations between political units, each of which claim the right to take justice into its own hands and to be the sole arbiter of the decision to fight or not to fight." For Aron, as for many of the conventional international relationists, while the political interactions between nation-states form the quintessence of International Relations, these political

interactions themselves comprise two components, namely the diplomatic and the strategic.

Lucio Colletti, writes that all non Marxian thinkers indulge mainly in the 'psychoanalysis of society'. This holds true in the realm of International Relations too. While Morgenthau claims that political relationships are governed by instincts deeply rooted in human nature, **Arnold Wolfers** speaks in terms of 'national urges' and **Robert Strauss Hupe**, in a similar vein, theorizes about 'power urges'. Thus, not only do the orthodox theories of International Relations focus on the political relationships among sovereign nation states, they also construe these political relations in terms which may be defined, in the strict philosophical sense, as 'idealistic'. It is now possible to identify the **problematique**, that is to say the set of basic and inter-related problems that constitute the conceptual framework, of the dominate theories of international relations.

1. Individual nation-states are the predominant units of analysis, and the central concern is the understanding of the behaviour of nationstates. (Incidentally this is borne out by **David Singer's** statement in his article 'The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations': "Most of us have tended to settle upon the nation-state as our most comfortable resting place").

2. Nation states themselves have been understood as societies with separate and parallel histories. As **Immanuel Wallerstein** puts it critically, for the conventional theorists "the fundamental paradigm of modern history is a series of parallel national processes."

3. The focus of analysis is the **Political** relations between nation-states, while the 'substructural' relations are either neglected or

relegated to a wholly secondary place.

4. Fundamental international political issues are thought to revolve almost exclusively around the relations among the hegemonic or 'world' powers.

5. Nationstates are portrayed as homogenous entities while 'national interest' is presented in class-neutral terms.

6. The major preoccupation is with 'stability' and the maintenance of the global status-quo.

The basic weakness of this orthodox analytical framework is that in focussing primarily on the nationstates, it implicitly denies or ignores the existence of a **single world system** in which national states are merely the component units. By 'world system' we mean the dialectically contradictory unity of the capitalist and socialist world systems. Since the world capitalist system is structured unequally, unevenly and hierarchically, different nation states occupy different places within that structure and thus play different roles. To understand this and the kind of relations a given nationstate has with others it is necessary at the outset to locate it within the world system. Quite simply, nationstates must necessarily be considered as parts of a complex unevenly structured totality, and this is precisely the kind of perspective that the dominant theories lack.

Our recognition of this fundamental weakness of orthodoxy indicates to us simultaneously, one of the basic characteristics that an alternative general theory must possess. This is what **Immanuel Wallerstein** designates as the "world system perspective". This perspective is grounded in the understanding that, in the words of **Samir Amin**, "all countries are integrated, though to varying degrees, in a worldwide network of commercial, financial and other relations, such that none of them can be thought of in isolation, that is, leaving these relations out of account....." In sum, the alternative general theory of international relations we are attempting to construct must be informed by a perspective which recognises that,

as **J. V. Stalin** expressed it as far back as 1924 in the '**Foundations of Leninism**': "The transformation of capitalism into a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression....has...converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain called **world economy**."

"Formerly," Stalin continues, "the analysis.... was usually approached from the point of view of the economic state of individual countries. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self sufficient units and have become links in a single chain called world economy.... Now we must speak of....the entire system of world imperialist economy as a single whole."

The tendency of the dominant theories to portray the nationstates as homogenous entities and 'national interest' as a class-neutral concept indicates negatively to us yet another necessary characteristic of a genuinely scientific alternate theory. While a given nationstate must at the very outset, be located within the overall global structure, we must also concern ourselves with the interpenetration of international relations and internal structures, within the domestic socioeconomic profiles, class contradictions and political struggles. It will then be possible to counter the dominant theories of 'national interest', and understand how various political relations and policy postures may be efforts to alter or maintain the world capitalist system and also a position within this system which is to the advantage or disadvantage of particular social groups situated within a given state. This implies a recognition that the hegemonic social layers always attempt to portray their particular interests as that of the entire nation and that this constitutes a central element of the dominant ideology prevailing in society. An alternate theory implies a definitive rupture with this ideology.

The conventional international relationists preoccupation with the **political** relations between nation-

states is fundamentally misleading. Though the realm of politics is relatively autonomous, and the political factor may even be dominant, it is not, in the last instance, the determinant factor — which is none other than the mode of production. It is this titanic contribution of Marx in opening up the continent of History to science that must constitute the very foundation of an alternative theory of international relations. To put it differently, **we must extend the materialist conception of history to the realm of international relations**, in direct contradistinction to the conventional analysts' near-exclusive focus on **political** relations between nation states.

If the perspective ought to be that world system and the methodology, that of historical materialism, what then should be the **key analytic category** in an alternative theory of international relations? A brief digression needs to be made at this point. Though the nationstate has been the focal unit of analysis in most theories of international relations, there are some scholars in the field who have adopted a 'worldsystem perspective' of sorts. I refer principally to **Morton Kaplan, George Modelski, Richard Rosecrance, Leonard Binder** and other such systems theorists who adopt a 'macroperspective.' While they have avoided some of the pitfalls of an analysis which considers the nationstate as its main focus or central unit, the profound flaws in their methodology and analytic categories have ensured the basically unscientific nature of their theories too. (For instance, George Modelski's use of the Riggian typology *Agraria/Industria* reverses the analytical gains obtained from his macro perspective.)

Thus it is clear, that despite superficial resemblances, the world system perspective as defined by us earlier, is radically different from that of **all** the dominant theorists. As stated before, while our perspective must be that of the world system and our methodology must be that of historical materialism, what is necessary now is a valid analytical category which will be the key category in the conceptual framework of an alternative theory of international relations. What is

the category, resulting logically from our overall perspective and methodology, which will enable us to grasp and represent the complex texture and the overall, if contradictory unity of social reality? This category must transcend the static and particularized approach which fragments social reality into economies, sociology and politics.

While integrating the economic, sociological and political planes in an overall understanding of the world system, this category must also be capable of embracing the longterm trends and forces within the world system and the natural history of the integration of its various components.

We may present the concept of 'social formation' as fitting most of these requirements. According to Louis Althusser, 'Social formation' denotes the historically concrete complex whole comprising economic practice, political practice and ideological practice at a certain place and stage of development. **Historical materialism is the science of social formations.** By economic, political and ideological we mean the processes of production and/or transformation. Economic practice is the transformation of nature by human labour into social product, political practice the transformation of social relations by revolution, ideological practice the transformation of one relation to the lived world into a new relation of ideological struggle. These three practices constitute the social formation.

Since the world capitalist system cannot be reduced to a mere juxtaposition of 'national capitalisms', no concrete social formation can be seen other than in a worldsystem perspective. Thus we can say that the central concept in a genuinely scientific alternative theory of international relations should be none other than that of "**social formations on a world scale.**" (Here I wish to acknowledge my debt to Dr. Bertie Gajameragedera, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Peradeniya, for suggesting this definition).

An important qualification of this statement needs to be made immediately. Although social formations must be viewed from a worldsystem perspective, it is imperative to

understand that social formations are 'enclosed' so to speak, by national frontiers. Therefore we must not fall for to "a kind of sociological monism which assumes a planetary social structure, soaring above its articulation in any concrete political system." (Incidentally, such an assumption, according to Nicholas Krasso, was one of Trotsky's basic errors.) *The alternative general theory we seek to construct must therefore combine a worldsystem perspective with a correct estimation of the autonomy of the political institution of the nationstate.* Marx himself provides an excellent example of how this contradiction can be reconciled, and in the Communist Manifesto where he clearly states that capitalism has become a global system, he also acknowledges that the primary unit of class struggle is the nation, and that such struggles are fought out principally at the national level.

"Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word."

Thus if our alternative general theory of international relations does not integrate an understanding of the social formations on a world scale with a grasp of the relative autonomy of the political institution that is the nationstate, we will not be able to make a concrete problems such as the persistence and indeed the recrudescence of nationalism as a political force in both the capitalist and socialist sectors the contemporary world.

One final observation. Accompanying our key concept of "social formations on a worldscale", the analytic framework we wish to construct must also utilize the vitally important concept of '**conjuncture**'. Identified by Lenin, Gramsci and Althusser as one of the central concepts of the Marxist science of politics, it denotes the exact balance of forces and the state of overdetermination of the contradictions, at any given moment, enabling us to utilize it in the vitally important assessment of the **correlation of forces on a world scale**, which determines in the last instance, relations among nations.

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GARAB

Observations on the Madurai Tamil Conference

Sachi. Sri Kantha

(Dept. of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya)

I write in reply to your comment under 'news background' on "MGR and Tamil sub-plot" (LG, Feb. 1, 1981). Since this comment contains so many inaccuracies, and as a Sri Lankan delegate who was an eye-witness to many of the scenes which had been referred to in the comment, I am compelled to reply for the benefit of the LG readers.

Prior to commenting on the incidents which occurred in Madurai, I would like to draw the attention of the readers to a sentence which gives a serious misinterpretation of events which occurred in 1974. I categorically deny your statement that, "...In 1974 at the last Conference several persons were killed in Jaffna when Police fired on demonstrators shouting slogans against the Bandaranaike government and demanding Eelam". Firstly the columnist had erred in equating the incident of Jan. 10, 1974 with the demand of Eelam. Eelam demand had not been originated at that time, if political records of this island have to be believed. This demand was first put forward vehemently by S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the TULF, when he contested the KKS by-election, held on the 6th February 1975. Eelam demand was officially resolved and unanimously adopted for the first National Convention of the TULF held at Vaddukoddai on 14th May 1976.

Secondly, regarding the incidents of 10th Jan. 1974. I would prefer to quote from the "Report of the Commission of Inquiry, on the Tragedy of January Tenth, 1974", published on 18th Feb. 1974.

The Commission consisted of Mr. O. L. De Kretser, Mr. V. Manicavasagar (both former Judges of the Supreme Court) and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Sabapathy Kulandran (former

Bishop in Jaffna). To quote the inferences made by this Commission,

"The irresistible conclusion we come to is that the police on this night was guilty of a violent and quite an unnecessary attack on unarmed citizens. We are gravely concerned that they lacked the judgement which we expected of policemen in a civilian police force whose duties call for tactful handling even in the most difficult situation.

"The evidence establishes that this was not all that took place that night. The police in their armed might roved the city assaulting whomsoever they came across for no better reason than that the people were doing what they were entitled to do.

"We are of opinion that those who suffered physical injury and material damage, and those who lost their lives were the innocent victims of a chain of events set in motion by a completely wrong and unwise decision on the part of the police officer who made it. We can find no justification at all for the police assault on defenceless and innocent citizens."

These inferences made by the learned Commission, do not vindicate the assertion made by the LG columnist that, "Police fired on demonstrators shouting slogans against the Bandaranaike government and demanding Eelam." I give the choice for the LG readers to pick out which is correct.

Regarding the events at Madurai Conference, being an eyewitness, I agree with the LG columnist, that "pro-TULF Tamil expatriates sought to 'internationalise' the issue, and to a greater extent they had succeeded." Though the exhibition stall organised by the Eelam supporters who travelled from UK and USA, was demolished on the instructions of Tamil Nadu government, the administration could not stop the activists pasting the posters depicting the "Jan. 10 incidents of

1974 Conference" all over the Madurai city, again on 7th night.

As a matter of fact, large crowds converging to Madurai city, gathered around the places where these posters were pasted; the posters themselves were different in colour, content and appeal. In fact most of the commoners were blaming the MGR Administration, for not allowing them to know what had really happened in the 1974 Tamil Conference.

It is strange that LG columnist had not been informed of the speeches made by our two Tamil "Generals" of J. R. Jayewardene. If Amirthalingam delivered a very restrained address at the Opening Ceremony on the 4th of January, it seemed to us, the Sri Lankan delegates, that Thondaman had played the role what Amir was expected to play. Thondaman's address at this function was more political, exceeding the limits warranted for; and mind you, he was pleading for the Tamil minority community. He went to the extreme of quoting General De Gaulle's sympathy towards the French-speaking Canadians living in Quebec.

Though our Speaker of Parliament, had been recognised by the LG columnist, as the Tamil-speaking Moslem MP, in my humble opinion, he did not perform well to bring repute for this compliment. Bakeer Markar, made a smattering speech in Tamil, mainly reading a lengthy text with awkward accent and unwarranted pauses. Many of our colleagues commented that, Professor Asher from the University of Edinburgh delivered a better impromptu address in Tamil for a full fifteen minutes!

Building a working class party

Shanta de Alwis

Tactics, though flowing from theoretical positions, are not identical with them. The question Vama was posed with was not merely the clarification of the nature of the SLFP or of popular frontism, but also of winning the majority of the working class to a revolutionary programme, to build the mass revolutionary party.

The best theoretical position in the world is of absolutely no use unless from it flows a tactical approach to win the working class to it. Even if all these ridiculous neo-Stalinist sects mentioned by Chintaka had a perfect Leninist position on the SLFP, (which they certainly did not), it was of no use to the working class.

The point is that in the enrist period 1970-77, our slogans did not directly reflect our full theoretical position. The slogans were necessarily transitional ones designed to raise the consciousness of the workers from their present level to a higher one and to drive a wedge between a bourgeoisie in the coalition and the proletariat. Except for a few workers who could be won over directly to our positions, the vast majority of the working class had enormous illusions in the old leadership and 'Vama' had to take an extremely flexible approach.

When Vama agitated for "the removal of Felix, Malthri, etc" we were responding to what the LSSP leadership was telling the workers. The question raised was, if these gentlemen block the progressive measures why don't the LSSP leaders themselves agitate for their removal? When we wrote about the three TB's etc., we raise the question of why the so-called left in the government (identified by the LSSP-CP leaders) did not fight the right wing since this would accord with the strategy put forward by the party leadership itself.

Furthermore, the question of Siri-ma's reactionary role was brought out explicitly in our slogans after the ban on the United Federation of Labour (controlled by the LSSP) rally in November 1974. That was the tactically correct point to pose explicitly: the question of whether the LSSP and CP leaders were prepared to destroy Siri-ma's crisis-ridden regime and build an alternative. (Vama Samasamajaya Dec 1974) From then on our main slogans had been "Overthrow Siri-ma-Felix leadership" "build a United Left front".

Our tactics were aimed at showing up the leadership in so far as they proved incapable even of carrying out the very struggle that they promised to carry out when they entered the coalition. Certainly our campaigns had to start from acknowledging the existence of the front and participation of the working class in it! Within that context it was tactically correct to pose the question of the 'Left' fighting the right wing (the latter being the medium through which the bourgeois operated at that stage) and the objective of all our slogans was the breakup of the coalition. Our slogans if taken up by the LSSP would have led to the coalition's breakup. The leaders, having more intelligence than any of these gentlemen on the fringe of the working class movement, refused to do so precisely for that reason!

On the other hand this refusal on the part of the leaders raised questions in the minds of the workers, about the sincerity, integrity and revolutionary perspective of the leadership — for they were refusing to move along the path that they themselves had mapped out to the party!

It is through such flexible tactics (based on our theoretical positions) that the tiny 'Vama' tendency was able to grow into a mass working class party whilst all those superb theoreticians of "Mitipahara", "Nirdhanaya" 'Lanka Social Studies Circle' etc remained in the wilderness.

This is the second part of Prof. de Alwis' reply to Chintaka's article "The NSSP and the LSSP" *Lanka Guardian* October 1 1980. Dr. Shanta de Alwis is Professor of mathematics at the University of Sri Jayawardenepura and an associate member of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste, Italy. He has served on the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Nava Sama Samaja Party.

".... the Vama group did not take a clear stand on SLFP and break with the coalition after 1971 when there was no real need to 'expose' the SLFP further from within the UF since that party had signalled, in the bloodiest fashion, its transition 'from reformism to counterrevolution'."

The above quotation from Chintaka clearly shows his theoretical confusion. Firstly the question of 'Vama' breaking with the coalition does not arise. Vama (in 1971 limited to a tiny discussion group) was a tendency within the major working class party in Sri Lanka which was in a coalition. Its prime objectives were to win over the majority of the LSSP worker activists to its revolutionary program and the forcing of a split between the workers parties and the bourgeoisie. Demonstrative gestures such as leaving the party after the JVP insurrection would only have isolated Vama from the mass organisations of the class and Vama would not have achieved either of these objectives.

Secondly 'Vama' did not have a perspective of "exposing" the SLFP from within the UF but of "exposing" the LSSP leadership which had taken the working class into an alliance with the SLFP.

Thirdly the mechanistic thinking characteristic of 'Chintaka' to view developments exclusively from the point of view of the radical petite

bourgeois youth, is revealed in the last clause of the above quotation. In the last analyses all bourgeois parties are counterrevolutionary and no "signals" are needed to determine that. **However if the phrase "transition from reformism to counterrevolution" means that after suppressing the JVP insurrection a sort of semi-fascist dictatorship was instituted, Chintaka must have been living at that time in the fantasy world created by the frightened petty bourgeois.**

He forgets that the mass organisations of the working class were intact and remained in the coalition. He forgets that in the utterly futile and meaningless split in the CP, its worker base remained with the "renegade Pieter" as he was referred to by the 'radicals'. Furthermore he forgets the mass mobilisations spearheaded by the organised workingclass on the issue of the nationalisation of the plantations, the 28 demands and the semi-fascist threat from the UNP.

Far from being one of triumphant counter-revolution, it was a period brought with revolutionary opportunities. Vama participated in these mass actions and its slogans were aimed towards taking them beyond the limits within which the LSSP and the CP tried to constrain them for fear of "rocking the boat" and breaking up the coalition. It was precisely these pressures which led to the break up of the coalition in 1975 in spite of the attempts of the leaders to save it.

Furthermore it was the line of action prepared by us that brought about the final breakup in early '77. Not only was the railway strike of '76-77 the culmination (in this period) of our strategy of breaking up the popular front, Vama also played a leading role in it through the largest Union in the

railway the Dumriya Seveka Sangamaya. Vama had by then a majority as its executive committee including its most popular leaders U.E. Perera and Satyapala. It was that strike which forced the CP to break from the government and finally brought the emergency to an end. It also had the effect of gaining freedom for those who had been held without trial since 1971.

The CP radicals on the other hand never put forward a fundamental critique of the coalition itself even after they split on the CJC issue. What they opposed was the government policy of depending on the IMF rather than the Soviet Union. The thrust of their attacks was on the left in the coalition, especially on NM and Pieter, rather than on the right wing.

Furthermore when the 28 demands were put forward by the JCTUO "Vama" campaigned for their implementation whilst the CP radicals initially counterposed 10 demands. Finally after three years of these antics they reunited with the "renegade" Pieter: at a time when the government had moved even further to the right.

One might also ask what these people were doing when the LSSP was kicked out of the coalition and the CP expressed its "deep regret" at the developments that had taken place but continued to defend the coalition and sow illusions about the progressive anti-imperialist nature of Sirima Bandaranaike. Vama addressed an open letter to these CP radicals ("Vama Samasamajaya" October 1975) to pressurize their CC to break from Sirima. But we see no evidence of such activity on the part of these radicals. Their position becomes even more questionable with the 1976-77 Railway Strike. These radicals who split on the issue of the suppression of the radical petite bourgeois youth, did not have much to say when the SLFP-CP government was attempting to send striking workers back to work at bayonet point! One can only conclude that the split of the radicals in 1972 was merely an empirical adaption to the pressures of the radical petite bourgeois youth. It achieved absolutely nothing.

United Front Tactics

In his anonymous phase ('News background' — Lanka Guardian 1st June 1980) Chintaka predicted that the NSSP will fall within the ambit of the SLFP by May Day 1981. In his pseudonymous phase he has seen fit to postpone the day of reckoning by two years. (The 1983 general elections) I wonder what penance he is prepared to undergo when his prediction is falsified?

The point at issue is the NSSP's United Front (UF) tactics. Chintaka forgets that while advocating UF actions with the SLFP in defence of democratic rights, the NSSP for the past three years has also been advocating the formation of a United Left Front based on a revolutionary socio-economic program. It has called upon the CP, LSSP and the JVP to form such a front and was the only party to propose such an alliance at the last local government elections.

During the present strike we pointed out the need for a clear political lead and perspective. The SLFP — LSSP were giving one kind of political perspective a popular frontist, parliamentarist one which will give back the job in 1983 etc. It was necessary to pose the question of the formation of a left government through the extra-parliamentary struggle, whether this was an immediate perspective or not is hardly the point. It was necessary to counter the parliamentarist illusions being sown by the SLFP — LSSP. Thus it was to the CPSL that we posed the question of a programmatic bloc to pose the left alternative. Unfortunately, the CPSL refused even to discuss this question!

(To be continued)

MARKET REPORT:

Today's Bullish in Sri Lanka

On the comfy sod sit

Fat children flying kites.

They determine the kites' heights.

The fat children are capitalist.

Patrick Jayasuriya
(Peradeniya).

A striker commits suicide

Jayantha Somasunderam

The Sri Lanka Government claims that 40,000 workers struck work last July. The Opposition counter-claims that the actual number of strikers was 140,000. Preoccupied with the political debate concerning the justification of the strike; enmeshed in the economic arguments to decide the strike, most people have forgotten the people who go to make up this amorphous, debated, faceless numeral.

Juan Piyadasa who would have been 31 this year is one of this forty or hundred and forty thousand. His wife, his children and loved ones are among the million people who have been affected by last July's lock out.

Born in the outskirts of the metropolis in Kadawatte, he grew up in Kelaniya where his father is still a small-time trader. Typical of his generation, of the new literate proletariat, he aspired to a professional career through the developing welfare state.

At eighteen he fell ill, had his studies interrupted, left school with an ordinary level certificate, and began work in the C. T. O. Whilst working there as a peon he married his sister-in-law as a part of an inter-marriage, quite common in Ceylonese society.

When the Trade Unions called a general strike last July asking for a wage increase of Rs. 300/- in the face of forty percent inflation, Juan Piyadasa had two sons, Saminda aged five and Aruna aged three -and a third child was on the way.

Because he refused to betray the strike and his locked out comrades, Juan Piyadasa became one of tens of thousands thrown out of employment for daring to strike. For five months he managed to provide for himself and his family by doing odd jobs as a labourer. But his health had never been good and he couldn't go on in that vein.

His brothers and sisters closed ranks and pitched in to help Juan's young family, but desperation was fast giving way to fatalism.

With his wife in hospital for her third confinement, Juan returned to his parents home. On the 13th of December he touched his parents feet in traditional salutation and then swallowed a fatal dose of caustic soda. Retching blood he was taken to hospital. The next day he learned that his wife had given birth to a third boy. She was able to bring the baby to his bedside, for him to see the child once before he died on the 18th of December.

He left behind a letter, addressed to the Minister of Posts. In it he merely tells them that they can now consider him as having vacated his post.

Piyadasa is the sixth striker to commit suicide in an equal number of months.

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The Dostoevsky Centenary

Reggie Siriwardena

Last month the Soviet Union commemorated the centenary of the death of Fyodor Dostoevsky, which fell on February 9. The importance ascribed to this occasion and the scale on which it was observed are a measure of the place now given to Dostoevsky's work in Soviet cultural estimation. Dostoevsky's reputation has undergone several fluctuations in his own country since the Revolution, but today it seems to be at its apogee.

The centenary was marked by a scholarly conference on the problems relating to the creative work of the great Russian novelist at the Gorky Institute of World Literature and an exhibition on his life and work at the State Literary Museum. *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the organ of the Union of Writers, devoted a section to Dostoevsky, headed 'The great writer-humanist.' This included an article by Georgy Fridlender, the chief editor of the great USSR Academy edition of Dostoevsky's **Complete Works**.

It was in 1972 that the USSR Academy of Sciences, anticipating the centenary, decided to sponsor the most scholarly and comprehensive edition ever produced of Dostoevsky's works. This edition has since been appearing volume by volume over the last decade. Originally planned to consist of 30 volumes (17 of novels, short stories and notebooks, 13 of articles, diaries and letters), it will actually run to 33 because the unexpectedly voluminous mass of the novelist's correspondence which has been amassed from different parts of the world has necessitated the subdivision of the last three volumes devoted to the letters. Arrangements have already been made for the translation of the entire edition of the **Complete Works** into Japanese, owing to the exceptional interest in contemporary Japan in Dostoevsky's writing.

The major contribution made by Soviet scholarship of recent years to an understanding of Dostoevsky's life has been the unearthing of the facts relating to his father's death. It was for long believed by biographers that Dostoevsky's father had been murdered by his peasants; and on this supposition Sigmund Freud based an elaborate theory that the murder triggered off a sense of guilt in the son, owing to his Oedipal hatred of his father and unconscious parricidal impulses. Freud attributed Dostoevsky's epilepsy to the shock of guilt brought about by the father's death. This last supposition was in any event unfounded, since it can be proved that the first signs of the disease were present before the death of the father.

In 1975, however, a fresh investigation by a Soviet scholar of the circumstances of the death of the elder Dostoevsky showed that the rumour that he had been murdered was spread by a landowner who was involved in a lawsuit against the Dostoevsky family; that the matter was thoroughly investigated at the time and no evidence of foul play was established (the murder of a landowner by his peasants was not a crime to be taken lightly under the Tsarist regime). The older biographical theories regarding the supposed murder and Freud's psychoanalytic conjectures based on them must, therefore, now be rejected. Incidentally, the large-scale biography of Dostoevsky that is being produced by an American scholar, Professor Joseph Frank (it will run to four volumes when completed), assumed the truth of the murder story in its main text, and the new Soviet discovery arrived just in time to make a footnote before the first volume went to press.

Soviet scholarship and criticism of Dostoevsky at the present time

(Continued on page 24)

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• SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Content, Form and Marxist Criticism

Samudran

I think I owe the readers of the Lanka Guardian, who have been following the debate on Content and Form in Marxist Criticism provoked by my first article on the Tamil Literary Scene (L.G. Sept. 15) a concluding note summing up my position. In my reply to Reggie Siriwardene (L.G. Dec. 1) I have explained the circumstances that prompted me to write my first article. I am thankful to Siriwardene for his timely and healthy intervention which gave me an opportunity to elaborate further on my assertion of the **primacy of content over form**. The issues raised by him took me to the heart of the Content-Form problematique.

After Siriwardene's last reply it would seem that he is in agreement with my definition of content as a product of artistic reflection. If he accepts this definition he should find my assertion of the primacy of content over form to be a logical consequence. However, he does not seem fully convinced. This is evident from his comments on my insistence that content is more decisive than form within a framework of dialectical interdependence between the two. I feel that this point calls for some clarification before we close this debate for the present.

Content becomes decisive in determining the social relevance of a work of artistic praxis. Marxist criticism adopts political-cultural-aesthetic criteria derived from historical experience and based on the necessities of the struggle for the creation of a better society and the re-discovery of human essence in its totality. The social relevance of a particular work is a function of its content. It is only through an analysis of it that one could arrive at the meaning, the conscious and unconscious class biases and values and the emotional aspects of behavioural phenomena. However, it must be noted that deficiencies in content as the pro-

duct of artistic reflection have their effects on form and lead to an impairment of the dialectical relationship between the two. When Marx and Engels criticised Lasalle's Franz von Sickingen they made pointed references to the deficiencies in content which worked against the **organic, artistic evolution** of the political message Lasalle wanted to convey. Marx wrote to Lasalle: "The noble representative of the revolution—behind whose watchwords of unity and liberty there still lurked the dream of the old empire and of club-law—ought not in that case to have absorbed all interest, as they do in your play, but the representatives of the peasants (particularly these) and of the revolutionary elements in the cities should have formed a quite important active background." Engels also criticised Lasalle's "relegation of the peasant movement to the rear" as the major error which induced the author to misrepresent the class struggle. (Incidentally, even at that time—1859—Marx had nothing but contempt for Formalism when he said "our brood of epigonous poets have nothing left but formal gloss")

What does Brecht emphasize when he says that realist writing "is conditioned by the question of how, when and for what class it is made use of: conditioned to the last small detail"? Obviously the various elements and aspects of the content. Brecht's rejection of "eternal aesthetic laws" and his interpretation of the role of techniques and the broadening scope of the function of art amplifies this position further: "Reality alters; to represent it the means of representation must alter too. Nothing arises from nothing; the new springs from the old but that is just what makes it new." As regards the attitude of the of the high-priests of the 'Socialist-realist' establishment towards Brecht, I accept that they were mistaken; Brecht was, in my view, a far better exponent and a

BRECHT'S DEFINITION

'Popular' means: Intelligible to the broad masses, adopting and enriching their forms of expression/assuming their standpoint, confirming and correcting it/representing the most progressive section of the people so that it can assume leadership...

'Realistic' means: Discovering the casual complexes of society/unmasking the prevailing view of things as the view of those who are in power/writing from the stand-point of the class which offers the broadest solutions for the pressing difficulties in which human society is caught up/emphasising the element of development...

more genuine representative of socialist realism.

Siriwardene is correct in stating that my definition of content points to the fact that content and form can be separated only as abstractions for analytical purposes. This is precisely what Marxist criticism does but not in a mechanical way. The dialectical method of abstraction should enable the critic to make a functional differentiation between the two within their unity. Form deserves to be given the importance demanded by its functional role in artistic creation, however being less decisive in determining meaning and quality does not make form's specific function less important.

Marxist criticism would thus seem to be a complex task and unfortunately many critics claiming to be Marxists do commit the crime of vulgarization and oversimplification reducing content to mere ideology. This happens with critics who do not have adequate mastery of the Marxist method of content analysis. The inadequacy of the critic is not the fault of the method.

Turning to my other critics, particularly Sivasekaram and Canagaratne, I note with deep regret that

(Continued on page 24)

THE 'N M' FILM

Carlo Fonseka

Having had to learn scientific method by actually practising it, I reflexly look for the 'control experiment' whenever I examine validity of a testable hypothesis. In his review of Tissa Abeysekera's skimpy documentary film of Dr. N. M. Perera's life and work (L. G. 1 February) H. A. Seneviratne says that the LSSP "took a sharp turn to the right in 1964" and implies that was its crucial wrong turn. I presume that by "a sharp turn to the right" he means the LSSP's strategy of working with and through the SLFP for the attainment of specific political objectives. On the hypothesis that association with the SLFP in 1964 was the wrong line, the hypothesis of uncompromising opposition to the SLFP in and after 1964 becomes the right line to have been pursued. This hypothesis has in fact been put to the test of historical experience by erstwhile LSSP ers of the calibre of Edmund Samarakkody and Bala Tampoe (in whose CMU, film critic H. A. Seneviratne was himself a great activist).

Concurrently with the LSSP pursuing its policy of working with the SLFP as far as it could go, these able men of unbending theory, who broke away from the LSSP precisely on the issue of that particular policy, tried with great zeal and devotion, to lead the direction opposite to that in which the LSSP took them. In other words, Samarakkody, Tampoe and others of their political ilk provided the nearest equivalent of "a control" to the LSSP's political experiment. Who will deny that the verdict of history has been infinitely more cruel to Samarakkody and Tampoe than to the LSSP? The masses instantly, decisively and unalterably rejected their political line and leadership. Surely, the final test of the validity of a political line is: does it work? The line favoured by Mr. Seneviratne simply has not worked. How then can he imply that the LSSP's decision in 1964 to work with the SLFP was politically

unwise and wrong? "Having failed to lead the masses at a crucial hour", pontificates Mr. Seneviratne, "the LSSP leadership lost its capacity to follow them". That highfalutin statement is offered by him as "a historical truth"; actually it embodies nothing but piffle.

N. M. Perera was born to a devout Buddhist mother. He was nurtured as a Buddhist. He was educated at the premier Buddhist college in the country. Every wesak he offered flowers to the Buddha in accordance with a promise he had given his mother as a boy. Once he was nearly sacked from the LSSP for participating in a 'nethra pinkama'. Inaugurating the 27th annual session of the Ceylon Association for the Advancement of Science in 1971 he declared: "We have a tradition of democracy coming down to us from the ages. Buddhism is the very antithesis of blind faith. It is the embodiment of independent thinking. We must build on that great tradition and dove-tail that heritage into our political institutions. A statue of the Buddha occupied a prominent place in his private room. Finally he was cremated under Buddhist religious rites. Tissa Abeysekera's film made some allusion to this aspect of N. M. Perera's life and Mr. Seneviratne divines that "that can only lead to contempt and ridicule in the eyes of the masses". Mr. Seneviratne evidently fancies himself the authentic detector of the feelings of the masses. A presumptuous and sweeping judgement of the sort he has made can come only from the pen of a writer who is prone to identify a feeling in the pit of his own stomach as the ultimate expression of an universal urge of mankind. Mr. Editor, thank you for informing us in a helpful footnote that fiction is Mr. Seneviratne's forte.

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A study in terror

Emergency '79 —

A MIRJE Publication 80p.

BOOK
REVIEW

Emergency '79 recounts the events that took place in the Jaffna peninsula under the state of emergency.

The Jayawardena Yugaya however, was already heir to a paradigm of police-citizen relationships that made the events which followed the declaration of a state of emergency last July, a study in terror.

Unlike in other colonies, the absence of a violent form of anti-imperialism had ensured cordial relations between the civilian and uniformed inhabitants of Sri Lanka. With the exception of 1915, the period after the 1848 Rebellion could be characterised as tranquil. The British were not compelled to resort to military repression because the leaders of the nation, the Senanayakes and Jayatilekes, posed no threat to British rule. Even when combating the LSSP before and during World War II, the rule of law rather than terrorism proved adequate for the British. In the provinces, and in its dealings with the poor and powerless, the police could resort to bullying, but such activities had to be circumscribed.

With the granting of dominion status in 1948, the threat from the left opposition grew to the point where the Police became congenitally anti-Marxist. But their response, barring exceptional circumstances, was 'legitimate'.

Impartial

In their response to the minorities, the Police and Armed Forces were impartial. In 1958, throughout the island, the Tamil people could count on the Police and Armed Forces to defend them. Whereas in 1977, it was from the Police that the Tamils fled. Mrs. Bandaranaike's efforts after 1961 to implement the SLFP's language policy in the North with troops under Col. A. R. Udugama, and the purge of minorities which followed the 1962 abortive coup, changed the attitude of the Police and Army to the Tamils. Impartially gradu-

ally gave way to repression, and repression to terrorism.

Right upto 1971, the role of the Police and Military in national affairs was minimal. The insurrection did not merely give them money, equipment and power but it also gave them a bipartisan configuration. Whilst UNP politicians were locked up, the Nugawelas and Weeratungas who had substantial links with the UNP, became Coordinating officers. It is believed that the Army itself was by now in a position to dictate such appointments. The Police and Military realised that they were needed by the civilian government to "pull their chesnuts out of the fire" as a DIG remarked during the 1972 Bank strike.

As in the South, in the North too, the Police which had become intolerably unpopular, had no option but to use terror to ensure its existence. So long as the victims were dead or silent, the wraps could be kept on. But the moment the oppressed retaliated and began assassinating their tormentors—Tamil police officers,—the government had to rush to their defence. The reign of terror which followed the Emergency was stunning. Equally breathtaking was the complete throttling of information outside the peninsula regarding police terrorism.

— J. S.

Trends...

(Continued from page 10)

PRICE OF TNC's

Enter MOTOROLA, the first real TNC. And now, the Ceylon Observer reports, that Sri Lanka will "denounce" a section of the ILO convention when it comes up for ratification. Sri Lanka, a signatory, will "denounce" the section which prohibits the employment of women workers between the hours of 10 pm. and 6 am. The reason? The Electronics industry prefers women workers for their 'dexterity' and they must work three shifts. So, renounce 'human rights' to accommodate Motorola! How ambi-dextrous.

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You get your ducal finger out!

O how it warms the common heart
To know that you don't give a fart!
We honour and salute you, Sir,
O noble Nuke of Edinburgh!

No axe to grind, above the fray,
No purpose but to earn your pay,
You flatten with a single blow
The architect of all our woe!

No other cause of strife exists
But Russian guile and Russian fists;
No crime that others may commit
Has anything to do with it.

Let timid souls express concern
That you were speaking out of turn;
You know, when all is said and done
Which side your bread is buttered on.
— N. S.

The Dostoevsky . . .

(Continued from page 19)

is marked by other significant differences from the approaches dominant in Western writing about Dostoevsky. While Western criticism has tended to emphasise the fantastic and anti-realist elements in Dostoevsky's work, the commentary and notes in the USSR Academy edition bring out the extent to which Dostoevsky's creation was rooted in the social realities of his time. Further, while many Western admirers have seen Dostoevsky as an anti-humanist glorifying the irrational and perverse aspects of human nature, Soviet criticism finds the abiding contemporary significance of his work in the humane compassion for 'the insulted and injured' in his early work and in his endeavour in his mature novels, as he said, 'to find man in man.'

Shortly after the October Revolution, Sovnarkom, the Council of People's Commissars decided, on a proposal of Lenin, to erect monuments to outstanding revolutionary figures and creative geniuses in Russian history. In the list of the latter of these groups Dostoevsky's name stood second, immediately after Tolstoy. Lenin however left

behind no writings on Dostoevsky as he did on Tolstoy, and in the ideological climate of the 'thirties, 'forties and early 'fifties, it seemed that the right-wing political opinions of Dostoevsky's latter years might eclipse for Soviet readers his artistic genius. Today, however, a Soviet critic, Yuri Melentyev, writing in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of February 11, hails Dostoevsky's work as 'one of the incarnations of the genius of the Russian people in its arduous journey towards social justice, freedom, equality and the brotherhood of men.'

Some thoughts . . .

(Continued from page 21)

their reactions were marked with an overt and extreme hostility and subjectivism. What is most depressing is their alarming state of intellectual bankruptcy and their lack of serious thinking. For AJC's sonorous rhetorical frenzy is nothing but a facade to cover up an acute theoretical vacuity. His last para is a clear reflection of an infantile psychology; this is really shocking, particularly as his translations into Tamil of some serious theoretical writings on culture, literary criticism etc. had led me earlier to a different assessment of him. How could such a man now resort to emotional outbursts, invectives and sophistry? The only plausible explanation seems to lie in AJC's chosen role as the 'hatchet-man' of a literary group that subsists on gossip, slander and charlatanism which prevents him from rising to a level of serious debate on a subject in which personalities do not count much.

Is it AJC's "nodding acquaintance with Marxism" that led him to see some "counter-revolutionary implications" in Sankaram? His views do not appear to have a theoretical basis in the play, unless he subscribes to a vulgar reductive notion of the class struggle. I have not seen the play in its present form but a reading of the revised script appears to indicate that Maunaguru has made some notable improvements. However, in my view a much deeper theoretical issue that may be raised about Sankaram's content, in the light of current Marxian scholarship and

debate on historical materialism is the representation of a unilinear succession of societies from primitive communism towards socialism. But this has no "counter revolutionary implications."

Finally a word on the "real battle field" about which AJC keeps talking so much. I must say that I am not at all alienated from this "real battle field" and one of my very recent attempts to have a direct debate with a stalwart of the Alai group at a seminar in Colombo did not prove fruitful as he hurriedly left the forum under some pretext. He also disappointed many others who were present at the seminar as they too had many questions to be posed to this elusive, self proclaimed "cognoscente".

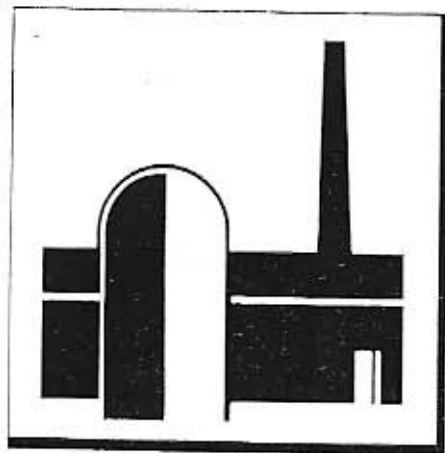
Letters . . .

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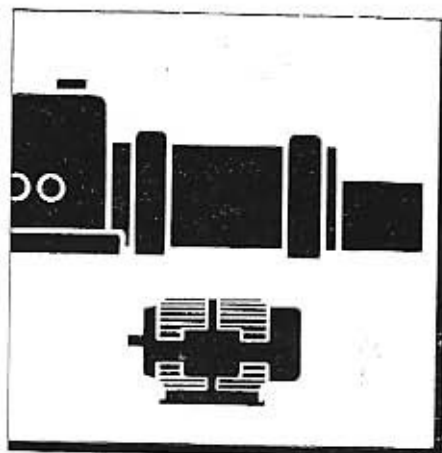
of almost 100,000 workers who participated in the General Strike last July. Twelve persons have been charged in connection with certain events in the city on that day and their trial is proceeding currently at the Harbour Court in Colombo. Of these twelve the sole individual who has been denied bail and retained in custody is Comrade Dharmasekera. He has made one application for bail to the Magistrate's Court and three such applications to the Appeal Court. His fourth application was turned down on January 30th.

In this situation it is a primary task of all Left-wing and democratic sections in the country to launch a campaign on behalf of Comrade Dharmasekera. Already our paper *Desha Vimukthi* has taken some steps in this regard. I hope that the *Lanka Guardian* which has given special place to the views and opinions of the New Left, will fulfil its tasks on this occasion too. I am certain that the L.G. can be of assistance in focussing the attention of the English reading public on this matter.

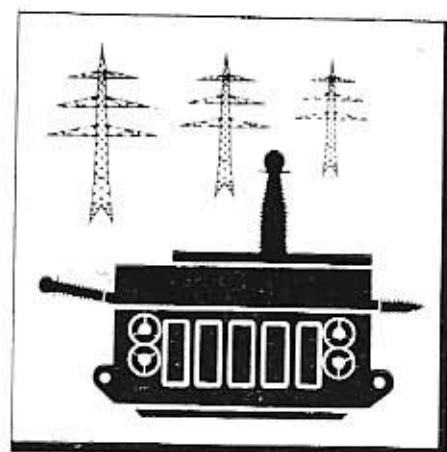
Nihal Perera
(*Desha Vimukthi*)



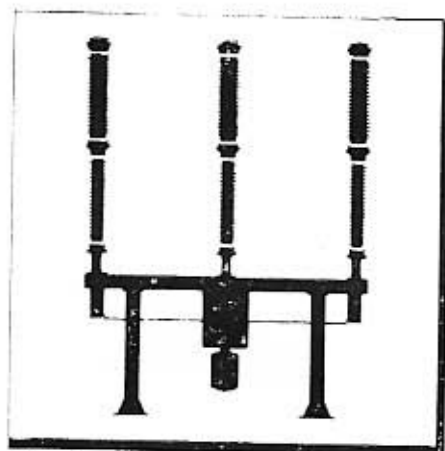
Steam and gas turbine power stations



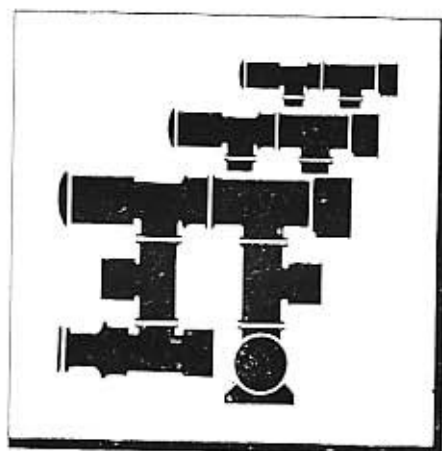
Generators and motors of all types and sizes



Large power transformers



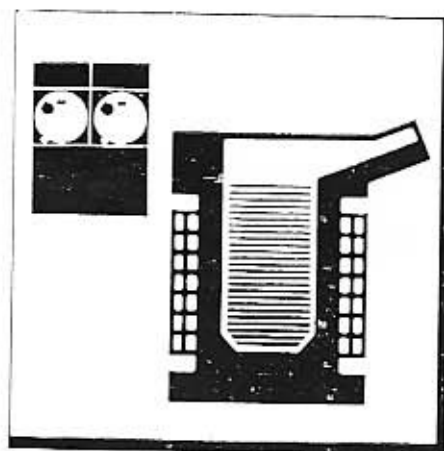
SF₆-circuit-breakers up to 420 kV



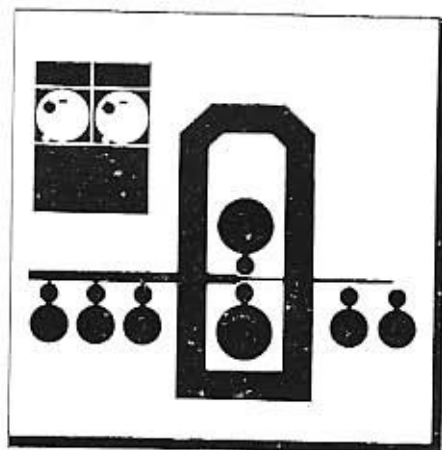
Medium- and high-voltage switchgear up to 525 kV



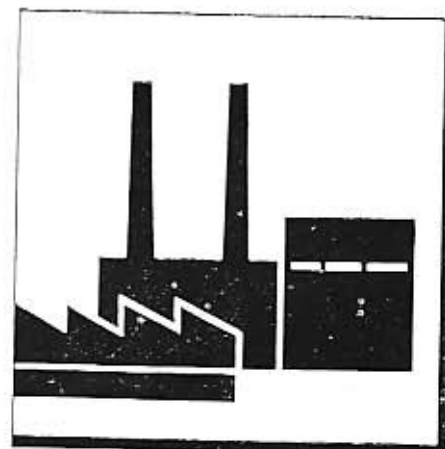
Tele-control and data systems



Electro-heat applications (foundries)



Electrical equipment for rolling mills



Complete installations for the building materials industry

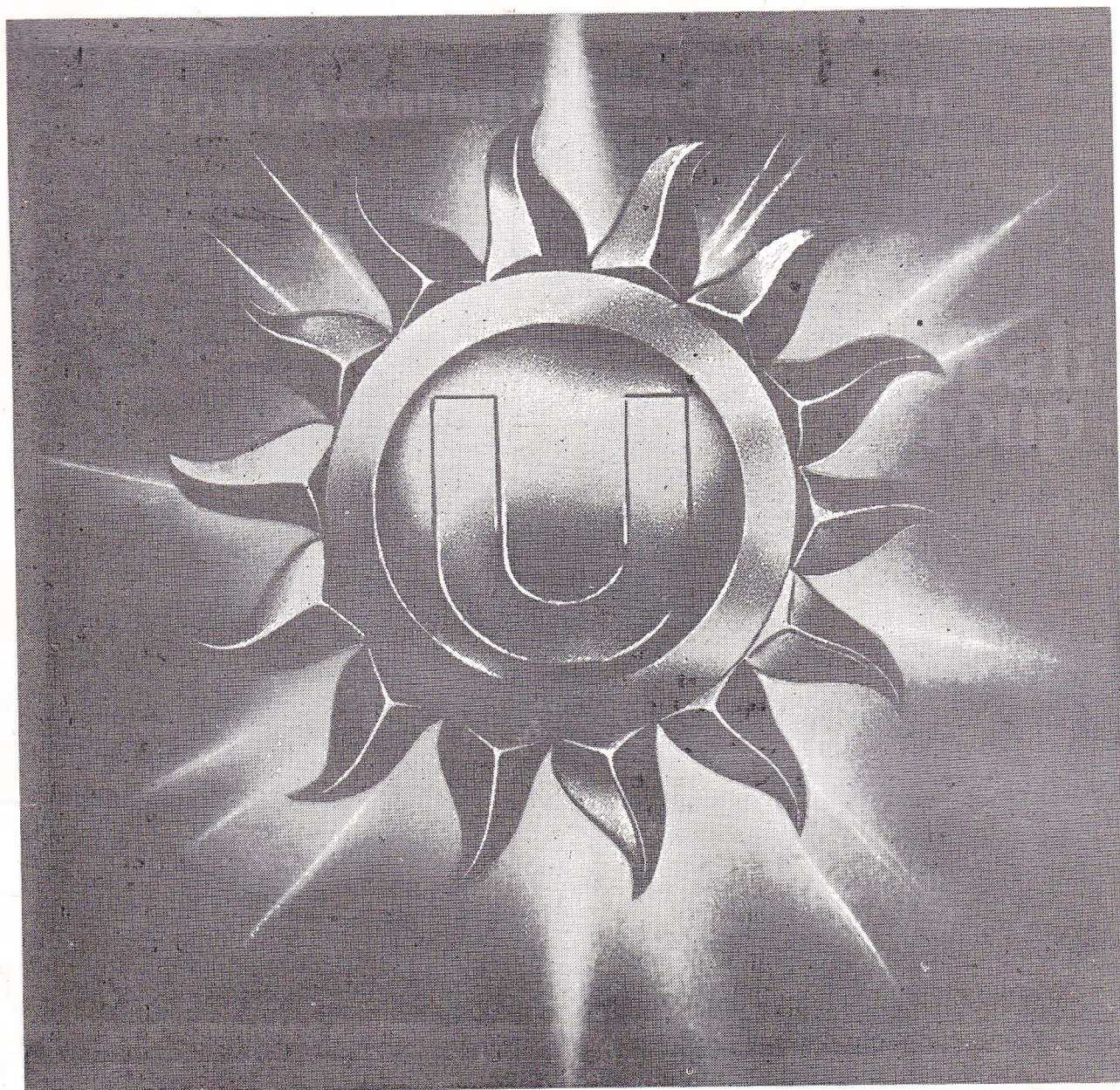
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The sun, an eternal symbol of energy and the bright side of life is the Upali Group's emblem and inspiration.

For centuries the people of Sri Lanka, bronzed by its warmth have looked upon the fiery star as a sign of good omen and adorned their flags and crests with its likeness.

The Upali Group's burnished sun shines not only in Sri Lanka but over many lands, Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, where their products are manufactured and

USA, Australia, Japan, Ireland, Hong Kong, Thailand, where they are marketed.

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