

YOUNG SOCIALIST

EDITORIALS ON: The class struggle erupts; The struggle against the Emergency regime; January 5th; The policy of attempted intimidation; the creeping Dictatorship; The working class defends the democratic rights of all; The threefold crisis; Government's financial crisis; The advancing crisis of the economy; Precursors of political crisis; Murder by Statute; The 22nd Congress of the C. P. S. U.; Goa.

NATALIA TROTSKY

The Sources of Power in the Ceylon Constitution

by A. J. WILSON

A History of the Working Class Movement in Ceylon (Part III)

by N. S. G. KURUPPU

The Indian Political Scene

by HECTOR ABHAYAWARDHANA

Plantation Labour in Ceylon (Part II)

by S. RAJARATNAM

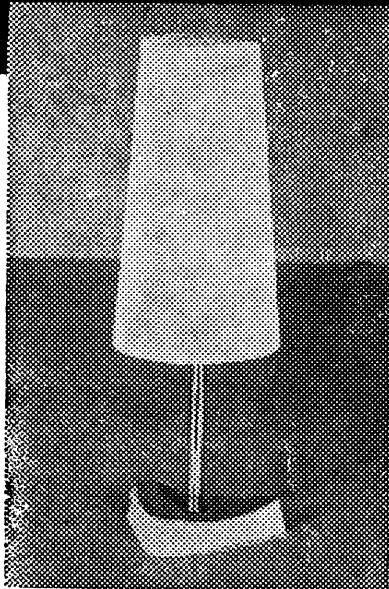
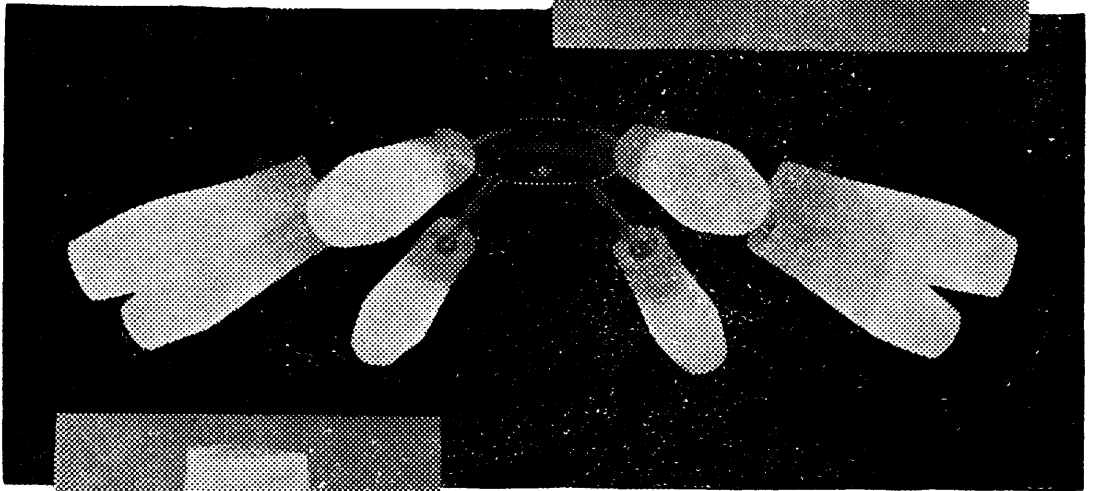
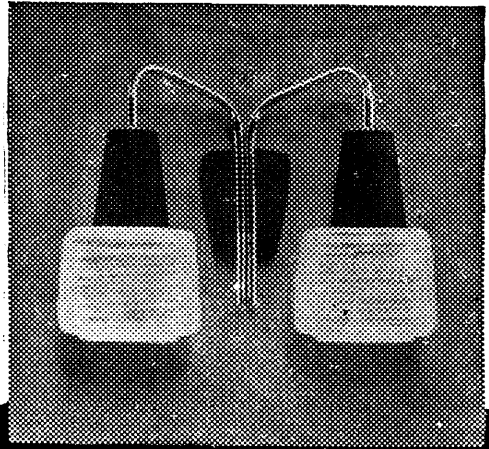
Accumulation in Backward Countries

by ANIL MOONASINGHE

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YOUNG SOCIALIST

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Editorial Notes

THE CLASS STRUGGLE ERUPTS

IN the last few weeks a noticeable change has taken place in the climate of Ceylon politics, in the relationship of class forces and in political alignments. The basic cause of the change is the continued eruption of the class struggle.

Ever since the 24 days strike of the Colombo Port Cargo Corporation workers terminated in June 1959, Ceylon has seen substantial class peace. What with the Bandaranaike assassination, two general elections inter-valled by a minority UNP Government which roused old mass fears anew and the working class itself participating in the installation of a Government pledged to conciliationism in relation to the working class, the working class was as it were too preoccupied otherwise to engage in direct struggle. Right down to December 1961 the only major break in the quiescence of the working class was the bank employees strike in April 1961. Looking back from today it is clear that this strike, which was submerged in the events attendant upon the mass satyagraha movement of the Tamils in the North and East, not only heralded a new wave of working class struggle but also signalled already the unity and determination which were to characterise the working class in the new struggle.

The long period of class peace has definitely ended. November 1961 witnessed in a sudden strike of the bus workers at the Kadawata Depot the precursor of the coming storm. Even in this little action the unity and determination in struggle of the strikers

were marked features. There followed the massive demonstration in Colombo and the monster rally at Galle Face organised by the Co-ordinating Committee of Trade Union Organisations and the Public Service League. It was clear from this huge protest against the new budgetary burdens placed upon the toiling masses and the failure to implement the wage concessions, embodied in the Report of the Wages and Salaries Commission that the workers and employees of the Government sector in particular were girding themselves for struggle.

Hard on the heels of this demonstration, which undoubtedly stirred up the working people generally, came the strike of the Ceylon Transport Board workers. Starting as a united action of the workers at the Ratmalana depot this strike brought to a head the long simmering discontent of the C.T.B. employees against bureaucratic mishandling and mismanagement and developed into a general strike of the workers. The Prime Minister's personal efforts at impelling the popular masses against the strikers and also to disrupt the strike from within failed completely and the strikers won their demand with devastating consequences to the managing Board itself. There can be no doubt that the success of the C.T.B. workers added to the confidence of the general trade union movement.

As the C.T.B. strikers returned to work the Port Cargo Corporation's 17,500 workers struck on 14th December as one man. This strike, unprecedented among the Port workers for its hundred percent unity and its sustained determination, still continues

and as at the time of writing is in its 36th day. Not a man has gone back in the interval. When it is remembered that these men receive no strike pay and that it is only recently that some little assistance has been organised for the most needy, the sheer heroism of these strikers and their valiant families and dependants becomes clear even while begging description.

The strike in the Colombo Port was met by the Government with a two pronged policy of refusal to negotiate and of the use of the military for plain black legging. Little did the Government realise that it was thereby paving the way for the entire trade union movement to be rapidly drawn into the main stream of the strike struggle. Government's policy in relation to the Port strike was the direct provocation for January 5th.

While the general trade union movement was preparing to come to the support of the Port workers, the employees of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company struck work on December 22nd on a long standing bonus claim. This strike too still continues and is therefore in its 28th day. The history of the bonus issue, which involves all the oil companies, is shameful. The companies went back after the late Prime Minister Bandaranaike's death on an undertaking given by them in Mr. Bandaranaike's life time in public and direct response to a declaration of Government policy. They persuaded an industrial court to which only the quantum of the bonus was intended to be referred to go into and reject the very principle of bonus payments which had been previously conceded by them. The present Government which claims to speak in the Bandaranaike name stands behind the oil companies in their pusillanimity and miserliness. Admittedly the oil companies can more than bear a bonus payment. Now that the Government's Petroleum Corporation is in process of being launched, the question arises whether it is not a case of the companies lining up with Government policy. Certainly the present strike wave has led to a public acknowledgment by Government that it has long been operating a general wage freeze. Undoubtedly it is this policy which has prolonged the present strike struggles even as the determination of the workers has given them their dour character.

On December 27th the Bank Employees resumed the strike which they had interrupted after 17 days of struggle in April 1961. This strike is now in its 22nd day and has kept all the commercial private banks and the nationalised bank of Ceylon completely strike-bound. This strike has exposed another facet of Government policy. Quite apart from the regulations and essential services orders under the Emergency powers, the Government has sought to involve this strike in specific illegality by referring the dispute to an industrial court for compulsory arbitration. Even as the court sat, it was presented preliminarily with an application by the banks for authority to dismiss or otherwise punish the strikers pending the court's proceedings on the ground that the Industrial Disputes Act prohibited the continuation of a strike after reference of the issues to an industrial court. Since the

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Bank of Ceylon is now a Government Bank and it has joined in the application, the authority sought for what is clearly victimisation is obviously in accordance with and in pursuance of Government policy. Of this more anon.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EMERGENCY REGIME

It is necessary to stress that all these strikes and the great January 5th general engagement have gone forward in the setting of and in despite of the Emergency regime which has prevailed in Ceylon since April 1961. We have previously drawn attention in "Young Socialist" to the draconian nature of the regulations and orders made under the Emergency powers and the severely hampering effect they have on even the ordinary routine activity of the trade unions. Over and above these restrictions and limitations, strikes, propaganda for strikes, assistance to and co-operation with strikes or even individual strikers, mere disobedience of the orders of the bosses and a multitude of others such things in nearly every branch of economic and administrative activity in the country have been illegalised and penalised with fine, imprisonment and the automatic forfeiture of property including personal goods. It is a Government with such dictatorial and repressive powers, including the power to prohibit opposition, to illegalise organisations and to imprison without trial both opponents and critics, which the working class movement is facing today in direct struggle. Accordingly the working class finds itself not only in a struggle for its own trade union demands but also in the van of the struggle for the restoration and consolidation of the democratic rights of the entire people.

JANUARY 5TH

As fundamental issues posed by Government's policy in relation to the strikes grew clear, the entire trade union movement, growing aware of the danger to trade unionism itself and the working class movement broadly, began to prepare for general action on the general issues. The CCTUO, the PSL, the Central Council of Ceylon Trade Unions, the Ceylon Trade Union Federation

and the Public Service Workers' Trade Union Federation came together in a call for a one day general strike on January 5th in demonstration of protest against the use of the military for strike-breaking and the refusal of the Government to negotiate a settlement of the just demand of the Colombo Port workers for a straight monthly wage.

It is not the function of these notes to recite the stirring tale of this general engagement of the working class with the forces of the SLFP, the Government and the state which were backed openly by the United National Party also. Suffice it to say that we have the Prime Minister's own subsequent admission that the entire energy of the Government and of the administrative machine was consumed for several weeks in the single task of preparing to face January 5th. And yet, January 5th, which was organised entirely through the trade union organisations and not through any political parties, saw the Government cut off from most of the country and Ceylon cut off from the world because of a strike of the technical officers in Radio Ceylon, the Overseas Telecommunication Services and the Civil Aviation Services. Although the pretence of a skeleton bus service in the form of convoys under military escort was maintained on the roads, the railway system was brought to a virtual stand still. The posts and telegraphs were paralysed, and the telephone system was disorganised and disrupted. Not a ship moved into or out of the Colombo Port that day. Hardly an export firm functioned. The plantations which constitute the heart of Ceylon's economic system were completely strike bound. Whole branches of the administrative services were thoroughly disorganised and in many a case and region came to a complete standstill. All in all over a million workers struck work that day in every field of production, distribution and administration. Whatever the propaganda pronouncements of the Government January 5th undoubtedly made it realise the depth and strength of working class resentment against Government's resort to the military for strike-breaking and Government's policy of attrition in relation to strikes. Above all, Government realises that January 5th was of the nature of a first engagement only and

that a more sustained clash of the same general nature is in the offing. The working class movement, conscious of an action of unprecedented unity and solidarity of unprecedented numerical and organised strength and of an unprecedented level of general class consciousness, continues to be on the rise.

THE POLICY OF ATTEMPTED INTIMIDATION

Government reacted to these developments in the class struggle with a mixture of panic and purpose. Emergency regulations and orders which had been previously withdrawn or modified in partial deference to Parliamentary criticism were reintroduced in their full force. The military were mobilised with their reserves called up and a Pioneer Corps recruited. The censorship was re-enforced in full vigour in respect of strikes and the propaganda media of Government and of the Government party were brought into full play. At key points the armed forces were organised to substitute for civilian personnel on strike and all safety regulations were discarded in respect of every form of transport. Threats of reprisals against strikers were publicly made and a general atmosphere of intimidation was sought to be created. When, nevertheless, the organised trade union movement struck its blow on January 5th, the Government retorted with the widest and most vicious victimisation. In particular the gallant Radio Ceylon technicians, who had effectively cut Government propaganda off the air from 6-15 a.m. on the 4th, were served with notices of vacation of post while eight of them were detained under the Emergency regulations on an allegation of sabotage. Two Station-masters who had refused to permit trains to pass through were interdicted by telegram. Innumerable strikers in the CTB were arrested with or without accusations made. Pay was docked all round and an infamous circular, whose legality has been challenged, instructed all heads of Government departments and the managements of Government corporations to victimise in various ways the men who struck. In the case of certain punishments there has been even a touch of veritable meanness. And the refusal to negotiate with the Harbour

strikers has been reaffirmed at the cost of making the Minister who represents the Prime Minister in Parliament eat his own words in Parliament.

The trade union movement and the working class generally have not been intimidated by the victimisations but only stirred to anger. Sections have already struck back where opportunity presented itself and the Radio Ceylon men in particular have continued their strike on the demand for the release of their imprisoned comrades. This strike or lockout, whatever its proper name, continues.

THE CREEPING DICTATORSHIP

Thus four powerful strikes which affect three vital sectors of the economy and one vital centre of Government propaganda keep the entire strike movement in continued flow after January 5th. And Government, fearing a new broadening of the flow, is still preoccupied primarily with the organisation of itself and the means available to it against another general strike. It is known that the military dispositions have already been determined and that the politico-military operational headquarters at Temple Trees, which draws in the armed forces, the police and the Cabinet are continuing to function as an effective centre of politico-military decisions. In other words the panic-stricken Government, conscious of its inability to face a collision with the working class with its own political and mass resources, has set going a process of the interpenetration of the military and the civilian sectors of administration which carries with it the gravest consequences to the Parliamentary democratic set-up which is said to be fundamental to the political institutions of Ceylon.

The process we are witnessing is a kind of cold militarisation of the processes and institutions of rule and administration in our country. Its advance is so quiet, partly so secret, and also to many so apparently natural and inevitable in the circumstances that the manner in which it steadily undermines the democratic rights of the masses and carries the country forward towards a straight military dictatorship is not readily realised even in intelli-

gentsia circles. It is therefore a process of creeping dictatorship which is both more subtle, and also more dangerous because it does not evoke the same sharpness of resistance, than either straight military repression or a military *coup d'etat*. Incidentally it is of course a process which creates a better opportunity for a *coup d'etat*. Governments which rely on the military to the extent of resting upon the use of military force for every day purposes soon fall into the position of being the prisoners of the very forces which they thought to use. And since this resort to the military is to protect themselves against the popular masses, when the crisis in their own relations with the military comes they cannot resort to the masses for defence against the military.

THE WORKING CLASS DEFENDS THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS OF ALL

Thus the defence of the democratic rights of the masses has to be undertaken directly by the masses instead of being left to the Government which they themselves elected. That is the situation in which we are today and it will not be difficult to gain wide recognition for the fact that the working class in struggle is fighting not only for its own demands but also for the democratic rights of the wide masses. Incidentally that is the answer to the Government's efforts to drive a wedge between the working class and the rural mass in regard to the strike movement. The truth is that the working class is at present shouldering the burden of the struggle for the democratic interests of the people as a whole.

THE THREE-FOLD CRISIS

The great strike movement goes forward in a deteriorating financial and economic situation which is itself the ultimate source of the Government's intransigence and panic. The fat accumulated by Ceylon capitalism in the period of post-war prosperity has been consumed and burnt up to the point where Ceylon capitalism has acquired a lean and hungry look. Indeed, Ceylon capitalism has degenerated at its very heart. It is today unable to generate and sustain a rate of economic development which can match the rate of increase of

Ceylon's population. The accelerating growth of unemployment generally and the sheer inability to absorb the educated youth in gainful employment consistent with their attainment is the principal manifestation of the disease.

There are three co-existent and merging crises in the country today. These are the financial crisis of Government, the general crisis of the economy and the consequent political crisis. Each of these is at a different stage of development. The most advanced is the financial crisis of Government. The crisis of the economy is less advanced but can be more dangerous if it lasts than the financial crisis. The supervening political crisis is only in its very first form but has always the capacity of maturing speedily and exploding suddenly before the full maturing of the economic crisis.

GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL CRISIS

No longer can even the glib Finance Minister pass off the financial difficulties of Government as a problem of mere imbalance. The Prime Minister herself has been forced by the strike situation to put forward the financial crisis faced by her Government as an excuse for her class intransigence and her Finance Minister's unofficial wage freeze. Thus the extremity of Government's financial situation is no longer capable of being hidden. Current, or rather, recurrent expenditure (as distinct from capital or development expenditure) is eating up not only current revenue but even loan funds; and revenue itself is showing a heavy downturn in continuation of the trend already manifested in the year 1960-61. It is said that the revenue will show a short fall of at least Rs. 100 millions in 1961-62. Even such nest-eggs as the Employees' Provident Fund have been raided for routine needs; and Treasury Bills continue to be taken up by the Central Bank in quantities which point to the printshop becoming one of Government's financiers. There can be little doubt that Government is resorting deliberately to monetary inflation as a means of surmounting its financial crisis. Of all methods to which a Government can resort in such a situation, it is not only the most cowardly but also the most disorganising in its effects on the general economy.

THE ADVANCING CRISIS OF THE ECONOMY

These disorganising consequences have in fact been manifesting themselves increasingly in the general economic sphere, principally in respect of the domestic price-level. Import restrictions governed by the depletion of the Government's foreign balances, unaccompanied by any expansion of relevant domestic production, began quite a time ago to drive up the prices of consumer-commodities. The continued excess of Government expenditure over revenue, resulting in ever more unbalanced budgets, represented, in the context of lagging economic development, only a continued pumping of purchasing power into the economy unaccompanied by expansion of production. The upward pressure on domestic prices was thereby further enhanced. When, further, Government began in effect to take up its own Treasury Bills, that is to lend to itself, and thus set going a process which really amounted to unacknowledged currency depreciation, it is no wonder that prices took wing and began to soar. Neither Government's pitiful efforts at operating price-controls nor its nervous, unprepared, uncorrelated and wholly inadequate incursions into the fields of wholesale and retail trading have sufficed to counter or hold within bounds the pressures on prices generated by its own financial policies.

In recent months a new and more fundamental danger has come upon the financial and economic scene. The prices of the export products on the profitable sale of which in the international markets the very functioning of our economy depends have declined so steadily that our coconut industry is in semi-depression conditions, our rubber industry is in the doldrums of near non-profitability and bare profitability and our mid-country and low-country teas are on the narrowest profit margins. High-grown tea alone shows high, if also reduced, profits. To cap it all, the previously risen import prices show no decline. Our economy is being struck both ways.

Thus, the severe financial crisis of the Government is merging in the beginnings of general economic crisis which in turn renders more acute the financial crisis of the Govern-

ment. A Budget which leans heavily on export duties can be crippled by the decline in export prices. And in turn, a Government with crippled finances can ill engage in economic development and so on.

PRECURSORS OF POLITICAL CRISIS

The political consequences of the financial and economic situation outlined above have only just begun to be signalled. But although in this sense the political crisis is the least advanced aspect or element of the three-fold crisis, at the same time it is the one constituent of the crisis which can, in certain circumstances, develop and mature most rapidly of the three. The masses do not always await the full maturing of a financial or economic crisis before entering upon political action in relation to the crisis. On the contrary, political action by the masses in relation to the forces and institutions which they regard as responsible for an increasingly intolerable situation can well anticipate and has often preceded the full maturing of financial and economic crisis. Such political action, let it be added, is not necessarily concerned with constitutionalities. The masses act not only to change the law but also when necessary heedless of the law.

The first major new factor in the political scene is of course the massive irruption of the organised working class into the political arena. Its effects are visible in many ways. For instance, the principal criticism of and attack on Government's policies no longer emanate from the Right but from the Left. The leading opposition to Government's policies is now centred in the working class movement and not in the capitalist class as represented by the U.N.P. This has been so since the great CCTUO—PSL demonstration and rally of December 2nd 1961.

This shift of the centre of criticism and attack has had its consequences on political alignments. For instance it is obvious that those who gave the Government "critical support" since its installation are occupied very much more with active criticism than with mere support. The criticism, it should be stressed, has been confined to sharp words but has increasingly taken the form of direct

action. It was no doubt a consciousness of the acuteness of the strain on earlier political alignments that led to the Minister of Transport and Works in the debate on the January 5th general strike appealing openly and directly to the LSSP and CP not to let relations with the Government reach the point of severance. He of course invited the retort that the responsibility for the situation was wholly the Government's.

The new surge of the class struggle has also had an effect upon alignments amongst the parties which have any degree of an important base within the working class. Certainly in the sphere of trade union action the L.S.S.P., the C.P., the M.E.P., and the C.W.C., have succeeded in acting with unprecedented unity. Co-operation in the trade union field has also manifestly served already to minimise or, more accurately, to submerge the frictions between these political parties and there can be no doubt that the extent of co-operation already existing between these parties have had a visibly heartening effect on the working class generally.

The resurgence of the class struggle has also had effect elsewhere in the field of political alignment. One effect, which is not without significance, was seen in relation to the January 5th general strike. The U.N.P., expressing itself through its trade union leadership and above all through the Mayor of Colombo, came down hard on the side of the Government in respect of the January 5th strike. Thus was demonstrated anew the immanent capacity and readiness of the capitalist class to come together in defence of common interests against the danger from working class action.

In fact there has been a manifest Rightward trend in the S.L.F.P. Government's policy under the pressure of working class direct action. Even the earlier Left phraseology has worn thin and almost become forgotten. The policy of "firmness" and threats, the appeals to the "rural masses" against the working class and the demand that the working class should refrain from endangering the (capitalist) economy are long familiar from earlier regimes. Such policies do not become the less reactionary because they are operated in the name of a fake "democratic Socialism."

This shift to the Right in Government policy has not been without effect within the Government party in Parliament and the S.L.F.P. forces and following outside. In a broad way the S.L.F.P., has lost the working class which helped so actively to bring it into power in July 1960. The working class, so long disoriented and confused within itself, has begun to draw together for class action in pursuance of class aims even in conflict with the S.L.F.P., Government.

This trend of the working class movement, this enormous weakening if not breach of the political link between the working class and the S.L.F.P. has begun to have consequences within the S.L.F.P. itself. The controlling leadership has manifestly moved Rightwards while elements in the rank and file have begun to look Leftward. Little manifestations of anxiety if not opposition regarding Government policy in relation to working class struggles have appeared and disappeared and there can be no doubt that the broad rank and file, even while it rallies to the controlling leadership, is unhappy, uncomfortable and even at times restless. These are the first forms and signs that the flow of the working class movement is inducing stresses and strains in the Government party such as can in the next stage of development lead to the beginnings of an internal crisis. Whatever is genuinely progressive within and around the S.L.F.P., must and will move nearer to the working class in the next stage of the development of the working class struggle.

As for the impact of the situation on the non-worker masses of the toilers, there is little means of gauging the position. What is noteworthy is that, unlike previously, these sections of the masses have not shown an active hostility to the strike struggles of the workers. This is a pointer to the extent to which the economic situation and its consequences have affected the loyalty of the mass following of the SLFP. It will depend on the heights to which the working class movement rises whether these sectors of the masses get drawn towards the working class. Certainly it is demonstrable that many of the broad issues on which the working class is battling, such as the Emergency regime, the tax burdens, the price question and the threat to democratic rights, concern the broad mass of the toilers no less than the working class.

MURDER BY STATUTE

THE Capital Punishment (Special Provisions) Bill, introduced in Parliament at the time of writing, cannot await the next issue of "*Young Socialist*" for comment. The storm of protest it has evoked is in every way justified.

The Bill embodies Government's reaction to the unanimous decision of the five judges who sat as a Full Court of the Court of Criminal Appeal that the Capital Punishment (Repeal) Act of 1959 did not catch up conspiracy to murder and that therefore Mapiitigama Buddharakkita Thera and Hemachandra Piyasena Jayawardene (Talduwe Somarama Thera does not matter as the sentence of death passed on him for the conviction of murder stands confirmed) could not be sentenced to death but only to life imprisonment in terms of the Suspension of Capital Punishment Act of 1958 for the offence of conspiracy to murder the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike of which they were convicted. Mr. Bandaranaike was of course Prime Minister at the time he was murdered and, it should be added, it was he who had

been responsible for the suspension of Capital Punishment Act. The Prime Minister at the time of the repealing Act was the Hon. Wijayananda Dahanayake, the successor chosen by the S.L.F.P. Cabinet and Government Party to take the place of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike.

The present Bill asserts it was Parliament's intention under Mr. Dahanayake's Act that "the persons responsible for that assassination should suffer capital punishment" and thereupon goes on, specifically mentioning the number of the case and the names of the persons against whom the Bill is aimed, to decree capital punishment for them.

The means of imposing the death penalty upon Buddharakkita and Jayawardene should be noted. The Court of Criminal Appeal judgement in regard to sentence is declared null and void and the sentence of death passed by the trial judge (whose sentence the Court of Criminal Appeal set aside) is directed to be "deemed at all times to have been, and to be valid notwithstanding the judgment of the Court of Criminal Appeal."

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It is probably that a Bill such as this has never before been presented to any Parliament in the world at any time in history. It is perhaps a consciousness of this which has caused the inclusion in the Bill of provisions which prohibit any proceedings of order in or by any Court "whether of its own motion or otherwise" in connection with the implementation of the provisions of the Bill. Further, complete immunity is granted for those carrying out the provisions of the Bill and lest there be any doubt possible it is added that "the provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything in any other law, and shall not be called in question in any Court."

This Bill provides a particularly vicious example of retrospective legislation. To begin with it is directed against particular persons and not against even a class of persons. Secondly, the object is to take away the life of these persons by a pretence of judicial process which is only a cover for an executive process which is itself protected by this misuse of the legislative process. Thirdly, the liability to a death sentence thus imposed is accepted by the Bill itself as not having been present either at the time of the offence or at the time of the trial and the appeal. The liability is imposed now for then. Finally, this liability is created by what amounts to a subsequent and retroactive deprivation of the right of appeal which these people had not only had but also had exercised successfully. That is the force of declaring the Court of Criminal Appeal judgment null and void and making operative the judgment of the trial judge which the court of Criminal Appeal had expressly set aside as being illegal.

If this Bill is accepted by the Legislature and, when enacted into law, carried out, it will be a case of murder by Statute. The vistas of horror which will thereby be opened out are such as make the mind and imagination boggle. In the meantime there will be an undermining of the judicial process, a perverting of the legislative process and, to a degree, the placing of the Executive above the law. It is incredible that this could happen in a civilized country and we have no doubt that this Bill will shock and alienate civilized world opinion.

THE 22ND CONGRESS OF THE C. P. S. U.

We conclude as usual with a couple of notes on international affairs.

Not only has the tension over the Berlin question sensibly eased; it has also been to a degree overshadowed by the sensational revelations officially made at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union regarding Stalin's period of rule.

Although these revelations of the cruel and anachronistic nature of Stalin's personal dictatorship, with its frame up trials, its falsifications of history, its perversion of Marxist theory, its betrayal of both the revolutionary forces and the revolutionary tradition as well as of course its record of plain mass persecution and oppression, has come to the world with the force of a new revelation, it has long been familiar to and systematically exposed by the Trotskyist and indeed, first of all, by Trotsky himself before an assassin hired by Stalin drove an ice axe into his mighty brain. Such books as the "Revolution Betrayed", and "The Stalin School of Falsification," immediately spring to one's mind. The difference is that now the facts are no longer in issue because so much has been admitted by manifest participators in the crimes of Stalin's time. It is only a matter of time before the principal victim of their regime, Leon Trotsky co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, is publicly and officially rehabilitated in the place and reputation which are his by right.

The revelations at the 22nd Congress were in continuation of the revelations already made at the 20th Congress of 1956. However, the current revelations have had the greatest impact because they have been officially published whereas the earlier revelations were made to the C. P. S. U. in secret session. It is no more necessary to establish the facts; what is required is interpretation of the admitted facts.

Since interpretation has itself become both a weapon of reaction in the cold war against the Soviet Union and a fresh means of attack on socialism itself by socialism's opponents, it is necessary to put the facts in perspective.

Let us begin pointing out that the Trotskyist movement itself has never found reason in these facts, which include the systematic and ruthless persecution of itself, to abandon its characterisation of the Soviet Union as a workers' state. While denouncing the outrage on socialism both in theory and practice which was Stalin's regime, the Trotskyists insisted that the maintenance and development of the stratified property system preserved the fundamental conquest of the October revolution which overthrew the feudal and capitalist power in Russia. So much for those who seek to use the 22nd Congress Revelations to question the very nature of the Soviet Union as a workers state.

What the Trotskyists did with these facts was to show that they fell into a pattern of political power which on the one hand showed that a bureaucracy had usurped governmental power and on the other that the interests of this bureaucracy which had risen on the conquests of the masses clashed in vital ways with the interests of the revolution which the masses had carried out. The process of the bureaucracy's consolidation of its power, a process in which the crimes now denounced by Stalin's heirs played a vital part, was characterised by the Trotskyist movement as a process of the political, and social degeneration of the Soviet State in its character as a workers' state.

The Stalinists have falsified the meaning of this Trotskyist characterisation as they have falsified all else. They and their apologists have pointed to the mighty economic and scientific achievements of the Soviet Union as contradicting the Trotskyist characterisation of the Soviet Union as a (socially and politically) degenerated worker state. Therein, however, they simply hid the fact

that the Trotskyist criticisms simultaneously insisted that the stratified property system, despite the weight on it of the bureaucracy and the distortion of its direction and functioning introduced by the bureaucracy, was capable, because of the systematic planned development it enabled, of providing a rate of economic progress such as capitalism had not known. In other words, the economic and scientific achievements of the Soviet Union were foreseen by Trotskyist theory instead of being confuted by them.

Why the Krushchev regime has had to turn retrospectively upon the Stalin regime is not a matter for a short note such as this but it is necessary to say that there has only been a relaxation and not a fundamental transformation of the Stalinist system in the Soviet Union which Trotskyism has analysed and explained. In what manner the Soviet masses will carry through this transformation will probably be seen much sooner than many anticipate. In the meantime, the admissions made and the changes which are going forward serve only to revalidate the theses of a man who saw as far ahead in his time as Marx, Engels and Lenin did in theirs.

GOA

The anomaly of Goa, Damien and Diu has been ended. The last surviving vestiges of colonialism in the Indian subcontinent have been wiped out. It is idle for the imperialists of the world to hold up their hands in pretended horror in the name of peace before the belated spectacle of this destruction. In the light of both history and the flow of events in the world today, the incorporation in the Indian Union of these little territories was just.

20th January 1962.

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NATALIA SEDOVA TROTSKY

THE of death Natalia Sedova Trotsky was announced on January 23rd in Paris, into a suburb of which city she had moved from Mexico a few months ago.

We mourn her passing not only because she was Trotsky's wife and companion through all of his adult life, but also because as a revolutionary in her own right she was the last survivor of a gallant generation of revolutionaries, who, having devoted all their lives to the revolution in Russia and successfully carried it through, refused to capitulate to the usurpers.

Natalia was born into the Russian nobility, that outmoded hierarchical system characteristic of feudalism, which survived in Russia into this century. Natalia was herself to contribute in no small measure to the proletarian revolution that swept the aristocracy along with much else to well-deserved destruction.

The spirit of rebellion in her showed itself quite early. She was expelled from boarding school because she succeeded in making some of her class-mates stay away from prayers and read the radical author Chernishevsky instead of the Bible.

Having graduated from Moscow University, she went to Geneva, having decided that it was only in emigration that she could find the opportunity to work for the revolution. She joined Plekhanov and his "Iskra" group.

Trotsky first met Natalia in Paris when he was sent on a lecture tour to France and Belgium by the London headquarters of the "Iskra" Group. He had just escaped from Siberian exile and reached London where Lenin, quickly noting his ability, had proposed his being added to the editorial board. The lecture tour was to raise funds for the "Iskra".

From then on Natalia's life was inextricably intertwined with that of her husband and the ebbs and flow of the Russian revolution.

Since Trotsky's assassination in August 1940, Natalia's life must have been unenviably sad and lonely. Stalin had wiped out not only her husband and two sons, but also her two-step-daughters by Trotsky's first wife, Alexandra Sokolovskaya. Alexandra too had disappeared in some Siberian prison camp. So too had all her revolutionary colleagues and contemporaries who had failed to die a natural death or capitulate to Stalin.

But not once did Natalia waver in her opposition to the bureaucratic regime. She threw a number of public challenges to the bureaucrats, the last shortly before her death. Nailing Krushchev's "revelations" as fragmentary half-truths she demanded the complete rehabilitation of Trotsky and proper evaluation of Stalin's crimes.

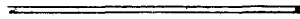
She was an unflinching fighter to the end.

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THE SOURCES OF POWER IN THE CEYLON CONSTITUTION

By Dr. A. J. WILSON Ph. D.

IN any independent, democratic, sovereign state, power is supposed to be vested in the hands of the citizens who inhabit its territorial confines. This is what is usually meant by the commonly used phrase, 'sovereignty resides in the people'. Though however sovereignty or power is supposed to be vested in the people, it need not and for practical purposes, it cannot be exercised by the people. It is because of this practical difficulty that constitutions have been designed with the approval of the people, which is in effect the electorate, through their representatives, for the purpose of defining the extent of this power and the way in which it should be exercised. Government in effect therefore is the art of exercising power as laid down in a constitution. Our own country possesses a written constitution and it is from this constitution that we can determine the extent to which power has been delegated by the people to its representatives who constitute the Parliament of Ceylon.

It will of course be argued that it was not the people of Ceylon but a foreign country that imposed a constitution on this country. This statement is not entirely correct. The Soulbury Constitution which is the foundation of our present constitutional system was essentially a substantial reproduction of the Draft Scheme formulated by the Board of Ministers within certain limitations under His Majesty's Declaration of 20th May 1943. The Soulbury Constitution was subsequently liberalised by a White Paper issued by His Majesty's Government in October 1945. It might be recalled that this White Paper was accepted by the then State Council by an overwhelming majority of 51 votes to 3. It can be argued that it was a superannuated State Council which had long lost its mandate from the people and which had been kept alive by extensions owing to war conditions that accepted the White Paper of October 1945. But it can also be argued that the fact that a majority in the House of Representatives in 1947 and 1952 worked this 'foreign product' was evidence that the

people had at least tacitly given their consent to it. Where this statement is partly correct is that the Constitution which defines governmental conduct in our country today is not one which has been framed by the people of this country through their representatives in a constituent assembly. This is the usual practice when a people achieve their independence. It was not so with us. Our Constitution in this sense was a fait accompli which the people had to accept, because if they declined it, it may have meant further postponement of our independence.

Whatever the arguments, our task is to examine the basis of power as constitutionally defined. Who exercises power? What is the extent of power that such persons or institutions can exercise? What are the limitations? How can these limitations be overcome? These are some of the questions that enter the mind when a fundamental problem of this nature is posed.

THE CONSTITUENT POWER

It can be argued that the power which conferred independence and a constitution on this country has legally the right to revoke that power. Though this may sound an absurdity from the angle of practical politics, it is nevertheless a legal fact. Constitutional authorities like Berriedale Keith and Hankey argued that it was within the power of the United Kingdom to revoke such a grant of independence.

Although such a revocation is not quite possible in actual fact, it is none the less possible for the U.K. Parliament to intervene in an indirect way. This brings us to the question of the constituent power or the amending procedure. How can a lawfully constituted Government change the basis of power as laid down in the Constitution? Or, in other words, how can it overcome the limitations imposed therein?

Apart from the procedure laid down in Section 29 (4) of the Constitution for amend-

ing any of its sections, there is also provision for the United Kingdom Parliament to intervene. Section 1 (1) of the Ceylon Independence Act provides for this. It permits the Parliament of the United Kingdom to legislate on behalf of Ceylon at the express request and with the consent of Ceylon. What is meant by 'Ceylon' is not defined in any way so that there is room for doubt as to whether 'Ceylon' means the Government of Ceylon, the Parliament of Ceylon or both. In contrast, in some of the other Commonwealth countries, care has been taken to define the authority. In Australia, it is the Parliament and Government of the Commonwealth. In South Africa, it was, before she became a Republic outside the Commonwealth, the Parliament of the Union. In Pakistan, it is the legislature. In Canada as in this country, the question has been left open. Jennings argues that by virtue of the provision aforementioned, "legally-speaking an amendment of the Ceylon Constitution could be made by an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom made at the request and with the consent, of the Government of Ceylon." (The Constitution of Ceylon, 3rd ed., p. 147). Thus the U.K. Parliament would not have to look beyond the Government of Ceylon. It would therefore not be material whether such a Government had the backing of a two-thirds majority or even of a majority in the House of Representatives. This would therefore mean that even a minority Government as for instance the Government that Mr. Dudley Senanayake formed in March 1960 could have effected any amendment that it may have desired during the short period of its office.

The amending procedure which however in normal circumstances would be used is laid down in Section 29 (4) of the Constitution. This states that Bills providing for amendments to the Constitution must be adopted by not less than two-thirds of the whole number of members of the House, including those not present. It also requires that Bills of this nature must have endorsed on them certificates under the hand of the Speaker that the stipulated number of votes had been cast in their favour. Owing to doubts cast as to what is actually meant by the phrase 'the whole number of members of the House including those not present', it has been realised that it would

be possible for Governments which do not have the requisite majority to effect amendments by a circuitous route. There is doubt as to whether 'the whole number of members of the House including those not present' implies the total membership of the House inclusive of vacancies or the total membership exclusive of vacancies but inclusive of all members whether they are present in the House when voting on an amendment to the Constitution takes place or not. Section 19 of the Constitution clarifies the position somewhat. It states among other things, that 'each chamber shall have power to act notwithstanding any vacancy in the membership thereof....' Thus if the phrase 'the whole number of members of the House, including those not present' is interpreted in the context of Section 19, then it will have to be interpreted as the total membership exclusive of vacancies. Further, it is not quite correct to say that the whole number of members of the House should necessarily be equal to the total number of seats provided for. One member can for instance represent more than one seat. Thus in the 1956 Parliament, there was provision for 101 seats in the House of Representatives. But there was one member who represented two constituencies. The 'whole number of members of the House' in April 1956 therefore did not amount to 101 members as statutorily provided for but 100 members. A two-thirds majority when there were 100 members would therefore have been 67 and not 68. In fact Sir Ivor Jennings confirms this point of view by implication when he states in page 78 of 'The Constitution of Ceylon' (3rd ed.): "Assuming that there are no vacancies among the members, it (i.e. an amendment to the Constitution) must be supported by 68 members (i.e. when the membership was 101).

Such an interpretation of Section 29 (4) of the Constitution (which is in effect the only possible interpretation) opens out dangerous possibilities. For a Government in office can by an indirect route secure the necessary amendments to the Constitution which it cannot procure by the prescribed route. It would, for instance, be possible for such a Government to proclaim a State of Emergency under the relevant provisions of the Public Security Act and by using the powers of detention given

under the Act deprive a goodly proportion of the members of the House of their seats. This would be possible because the right to grant leave of absence rests with the Government's majority in the House. Thus after three months of continuous absence, the members detained would forfeit their seats and under the Public Security Act, the Government could refuse to hold by-elections for these seats for an undefined period—at any rate as long as the Emergency lasts. [There is no provision in the Constitution which requires that a by-election should be held within a stipulated period of time, immediately a vacancy occurs. The only relevant section is 24 (2) but all that it states is that whenever the seat of a member of Parliament falls vacant (except upon a dissolution of Parliament) the Clerk to the House should notify the Governor-General who will (except in the case of an Appointed Member) within one month of the notification by the Clerk have to order the holding of an election to fill the vacancy by notice in the Gazette. There is thus no provision to the effect that the election should be held within a stipulated period. The actual date of the by-election will have to be fixed by the Prime Minister. This is the view taken by Sir Ivor Jennings (op. cit. p 197.)] The Government could then proceed to effect amendments to the Constitution because with a fair proportion of the members of the House deprived of their seats, it will not be difficult for the Government to secure a two-thirds majority of the whole number of members of the House, i.e. the total membership exclusive of vacancies. Thus even a minority Government like that formed in March 1960 could—by utilising the relevant sections of the Public Security Act and the Constitution—bend the latter to its own purposes. Or in the alternative, as has been stated elsewhere, the Parliament of the United Kingdom could be used for such undemocratic purposes. The Constitution itself thus contains loopholes which could be used to transform a democratic system into a dictatorship and perverse governments might not hesitate to make use of such loopholes, if driven to desperate straits.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

At the head of our constitutional system is the Queen. But since the Queen is not

resident in Ceylon, her functions are exercised through her representative, the Governor-General. The Governor-General holds office during Her Majesty's pleasure. This in effect means that he holds office during the Prime Minister's pleasure. It has now become the practice for the Governor-General to serve for a period of five years. But this does not preclude the Prime Minister from removing him at any time.

Certain functions under the Constitution can be exercised only by the Queen. Others may be exercised by the Governor-General. The Queen, however, if she so desires can exercise the functions performed by the Governor-General herself or entrust these to some other representative. Thus for instance King George VI sent his brother the Duke of Gloucester for the State Opening of Parliament on February 10th 1948. On normal occasions the Governor-General performs this function.

Under the Constitution, the Governor-General however performs two important functions which are relevant to the subject under discussion. The first is in connection with the selection of a Prime Minister. Related to this right to appoint a Prime Minister is the right of dismissal. The second important function is with regard to the dissolution of Parliament.

In normal circumstances it is easy for the Prime Minister to be selected because the choice will always fall on the leader of the largest single group in the House of Representatives. (The leader of the group need not sit in the House. He or she can be a member of the Senate). There are, however, occasions when the choice may have to be made from among one or two individuals. Lord Soulbury, for instance, had to make a decision between Mr. Dudley Senanayake and Sir John Kotalawala. He chose the former. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke could have appointed Mr. C. P. de Silva as Prime Minister after Mr. Dudley Senanayake was defeated in Parliament in April 1960. He preferred to accept Mr. Senanayake's advice to dissolve Parliament. On such occasions it might be noted that a Governor-General has a limited choice which he can, if he is politically-minded use for political purposes or even for his own personal advancement.

The right of appointment carries with it the right of dismissal. This right is not normally exercised but it may be exercised when a Prime Minister openly violates the Constitution or if he refuses to resign when he has clearly lost the confidence of the House. It has never been exercised up to date but there was one occasion when the present Governor-General was called upon to exercise this power. This was when Mr. W. Dahanayake decided to dismiss the majority of his colleagues when he functioned as caretaker Prime Minister from December 1959 to March 1960. It was evident that if Mr. Dahanayake faced the House of Representatives he would have been badly defeated. For this reason since he did not command the confidence of the majority in the House, Mr. C. P. de Silva was deputised by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which was the largest group in the House at the time of dissolution, to request the Governor-General to dismiss Mr. Dahanayake and to appoint Mr. C. P. de Silva as Prime Minister. Nothing, however, came of this move.

The other important power which the Governor-General exercises is with regard to the dissolution of Parliament. Here, again, in normal circumstances, when a Prime Minister commands a majority in the House, he will act on the Prime Minister's advice. But there may be occasions when he can exercise his discretion. This will happen when the Party situation in the House is complicated and not very clear. On such occasions, if he can find an alternative Prime Minister, he can refuse a request to dissolve. For instance in April 1960, the Governor-General could have refused to accede to Mr. Dudley Senanayake's request to dissolve and could have appointed Mr. C. P. de Silva as Prime Minister. Such occasions may arise in the future and a Governor-General, if unscrupulous enough, can use this power for his own ends.

The powers to appoint a Prime Minister and to dissolve Parliament are in fact the more obvious and evident powers of the Governor-General. But he could also intervene in many unseen ways. He can offer to help a Prime Minister out of political and other difficulties as for instance the present Governor-General did during the state of Emergency which commenced in May 1958. He can take command of the

situation as he actually did during the first few weeks of the Emergency of 1958. In such cases however, the degree of interference will depend on the personality of the holder of the exalted office. Sir Henry Monck-Mason Moore and Lord Soulbury were models of rectitude in comparison with the present holder. The latter however is a more forceful personality and politically-minded. Hence the desire to interfere. It does not however follow that his successors would follow his path.

THE PRIME MINISTER

It is really around the Prime Minister that the whole constitutional system revolves. He has virtually the power of life and death over the whole machinery of constitutional government. To wield this power he must satisfy only one condition. He must have the backing of an absolute majority of the House of Representatives. Sometimes he need not have even this absolute majority. He can be the leader of the largest single group but he can build up this group so as to be eventually able to dominate the House. This he can do by a wise and discreet use of the patronage he disposes of. It was thus that Mr. D. S. Senanayake who started as Prime Minister with 42 supporters in a House of 101 members was subsequently able to build up a comfortable majority in the House.

The most important power that the Prime Minister wields in the executive sphere is in regard to the appointment of the Governor-General. The Constitution provides that the Governor-General should be appointed by the Queen. The Queen however will act on the advice of the Prime Minister in accordance with Section 4 (2) of the Constitution. It is not obligatory that the Prime Minister should consult the Cabinet but he can consult it if he so desires.

The Governor-General does not hold office for a fixed term but during 'His Majesty's pleasure' (Section 4 (1)). 'His Majesty's pleasure' merely means that the Governor-General will hold office only as long as he is acceptable to the Government of the day and particularly to the Prime Minister. Though it has become the practice to appoint the Governor-General for a period of five years in the first instance, this does not mean that the Prime Minister is prevented from

removing him at any time during this period. The Prime Minister can if he wishes advise the Queen at any time to remove the Governor-General and appoint another in his place.

Thus though the Governor-General is supposed to be the visible head of our constitutional system and though Sir Ivor Jennings—one of the leading architects of our Constitution—has stated that there may be occasions when the Governor-General could refuse to accept the advice of his Ministers or of the Prime Minister (op. cit. p 50), it is quite evident from the actions of the present Governor-General especially, that he will as far as possible try to fall in line with the wishes of the Prime Minister in order that he might avoid his displeasure. Displeasure might eventually mean either removal or a refusal to extend the term of office. Thus even the discretion that the Governor-General exercises in regard to the granting of a dissolution may be exercised in accordance with the wishes of the Prime Minister.

Mention of the office of Prime Minister is made in Section 46 (2) of the Constitution. The succeeding sub-section refers to his functions. It requires that he should be in charge of Defence and External Affairs. It further states that it is he who will assign subjects and functions to other Ministers whom he may have appointed. There is no constitutional limitation on the number of such Ministers.

Besides selecting the members of the Cabinet and assigning subjects and functions to them, the Prime Minister has a considerable amount of power at his disposal in the executive sphere. He has the right to appoint Parliamentary Secretaries to assist the Ministers whom he selects. The only limitation here is that the number of Parliamentary Secretaries should not at any time exceed the number of Ministers (Section 47.) Thus by the judicious exercise of the power of appointing Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, the Prime Minister can improve and strengthen his majority in the House. Both Mr. D. S. Senanayake and Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike made liberal use of this power to maintain their Parliamentary position. In the case of Mr. Bandaranaike, at one time more than half of the Government's Parliamentary Group in the House were office-holders.

Further, it is on the Prime Minister that the efficient functioning of the whole administration depends. It is he who advises the Governor-General to appoint the three members of the Public Services Commission. These members are eligible for reappointment which in effect means that they must exercise their powers in a way acceptable to the Prime Minister if they wish to be appointed for a further term. What is more, if the Prime Minister finds that any of the members of the Commission are not functioning satisfactorily, he can advise the Governor-General to remove them [Section 58 (5)]. The Governor-General is, however, required to give the reasons for removing any member of the Public Services Commission from office. Such reasons are however not difficult to find should the need arise. It is however not quite necessary for the Prime Minister to resort to such extreme measures. He is more likely to indicate to the Commission his wishes and the latter will probably try to accommodate him. This would apply not only to the Prime Minister but to other Ministers as well.

The appointment of certain key officials in the administration also lies with the Prime Minister. Permanent Secretaries who exercise an overall supervision over the Departments of Governments in charge of each Minister are selected by the Prime Minister. If he finds them unsatisfactory, he can have them transferred to other public offices. The efficient running of the administration will therefore depend on a wise and careful selection of Permanent Secretaries by the Prime Minister. There are other appointments too in the Public Service which are in the power of the Prime Minister but these are not relevant to the present discussion.

Where the legislature is concerned, the Prime Minister exercises three important powers. Most significant of all these is the power of dissolution. It is the supreme weapon that he possesses to discipline his supporters and to keep his majority. It is true that in this matter the Governor-General has a certain discretion, but it has become the practice for the latter to accede to the wishes of the Prime Minister even in abnormal cases. Thus a minority Prime Minister like Mr. Dudley Senanayake was able to advise and obtain a dissolution in April 1960 although he never met Parlia-

ment successfully and suffered two convincing defeats at the hands of the Opposition as soon as he confronted it. Nor is it necessary that the Prime Minister should consult his Cabinet in exercising this power. Mr. W. Dahanayake recommended dissolution in December 1959 but many of the important members of the Cabinet were not aware of his intentions until dissolution actually came. The threat of dissolution is a power which in the last resort might even tame the wildest of rebels.

Related to the question of dissolution is the power which the Prime Minister possesses in regard to the arranging of the time-table of Parliament. Section 15 (1) of the Constitution states that it is the Governor-General who summons, prorogues or dissolves Parliament. But summoning and proroguing Parliament are done on the advice of the Prime Minister. On normal occasions the time-table of Parliament is arranged by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the House after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition and if necessary with leaders of Opposition groups who have declined to come under the Opposition Whip. But on difficult occasions, the power to arrange the time-table of the House can be of invaluable assistance to the Prime Minister. Where a Prime Minister is in difficulties regarding his majority in the House he can gain time by proroguing Parliament for a substantial period and so avoid a hostile majority while he seeks to stabilise his position by winning over the required number of supporters. It might be recalled that Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike made use of this expedient of proroguing Parliament to gain the objectives referred to above.

The power to recommend dissolution is basically a negative weapon. More solid than this is the power the Prime Minister possesses to recommend the appointment of up to six members of the House of Representatives. Though Section 11 (2) states that such members should be appointed to represent important interests which are not represented or inadequately represented in the House, there is a wide discretion which the Prime Minister can exercise in this matter. By a shrewd use of this power, he can bolster up his majority and stabilise it. Though this power was inserted in the

Constitution mainly to enable Europeans and Burghers to obtain representation, both Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike made use of this power to recommend the appointment of representatives from certain minority Sinhalese caste groups. This is one positive way by which the Prime Minister can enhance his political standing among caste groups which are widely scattered but still strong enough in certain electorates to make a difference at the final reckoning in an election. These Appointed Members however can also make a vital difference to the Government in the House of Representatives where its majority is precarious. The power to appoint up to six members has in fact been of invaluable use to Prime Ministers in difficult situations. When Mr. D. S. Senanayake was appointed Prime Minister as leader of the largest single group of 42 members in a House of Representatives of 95 elected members, his six appointees helped him to stabilise his position and improved his bargaining power with other individual members and groups. When Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike resigned from the same Prime Minister's Cabinet and crossed over to the Opposition with a small following, the support of the six Appointed Members once again proved very useful. Similarly, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was able to keep a precarious majority during the latter part of his Premiership with the support of Appointed Members after Mr. Philip Gunawardena crossed over to the Opposition with a number of others. Had the Appointed Members defected on this occasion, Mr. Bandaranaike's Government would surely have fallen. Mr. W. Dahanayake found the Appointed Members likewise a tower of strength when in sore straits during his brief tenure of the Premiership.

The last of the powers possessed by the Prime Minister in this sphere is in regard to elections and appointments to the Senate. The Senate is a comparatively innocuous and politically insignificant body, except on rare occasions, as when a Prime Minister sits in that House. Nevertheless, the power to determine the election and appointment of an average eight members of the ten who enter the Senate every two years can be utilised for political purposes by a shrewd and sagacious Prime Minister. Of the

eight mentioned above, five are appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister while the other three are those chosen by the Government Parliamentary Group for election by the House of Representatives. Here the Prime Minister does not have as free a hand as in the case of the Appointed Members of the Senate, but his views can none the less be the deciding factor.

The Prime Minister's powers in the judicial sphere are equally significant. The Constitution provides for a Judicial Service Commission, the members of which, other than the Chairman, are to be appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister. As in the case of members of the Public Commission, the members are eligible for reappointment on the expiry of their terms of office and can be removed at any time from office for cause assigned. The appointment of all judicial officers other than Judges of the Supreme Court and Commissioners of Assize is vested in this body, so that in this sphere too the Prime Minister can exercise a powerful influence if he so desires.

The Supreme Court is the final arbiter in matters where the validity of legislation is questioned. Besides this, the decisions of Judges of the Supreme Court in other matters which are even distantly connected with politics can be a source of embarrassment either to the Government as a whole or to individual Ministers. The appointment of the Chief Justice and of Judges of the Supreme Court is in the hands of the Prime Minister. It might well be argued that once a Judge is appointed to the Supreme Court, he is assured of independence, in that the Constitution provides that he will continue to hold office during good behaviour until he reaches the retiring age and that his salary cannot be diminished during his term of office. These provisions are no doubt essential for the continued existence of an independent Supreme Court, but they do not exhaust the possibilities of interference. In fact, there are provisions in the Constitution itself which can be utilised by an unscrupulous Prime Minister endeavouring to undermine the independence of the Supreme Court, and indirect methods are available through which efforts to influence the Court might be made.

In the Constitution, the most objectionable provisions are to be found in Section 52 (3) and Section 53, and in particular sub-section 3 of the latter. Section 52 (3) fixes the age of retirement of Judges of the Supreme Court at 62, but provides that an extension for a period not exceeding 12 months may be granted at the discretion of the Prime Minister. Such extensions may well be considered in the light of how well a Judge has seemed disposed towards the Government, and constructions may be placed on his judgements for the purpose of settling this question. A year's extension may well be of very great importance to an individual Judge. It may be that the extra year qualifies him for a pension. It may provide him with the opportunity of ascending to the summit of his profession—the Chief Justiceship, with perhaps the chance of acting as Governor-General. History records instances where such inducements as these have affected judges who are unscrupulous victims of their own ambitions. We should not lose sight of this fact. Section 53 which provides for the constitution of the Judicial Service Commission is also not quite satisfactory. Under this Section, the members of the Commission other than the Chairman (who will be the Chief Justice) are to be appointed by the Governor-General which in effect means appointment by the Prime Minister. If judicial independence is to be safeguarded, it is best that the Prime Minister be prevented from picking and choosing from among Judges of the Supreme Court for appointment to a body which exercises considerable authority in certain categories of judicial appointments. Further, Subsection 3 of this section is just as harmful. It states that the members of the Commission appointed by the Prime Minister are eligible for re-appointment after they have served their five-year term. If absolute independence is to be maintained, there should not be any hope of a further appointment. The Indian Constitution has provided for this in regard to the Union Public Service Commission. Members of the Commission are not eligible for re-appointment after the expiry of their term of office.

Article 7 of the Letters Patent, constituting the office of Governor-General is also not a very happy one. It provides for the Chief

Justice to act for the Governor-General 'if no other suitable person is available'. There should be no such alternative of this sort. For a Prime Minister may wreak vengeance on a Chief Justice who has proved a source of embarrassment to the Government by not appointing him to the acting office when the permanent holder retires or is on leave. A Prime Minister may hope that the prospect of acting for the Governor-General may act as an inducement to the Head of the Judiciary to so conduct himself as to win the Government's favour.

Indirect ways may be used by a Prime Minister with little regard for constitutional morality to try to influence Judges of the Supreme Court. The practice of the Prime Minister appointing retired Judges as members or Chairmen of Commissions or to other high offices is by no means helpful in ensuring the maintenance of absolute judicial integrity. Judges who have been considered 'unsympathetic' towards the Government may be deliberately ignored when such appointments are made. Thus a Prime Minister might hope that Judges of the Supreme Court will be anxious not to antagonise the Government so that they may be favourably considered for other appointments after retirement, and endeavour thus to influence them.

CABINET MINISTERS

The Cabinet is constitutionally recognised as a body collectively responsible to Parliament. It is charged with the general direction and control of the government of the island. Broadly therefore the Cabinet is expected to formulate and lay down policy. Ministers are expected to implement such policy in detail in relation to their particular spheres of activity. This is in effect the constitutional position. In actual fact however there is a difference between theory and practice.

The general tendency in Ceylon is for individual Ministers to push forward with their own schemes and policies even though sometimes the Cabinet may view these with disfavour. The Prime Minister is expected to exercise an overall supervision, but this does not always happen. Even under a forceful Prime Minister like Mr. D. S. Senanayake, there were Ministers who, though they

did not go contrary to Cabinet policy, were nevertheless strong enough to compel the Prime Minister as well as the rest of the Cabinet to fall in line with their policies or at least to refrain from interfering. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam when he was Minister of Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries, had his own views about which areas in the island should receive priority in programmes of industrial development. Though his views may have been distasteful to the majority of his colleagues, he was nevertheless successful in giving effect to them. Similarly, the Minister of Justice in Mr. Senenayake's Cabinet, Sir Lalitha Rajapakse, had his own views about the shifting of the Courts from Hulftsdorp to Bambalapitiya. Though his plans may have caused much discomfiture to a good many of his colleagues he was nevertheless able to pursue them with some amount of vehemence and vigour.

The situation was somewhat similar under Mr. Dudley Senanayake. Mr. R. G. Senanayake, the Minister of Commerce, regarded himself as the sole architect of the Rubber-Rice agreement with Communist China. Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, the Minister of Finance, had his own views about what the Government's attitude should be towards communist countries and did not hesitate to air such views on public platforms. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam who continued as Minister of Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries, meanwhile pushed on further with his own plans about industrial development. Under the regime of Sir John Kotalawala, the Prime Minister seemed largely interested in making an impact on the international stage. His Ministers were very largely allowed to do just as they wished.

With Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike the situation worsened, largely owing to the coalition character of his government. The left-wing section of the Cabinet under the leadership of Mr. Philip Gunawardena went ahead with its own plans and policies, while the right wing had its own views on economic development. Thus Mr. Philip Gunawardena had one policy on agriculture while Mr. C. P. de Silva's land policies came into conflict with the former in some respects. On one occasion, in connection with Mr. Philip Gunawardene's effort to alter the mode of payment of food production subsidies, the

friction in the Cabinet was reflected in public demonstrations in which at least one Cabinet member took a prominent part! It became not unusual for Ministers to criticise each other in public and even in Parliament, sometimes covertly and sometimes overtly. Meanwhile Mr. Dahanayake as Minister of Education gave himself virtually a free hand to do as he liked with no interference from any quarter in the government sector.

The two Prime Ministers who succeeded Mr. Bandaranaike—Mr. Dahanayake and Mr. Dudley Senanayake in his second term—were not long enough in office for any individual Ministers to formulate their own policies and implement them. But Mr. Dahanayake had his own share of troubles with his Ministers from which he ultimately took refuge in dissolving Parliament and in dismissing several Cabinet Ministers.

With the present Prime Minister the position is not different from what it has generally been. The Minister of Trade and Commerce Mr. Ilangaratne has his own policies in relation to his Ministry and is able to press forward with his schemes as if they were purely his own affairs and not part of an overall scheme formulated by the Cabinet. Similarly the Minister of Agriculture and Lands has his own policies with which he himself, rather than the Cabinet, seems identified. The Minister of Education for his part appears to do as he likes in educational matters notwithstanding the appointment of an Educational Commission to advise the Government in regard to educational policy. There is very little evidence of active Prime Ministerial direction in any of these sectors.

With this question of Cabinet coordination is linked that of planning for development. In spite of the publication of a 10 Year Plan in 1959—which the present Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government purports to be implementing—there is no evidence whatever that individual Ministers pay any attention to what is set down in the 'Plan' in formulating their own policies.

Part of the reason for these individualist tendencies lies in the 'traditions' of the Donoughmore period. The Executive Committee system under the Donoughmore Constitution encouraged Ministers to be highly individualistic. Another fact to be

noted is that in the country generally there is no expectation that the members of the Cabinet should act with a sense of collective responsibility. On the contrary, the public is more than ready to identify particular policies with particular Ministers and to regard it as quite natural that other Ministers should be opposed to such policies. Still more important, in this connection, is the fact of the enactment of a quite extraordinary amount of what might be called 'framework' legislation, i.e. legislation under which only broad outlines are indicated and where sometimes all-important details are left in the hands of the Minister concerned and his officials to be worked out subsequently. As a result of this, vast powers—sometimes not only of an administrative but even of a semi-judicial character—tend to be accumulated in the hands of individual Ministers. It may be said that a good deal of the work of government in its practical and a day to day aspects is attended to by Ministers in their individual capacity, and with hardly any reference to the Cabinet, except, of course, where crises develop requiring urgent attention by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet as has frequently happened in recent times. The rapid development of Corporations in the recent period has increased the amount of the 'framework' legislation referred to above.

It is not merely that individual Ministers who have a mind and will of their own have been allowed to forge ahead with their own plans without let or hindrance from the Prime Minister. There have been powerful Ministers whom Prime Ministers have at times not dared to and on other occasions have found it difficult to bring under Cabinet discipline. For instance, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was too strong to be disciplined by Mr. D. S. Senanayake when he was a member of the latter's Government. Sir John Kotalawala proved a thorn in the side of Mr. Dudley Senanayake during the latter's tenure of office in 1952-53. Mr. J. R. Jaayawardena and Mr. R. G. Senanayake were 'difficult' Ministers in Sir John's Cabinet. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike found Mr. Philip Gunawardena a problem. The present Prime Minister has her own problems of this kind.

In addition to these evidences of Ministerial power, there have been cases of certain

Ministers holding key portfolios wielding a larger share of power than their colleagues. This has been so particularly with Ministers of Finance. In the present Government, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike wields very considerable power, partly for reasons which are obvious, and equally because he holds a portfolio which has a great deal to do with all other branches of governmental activity. Earlier Finance Ministers too exercised powers more special than fell to their colleagues.

THE GOVERNMENT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

This group does not necessarily contain only the members of the ruling Party. It also has other minor groups and independent members included in it to strengthen the position of the Government. They participate in its proceedings and sometimes some of them play an important role. The power and influence that this group wields depends on the personality of the Prime Minister and the strength of the ruling Party. The part that the Government Parliamentary group plays in legislation is however something peculiar in the parliamentary life of this country. In recent times the group has tended to interfere in an increasing way in the activities of the Cabinet and of individual Ministers.

With Mr. D. S. Senanayake, the Parliamentary group did not have the opportunity of taking an active part in legislation or in the work of the Cabinet. This was in part due to the forceful personality of Mr. Senanayake and partly due to his political acumen. None the less, a man of stern independence like Mr. E. F. N. Gratiaen who was at that time an Appointed Member was able to persuade a large section of the Government Parliamentary group to accept his proposal to amend Section (13 (3) (f) of the Constitution which disqualified persons who had served a specific term of imprisonment from sitting in the House of Representatives. Mr. Gratiaen was able to have his way even though the Prime Minister was not very much in favour of his proposal.

But with Mr. D. S. Senanayake, Mr. Dudley Senanayake and Sir John Kotalawala, the Parliamentary group was not given very much opportunity to interfere in the activities

of the Cabinet, and it was often remarked at the time that the position of individual Ministers as a result could not compare with that of individual State Councillors who could exercise a good deal of influence under the Executive Committee system. Of course awkward questions used to be raised at times in the Parliamentary group which embarrassed individual Ministers and sometimes the Prime Minister, but differences were not so frequent or so vital as to compel the Cabinet to come to a compromise with the Parliamentary group.

With Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike the situation changed considerably. The Cabinet on important occasions tended to become subservient to the wishes of the group. This was so especially in connection with controversial legislation. Thus Mr. Bandaranaike's original draft of the Sinhala Act was withdrawn because the Parliamentary group was not willing to accept it. Similarly Mr. Philip Gunawardena's Paddy Lands Bill and Co-operative Development Bank Bill were amended in even vital respects to meet the wishes of right-wing elements in the Parliamentary group.

With the present Government too, there has been the same trend though this has not been so marked as to become the rule. The most recent example is that of the Press Bill. The group rejected the Cabinet's draft and the Minister responsible was asked to frame a Bill which meets the wishes of the group as a whole.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker enjoys an honoured position in the parliamentary system. He also exercises some power. He is the master of the proceedings of the House, but in order to make his authority felt he must have the backing of the House, especially, of the Government. In regard to certain types of legislation, too, he plays a key role. This is the position in regard to money Bills and Bills seeking to amend the Constitution. In both cases a certificate from his hand is necessary if such Bills are to pass into law. Much will however depend on the personality of the holder of the Office. In our brief Parliamentary history, we have had so far only two forceful speakers—Sir Francis Molamure and Mr. T. B. Subasinghe.

THE COURTS OF LAW

Since the Constitution is a rigid one and Section 29 (2) places certain limitations on the powers of Parliament, there are likely to be occasions when the validity of legislation is called in question. The Courts on such occasions will have to be the final arbiters. To this extent therefore the Courts of Law exercise some authority over the actions of Parliament. In some matters, it is sufficient for any court of law to pronounce on the validity of legislation. Thus, for instance, the Ceylon (Parliamentary Elections) Amendment Act No 48 and the Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948 were challenged before Mr. N. Sivagnanasunderam, the Revising Officer for Ruwanwella and were declared invalid by him in so far as they sought to deprive members of the Indian community of the franchise. In other matters, the Supreme Court is the authority for making a decision. In *Thambiayah v. Kulasingham*, the Supreme Court held that the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act No 19 of 1948 contained certain provisions which were repugnant to Section 13 (3) (h) of the Constitution. Whether, however, it is a lower Court or the Supreme Court which makes such a decision, there can be recourse to a higher tribunal, i.e., the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The decision of the Revising Officer for Ruwanwella, for instance was challenged in the Supreme Court, in *Mudanayake v. Sivagnanasunderam* and it was quashed. Thereafter an appeal was taken to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which is the final arbiter in all such cases. At present a Ceylonese judge is associated with their Lordships of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to help them in all cases that come up before them from the Ceylon courts. Up to now there has been no definite move made by any Government to abolish appeals to an outside body like the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

The Courts of Law can thus exercise a real authority when the constitutionality of legislation is questioned before them. They can hold up the work of government. Though up to date they have not been a serious source of embarrassment, this does not in any way mean that they could not be so in the future.

THE BASIS OF REPRESENTATION

Under a democratic system, it is the electorate which is the final judge of a Government's conduct. Though the electorate does not exercise effective power during the interim period between General Elections it nevertheless is the prime factor in determining governmental conduct. The electorate is therefore in effect the ultimate sovereign—though, of course in many instances its authority is exercised in negative ways.

The question therefore arises as to how comprehensive the electorate is, and how power is distributed within it. The introduction of universal franchise was a feature of the Donoughmore Constitution. Under the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act referred to above, the qualifications of voters were altered so that voting rights depend on citizenship rights which in turn were limited by the Citizenship Act also referred to above so as to exclude from the voting registers several hundreds of thousands of persons—those of Indian origin—who previously enjoyed the vote. The existence of a large voteless population in Ceylon is therefore a limitation of the electorate which is the more significant because this voteless population play an all-important role in the economic life of the country, since they form the bulk of plantation labour. Voting rights were formerly limited to persons otherwise qualified and over 21 years of age. The voting age has subsequently been reduced to 18 years, thus making the electorate more comprehensive in this respect than it formerly was.

The question remains whether certain sections of the electorate wield a larger share of power than others. Is there any bias towards any section of the electorate? What are the deciding factors in this connection?

The Constitution itself provides for a system of electoral division. This is to be found in Sections 40 and 41. Sir Ivor Jennings states that the basis of demarcating seats was designed to provide, among other things (1) increased representation to the sparsely populated areas; (2) weightage to the Kandyan Provinces as against the Low Country Sinhalese areas; and (3) weightage

to the backward areas as against the more populous and wealthier areas. The sum effect of all this is that by constitutional provision 'backwardism'—if such a term may be used—and ruralism have been given a positive bonus. The rural areas have in effect been given a tremendous amount of weightage at the expense of the urbanised areas. Thus, for example, the more advanced Western Province under the 1946 Delimitation Commission's proposals had 1 representative for every 93,320 of population, while the thoroughly backward North Central Province had 1 representative for every 27,876 of the population. The Eastern Province which is equally backward was given 1 representative for every 38,878 of population. To put the position in a different way, at the 1947 General Election, of the 95 members who were elected, 12 were elected by electorates containing over 50,000 voters, 55 by electorates of between 25 and 50,000, and 28 by electorates of less than 25,000 voters. Of the latter, 8 had less than 15,000 voters, namely Mannar, Vavuniya, Medawachchiya, Anuradhapura, Horowpottana, Polonnaruwa, Bandarawela, Haputale. These disparities in voting strength resulted in an advantage to backward and rural areas.

At the 1952 Elections, the weightage to conservatism and ruralism was considerably increased as a result of the disfranchisement of the estate population of Indian origin without any change being made in the demarcation of electorates. At this General Election, the number of constituencies with a voting strength of less than 15,000 increased from 8 to 15. The more politically conscious and urbanised Western, Southern and North Western Provinces were placed at a disadvantage as against the others. Further, a number of pocket boroughs of which Talawakelle, Nuwara Eliya, Kotagala, Maskeliya and Haputale were notable examples were created. This remained the position in the 1956 Elections too since no fresh delimitation of electorates was made, the law being changed to permit this, although according to the Constitution as originally framed a fresh delimitation should have preceded the 1956 Elections.

The two General Elections of 1960 were based on a new delimitation of electorates. The principle of demarcation (i.e. with

reference to area and population) remained the same. The total number of seats was increased by roughly 50%. An anomaly that can be detected here is that the *population* that is taken into account in demarcation includes *voteless* persons. As a result electorates in the Central and Uva Provinces and to some extent the Sabaragamuwa Province have a proportionately lower voting strength than others to the extent that they contain large numbers of voteless persons (estate workers of Indian origin). The sum result of the system of electoral demarcation is that the more conservative Parties which have resources and organisational capacity make headway while radical opinion is placed at a definite disadvantage. In short, it is the rural voter who holds the balance in our political system today, and the rural voter—as is the case all over the world—is inclined to be conservative and is susceptible to chauvinistic appeals to a greater extent than the more progressive and politically conscious voters of urban areas. It seems as if the Constitution has been deliberately shaped to effectively keep out left-wing and working class Parties from gaining political power. Would this mean that such Parties would have to resort to extra-Parliamentary methods? Or can they ever win the affections of rural voters? These are however questions that lie outside the scope of the present discussion but they effectively point out to where power lies.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

In recent times especially since 1956, the allegation has been made, sometimes loosely but not seldom with much foundation that the Government is hamstrung because of lack of co-operation from public officials. The latter usually belong to the category of departmental heads and policy-making or policy-influencing executives but quite often the lower rungs like the village headmen and others of a related type are also involved. The reasons for this indifference or obstructionism on the part of such officials are various. For one thing, the old system of colonial administration is yet being maintained despite vast changes in the social, economic and political set up of the country. The result is that the politically-minded higher grade official is allowed under our system of public administration a fairly wide area

of discretionary action. Ministerial directives can under such circumstances be ignored or implemented in a way so as to thwart their purpose. But another equally important reason is that in the past and also at present, the top ranking officials have been encouraged to be the collaborators of the Minister-politician. They have not been allowed to only function in their proper capacity as Counsellors of Ministers and executors of policy. The inevitable consequence has been that these officials have sometimes tended to implement their own

policies which may not be exactly that of their Ministers. Or in the alternative they have tended to be over-zealous in the implementation of policy resulting at times in embarrassment to their political heads. All this arises from the fact that the administrative set up has not been changed to meet the new conditions. The public official is hence in a position to wield power within a limited but important area and what is more he is able if he endeavoured to, influence the very sources of power. Reform in this sphere is therefore long overdue.



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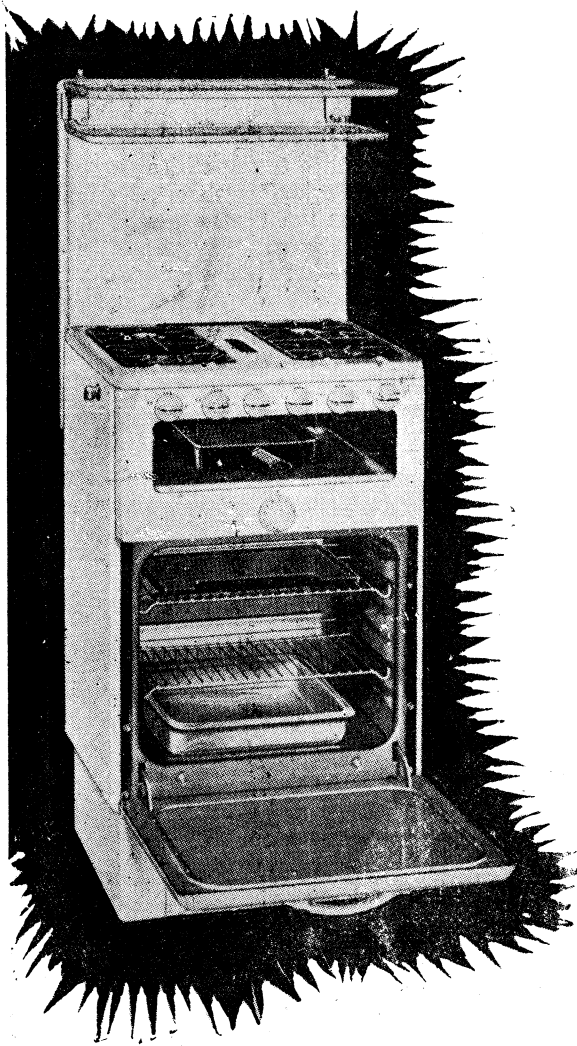
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A HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT IN CEYLON

By N. S. G. KURUPPU, B.A., (LOND.)

Part III—The Growth of Trade Unionism and Political activity 1918—1935

IN two previous articles we have attempted to sketch the use of a capitalist economy, and with it the emergence of a working class in this country. It is only with the 3rd phase of our study that we witness the real beginnings of a working class movement as such. It is significant that these beginnings were influenced by factors connected with both national and international developments. The First World War itself was responsible for depressing economic conditions throughout the world and Ceylon was no exception. Undoubtedly it was the working class the world over who were most affected. But even before World War I was over bringing what seemed victory final and complete for the forces of Capitalist Democracy, the Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia. It is true that in Germany, sad to relate, the workers' bid for power had failed but world capitalism was soon snapping at its weakest links. Within a decade of the Russian Revolution came the armed and militant struggles of the Chinese workers in the abortive Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. Even in good old England with the rise of the Trade Union movement and the Labour Party there occurred the General Strike of 1926. In fact, as we shall see, the progress of the Labour Movement in England had a direct influence on the rise of trade unionism in this country. If the workers of the World had still to unite, they had by now definitely entered the road of organised and militant class conscious struggles for their economic, political and ultimate social emancipation. In neighbouring India although the working class movement was still not a separate force to be decisively reckoned with, the struggle for swaraj under Gandhi's leadership did stress the need for giving the depressed and exploited classes in society their due rights and liberties. It is against the background of these international developments that we have to trace the growth of the working class movement in our own country.

In Ceylon the rise of an indigenous middle class led in the main by professional men, largely lawyers and doctors, came to acquire political consciousness and an organizational form when the Ceylon National Congress was formed in 1919. But although in the earliest years of this period, (i.e. 1918-1935) this body did give some consideration to working class problems and its leaders did start some organizations in the interests of the working class, it naturally did not and could not in the long run give any effective leadership to the working class movement in the country. The result was that the labour movement had to be diverted into independent channels with a more militant organization and leadership.

In 1919 there was organized the Ceylon Workers' Welfare League largely owing to the influence of men like Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam. It is noteworthy that in this year this association succeeded in getting the National Congress to adopt a resolution which demanded that—(a) Labour laws should be amended by elimination of all provisions which do not fully recognise that labour is a form of social service, and that the labourer's welfare is of greater importance than the production of material wealth; (b) criminal penalties imposed on labour for alleged offences should be removed; (c) child labour should be abolished; (d) minimum wages and (e) hours of work, should be fixed and regulated; (f) the right of association be granted to workers; (g) good working and living conditions be ensured to the workers; and that (h) they be provided with rest and recreation and finally (i) that maternity benefits be granted. (*vide: report of the Asian Regional Conference of the I.L.O. proceedings January 1951. Speech by Mr. Perisunderam*) Also formed during this time were the Ceylon Social Services League and of greater importance, The Ceylon Workers' Federation with which also Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam was con-

nected and also Sir (then Mr.) D.B. Jayatilake. This organization was the parent of the present Railway Benefit Association. The name of the Late Mr. Martinus C. Perera must also be mentioned in connection with the activities of this association as he appears to have been one of the most active of its members, and who even appears to have led a few important strikes.

However, this early phase of agitation and organization in the interests of labour did not result in the rise of real trade Unions as such, but only in attempts at mild social reform by middle class leaders who, in a somewhat condescending attitude of social service felt that something should be done for the poor labourer by strictly constitutional and conciliatory methods. But even when labour as an independent force came to clamour for its rights it is significant that the leadership had to come from the educated middle class. Indeed in this country, or for that matter in all subject colonial countries, the cultural backwardness of the worker coupled with the fact that the administration was in the medium of a language (English) of which the working class had no knowledge, explains largely why labour discontent was naturally led to assume organizational form under educated middle class leadership, revolutionary or otherwise.

A REAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

The beginnings of a labour movement of any considerable proportions begins with the inauguration of the Ceylon Labour Union on 10th October 1922. But it is noteworthy that in this phase of the rise and growth of labour organization, it was the city of Colombo in which most of the activity was centred. But even in Colombo a large proportion of the labour was Tamil, for Jackson in his Report on Immigration (page 16) states that as far down as 1936 a little over quarter of the labour attached to Government departments was Indian, while according to the statistics he obtained from 57 private companies a little less than half the labour force they employed was also Indian.

In the plantations where labour was regimented and in effect also segregated and far removed from urban centres, especially Colombo, trade union organization of any

sort does not make its appearance till the last years of this period. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam however was one of the earliest to champion the cause of the immigrant labourer although no trade unions as such were formed in the estates in his time. In his address to the Ceylon National Congress in November 1919, Sir Ponnambalam declared: "The Immigrant Labourers' Bill treats labour mainly as a commodity to be imported by Government and handed over to the employer. It retains in full force the barbarous provisions which subject men and women to imprisonment and hard labour, and to fines for breaches of civil contracts and other acts which are not offences under the ordinary law."

Partly as a result of the agitation of men like Sir Ponnambalam but more it appears to satisfy the Indian Government, the monstrous *tundu* system was abolished in 1921. The Government of India after passing the Indian Immigration Act 7 of 1922 had an Indian Agent to look after the interests of Indian nationals in this country. In 1923 the Ceylon Government itself inaugurated the Department of the Controller of Emigrant Labour, which, after the Donoughmore Constitution came into force in 1931, gave place to the Department of the Controller of Labour. In 1927 the minimum wages Ordinance was passed regarding estate labour, on the basis of the calculations made by Mr. Rangunathan, the Indian Agent, concerning the requirements of Indian labour. But between 1931 and 1933 as a result of the depression, the minimum wages were reduced progressively. Moreover the wages boards set up under the 1927 Minimum Wages Ordinance were a big farce from the point of view of the labourer, for his representatives on the boards were the head *kanganys*, who were always prepared to arrange matters to the satisfaction of the employer. (*vide: the Indo-Ceylon Crisis* by K. Natesa Iyar.)

Thus although little was done for estate labour, conditions yet remained most unsatisfactory. Attempts began to be made by various Indian associations started in the country to make some representations on behalf of labour. During the Great War of 1914—1918 the Indian Association was started, and between 1925 and 1930 the Central Province, the Uva Province, the

Northern Indian Association and the All-Ceylon Indian Youth League were started, but the activities of these essentially middle class associations which were mainly political in no way served the interests of plantation Indian labour effectively. Mention must also be made of the various *sangams*, named after various Indian Congress leaders like Bose and Gandhi, which at about the same time were set up amongst the labourers. These too, however, were more political in outlook than anything else, and failed to provide any basis on which real workers' trade union organizations could be built.

The first organizations, however which were set up mainly for the purpose of attending to grievances of Indian plantation workers were really those started by Mr. K. Natesa Aiyar, a Brahmin journalist who was a member of both the Legislative and State Councils. Somewhere about the late twenties or the early thirties there was set up by him the All-Ceylon Indian Estate Labourers' Federation which was confined mainly to the Hatton district, and later the Ceylon Indian Workers' Federation. These organizations, however, were set up to be directed and controlled by one man but nonetheless were the first estate workers organizations to arise in this country. Mr. Natesa Aiyar himself worked in close association with the Ceylon Labour Union in Colombo but later broke away dissatisfied with Mr. Goonasinghe's policy towards India labourers, and even tried to set up a separate Indian Labour Union in the city. He followed mainly constitutional and conciliatory methods in organizing and fighting for labour and there appear to have been no strikes of any note on estates right through this period up to 1935, when there were well over 600,000 people constituting the estate labour population.

MILITANT WORKING CLASS TRADE UNIONS

Far different was this period for the working class in Colombo, where rapid and far reaching developments took place. Here the struggle for better wages and better working conditions took a very militant form. The Ceylon Labour Union inaugurated as we have seen in 1922 was in itself not a pure trade union but an organization which purported to combine both political

and trade union activity in one body. Associated with it were men like Mr. Victor Corea, Mr. C. H. Z. Fernando and Mr. S. W. Dasse-naike, but Mr. Goonasinghe soon came to be the most forceful and dominant figure of the union and well may it be said that down to the thirties he was the undisputed labour boss in Colombo. The Ceylon Workers' Federation itself, which was opposed to the formation of the Ceylon Labour Union soon faded away, failing as it did to give a militant leadership to the working class.

On February 15th 1923, there began a strike amongst the railway workers which soon spread to the harbour, the Wellawatte Mills, the engineering firms in Colombo (Walker & Co. Mutwal, Hutson & Co. and Brown & Co.) and even the scavenging workers, and assumed such vast proportions that involving well over 15,000 workers it is second only to the 1947 strike during the first half of the century. It ended by the close of March of the same year and Mr. Goonasinghe and the Labour Union now occupied the foremost place in the labour movement. The Labour Union rapidly expanded by incorporating within it a number of branch unions in various districts like Negombo, Nawalapitiya and Badulla. In fact between 1923 and 1928 were formed a number of unions which may be regarded as the first trade unions in the Island. Among them were the Ceylon Chauffeurs' Union, the Ceylon Printers' Union, and the Ceylon Naval Workers' Union. Although the 1923 strike brought no immediate gains to the workers, in 1925 they were as a result of various negotiations consequent to the strike given among other less important concessions an increase of 20% in their wages.

The years 1926 and 1927 saw also a number of strikes. On August 1st 1926 the Wellawatte Mill workers struck work over the dismissal of two workers. The strike appears to have lasted nearly two months. On February 29th 1927, there began a two day strike of naval yard workers over inadequate wages which was followed by a strike of the cargo loading and unloading workers in the harbour while on September 8th of the same year there was a lightning strike of the coal workers of the harbour. All these struggles did bring the workers a certain measure of success, being as they were the

first organized efforts at combination and direct action on the part of the working class.

The year 1928 marks an important landmark in the history of the working class movement in Ceylon. On the one hand it marks not only the inauguration of the All-Ceylon Trade Union Congress but also in the political sphere of the Ceylon Labour Party. The first appears to have taken place in August while the later event was in October. At about the same time was also formed the Independent Labour Party under the leadership of Mr. P. Givendrasinghe (who had broken away from Mr. Goonasinghe's Labour Union) and Dr. R. Saravanamuttu who entered the first State Council as the sole representative of his party in it.

As regards the formation of the All-Ceylon Trade Union Congress we can clearly discern an important part played in it by the British Labour Movement. In 1927, A. A. Purcell, a British Labour M.P. came on a deputation to India from the British Trade Union Congress to render assistance to workers in India to organize themselves into properly constituted trade unions. On his meeting Mr. Goonasinghe and the Ceylon Labour Union in Ceylon it was decided in January 1928 by the Ceylon Labour Union to take steps to form a trade union congress. In June of the same year Mr. Goonasinghe left the island for England to attend the Imperial Labour Conference and on his return in August 1928, the All-Ceylon Trade Union congress held its first sessions. By 1928 Mr. Goonasinghe claimed to represent about 40,000 workers, and besides the various branch unions of the Ceylon Labour Union and the unions mentioned above it is interesting to note that there were represented at the congress, the Ceylon Domestic Servants' Union, a Buddhist Transport Workers' Union and a Salpity Korale Peasants and Workers Union. About 22 organizations in all were supposed to be represented in the Congress. No one of course would say that most of these organizations functioned on a systematised and well-ordered basis but what was significant was that in a country where Trade Union organization had to contend with so many difficulties, this was the first occasion on which an important and large section of the working class formed one united workers, organization through which it could work for its welfare.

The chief demands put forward on behalf of the workers were: (a) the right of combination and legal recognition of trade unions, (b) workmen's compensation and the employer's liability for its payment, (c) minimum wages, (d) regulation of hours of work, (e) arbitration courts, (f) old age pensions (g) housing and rent restriction, (h) maternity benefits. Here it must be added that most of the working class legislation so far passed by the government was with reference to the estate labourer and was largely due to the pressure of the Indian Government. Even such legislation however in effect did not mean very much to the estate labourer. The other sections of the working class not having even the benefit of such limited legislation in their interests had, perforce to win concessions for themselves by keen and bitter struggles.

On the political side the formation of the Labour Party was also of much significance during this period. From 1922 the newly formed Ceylon Labour Union which was itself uncompromisingly nationalist had worked together with the Ceylon National Congress. But with the coming of the Donoughmore Commission to Ceylon for investigation in 1927 it was decided at the 5th Annual General Meeting of the Ceylon Labour Union in September 1927 to demand adult franchise. Soon it was found that Congress nationalists, foremost among whom were D. B. Jayatilake and D. S. Senanayake, were opposed to the granting of universal franchise. The newly formed Labour Party with Mr. Goonasinghe at its head were the only people in Ceylon at that time to demand universal franchise, and it is now somewhat amusing to note that Mr. Goonasinghe then "exposed" Mr. Senanayake among others as a betrayer of the nation who opposed the grant of universal franchise to the masses of this country. So by October 1929, the Labour Party and the Union severed their connections with the Ceylon National Congress. The L. P. fought independently of the Congress at the first State Council Elections of 1931 and won two Colombo seats to which were returned Mr. Goonasinghe and S. W. Dassenaik. Today of course we can only say: "How times do change and how we change with them."

With the economic depression deepening, the years 1928 and 1929 witnessed a number

of strikes which we may say mark the closing stages of Mr. Goonasinghe's career as a militant labour leader. There was now, however a growing tendency on the part of the erstwhile seemingly uncompromising hard-headed fighter for labour to resort to more conciliatory methods of bargaining with employers. In April 1928 came the strike of the motor workers in the Armstrong garages, and in July the workers of the Colombo Commercial Company struck work. In December 1928 there were strikes of the workers in the G.O.H., Queen's Hotel and by the printing workers of the Colombo Apothecaries. Within the first three months of 1929 there were strikes at the G.F.H., Walker & Greig's saw mills and in the printing departments of the Times, Lake House and Cave & Co. Overshadowing them all however was the Tramway strike in February 1929 when the Maradana police station was burnt down. It sounds somewhat ironical now to read that in those days Mr. Goonasinghe was accused of trying to import Bolshevism into the country.

By the thirties however a new and significant development had taken place in the labour movement. In 1932 was inaugurated the Wellawatte mill workers union of which Dr. Colvin R. de Silva was president and Mr. Vernon Gunasekera the secretary. In 1933 about 1,400 workers in the mills staged a mammoth strike from February to July. This may be said to mark the beginnings of Marxist influence in the working class movement, foreshadowing the phenomenal growth of the Sama Samaja movement after 1935 in this country. Significant also of this strike, is that Mr. Goonasinghe played the role of a supplier of scabs to help the management to break the strike. *Quamulatus!*

In 1935 was passed the Trade Unions Ordinance which made compulsory the registration of trade unions and legalised the position of trade unions while also in the same year there came into force the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance of 1934.

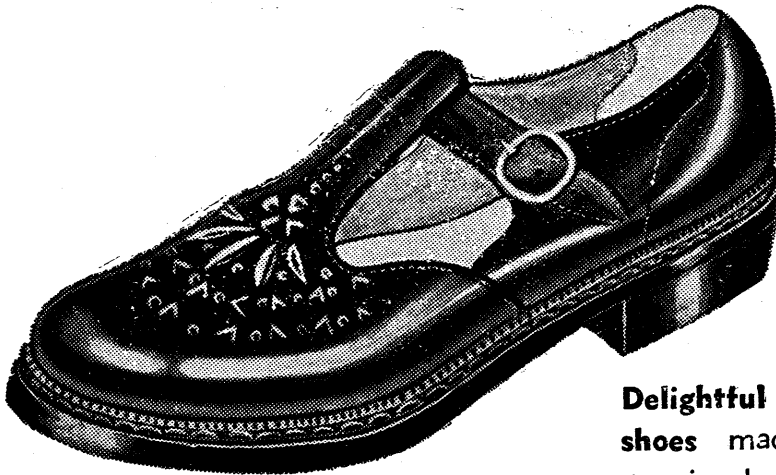
Thus had arisen a labour movement in this country bearing the characteristic marks of its origin and growth. As was to be expected Colombo and the urban areas became its focal point. Very significant however, was the fact that the workers in Ceylon's major plantation industry especially Tea, stood

outside the main currents of this movement and failed to be integrated within it. Even today, twenty five years later, in spite of the the great advance made in trade unionism on the plantations the position is not very much better. Communalism still continues to cut across class affiliation and unity. None theless the urban workers had begun to assert themselves. Not only had they formed unions for militant action but had already claimed the political right of franchise.

The gathering economic depression after the wars in the late twenties helped to accentuate the worsening conditions of the working class and make them take the road of militant struggle. For reasons, stated before, the more radical elements of the educated middle class came to provide the labour movement in the country with its leaders. But trade union organization always proved to be somewhat unstable especially on the financial side for a number of reasons, although in this period, once the labour movement got a start, the setting up of unions of a loosely knit type proved to be comparatively easy. For one thing, since trade unions were not on a legal footing, trade union funds could be easily misappropriated. Secondly the workers themselves were not in a position to contribute much towards a trade union fund while their cultural backwardness retarded the growth of an efficient trade union organization. In addition must be noted a feature peculiar to the indigenous Sinhalese labourer in the city of Colombo. A large number of Sinhalese workers, although daily paid wage labourers, had connections with the village from where they originally came, and often had a share however small in landed property. The old family system in many cases still holds good for a large number of workers and there was therefore a tendency for the workers to fall back on this security of the family group in case of unemployment and hardship. The trade union therefore would be regarded more as an *ad hoc* body for purposes of fighting for better conditions on specific occasions and less as a permanent well-organized society to which the worker could always look for the betterment of his conditions. In this respect, even many an Indian worker could in the last resort go back to his village in South India. It is indeed with all these peculiarities and limitations that trade unionism arose in this country amongst the working class.

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PLANTATION LABOUR IN CEYLON

By S. RAJARATNAM M.A., M.Sc. (Lond.)

PART II FLUCTUATING DEMANDS FOR LABOUR AND CHANGING CONDITIONS FROM THE 1890'S TO 1931

THE SLUMP IN THE TEA INDUSTRY AND THE EXPANSION OF THE RUBBER INDUSTRY.

DESPITE the ineffectiveness and eventual failure of the Labour Federation in 1898, the high labour turn-over in the plantations was considerably reduced. By 1897 the average price of tea had declined almost to unprofitable levels, and many estates in the mid-and low country districts were selling below the cost of production. Though output remained normal, the demand for labour declined. Extension of cultivation was much reduced and economies were undertaken. Manuring, cultivation and weeding programmes, usually done on contract, were cut to a minimum, and for a short period it appeared that there would be a surplus of labour, increased by heavier immigration during the last years of the century as a result of a series of bad harvests in South India between 1898 and 1903. The unprecedented immigration figures for 1900 and 1901 exceeded 100,000 each year.

There would have been considerable hardship among the coolie population but for the expansion of the rubber industry at the turn of the century, which absorbed the surplus in opening up new estates, so that until about 1907 the labour market in fact showed a great deal of stability. The turn-over was reduced; crimping and bolting were practically non-existent.—(*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1906. p 23) At the beginning of the rubber enterprise there was no undue strain on the supply as improved immigration and the willingness of the Sinhalese to work on the rubber plantations helped to meet the greater demand for casual labour.

Rubber occupied a greater proportion of indigenous workers and capital. It is impossible to estimate the amount of local labour involved as this was largely non-residential, villagers from neighbouring settlements finding casual employment for short periods. Three reasons may be found

to explain the different Sinhalese attitude to work in the rubber estates. Firstly, rubber grew in the wet, low country where most of the islands' population lived, so that employment could be secured near home. In the second place, the economic position of the villagers had declined by the end of the century. The growth of population, the infinitesimal sub-division of land, and the alienation of small properties for tea and rubber had made the peasants' dependence on their land for a living rather precarious. In the third place, expansion of rubber, unlike tea, demanded lands owned by local smallholders, many of whom, having sold their land to the rubber planters, squandered the money in the towns, and ended as landless agricultural workers.

Coolie Migration 1894—1910 (*Registrar General on Vital Statistics (Series)*)

	Arrivals	Departures	Difference
1894	85,256	66,292	+12,964
1895	123,611	80,673	+42,938
1896	128,350	93,281	+35,069
1897	153,075	109,213	+43,862
1898	136,864	105,706	+31,158
1899	68,393	81,629	-13,236
1900	207,994	112,936	+95,058
1901	120,603	118,343	+2,260
1902	87,763	63,917	+23,846
1903	77,966	47,715	+30,251
1904	77,302	56,246	+21,056
1905	160,080	65,513	+94,567
1906	88,945	59,659	+29,286
1907	55,724	63,671	-7,947
1908	86,401	78,740	+7,661
1909	79,845	61,287	+18,558
1910	118,613	64,660	+53,953

The planters did not take the improved labour market to be a permanent feature. The economies in the tea industry could not be maintained indefinitely, and higher tea prices would mean a bigger demand again. There was also a threat of a definite shortage of labour arising from reduced immigration. The high figures of the early

years of the century did not last long, and by 1903 they had slumped to very low levels. There was competition for South Indian coolie workers from Malayan rubber plantations, where coolies received better terms of employment and arrived completely free from debt, the cost of travelling being borne by the planters.

The indebtedness of the coolies and the bad living conditions were serious threats to immigration into Ceylon. The fear of a steadily mounting debt kept many away; and even coolies who had worked for a long period in the island were finding their way to the Malayan Peninsula. Ceylon planters were not altogether unaware of these circumstances. Some made frequent appeals for an improvement in wages and living conditions, but the majority complacently showed lack of interest. Why, they asked, should standards need improving if coolies had so far found them adequate? In such matters individual action was found ineffective. Changes on a national scale were necessary.

Moreover, ever since the decline of coffee there had been a shortage of capital in Ceylon, since the tea industry's prosperity had been short-lived. Now, at the turn of the century, the rubber plantations were in need of large scale investment. Foreign capital, however, found better openings in Malaya; while the unfavourable conditions left Ceylon without internal monetary resources.

The problem was to attract fresh labour. In the absence of better conditions for the coolie, the alternative appeared to be the formation of an organisation to encourage and facilitate movement to Ceylon. Hitherto there had been no effective supervision of immigration. The overseeing of the "coastal" of the Planter's Association, which managed all affairs pertaining to immigration, was only nominal. Kanganies had a free hand in recruitment in South India but seldom made any efforts at campaigning, the common practice being to sign on friends and relatives. Now, with the bigger demand for the rubber industry, and the threat of competition, an organisation was imperative.

At the end of 1904 the Planters Association formed the Ceylon Labour Commission with its headquarters in Trichinopoly, South India. This commission was put under the Ceylon Labour Commissioner and his European assistant¹. The functions of the organisation were to supervise and encourage immigration of coolies to the island and handle all affairs relating to labour on behalf of the Planter's Association. A number of agencies were opened throughout South India to enlarge the scope of recruitment, and propaganda was carried out to encourage coolies to seek employment in Ceylon. The expenses of the commission were borne jointly by all employers of Indian workers (at the rate of 10 cents per cultivated acre to the Ceylon Immigration Fund), and by the government. The state contribution was 25% of the entire outlay, which was in accordance with the change of policy towards immigrant labour, and was further justified by the fact that the government employed considerable numbers of immigrants for its irrigation and railway works.

Despite the efforts of the Ceylon Labour Commission, troubles began again by 1908 similar to those of the eighties and nineties of the previous century—a high labour turnover, crimping and bolting. The low price of tea, economies in the labour market and improved immigration had checked these disturbances. With the expansion of the of the rubber industry and the upward trend of tea prices, the demand for labour again rose, and the difficulties reappeared in the absence of a labour surplus to act as a buffer. During the first ten years of the century about 120,000 acres were brought under rubber cultivation; and casual labour was also demanded for maintenance work on the tea estates. In fact, production was not affected in their industry by shortage of labour, but the turn-over was greatly speeded up.

By the first decade of the present century, coolie living conditions had further deteriorated. The coast advance had increased from Rs. 10 in the coffee days to Rs. 40 by the 1890's, and by 1910 was in the region of Rs. 50. In the same year the average debt of

1 Ceylon Labour Commissioner —
Assistant Labour Commissioner —
Recruiting Agencies in India; —

Norman Rowsell.
Charles Wilkins,
Atur, Mayavarem, Trichinopoly Dindigul,
Madura, Tinnevely, Ammapatnam, Chingle-
put, Pudukotta, Perambur, Toraiyur,
Manaperi,

the coolie was Rs. 80, when his mean monthly wage was only Rs. 10. (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1913. p. 31.) The increasing coast advance and the tundu strengthened the power of the kangany, and with greater demand for labour, kanganyes again made use of their hold on the coolies, creating instability in the labour market. Gangs were shifted from employer to employer in search of better terms. Crimping and bolting became common once more. Being indebted and tied down to an estate by the tundu, the coolie found relief in running away and seeking more favourable employment.

Indeed, an improvement in living conditions would have been a better solution than the organisation of the Labour Commission. Though the positive immigration-emigration figures after the creation of the commission partly justify its formation, it must be noted that despite the longer distances and the inconvenience of going to Malaya, the coolies preferred employment there to work in Ceylon. Even the islands' age-old attraction, its proximity to India, could not halt the drift away.

At last circumstances deteriorated so far that those members of the Planters' Association who understood the causes were able to convince the majority of the need for government legislation in matters previously regarded as the employers' private affairs. Labour Ordinance No. 9 of 1909 consequently laid down that planters had to pay wages directly into the hands of the coolies and certify to the government agent of the district that they had done so.

This was a half-hearted measure. The legislators believed that direct payment would break the power of the kanganyes over the coolies. They did not understand that the real source of the kanganyes' power, and cause of the workers' indebtedness lay in the coast advance and the tundu, which were left untouched. So this ordinance failed; and the planters again resorted to voluntary measures to combat the evils; another Labour Federation was formed in 1911 to limit coast advances to Rs. 30, and prevent crimping. The new federation, like its predecessor, foundered on the planters' reluctance to trust each other, and barely half the employers of immigrant labour

joined. (*Planters' Association in Ceylon Proceedings* 1913. p. 27) In default of a satisfactory solution to the problem, the high labour turn-over and the instability in the labour market continued till the beginning of the First World War.

THE WAGES AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE COOLIES

Data obtained from: Marjoribanks and Marrikayar-Report on Indian Labour Emigrating to Ceylon and Malaya 1917.

The coolie's wage rate and living conditions hardly changed over long periods. With the decline of coffee there had been a fall in coolie remuneration, and this new rate had continued after the recovery of the economy. Allowances and bonuses had been reduced to a minimum, a trend which continued till 1914.

The average coolie wage rate was about Rs. 11 for three days' labour. There were, however, many variations, depending on the type of work, the district, and the allowances and bonuses paid by individual planters. Casual labour for jungle clearance received about 50 cents a day. Manuring and weeding work were executed on contract payment at around Rs. 1 an acre—about 2 or 2½ days' employment. Higher rates were paid to casual than to residential labour since certain facilities were not included, such as housing, rice and provisions at fixed prices, and free medical attention. There were also differences in wages between districts. The average daily rate in the Nuwara Eliya was 36 cents, while that in the Sabragamuwa district was 30 cents. This discrepancy was due to the harder work in the higher lands, the greater cost of living and the absence of local food supplies.

A number of factors controlled the coolie's real income: the number of days he worked, the price and quantity of provisions allowed by the planter, overtime and allowances. According to the labour laws a coolie might demand six days' work a week, and he frequently had his entitlement. As accurately as may be judged, the average number of days worked per coolie each month was 10 to 23 for men, 15 to 19 for women, and 17 to 21 for children. The average monthly wage rate varied from Rs. 8-40 to Rs. 10-18 for men, Rs. 4-34 to Rs. 6-24 for women, and

Rs. 3-96 to Rs. 5-69 for children. The higher sums include overtime, bonuses and other extras.

In addition, rice was supplied to all resident coolies at cost price, with an average monthly issue of one bushel per man, 3/4 bushel per woman, and 1/2 bushel per child. During times of scarcity it was issued even below cost price. This supply of rice was a significant addition to real income. Not all the rice supplied was consumed, and it was the practice to sell the surplus at increased rates to villagers. The majority of the estates also supplied free living quarters, fire-wood festive costumes and land for vegetable growing. The coolies' medical needs were looked after by various ordinances. Primary education for coolie children was provided by the general education code for the island, whereby estates were given government grants depending on the number of children and the standard of teaching.

Female coolies were treated more liberally under the medical wants ordinances. They had to be provided with lodging and food for one month after child-birth, and some estates even gave the women an extra allowance and additional supplies of rice during this period. Some estates, indeed, paid the mother a bonus when the child reached the age of one; and free meals were given to non-working children. (*C.O. 54: 560 Despatch 90 of 4 September, 1885*).

The income which the coolie received was thought to be more than adequate to meet his needs. A planter of 25 years' experience estimated that the labourer's cost of living averaged Rs. 6 a month, including tobacco and betel leaves. With a monthly income of about Rs. 10, he was in a position to save a substantial part of his income. The same planter calculated that a coolie family with one child earned Rs. 20 and spent only Rs. 13. But these advantages were offset by indebtedness, which, it has been claimed, represented half the coolie's wage. (*Marjoribanks and Marrikkayar: Report on Indian Labour p.11-13*)

THE WAR AND THE POST WAR DEPRESSION.

The supply of labour during the Great War caused the planters no concern. In 1815-16 immigration was normal, due largely to the opening of a new quarantine camp at

Mandapa, South India, which allowed the Labour Commission to transport coolies over the newly constructed Talaimanar line, for which the planters had agitated since the turn of the century. Its completion opened the overland route, eliminating the unpopular sea trip from Tuticorin.

In 1917 immigration decreased. With recruitment for the armed forces and the Madras Labour Corps, the Indian Government imposed restrictions on the passage of coolies abroad. These orders, which came into force on the 1st of April 1917, prohibited the passage of all adult males to Ceylon unless they had been there before, or were accompanied by their families; kanganies were restrained from recruiting outside their native districts; and permits issued by the Government of Ceylon through the Ceylon Labour Commission were demanded of emigrants. (*Ceylon Association in London. Proceedings 1917. p. 19. Ceylon Association in London. Proceedings 1917. p.31.*) Coolie arrivals in Ceylon during 1917 and 1918 numbered less than half those of the two previous years.

Coolie Migration 1911-20 (*Census Report 1981. Vol. I. p. 17.*)

	Arrivals	Departures	Differences
1911	97,536	58,916	— 28,620
1912	117,475	77,840	— 39,635
1913	120,354	90,374	— 29,980
1914	78,662	49,031	— 29,631
1915	94,828	38,298	— 56,530
1916	115,713	47,588	— 68,137
1917	47,296	32,119	— 15,177
1918	43,184	23,161	— 20,023
1919	113,391	34,268	— 79,123
1920	45,946	27,581	— 18,365

However, reduced immigration did not affect the labour supply in the plantations since demand had declined during the war. Tea cultivation had practically reached its limits, and if extensions were carried out they were on a very small scale. By 1917 currency and shipping difficulties affected the tea market, causing a fall in production. During the war years about 100,000 acres were brought under rubber, but this did not call for more casual labour than could be drawn from the local population. Most of the new lands were owned by native capitalists and small holders. Shipping shortages cut fertiliser supplies, further reducing the demand for casual labour.

Labour costs increased, however, both during and after the war. With higher commodity prices, wages had to be raised, so that by 1918 the average pay of a residential coolie amounted to 40 cents a day, or 45 cents in the upper districts. (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1918. p. 31.) Planters had further to bear losses on the supply of rice. It had been the practice to supply workers with rice at 6-40 a bushel; when shipping difficulties and the absence of a rice surplus in South India increased prices to scarcity levels, almost every estate showed "loss on rice," which deficit also continued into the post-war years. The influenza epidemic of 1918 again contributed towards higher labour costs, since many coolies went on the sick list and planters had to bear additional expenditure on medical attendance. (*Ibid. Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1921. p. 9.)

The demand for labour in the plantations did not rally with the end of the war. Between 1918 and 1921 the tea industry slumped, and controls had to be introduced to improve prices. Similarly, rubber was faced with slump conditions until the commencement of the Stevenson Restriction Scheme. As a result of the depressed market the demand for permanent labour slackened, and that for casual labour almost disappeared. Further cultivation was abandoned together with manuring and weeding programmes. Recruiting in India was reduced and a number of agencies closed down. (*Ibid.* p. 21) But threats of unemployment did not materialise since the slumps in the two industries were not concurrent. 1921 was by far the worst year for employees and repatriation began, but the recovery of tea prices in 1922 and the introduction of rubber restrictions created some optimism concerning the future.

By 1922 the economy rallied, and with it the demand for labour. More coolies were needed both for a return to normal production and for finer plucking of tea, which was practised after the war, and two coolies were required for one acre of tea; while rubber now required a coolie for an acre because of the thinning out of trees during the war.¹ (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1927. p. 46.) Cultivation and manuring were renewed. The labour force

available was inadequate for these demands since recruitment had been reduced during the slump. Thus the sudden demand in 1922 disorganised the market, and led to great difficulties.

The reaction in the labour market was similar to that during previous periods of intense plantations activity. Turn-over increased, with kanganies and gangs moving about in search of better terms of employment and was aggravated by Ordinance No. 43 of 1921 which abolished the penal clause for desertion, and harbouring of deserted coolies. Some planters explained the new high turn-over as an attempt by the coolies to test the effectiveness of this new ordinance; (*Ibid.* p. 38.2) but the movement continued till 1929, establishing that such shifting would always be associated with labour shortage. The high turn-over of 1922-27 differed from that of earlier periods. Previously it had been due to the absence of surplus labour but was now caused by a shortage of men for the actual working of the plantations, which led in 1927 to rubber production falling 20% short of the quota allowed under the restriction scheme. This drop was partly due to the rigidity created by the scheme, but primarily to labour shortage. The Planters' Association estimated the working force available in 1927 to be 30% below their requirements. (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1927. p. 46-47.) (though whether this was 30% of the maximum number of coolies who could have been offered employment, or of the minimum needed for efficient working of the plantation, is not clear).

Coolie Migration 1922-31³

	Arrivals	Departures	Difference
1921	25,496	—	—
1922	77,414	—	—
1923	89,607	—	—
1924	104,776	139,877	— 35,101
1925	226,090	158,457	+ 68,452
1926	216,167	182,348	+ 33,819
1927	285,137	211,062	+ 47,075
1928	271,869	216,061	+ 55,808
1929	238,141	241,972	— 3,831
1930	206,091	241,216	— 35,125
1931	169,191	195,505	— 26,314

1 Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings 1927. p. 46.

2 Ibid. p. 38. Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings 1921. p. 57.

3 Registrar General—Vital Statistics. (a) Emigration not known.

Various measures were adopted to increase immigration; new recruiting agencies were opened, and propaganda was carried out in South India. Record figures were achieved in 1924, and each year till 1929 the total exceeded 100,000. This improvement was partly due to the efforts of the Labour Commission and partly to improved terms of service. Wages rose steadily, at first owing to the higher cost of living during the war, and in the mid-twenties as a result of labour shortage. By 1926 average pay was up to 50 or 52 cents a day. The tundu was abolished in 1921, so that the coolie was freed from debt; provision of housing was made compulsory, while recruitment and immigration were brought under state control. Nevertheless the supply did not meet the demand till the fall in tea and rubber prices in 1929 compelled planters to economise, and at length to reduce production. Finally repatriation of coolies began once more in 1932.

DEPARTURE FROM LAISSER FAIRE.

The 1920's saw many far-reaching legal changes in regard to plantation labour, changes not wholly unexpected. Since 1900 the government had abandoned its attitude of non-interference and had co-operated with the Planters' Association in attempting to secure an adequate labour supply. Tentative efforts were made to improve living conditions. Labour Ordinance No. 9 of 1909 providing for the direct payment of wages to coolies was the beginning, but further legislation was interrupted by the war.

Since 1900 several influences had encouraged the government to change its policy. Within the Planters' Association there was a powerful group who believed that only legislation could improve the coolie's conditions, and had frequently pressed the government to act. Their efforts were largely responsible for ordinance No. 9 of 1909. Progressive migration of workers to Malaya, Burma and elsewhere strengthened this group; and their support for state action led to a number of ordinances being passed in the twenties with little opposition.

Native members of the legislative council had also been very critical of the indebtedness and living conditions of the coolies. The McCallum Reforms of 1911 increased

the native membership of the council; and they were further supported by the addition of two representatives of the Indian community in Ceylon. The native and Indian members of the Legislative Council drew their inspiration from the Indian nationalist movement, so that the agitation of constitutional reform in the sub-continent had its repercussions on the constitutional developments of the island. There were demands for similar reforms, improvement in native agriculture and the betterment of the coolies' lot. The migrants themselves, encouraged by political activity at home, were restive, and a few isolated strikes occurred.

The Government of India was also applying pressure on Ceylon to improve the position of the coolies. Until the war years the Indian government had not interfered with migration to the island, as it had in the case of other countries, because of the close proximity, and the frequency of the traffic. As a result of increasing movement to Malaya and elsewhere, and of the labourers' indebtedness, during the war India asked Ceylon to control immigration. This resulted in the appointment of a committee in 1918 to report on whether it was "desirable that a greater measure of control and supervision be exercised by the government." (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1918. p. 31.) The members of the committee, drawn from the Legislative Council, the Planters' Association and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce were all agreed that indebtedness discouraged coolies from immigrating, and suggested that a government board should be set up to supervise and regulate coolie recruitment, once the planters had irradicated the workers' deficit. (*Ibid.*)

The Problem of coolie debts had been a constant challenge to the planting community and its association since the transition to tea, but no acceptable solution had been worked out. After the war the majority opinion in the Planters' Association was that legislation was the only answer. Agitation from the community for such a measure resulted in Labour Ordinance No 23 of 1921 which, as has been said, abolished the tundu and the penal clauses of Ordinance No 11 of 1865. The tundu had been the basis of the coolie debt, and with it disappeared the coast advance system and the consequent indebtedness. Henceforth the employer had to bear

the cost of recruitment and transport to the estates.

This ordinance was soon followed by Labour Ordinance No 21 of 1923 by which the government undertook responsibility of recruiting coolies in South India and bringing them over to the plantations. (By the *Indian Government Emigration Act VII of 1922, emigration from India for o labour was only allowed on condition that the Ceylon Government undertook the responsibility of recruiting coolies.*) For this purpose a Department of Indian Immigrant Labour was created under a Controller who was assisted by an advisory board. This department took over the Ceylon Labour Commission, engaged coolies on behalf of the planters, and charged the expense to individual estates. The next important measure was Labour Ordinance No 6 of 1923 which prohibited the employment of children under the age of ten. (*Ordinance No 6 of 1923 legalises in Ceylon the Washington Conventions regarding the employment of women, young persons and children in industrial unertakings.*) Finally, minimum wages were prescribed by Labour Ordinance No 27 of 1927. This bill follows the pattern of the British Agricultural Wages Act of 1924.

The planting districts were grouped together under boards with the Board of Imigrant Indian Labour as the central authority. A schedule of minimum payments was laid down by the ordinance as follows:

	Men	Women	Children
up-country	cents 54	cents 43	cents 32
mid-country	„ 52	„ 41	„ 31
low country	„ 50	„ 40	„ 30

The function of the regional wages boards was to fix rates in each district in conformity with the schedule, taking into consideration the nature of the work performed, and the local price of essential foods. This decree met opposition from the Planters' Association on the grounds that the minimum levels imposed were higher than prevailing rates. For instance, it was pointed out that average wages in the up-country districts for a man were 50.7 cents a day in 1926, and 51.6 cents a day in 1927, while the new order prescribed 54 cents.¹ However, the government, including as it did influential native opinion, was determined to implement its decisions, and the ordinance became law. (*Ibid. p. 46-47.*)

(To be Continued)

¹ Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings 1927. p. 225.

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Errata on page 168 of Oct.-Dec. Issue 1961

COMPARATIVE PRODUCTION FIGURES FOR 1959

Figures in Millions *Source: U.N. Statistical Yearbook, 1960*

Items	Unit	World Totals	France	W. Germany	U.K.	U.S.A.	USSR
Coal	tons	1896.3	57.6	126.4	209.5	388.4	365.1
Oil (crude)	tons	980.6	1.6	5.1	.1	347.9	129.6
Iron Ore (iron content)	tons	191.4	19.7	4.3	4.2	32.1	54.7
Cement	tons	292	14.2	22.8	12.7	59.8	38.8
Pig Iron (and ferro-alloys)	tons	223	12.7	18.5	12.8	56.4	43
Steel (crude)	tons	304.8	15.2	25.8	20.5	84.8	59.9
Electric Energy	kilowatt hrs.	206200	64500	103200	121000	794500	265000

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THE INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE

By HECTOR ABHAYAWARDHANA

INDIA will have her third General Elections in the latter half of February. Apart from the mechanism they constitute, General Elections provide an invaluable insight into the basic political processes in any country. The coming General Elections in India will do more than this. The two elections that preceded it have already greatly illuminated the trends dominating the Indian scene. This one—if one might so confidently anticipate its result—will come as the culmination of these trends and focus the attention of people inside and outside the country on the urgency of forestalling their more disastrous consequences.

Viewed on the scale of the entire country, the Congress party enters the election arena on this occasion virtually unchallenged. Neither on the Left nor on the Right can any oppositional force be seen that is capable of dislodging the Congress Government from the saddle that it has occupied unbrokenly since the country's liberation. Any challenge that exists stems from the direction of the Right rather than from the Left. This is in marked contrast to the situation that prevailed in the earlier elections when the Communists and Socialists were the only serious challengers. It owes itself, in the first place, to the general support extended to the Congress party by the Communist and Praja-Socialist parties and the indistinguishability of their attitudes on most important questions from those of the Congress Government. It owes itself also to the steady disintegration of all Left parties that has been so prominent a feature of the Indian political scene in the recent period. But it owes itself no less to the big change that has overtaken the Indian role in world affairs, which was the biggest ingredient in the Congress Government's appeal to the people.

Like most things Indian in the present-day world, the Indian role in world affairs was an adaptation of a familiar role in the history of diplomacy. It was an adaptation to modern requirements of the traditional policy of the balance of power. Indian foreign policy based itself on the improbability of resolving the main conflict on the

international arena for as long a period ahead as one could envisage. Not being a military power of any great capacity, it could not think in terms of attaching the country to any of the existing military alliances. On the other hand, its needs were far removed from any kind of foreign aggrandisement and related largely to economic assistance that was urgently needed from abroad for the country's development plans. The policy of refusing to align with either cold war camp, while maintaining friendly relations with both of them, was calculated to maximise economic assistance, as distinct from aid determined by military considerations attracting it from both sides.

Three factors may broadly be considered to have emboldened the Government of India to strike out on this path in world affairs. The first is, of course, the dimensions of the country and the enormous difference to the fortunes of the cold war that would be made by India's inclination in either direction. The second is the nature of modern war itself with the impossibility of determining victor and vanquished in the face of nuclear holocaust. This consideration is further underlined by the virtual stalemate of the military race between the big powers that was developing over many years. Third is the position of leadership of the backward and newly-liberated countries in which India automatically found herself at the commencement of this period. So great was the prestige of the Indian leadership through the appeal of the new diplomacy to the self-respect of the new nations that it counterbalanced the risks implicit in the course.

The change that took place in India's world role resulted from the new factor constituted by the arrival of Africa on the international scene. European imperialism had carved up the body of Africa into numerous portions. Many of these were absurd and illogical and had no more sanction behind them than the military might of the occupying colonial power. The battle for freedom had commenced to be waged on the African continent long before India had made her notable essay

into world politics. But that battle began to reach maturity only in recent years. Through hard struggle, through agreement with the imperialist Government at home, or even through panicky retreat on the part of the occupying authorities, the African colonies were emerging into independence one by one. The future of these countries was a larger question mark than in the case of the former Asian colonies. Their immense potential riches made them of decisive importance to the protagonists of the power struggle outside. The dynamism of a vast continent reaching the light of the sun after so many centuries of benightedness had to determine the fate of the rest. Inevitably, the eyes of the world, and of those who claimed to be its most powerful rulers, had to turn in the African direction.

There need not have been any irreconcilable conflict between Indian aspirations and those of the emergent African peoples. If Indian policy was less centred on her government's own exclusive needs and had been more greatly attuned to the common interests of the developing nations, especially where they clashed head on with those of their former masters, the rise of African nationalism would have further strengthened the Indian Government's foreign political course. Nationalism, unfortunately, cannot rise above its inherent limitations. Indian nationalism, while prepared to identify itself generally with the cause of nationalism elsewhere, found that in specific situations its own interests were not always identical with those of other nationalisms. Committed to maximising its returns from non-alignment in the cold war, it was by no means willing to risk depreciating these prospects by ranging itself too heavily or too consistently against one or other camp in the cause of African independence. The balance of power could permit no leaning over on any side under compulsion of idealism or principle.

It was, perhaps, not so difficult to understand the remarkable moderation of the Indian Government's attitude to the independence movement in the British colonies. India was a member of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth was an important arm of Prime Minister Nehru's balance of power strategy. But many found it dif-

icult to explain the equivocation in the Government of India's Algerian policy. And in the Congo developments that culminated in the murder of Prime Minister Lumumba, it was often unclear what aims relating to the future of Africa were being pursued by Indian diplomacy. Finally came the Indian role in the negotiations that led to the Belgrade Conference of non-aligned powers, and in the conference itself. It appeared that the Indian Government was quite unwilling to support any policy that absolved the non-aligned countries from merely reacting to the decisions of the big powers and fashioned for them a world outlook of their own. To link this hesitancy with the heavy dependence of India on foreign aid for the country's Third Five-Year Plan was by no means an implausible explanation.

What had silenced the Congress Party's Right-wing critics and reduced their effectiveness was, more than anything else, the mounting prestige abroad of the Nehru Government. Generally speaking, the policy of independence and neutralism was in basic accord with the foreign policy approaches of the Left-wing parties. This applied to the Communist Party no less than to the Praja-Socialist Party. For though the former was wholly identified with Moscow, Soviet foreign policy currently sought to extend the area of neutrality among the newly-liberated countries. And if the latter's hostility to everything Communist led to a dangerous tenderness of attitude to the Western bloc, there could be little doubt of the fierce nationalism underlying it. Left-wing criticism of the Government's social and economic policies had, in this atmosphere, a friendlier reception than those of the Right wing. The change of atmosphere, it was natural to expect, would change the outlook for the Left parties. The slump in the Government's foreign prestige was the cue that the Right parties were eagerly awaiting.

It was not, of course, the rising tempo of African liberation alone that arrested the development of Prime Minister Nehru's diplomacy. The Chinese conquest of Tibet provided the occasion for Pancha Sila and the regularisation of Sino-Indian relationships. But beneath the surface it generated emotions of fear and deep anxiety

concerning Chinese ambitions among the Indian leaders. When the discovery was later made by them that the Chinese had already taken military steps towards unilateral solution of the problem of the Sino-Indian boundary, nationalist sentiments were immediately inflamed. It was plain that any remedy the Government of India could apply in this situation lay in negotiations with the Chinese. The extreme nationalism of the Chinese attitude, unfortunately, gave little expectation of immediate results. No better handle of attack against the Government could have been hoped for by the Right parties. What was brought in question was not the inadequate commitment of the Government to the support of nationalism abroad, but its ability to stand up to threats on the home border. As for the Left parties, their ranks were spread-eagled with one blow. The Communists argued pathetically among themselves for months before deciding by a majority to whisper condemnation of Chinese policy. The Socialists by and large found common cause with the Right parties in attacking the Government's failure to drive out the "invader."

The weakening of the Left in India and the emergence of the Right as the principal challenger to the Nehru Government cannot, however, be laid entirely at the door of reverses of foreign policy. In the case of the Communist Party, this would be the greater part of the explanation. Its policies within the country were not decided by the exigencies of national developments. At best these exigencies formed the background against which the party made its decisions. The latter were determined by international Communism's expectations of Indian foreign policy. The failures of Indian foreign policy had inevitably to have a severe impact on the Communist Party.

But how account for the collapse of the Socialist Left in India? This cannot obviously be ascribed to the subordination of national needs to preconceived notions of foreign policy. If anything, the Socialist Left errs in the opposite direction to the Communists. They have always exhibited a tendency to derive their foreign policy attitudes from the immediate needs they see in the situation at home. World problems thus tend to get solved in their minds

in the light of fiercely nationalist criteria. In recent years this nationalism has gone beyond the limits of realism and quite often been indistinguishable from anti-Communist hysteria. In seeking an explanation for their increasing displacement by the Right-wing parties, it is necessary to examine this very basis of nationalism for the shortcomings of the Indian Socialist attitude.

A preliminary observation may be made here concerning the development of the Socialist movement in India. On the scale of the country its growth was very uneven. Never in its entire history, for instance, did it have reckonable influence in Southern India. This may have been regarded as a coincidence if the prospect existed even today of Socialist expansion in a single Southern State. But neither in Madras, nor in Andhra or Mysore or Kerala, is there such a possibility. Almost in contrast, the bastion of the Socialist movement has always been the Hindi-speaking States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Even more interesting as a fact is the social composition of the Socialist parties where they existed in South India. It is not merely that significant membership came from the urban South India. It is not merely that significant membership came from the urban middle class. The caste origin of this membership is especially interesting. The principal cadres invariably belonged to the Brahmin community in all Southern States, with the possible exception of Kerala. To grasp the meaning of this it must be remembered that most political parties in South India—and this is by no means confined to South India—base themselves on one or more of the non-Brahmin castes.

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar—and the Hindi-speaking region generally—also provided the main base of the national movement in India. In times of struggle against British rule, the mass of the peasantry in these States rallied unflinchingly behind the Congress party. The Congress party, however, found its main support among the middle-class intelligentsia. Unlike in most other States, this was not confined to the towns. The Hindi-speaking intelligentsia, the majority of whom were chronically unemployed, abounded in the villages. It is the radicalism of this stratum

that gave strength to the Congress Socialist party. In Uttar Pradesh, in fact, the Socialists were in control of the Congress organisation even at the time that they walked out of it in 1948 to form an autonomous Socialist Party.

The inability of the Socialists to establish their party in South India stems primarily from the fact that they surveyed the Indian political scene with preconceptions that were manufactured in U.P. and Bihar. They identified what they saw in these States with what existed everywhere in the country. They justified this in the name of nationalism. In doing so, they were basing their political attitudes on an oversimplification.

Nationalism in India was a complex phenomenon. One strain in it undoubtedly consisted of a feeling of countrywide belonging. But this was confined to the English-educated middle classes whose advancement depended on their mobility from one urban area to another in search of jobs. It also included the trading community of banias, especially from Gujarat and Marwar, who quickly concentrated the greater part of indigenous business in their hands. Both these strata together, however, were a very small minority of the population.

The main strain in Indian nationalism was constituted by the awakening of the linguistic nationalities, especially as education progressed in the numerous mother-tongues. The largest of these nationalities was the Hindi-speaking group of former provinces. If Urdu is also identified with them, they were the overwhelming majority in Northern India. With the additional backing of the big cities of Bombay and Calcutta, the Congress party drew the bulk of its strength from the Hindi region. Its appeal to the non-Hindi regions was based on the organisation of the Congress party structure on the principle of linguistic provinces. In this way it sought to appeal to the language sentiment of the non-Hindi-speaking peoples, though in most places this appeal did not percolate below the educated middle classes. What must be noted is that the resolution providing for formation of linguistic provinces had to be forced through the Congress in the face of bitter resistance from the Hindi-speaking

delegates. Then, just as today, U.P. and Bihar found it painful to contemplate an Indian nation that was not universally Hindi-speaking.

The hyper-nationalist prejudices of the Socialist leaders thus constricted their movement within the boundaries of region, class and caste. Geographically, they were for the most part bottled up within the Hindi region. In terms of class, they were a primarily middle-class movement until the post-war phase of trade union organisation. The high composition of Brahmins in the intelligentsia everywhere found a ready base for all radical politics in this community. The advantage of this for the Socialists was that the Brahmins were perhaps the only all-India caste to be found in all parts of the country and they responded readily to any kind of all-India appeal. Its disadvantage was that even in conjunction with the other two upper castes viz. the Kshatriyas and Baniyas, they were a very small minority in South India and were generally alienated from the mass of the people.

In spite of the tragic experience of the Partition, the Socialists were unable to refine their understanding of Indian nationalism. Through their fanatical advocacy of Hindi as the sole national language, their hostility and contempt for regional movements based on the lower castes and generally confined to a single State, and their failure to champion the aspirations of the more backward States for greater autonomy from the Centre and more rapid economic development, they have lost ground steadily all over the country, and particularly in the non-Hindi regions. Even their economic and social programmes have largely stemmed from generalisations concerning the country as a whole, which have many times been lacking in particular local relevance. As though to compensate for all this, they have thrown themselves recklessly into the various movements for linguistic states that broke out in many parts of the country. Here and there, for a brief while, they even catapulted themselves into some prominence. Once the linguistic demand was conceded, however, the Socialists faded out again, making way for the Congress party.

India is not a single nation but a multi-national community. Each of the Indian nationalities has a long history and highly developed language and culture. The majority of them are larger than most European nations of today. Moreover, the social and economic condition of these nationalities varies so widely that it is impossible to elaborate a general specific for all of them that will have concrete validity. Basing itself on a particular relationship between these nationalities that has found its sanction in the nationalist movement, the present Indian constitution, and the framework of capitalism in the country, the Congress party is the unchallenged champion of the one-nation state in the country. The Socialist parties have failed above all because they have sought to bid for this nationalist mantle.

But events are changing the Left political parties in India, despite the conservatism of their leaders. Nearly fifteen years of independence have reduced these pretentious all-India parties to the level of local parties in a handful of States. Thus the Praja-Socialist and Socialist parties are essentially U.P. and Bihar State parties. The Communist Party has been rapidly transforming itself into the national instrument of the nationalities with the largest grievances—the Malayalees and Bengalis. In Madras and Orissa strong local parties advance to the fore, like the Dravida Munetra Kazhagam and the Ganatantra Parishad. For all its ambitions, the Swatantra Party of ultra-conservative Rajagopalachari has pny sizable following in a mere handful of States. Even on the basis of all-India programmes and aspirations, the political aarties of India are being reorganised on local or regional foundations. Only the future will show whether they will merge among themselves, with perhaps a federal structure to preserve their different local autonomies, or learn the art of co-existence beneath the umbrella of a federal state.

It would be incorrect, however, to leave room for any impression that the Congress party has somehow contrived to escape the force of these changes. In fact, the same kind of transformation can be seen taking place in the Congress organisation. The unrivalled popularity of Prime Minister Nehru still gives untold prestige to the party's central leadership. But Nehru is, without doubt, the last of the popular national leaders. While he still lives, authority at the Centre weakens from day to day. A new type of leader arises everywhere in the Congress organisation. No longer is there the old division of functions between party boss, Chief Minister and fund-raiser. The new Congress leader is essentially a local leader, but he is party boss, Chief Minister and fund-raiser all in one. Authority over party and state is rapidly passing into the hands of a directorate of Chief Ministers drawn from various parts of the country. Whether this will culminate in more powers to the State organisations of the Congress party as the price of co-existence, or in the disintegration of the party itself, it is much too early to predict.



ACCUMULATION IN BACKWARD COUNTRIES

By ANIL MOONASINGHE M. P.

THE problem of investment in order to develop the economies of backward countries is a complex one. Today the accent is on rapid growth of the semi-colonial economies of Asia, Latin America and Africa. How could this be done by minimising the attendant dangers. The rate of accumulation—i.e. the percentage of accumulation in relation to the Gross Domestic Product determines not only the rate of economic growth but itself is dependent on the political complexion of the state and has in turn an important impact on the political situation.

Primitive capitalist accumulation particularly in the older capitalist countries was spread over several centuries. This was achieved by the expropriation of land, as in England by enclosing land expropriation of labour by sweated domestic industry, unpaid labour (slavery in the Southern States of the U.S.A), piracy and the slave trade, exploitation of colonies, by heavy indirect taxation etc.

This was the pre-cursor and sometimes the accompaniment to the great mercantilist development in Europe which was immediately followed by the Industrial Revolution.

It is clear that these avenues of accumulation of capital are not open to the backward countries. What then should their rate of accumulation be, and what their sources.

In economically backward countries the great bulk of the population lives at subsistence level. Thus their ability to save is very poor and this in turn becomes a vicious circle as accumulation is in turn poor. Further, even when their income rises their standard of living rises in like proportion, as the increased purchasing power is used by them to buy consumer articles.

When England was expanding industrially accumulation went on at a great pace as the exploitation of labour was intensive and the

profits made by entrepreneurs were again and again reinvested in the economy.

In Ceylon today the rate of accumulation is about 10—12%. net accumulation would be about 7%. This has resulted in Ceylon's economy being stagnant. Our Gross domestic product increased between 1954-1958 by the annual rate of 3.4%. Per capita it increased by 0.9%! (White paper July 27—1961 p. 18.) During the same period China's increased by 14.5% and 10.9% respectively. Japan's by 9.3% and 8.1% respectively.

Of course the highly developed economies of western Europe could afford accumulation at the rate of 15%—17% or more. In any case the bulk of that investment was in the private sector.

The highest rates of accumulation were achieved by Poland before 1956 (i.e. before Gomulka) 25% and the USSR during the period 1929—38 and China today. In these countries the rate of accumulation was determined by the state and was mainly made through the Government sector. Needless to say, this high rate of accumulation was the result of forced saving and the heavy exploitation of labour.

In taking into account the rate of accumulation heed has to be paid to the per capita income position. It is relatively easier for Ceylon to have a rate of accumulation of 25% in comparison with India or China whose Per Capita Income is half ours. It is easier for Japan and Malaya to have this rate of accumulation (Japan's is 35%!) as their Per Capita Income is more than twice ours.

The question of accumulation is of the greatest importance to countries which are in the process of transition from Capitalism to Socialism i.e. workers states, with a nationalized and planned economy.

From a historical point of view the task of primitive accumulation of capital property belongs to the capitalist class. This has been

done ruthlessly, by the methods of blood and mud and tears while whole generations suffered and died, lived on half rations and were wiped out in epidemics. Generations were sold into slavery and yet other generations left Europe to settle in America and Australia.

Once industries were brought into being the problem of accumulation was not so acute. Primitive accumulation came to an end with the development of joint stock companies' increased productivity and better financial organisation. Once these were achieved saving became more an economic and automatic process. Forced savings, pulling in the belt, puritan living, abstention from satisfying wants no longer took on such a militant and crude aspect. The growth of trade-unions and democracy precluded these old methods. The export of capital to semi colonial areas helped these two elements, to coexist with capitalism.

However certain countries did not undergo this capitalist development; namely the development of capitalism in agriculture, industrialisation and the growth of trade and commerce on an exchange economy. Thus with the maturing of political consciousness amongst the petit bourgeoisie and workers, these bourgeois historical tasks had to be performed by the alliance of workers, rural poor and the intelligentsia. This in fact is the essence of the theory of the permanent revolution, (and what happened in Russia, China, Cuba and Yugoslavia) enunciated by Leon Trotsky in 1905 and accepted by Lenin in April 1917.

These countries were faced with the problems that were faced by the entrepreneur class in W. Europe—only in a more acute form. How to accumulate at the highest rate and how to develop industry and agriculture in the quickest way, using modern techniques so that the rate of development would be at least 10 times as fast, as in the older capitalist countries, is the problem in a nutshell.

So far as the Bolsheviks were concerned this rate of accumulation had to be at an optimum. According to Trotsky the main source would be the peasantry. He "argued that the lack of balance in the economy, fatal to the "link" between the proletariat and

the peasantry, might arise in two ways: either through the extraction for investment in industry of too large a proportion of the national surplus or through the extraction of too small a proportion of the surplus." (Socialism in one country—E. H. Carr 326).

From a political angle too although Trotsky advocated a policy of higher rate of accumulation though kept at that level which did not require compulsion and the abandoning of the democratic and self-regulating processes, the final destiny of socialism according to him was bound up not with break neck accumulation and building of industry in one country but with the spread of the revolution to the more advanced countries of Eastern Europe. In fact the actual rate of accumulation was even lower than that advocated by Trotsky between 1923—28 as the policy of maffifying the Kulaks (rich peasants) was being carried on by Stalin and Bukharin.

The theoretical problem of accumulation (where it concerns a workers state in a backward economy) was tackled first of all by Preobrashensky a leading member of the Bolshevik Party, in 1924. In his "Fundamental Law of Socialist Accumulation" he showed the early process of forced accumulation or primitive accumulation, as Marx called it, of entrepreneur Capitalism. It later developed an automatism on a new technical and highly developed economic complex.

He argued that Socialism must also pass through such a stage (in backward countries) and that the accumulation must come from the non-state sector—i.e. from the expropriation of part of the surplus product of all pre-socialist economic forms within the country for the purpose of broadening Socialist production.

"In the period of primitive socialist accumulation the state cannot do without the exploitation of small-scale production, without the exploitation of a part of the surplus product of the country side and of artisan labour..

...The task of the socialist society consists not in taking from these petty Bourgeois producers less than was taken

by capitalism, but to take more out of the even greater income which will be assumed to the small producers by the rationalisation of every thing, including the small production of the country."

By this he meant that the state would so reorganise and improve the methods of peasants, small business men and artisans that they would make more money and out of this increase the state would also take a share.

He advocated a price policy as the medium of this extraction.

Since only a more developed economy could depend on accumulation from its own industry and agriculture, a peasant and economically backward country would have to live mainly on the surplus extracted from the country side to finance development.

Although at that time these ideas were attacked by Bukharin (and by Stalin who was his ally at the time), with the growth of the Kulak menace (Stalin distorted and used the ideas of the left opposition) a programme of breakneck industrialisation was put into effect by Stalin in 1928 with the 1st five year plan. Nearly 3 million peasants lost their lives as a result of forcible collectivisation. The very law enunciated by Preobazensky was applied even more stringently than he had expressed it.

Politically important is the fact that not only the peasants **but the workers were forced to forego the satisfaction of their consumption demands.** The whip and the bullet were used by Stalin to carry out forced savings. Consumer industries were starved of investment and heavy and light Industry was built by this process of forced primitive accumulation.

We too, are a backward peasant country. Nearly 2/3 of our population live at subsistence level. Will we have to accumulate with the same methods? The answer to that depends on three questions. To what extent can we raise the yield of our agricultural sector intensively? 50% of our income is from the Agricultural Sector and 50% are gainfully employed in this sector.

At the moment the average Labour Productivity of Tea and Rubber is Rs. 1461 and of Domestic Agriculture Rs. 585. If these figures could be further increased as a result of the combination of better cultivation,

fertiliser, improved bio-chemical methods' workers' participation in management, improved credit and marketing facilities etc. — **part of the accumulation can come from this sector.** Expropriation of foreign assets in Ceylon will further ease the burden of accumulation.

Secondly to what extent can we harness voluntary labour? There is a great tradition of voluntary work from the time of the Sinhalese Kings. Of course this sometimes degenerated to forced labour. Only a revolutionary enthusiasm will harness this source. Thus these two can be accomplished only on the basis of a socialist programme.

A period of austerity is democratically possible as we have seen by the example of the Labour Govt's rule in Britain. Our traditions of democracy will go a long way. This is particularly important as both Yugoslavia and Cuba have shown that the principles of self Management and workers Councils and voluntary co-operatives in marketing, credit and fertiliser purchase and Agronomic aid, were able to develop Agriculture rapidly and thereby help accumulation in the country side.

It is clear too from these remarks that the problem of development can only be tackled on the basis of a planned and nationalized economy. The existence of a private sector in Export Agriculture precludes this. The lack of planning cannot help rationalisation of Domestic Agriculture. The non-participation of workers in Management will stymie growth in the Industrial and Transport sector.

Of course, these problems would not arise in a situation where as a result of world socialist revolution, Ceylon was given full economic co-operation by the advanced countries. Yet even in the present situation the existence of two blocs will tend to reduce the dangers of isolation. Trade and aid are two common features of the post-war world in contrast to the years immediately after 1917. Yugoslavia and India provide us with outstanding examples of how aid from both blocs can be utilized to develop our economy.

All these factors will enable us to increase our rate of accumulation from 12% to 22% in essence by the intensification of our democratic processes and by bringing the people into participation in the task of building up our society and our country.



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PLAYING HOP-SCOTCH, WORKING AT SCHOOL
OR PLAYING AT HOME—THEY SQUANDER
THEIR ENERGY WITHOUT A CARE. IT FOLLOWS THAT
A CHILD'S DIET MUST BE FOUNDED ON MILK,
WHICH IS THE SOURCE AND SUBSTANCE OF ALL
ENERGY. MILK IS GOOD, SOLID NOURISHMENT—
THAT IS WHY IT IS KNOWN AS NATURE'S FINEST FOOD.

Give your CHILDREN
MILK BOARD MILK
EVERY DAY

DON'T SETTLE FOR A SUBSTITUTE

DRINK MILK BOARD  MILK



NATIONAL MILK BOARD

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