

YOUNG

SOCIALIST

EDITORIALS ON: Socialism at the Wrong End;
Dissatisfaction in S.L.F.P. ranks; The Emergency;
The Salaries Commission Report; The Berlin Crisis;
The Belgrade Conference; The Megaton Bomb.

Plantation Labour in Ceylon (Part I)

by S. RAJARATNAM

The Yugoslav System of Self Management

by LESLIE GOONAWARDENA

Parliamentary Democracy in Ceylon (Part II)

by Senator DORIC De SOUZA

The Myth of Women's Inferiority

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

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Estate Schools in Ceylon—A National Scandal

by S. CHELLIAH

Soviet Industrial Growth 1917-1961

by V. KARALASINGHEM

October—December 1961

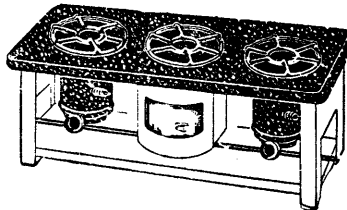
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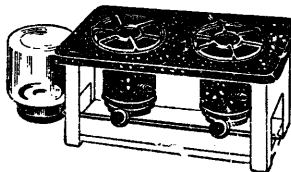
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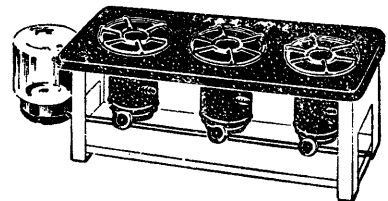
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YOUNG SOCIALIST

Number 3

October - December 1961

Editorial Notes

SOCIALISM AT THE WRONG END

EXCEPT in the case of the Petroleum monopoly with which it has been decided to enter into competition, the S.L.F.P. Government has been showing a marked reluctance to proceed against foreign capitalist interests. Similarly, when faced with the problems of rising prices and profiteering, instead of attempting to tackle the problem at its source by taking over the import of essential commodities from the hands of big foreign importers, the Government has embarked on a series of measures aimed at curbing profiteering by the retail trader. Further, the laws that have been framed hit not only the big medium retail traders, but also the vast mass of small traders. Indeed, in one law the definition of trade is so wide that even agricultural undertakings have been held to come within the definition!

As was to be expected, the U.N.P. has been making every effort to exploit the dissatisfaction created by the rising cost of living, shortages and the new burdens imposed by the budget, to their own advantage. It is worthy of note, however, that nowhere have they stated what their solution is to the financial crisis. They dare not!

The first step in the fight against rising prices is for the state to take over the import of all essential commodities. The taking over by Government of the dry fish trade is a new step to enter this field, and should be welcomed. The benefits of this measure are apparent from the fall in the retail price of dry fish that has already taken place. *For example, the retail price of a pound of sprats has gone down from Rs. 1.20 to 72 cts in Colombo.* However, it has to be stated

that even this eminently desirable action has been taken by the government without adequate preparation, and consequently the immediate result has been a shortage of dry fish throughout the country.

DISSATISFACTION IN S.L.F.P. RANKS

THERE is obviously much dissatisfaction in the ranks of the S.L.F.P. over the new burdens imposed by the budget. The split away of Dr. W. D. de Silva from the S.L.F.P. on the issue of the new taxes is not surprising. As president of the S.L.F.P. Trade Union Federation and parliamentary representative of a Colombo constituency, he was clearly under the pressure of the urban workers and petty bourgeoisie who have been most hard hit by the budget proposals. True Dr. de Silva did not take much away with him. But the significance of the episode lies in the fact that it demonstrates the extent to which S.L.F.P. Members of Parliament generally are affected by mass pressure in their electorates.

The M.P.'s are fully aware that at the next election the masses will judge them by results. And not a few of them have begun to feel that the first year of the S.L.F.P. Government has only succeeded in strengthening the forces of capitalist reaction. But what is important for them to realise is that it is not merely a question of inefficiency and incapacity on the part of the Government but above all a question of a programme of bold socialist measures that can meet the situation by providing the basis for a planned development. Such measures would have to include the take-over of the import and export trade, the nationalisation of the foreign banks, the nationalisation of

the plantations and the participation of workers in the management of nationalised concerns.

The situation created by the budget proposals constituted the first crisis this government has had to face on the economic front. And it will not be the last—unless of course there is a marked improvement in the world prices of two of our principal export products, rubber and coconut. And, judging from international market trends, this does not seem to be likely.

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THE EMERGENCY

THE recent debate in Parliament on the continuation of the state of Emergency for the 6th month in succession has brought out new facets of the present political situation. Except the Party in power, all other political parties are now opposed to the rule by the use of the Public Security Act which has seriously undermined the democratic rights and liberties of the people. Those Parties that encouraged or supported the use of the emergency powers to oppress and suppress the Tamil minority would now realise that the use of violence or undemocratic methods against a minority will inevitably recoil against the rest of the population.

Burdened by the rising cost of living and the recent heavy taxation on essential items of food and the broadening of the income tax paying circle the masses cannot act in an organised way against these unbearable and oppressive conditions in a situation of a "State of Emergency". What appeared to be measures to oppress the Tamil minority have now been directed against the people generally. The Dictatorship over a section of the people has grown into a dictatorship over the entire people.

The Government for its part has found it impossible to seriously maintain that the so called "Federal Problem" necessitates the continuation of the Emergency. Its failure to take any steps to solve the language problem or even ease the problem by even amending the Language of the Courts Act or introducing legislation for the reasonable use of Tamil is proof that the Government utilised the Emergency powers for a different purpose. The argument that the C.I.D. reports of secret meetings and the circulation of cyclostyled leaflets by the Federalists was unconvincing. The latest argument appears to be that nobody is adversely affected by the emergency rules—that public meetings continue to be held and that hardly any press censorship exists. Says the Government "let the Emergency rule remain to deal with any eventuality?" What then is this eventuality? The P.M. in the Upper House and some Government speakers at the debate let the cat out of the bag when they talked of politicians who prophesy the fall of the Government or the possible overthrow of the Government. So it would appear that

the emergency rule is necessary to prevent the Government from falling or for preventing mass action against the Government. If the Government is conscious of the growing discontent of the masses and the possibility of mass action against itself the Government will sooner rather than later realise that the continuation of the State of Emergency will only postpone the evil day but not prevent it from arriving. If mass discontent results in mass action despite the Emergency the existence of the Government could in such a situation be in the balance.

THE SALARIES COMMISSION REPORT

THE recommendations of the Salaries and Cadres Commission fall into two parts: the recommendations for the realignment of wages and salaries and those that cover the Commission's proposals for reorganising (and streamlining?) the public service.

By its terms of reference the Commission was especially required to investigate the maintenance of a suitable standard of living and the fixing of a minimum wage. The conclusions in regard to these matters form the foundation on which their salary structure rests. It is in regard to both these matters in particular that this Commission like its predecessors has failed.

At the bottom of the scale comes the unskilled worker for whom a consolidated monthly wage of Rs. 135/- rising in 15 increments of Rs. 2/- to Rs. 165/- is recommended. It is argued in support of this scale that at 1958 prices food (uncooked) would have caused Rs. 1-31 per person per day, i.e. Rs. 80/- for a two unit family per month. On the basis that the working class in Ceylon today spends 60 per cent on food the two unit family is expected to survive on Rs. 135/- per month. The pattern of spending is also to be preserved.

These 1958 prices quoted were no doubt obtainable in the fictitious market of the Government Gazette. At any rate they are utterly unrealistic today. In 15 years (if increments are duly earned) this worker's salary rises to the maximum of Rs. 165/- per month. This is not a recommendation for an increase in salary but a stern injunction

against the unskilled worker having any progeny. What has happened is that the Commission has in fact been impressed not by the object of maintaining a suitable standard of living but by considerations that have guided every pay commission: "the gross national product being low, the rate of increase being low, the economy being stagnant and the possible spiralling upwards of prices, should the purchasing power of the worker be increased".

The administrative proposals are guided by the stated objects of increasing efficiency, reducing the number of categories of public servants and the creation of an administrative service. The recommendations however in the minds of the Commissioners themselves appear to represent some intermediate halting place in transition from the present administrative structure to some ideal future. The public service itself shows no enthusiasm for these proposals. Nobody can cavil at the desire to increase efficiency, but what in the name of all that is bureaucratic is the efficiency bar proposed for an unskilled worker before he can earn his eleventh increment of Rs. 2?

Swabasha teachers and bachelors generally benefit most, but the range of increase in salaries is for most categories very small. But even those instances where the recommendations show a reduction are provided with a meagre increase on conversion. The resulting extra commitment in the salaries bill is what the Government is unwilling to meet today. On the other hand, burdened with the new taxes and finding the recommendations very far short of their demands the public servants will not be satisfied with the new scales.

The recommendation to continue the denial of political rights to all categories of public servants deserves the strongest condemnation. With government-sponsored boards and corporations emulating government practice in this respect and nearly all teachers being converted into public servants, this denial of political rights results in the condemnation of a large section of the population to a second grade of citizenship. It is to the public servant who in their opinion should remain politically gagged that the commission addresses this plea: "finally we trust that when public servants do protest against any of our recommendations they will do so with dignity and restraint."

THE BERLIN CRISIS

THE decision of the Government of the Soviet Union to conclude a Peace Treaty with the Democratic Republic of Eastern Germany, thus compelling the western powers to deal directly with the East German Government in order to obtain access to West Berlin, has sparked off a crisis that threatens to unleash a nuclear war.

The step itself appears to be reasonable enough. Firstly, it has to be remembered that the western powers, along with the Soviet Union, share responsibility for the creation of two German states after the last war. Further after the conclusion by the Soviet Union of the proposed Peace Treaty, access to West Berlin from the west will require only a 'de facto' recognition of the East German Government. The refusal of the Government of the United States, however, (leading the other western powers) to have dealings with the East German Government for this purpose, has nothing to do with the realities of the situation which demand a recognition that there exist in fact two German states. Rather, this refusal flows from the exigencies of the military plans of the U.S. Government. A fully armed Western Germany in opposition to the Soviet Union is an important part of these plans, and a 'retreat' on the question of Berlin runs the risk of impelling Western Germany out of NATO and ultimately into a position of neutralism not very different from that of Austria. This is the real reason why American imperialism, far from accepting a step which, as stated before is in itself eminently reasonable, fiercely resists this measure and indeed, even indulges in provocations in the region of Berlin which can spark off the conflagration.

Having said this, it is necessary to add that for socialists, this does not exhaust the question. Not only American Imperialism but the Soviet Union too is accelerating its military preparations and proceeding right up to the very brink of the precipice. The resumption of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union was but an illustration of this. And there is little doubt that a war over Berlin will develop into a nuclear world war with all its terrible consequences, including the risk of destruction of the human race itself.

One may well expect imperialism, which in history has never recoiled from crimes and massacres where its own interests are concerned, recklessly to plunge the world in such a catastrophe. But one does not expect the leaders of a great socialist country, with time and history in favour of the forces of socialism, to play the dangerous game of calculating on a last minute retreat by imperialism, risking everything in the process. The matter may be posed differently, in the form of a question. However wrong the imperialists may be on the question of Berlin, is it worth while to run the risk of unleashing a world war on this question? The answer is quite clearly No.

The fact that the Soviet leaders have answered this question differently demonstrates two things. Firstly, that they are placing their trust in the force of military might to the detriment of progressive political forces in the capitalist world. And secondly that, despite the changes that have occurred since Stalin, these leaders are still free from any real control of the masses.

THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE

THE lead given by the Belgrade Conference, taking place in the veritable shadow of gathering war clouds, and attended by the Heads of State or Governments of 25 Non-Aligned countries, is indeed heartening. The vast majority of the participating countries were far from socialist, and it could hardly be expected that they would subscribe to the socialist view that the only means of definitely removing the danger of war is the overthrow of capitalism by the masses in the capitalist world. However, the Declaration of the Conference went to the point of stating that "a lasting peace can be achieved only with the coming into being of a world where the domination of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism in all their manifestations is radically eliminated".

On the question of peace the Declaration contained valuable practical proposals. It called for "a general, complete and strictly and internationally controlled disarmament", such disarmament including "the elimination of armed forces, armaments, foreign bases, manufacture of arms as well as elimination of institutions and installations for military

training, except for purposes of internal security". And it also stated that the non-aligned nations should be represented at all future world conferences on disarmament, and that inspection teams should include members of non-aligned nations.

The Declaration also considered it essential that "an agreement on the prohibition of all nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests should be urgently concluded and that in the meantime "the Moratorium on the testing of all nuclear weapons should be resumed and observed by all countries.

The Declaration took a clear stand against colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination. It declared that "the non-aligned countries provide encouragement and support to all peoples fighting for their independence and their equality", expressed determination to "extend to the people of Algeria all the possible support and aid," demanded that "an immediate end should be put to any further shedding of blood of the Angolan people," who should be assisted by all peace-loving countries, called for "the immediate evacuation of French armed forces from the whole of Tunisian territory, and demanded "the immediate termination of all colonial occupation and restoration of territorial integrity to the rightful people in countries in which it has been violated in Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as the withdrawal of foreign troops from their national soil."

On foreign bases the declaration stated as follows: "The participating countries consider the establishment and maintenance of foreign military bases in the territories of other countries, particularly against their express will, a gross violation of the sovereignty of such states. They declare their full support to countries who are endeavouring to secure the vacation of these bases." Specifically it declared that the North American military base at Guantanamo, Cuba, affected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country.

The Declaration also called for an expansion of the membership of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to make these organs more representative of the membership and for the recognition of the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China "as the only legitimate representative of that country in the United Nations."

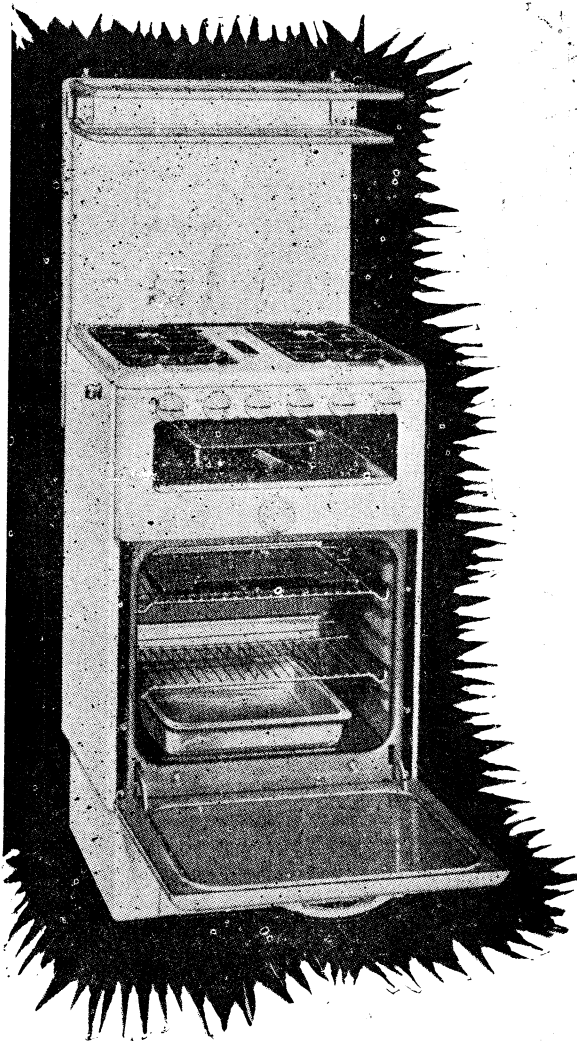
THE MEGATON BOMB

THE bigger the Megaton Bomb the greater is the amount of radio active material released by its explosion. Radio active Strontium, Caesium and Carbon are the dangerous by-products of atomic explosions, not only because they contaminate food and eventually settle down in human bones but also because they remain radio active for many decades. The radiation emitted by these elements bombard various cells of the body of which the bone marrow and reproductive cells are especially vulnerable. They can cause a fatal cancer of the bone marrow called Leukaemia, and they can alter the genetic pattern of reproductive cells in such a way as to increase the incidence of advance inherient characteristics. These are slow processes and the tragedy is that it will take several decades for mankind to know the full extent of the damage. By then many millions of human beings would have become victims of the megaton nuclear bomb being tested now.

By the resumption of Nuclear tests and the explosion of the megaton bomb Krushchev and the Soviet bureaucracy have dealt a severe blow to the international working-class movement. It has shocked world opinion and whatever might be the end result of this latest stroke of Krushchev diplomacy, one thing is certain—it has been a handsome gift to the most conservative and reactionary elements in the working-class movement, like Gaitskell.

25th October, 1961

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PLANTATION LABOUR IN CEYLON

This is the first of a series of articles on this subject,

By S. RAJARATNAM B.A.

PART I, THE CREATION OF A PROLETARIAT: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS AND POLICIES

WHO IS A PLANTATION WORKER?

A plantation labourer or a coolie in Ceylon was generally an immigrant recruited from the landless workers of South India. Coolies had been the main source of labour since the inception of plantation agriculture, and there has been continuous migration between the two countries since 1825 or even earlier. At the peak of coffee prosperity, about the year 1870, almost 90% of the labour force on the estates was of

Indian Origin. The character of this force remained unchanged throughout all subsequent phases. Despite the tendency since the turn of the century for more Sinhalese peasants to seek a share in such employment, the census of 1931 showed that the plantations were dependent on Indian labour for 85% of their workers. The proportion of Indian labourers in the plantations has declined since the depression but even today 70% of estate labourers in Ceylon are of recent Indian origin.

ESTATE POPULATION BY RACE

	1891	1911	1921	1931
Low Country Sinhalese	19,307	25,406	37,111	50,490
Kandyan Sinhalese		13,903	17,468	25,296
Ceylon Tamil	235,109	2,002	2,716	5,541
Indian Tamil		457,765	493,944	692,540
Europeans	1,955	2,365	2,670	2,814

(Census of Ceylon, 1931)

The reluctance of the Sinhalese peasant to work in the plantations is a well-known myth which requires drastic revision. Throughout the nineteenth century it was believed that the Sinhalese avoided the estates because they were not prepared to reduce their leisure hours, an opinion which seemed to have originated with a despatch of Sir Thomas Maitland, Governor of Ceylon between 1825-1830 (the relevant passage from his despatch is quoted by Mr. N. S. G. Kuruppu in his article in *Young Socialist No 1*). This story about the higher leisure preference of the Sinhalese seemed to have gained currency among the Governors of the island, government officials, planters, chroniclers of the Island's history, and the local press contribu-

ted to this opinion. Now, although this opinion is supported by statistics, recent studies by Ceylonese scholars seem to attribute the reluctance of the Sinhalese to work in the plantations to other factors arising out of the socio-economic framework of the island. Mr. Kuruppu, in the article cited above, mentioned the absence of economic pressure on the Sinhalese peasant and his rigid caste traditions in keeping him away from wage labour. Dr. Vanden Driesen attributes it partly to the unfamiliarity of the local population with the wage system and partly to the independence which the possession of land conferred on the native populace (Ceylon Historical Journal Vol. III No. I.)

The traditional feudal organization of the Sinhalese remained rigid in the nineteenth and even in the twentieth centuries, and European occupation of the island since 1505 had brought few social changes. So that feudalism, based on personal obligations and services still dominated the community. Until some of the traditions were gradually dissolved by the economic expansion of the island, the peasant's way of life continued to be based less on economic considerations than that of his counterparts in more commercialized societies. The caste system in particular militated against the mobility of labour, while strong family ties acted as a deterrent to taking up residence away from familiar surroundings at home. The coffee estates, and in later times most of the tea plantations, were located in the hill country, so that workers had to be housed on the spot or at least in the neighbourhood. This accounts for the larger supply of indigenous labour in the rubber plantations which were located in the low, wet country where most of the peasantry lived conveniently nearby. Indeed, for the peasant, residence away from his home was the primary drawback. Almost every villager owned some land (at the least a right of cultivation), either a few acres, or a share in a small plot (Census Report 1891, p. 53). Such possession made him independent up to a point; and if his land was insufficient to provide an adequate living, he naturally preferred casual labour nearby to the distant plantations.

But the Indian coolie recruits were landless. The South Indian social system was as conservative, if not more so, as the Sinhalese; but the shortage of land due to an oppressive land tenure and irregularity of employment made the South Indian more mobile. The extent of this mobility depended on the harvest conditions, and the prospects of local employment. The Indian coolie himself preferred to work in his own village, but when conditions deteriorated, he migrated to plantations in Ceylon. It is more a push from India rather than a pull from the plantations that has made Ceylon a haven to the impoverished landless proletariat of South India. Ordinarily, Indian labour is drawn from the lowest strata of society and field labourers are recruited from the depressed classes (Pillai. *Economic Conditions in India*. p.p. 108 and 235). And these are the classes who are ready victims of landlord's

rapacity, inclement weather and economic instability. In addition, they have very little rights of their own. The status of the HALIS who supply the bulk of agricultural labour in Bombay has been described by a senior British Administrator as follows: "There is virtually no difference between the position of these HALIS and the slaves of the American Plantations prior to the civil war, except the courtes would not recognize the rights of the master as absolute over person and services. But in this country where—more probably than in others—the rich have a better chance in the courts than the poor, this difference diminishes in importance." (L. J. Sidgwick, I.C.S., *Census Report of the Bombay Presidency 1921 pt. I. p. 219.*) This statement could as well be applied to the PADIALS of Madras. (Sir Gilbert Slater—*Some South Indian Valleys*. p. 9) and the the PULYANS of Malayalam. Quite naturally, therefore, overpopulation and their desire for a higher standard of living has been responsible for an average of 200,000 souls a year leaving their shores of India (Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee. *Economic Problems of Modern India Vol, II.p. 169.*) A quarter of this number finds itself in Ceylon.

Whilst such large numbers of Indian workers were arriving in Ceylon, the Sinhalese peasant kept out of the plantations. It is sometimes made out that the local peasant's reluctance to work in the plantations was due to the social habits of the Indian immigrant worker. They were unclean, carriers of small pox and plague and resorted to petty thieving and pilfering. Behind these prejudices, custom, tradition and the caste system, economic reasons underlay the Sinhalese peasant's antipathy to work on the plantations. With other sources of livelihood available, he would demand a bigger wage than the South Indian coolie. The money wage of resident unskilled labour on the plantations remained at Re. 1/- for three days' work from the mid-seventies to the beginning of the First World War, a rate not always attractive even to the landless Indian migrants. The Sinhalese preferred self-employment to plantation work where the inconvenience was greater and the income only slightly higher. Only when the peasants' economic conditions worsened did they turn to the estates, which again explains why there was a greater influx of indigenous labour into the rubber plantations at the

turn of the century. A recent labour survey in the plantations showed that while in the tea industry there was an overwhelming predominance of Indians, in the rubber estates the number of Ceylonese (Sinhalese for our purpose) exceeded the Indians.

EMPLOYMENT ON TEA AND RUBBER ESTATES, 1957

	TEA	RUBBER
Indians	397,577	38,268
Ceylonese	107,718	43,910
Total	<u>505,295</u>	<u>82,178</u>

(Administration Report of the Commissioner of Labour, 1957)

More Sinhalese were employed than might appear from the figures for resident labour in the estates, as the locals preferred casual work to permanent residence, the more so since casual rates were higher as a compensation for greater inconvenience, irregularity and the absence of certain facilities enjoyed by resident labourers. There had been a continuous demand for casual labour since the beginning of plantation agriculture in the island, and so a larger number would have been on the pay roll of the estates than official statistics reveal.

So far the coconut industry of the island has not been referred to. Although coconut exports have at times been the largest in the island's export trade, and in terms of acreage exceeds that of tea and rubber together, yet it was essentially a peasant product. Coconuts were grown in small holdings and peasant gardens with very little systematic cultivation. In 1900 there were 600,000 acres under coconut of which only 10% at most were in plantations. The acreage under coconut increased to 1,100,000 by 1931 but the proportion of estates remained unchanged. So that the majority of the workers employed in the coconut lands were the peasant proprietors themselves. In the large estates wage labour was employed but it was non-resident and to a large extent casual.

Unlike tea and rubber, maintenance of coconut lands require little labour and the additional labour needed during harvests was met from the unemployed and under-employed of the neighbouring village. Work on the coconut estates has remained a monopolistic hold of the local people.

CRASH OF COFFEE AND CHANGES IN LABOUR PATTERNS

The transition from coffee to tea affected the nature of the labour supply required by the planters. Since coffee cultivation required a smaller number in comparison with tea or rubber, planters preferred to employ a small number of permanent employees (quite a large number were Sinhalese as coffee estates were situated mostly in the mid country) for cultivation and maintenance and recruit seasonal labour for the harvests. So that the labour force during the coffee period tended to be largely migratory. The tea industry, like that of rubber, is labour intensive and requires a large amount of relatively unskilled cheap labour for work throughout the year. And, since the early tea estates were situated away from local peasant settlements, its labour became residential to the disadvantage of the local working population.

TOTAL ESTATE POPULATION

	Total population on estates	Increase	% Increase
1871	123,654	—	—
1881	206,495	82,841	67
1891	262,262	55,767	27
1901	441,601	179,339	68.4
1911	513,467	71,866	63.3
1921	568,850	55,383	10.8
1931	790,376	221,526	38.9

(Census of Ceylon, 1931)

As the above figures suggest, in the transition to tea, estate labour increases in volume and becomes more residential. This trend was further augmented by the demand for the services of women and children for tea plucking, partly due to the lower wages paid for this category of workers and partly due to the suitability of women and children for such tasks as tea plucking and sorting. And also to the fact that they released male workers for occupations where they were necessary. A recent labour survey in the plantations revealed the continuance of this practice and the extremely high proportion of female workers to the total resident-population. (I.L.O. Manpower Survey 1953. p. 63.). But there appears to be a genuine prejudice among local women to seek estate work. A Commission on estate labour came to the following conclusion "We find that, when the local conditions are favourable, the estate being situated in the neighbourhood of Sinhalese villages, little difficulty is found in inducing the villagers to engage in estate work, that it is their practice to return to their houses when the day's work is ended and that they can only in very rare instances be persuaded to reside upon the estate.

"On the whole the evidence before us points to the conclusion that Sinhalese labour is as efficient as that of the immigrant Tamil, but it is less dependable since the villagers have their own interests to which to attend.

"We find scant evidence of any general prejudice among the Sinhalese to undertaking work upon the estates, but in some localities the women do not appear to be allowed to engage in this form of labour." (Report of the Labour Commission 1900, p. xviii.)

RECRUITMENT OF COOLIES AND ITS ABUSES

The supply of labour in the plantations was dependent on the economic conditions prevailing in South India and to a lesser extent the state of the island's plantation economy. As we have seen, economic standards on the mainland were generally lower than those prevailing in Ceylon, and there had been continuous migration of labour to Ceylon. Indeed, in no year up to the beginning of the First World War did annual immigration of Indian coolies into the island

fall below the 39,000 mark. During a bad harvest in South India, this figure might exceed 100,000. Southern India was an area of impoverished agricultural workers, and the number of those who could be persuaded to seek employment in the plantations depended largely on the efficiency of the recruiting machinery. It was a question of tempting the villagers to break away from their village and traditional surroundings. The South Indian peasant was as conservative as his counterpart in many other parts of Asia, and his seeking work abroad, in the West Indies, Mauritius, Fiji and other colonies does not indicate exceptional enterprise but poor economic conditions at home. For these immigrants, Ceylon was not favourably placed. South Indian coolies had been employed there since about 1825; the island was separated from their homeland by nothing but a narrow strait; their customs and way of life were altogether similar; and labour was free to migrate between the two countries.

The "Kangany System", as has been said, is a suitable term for describing the whole method by which planters recruited, employed and paid their coolies; it had been accepted as the most convenient arrangement by everyone concerned with plantation agriculture since the first batch of coolies arrived in the island. The system requires discussion here because it was used as a means of extracting better terms from the planters, and a course of the constant drift of employees.

When the need for immigrant labour first arose with the opening up of land for coffee, the planters had commissioned influential men in the South Indian village communities to engage and bring over to the plantations the number of coolies needed. On the estates the coolies were employed in gangs under the supervision of the recruiter, who became the overseer or kangany of his team. This was at first a very convenient method. The planter, ignorant of the language and customs of his workers, was willing to leave supervision of work and payment to the overseer; and it suited the illiterate coolie to entrust all affairs to him. Patriarchal labour communities resulted in which the kanganies wielded immense power, largely through the payment of wages, allowances and bonuses. The kangany was the inter-

mediary between the planter and the coolie for all monetary transactions, beginning with the first cash advance made before leaving India; these transactions included loans, for which the kangany stood guarantor.

When a planter required additional labour, he sent the kangany back to "the coast" (South India) with a sum of money to pay an advance to each new recruit, on average Rs. 10 a head. "The coast advance" included a small sum to settle outstanding debt and to cover the cost of his journey to the plantation and subsistence *en-route*. All such sums were debited to the coolie and deducted from his wages by monthly instalments. It had been a common practice among the planters to lump together the debt of a coolie gang; the kangany, who was responsible for the settlement of this total, held a chit, or 'tundu' which registered the amount. According to the ordinance governing plantation labour, neither gang-leader nor his coolie could leave their employment unless debts were settled. It was, however possible for a kangany to obtain money from a prospective employer with which to settle the current debt, and then shift his gang to begin life in the new estate with a new tundu.

There were very few complaints about the working of this system during the coffee days. Early wages were high; there was a regular inflow of labour; and a surplus was available to meet the planters' demands. Consequently the labour turn-over was insignificant. But the decline of coffee and the financial crisis reduced coolie remuneration; and poor working terms inevitably created instability. The high turnover continued, however, even after the transition to tea was complete and the economic difficulties had been overcome. For this there were three main reasons.

In the first place, the kangany system was responsible for some of the confusion; it had been a fair weather craft which worked satisfactorily when conditions were good, but failed at a crisis. The kangany was invested with great power over his team; and so long as he gave legal notice and saw to the payment of the tundu, he could move freely to fresh employment. In practice, finding the grower in financial difficulties he obtained concessions by threatening to transfer his

workmen. Planters, in short supply of labour, found themselves forced to give way. Some of the concessions thus obtained were, in effect, detrimental to the coolies themselves. A favourite demand was for an increase in the coast advance, which rose from Rs. 10 during the coffee days to Rs. 30 by the end of the century. This meant an increased indebtedness for the labourer which in turn led to a higher turn-over. (*Planters' Association in Ceylon Proceedings* 1902-3 p. 12) The heavily indebted coolie offered his services to any planter willing to pay him a still higher advance; and a vicious circle was thus established. The common practice was for the kangany to find a planter urgently in need of labour and offering an increased coast advance for a gang, and shift his team by paying off the debt to the previous employer out of this larger sum. Quite often the kangany kept the balance of this transaction but the coolies were bound to pay the full new amount.

In the second place, the planters themselves contributed to the higher turn-over by keeping down coolie wages. At first pay was reduced from economic necessity but these low rates were maintained even after financial recovery. Coast advances were increased as an incentive to labour in preference to raising wages. Some planters recognised the evils arising from the steadily mounting advances, but no general agreement was possible. In matters relating to labour there was considerable mistrust within the planting bodies, and employers generally competed with each other in raising advance payments.

The third main cause of high turn-over was the lack of a labour surplus. For the actual production processes, a small but regular labour force was necessary and this was already available. But large supplies of cheap, unskilled, casual labour were required for clearing land, building roads, and opening up of new lands. The demand for this class of workers was less urgent than that for production purposes. But, on the other hand, during the early years of the tea industry, planters had plenty of reserve land for conversion to the growing of tea. Capital was, however, short. Therefore wages were maintained at prevailing levels, and planters attempted to employ as much

casual labour as possible under these wage conditions. Coolies preferred casual employment on account of the relative freedom, since this type of work was done on a contract basis, and also on account of the slightly higher wages paid for casual work. The higher rate was a compensation for the absence of such facilities as housing and the supply of rice which the permanent residential labour force enjoyed. Coolies, however, preferred a higher money income and shifted to casual employment whenever occasion arose.

When demand rose steeply in periods of expanding cultivation, there was a tendency for coolie gangs in the production processes to shift to casual employment and thereby increase the labour turn-over. (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1891, p. 46-63.) In short, the crux of the problem was the absence of a uniform wage level and a labour surplus to form a buffer between the permanent force and the demand for casual labour. If the planters had understood the problem and offered better wages to permanent workers, the high turn-over could have been greatly reduced.

THE EXPANSION OF THE TEA INDUSTRY 1884—97

The period between 1884 and 1897 was one of rapid expansion of the tea industry. Of the 450,000 acres under tea in 1931, almost 375,000 acres were brought under cultivation during this time. There was naturally a great demand for casual labour; and though it is not possible to say how far this demand was satisfied, a few general observations may be made.

The immigration of coolies increased considerably, and though the figures did not reach the level of the prosperous coffee days, the unfavourable balance in the migration of coolie labour was by 1889 converted to the island's favour. In spite of the lower levels of remuneration, South Indians still found advantages in migrating to Ceylon. Better wages might have attracted even larger numbers. There were, however, limitations to the planters' ability to pay more. Despite economic recovery, not all financial problems had been overcome. Many properties were still under some form of mortgage to the estate agency companies, and capital was

very short. To the planters of this period, any substantial saving in the labour bill represented an addition to capital. Furthermore, after the season 1883-84 the price of tea declined and the market showed little future promise.

Since there was no improvement in wages paid to coolies, presumably the planters had, in fact, adequate labour. In spite of their frequent complaints about the shortage of workers, tea production was not affected. It was indeed alleged in India, and even at home in Ceylon, that there was over production of tea in the island. The history of plantation agriculture during the period under review was one of rapid expansion, both in the area cultivated and production. What the planters really wanted were unlimited supplies of casual labour on their own terms. Their complaints can be attributed only to the lack of a labour surplus, ready for employment at any price.

The urgent problem in regard to labour was not shortage but the high turn-over, which disturbed the permanent labour supply. There was at the same time a break-down in labour discipline, as evidenced by the practices of "crimping"—that is seduction by a planter of his neighbour's workers, and "Bolting"—coolies running away before completing their contracts. Crimping was mainly carried out by smaller planters who could not afford to recruit coolies in South India, or by those who deemed it unnecessary to do so when it could be done on a neighbouring estate. Crimping had not been practised during the coffee days, less due to the labour laws than to a form of etiquette among planters in labour matters. Such etiquette was swept away by growing competition for cheap, casual labour. (*Planters' Association in Ceylon Proceedings* 1887, p. 44-45). Bolting was possible because planters were not over-scrupulous about employing hands without discharge certificates. Both these practices were offences under the labour laws, but in so far as both coolies and planters condoned them, there was little the law could do about it.

The planters were averse on principle to government legislation. At last, after much discussion, the Planters' Association organised the Labour Federation in 1898 to persuade growers to co-operate in ending

abuses in the labour market. The aims of the federation were:

- (1) that no member of the Federation shall pay more for any gang taken on from any other estate which belongs to the Federation than the amount of the tundu;
- (2) that no member of the Federation shall take on any gang or coolie from a Federation estate without the Federation tundu or a discharge note granted by a member;
- (3) members of the Federation before engaging coolies said to come from the coast shall fully satisfy themselves that they are *bona fide* coast coolies;
- (4) in the absence of a discharge note 'No-notice' coolies are not to be employed without reference to previous employers.

This organisation survived only a few weeks. As a result of mutual mistrust among planters over labour, barely half of them joined the Federation, which thus ended in a fiasco. (*Planters' Association in Ceylon Proceedings 1899. p. 22.*)

PLANTATION LABOUR AND THE GOVERNMENT

The government's policy towards plantation labour had been one of non-interference. Dominated by the philosophy of *laissez faire* prevailing in the mother country, the Government of Ceylon considered the employment of coolies in the plantations as entirely a private contract between them and the planters. Recruitment in India, transport to Ceylon and conditions were left in the hands of the employers. The government had from the beginning vehemently opposed any idea of direct intervention in the labour question. Nevertheless, it enacted such legislation as was barely essential for the proper working of a free market. These measures granted minimum rights to both coolies and planters whereby an effective free market could be assured with the least possible government interference. Ordinance No. 11 of 1865, "An ordinance to consolidate and amend the law relating to servants, labourers and journeymen

artificers, under contract for hire and service", was an important landmark: the principles which it enumerated have been, with minor amendment, the main basis of planter-coolie relationships ever since. (*Section 3 of Ordinance No 11 of 1865 applies to all contracts for hire and service, reads:—*

"Every verbal contract for the hire of any servant, except for the work usually performed by the day, or by the job, or by the journey, shall (unless otherwise expressly stipulated, and not withstanding that wages under such contract shall be payable at a daily rate), be deemed and taken in law to be a contract for hire and service for the period of one month, and shall be deemed and taken in law to be so renewed, unless one month's previous notice, of warning be given by either party to the other of his intention to determine the same at the expiry of a month from the day of giving such notice".

Section 4 reads: "No coolie shall be liable to punishment for neglecting or refusing to work, or desertion, or disobedience or neglect of work if he is not paid within three days following the month for which the wage is due")

This ordinance legislates for the regular payment of wages, protects the planters' interests against neglect, refusal to work, desertion or disobedience on the coolies' part and makes misappropriation of funds by the kangany a criminal offence. Planters were further protected against each other by making "the wilful employment, seduction or harbouring of coolies while on contract to others" a punishable act. Adjustments were made by Amending Labour Ordinance No. 16 of 1884 and No. 14 of 1889, but these simply interpreted certain clauses in the parent legislation, and introduced no new principles. (*These two measures defined the meaning of a contract and enabled coolies to sue defaulting planters for their wages "jointly and severally"*) Thus a free market for labour was maintained by limited government action.

This state policy was justified since the immigrant worker in Ceylon was legally a free individual, and unlike his counterpart in most other colonies was not obliged to undertake any fixed period of industrial

residence. The government made an exception, however, in regard to the provision of medical facilities. It was not originally intended that the state should interpose its authority to prescribe the medical care of plantation coolies; early Medical Wants Ordinances simply gave legal effect to the voluntary efforts of the growers. But in course of time this action developed into general government control.

Early in the coffee era there were few medical officers even in the larger towns, and none in the vicinity of the plantations. Owners of estates made arrangements among themselves for group employment of a medical man, either government medical officers or doctors in private practice, to attend to their coolie families. This system failed because the planters were unwilling to face the financial responsibilities. In view, however, of the high mortality rate among the immigrants (due to change of climate, malnutrition and bad living conditions), the government had enacted a number of ordinances providing medical facilities for coolies. Beginning with Medical Wants Ordinance No. 14 of 1872, a large number of orders followed (No. 17 of 1880, amending No. 18 of 1881 and No. 9 of 1882; No. 18 of 1882; and No. 9 of 1912); but the original principles remained unchanged. These were:

- (1) That hospitals and dispensaries were to be built by the government, and the estates in the district were to contribute on an acreage basis;
- (2) That planters were to pay for medicine and treatment according to the number of their coolies treated;
- (3) That regular inspection of coolie living quarters was to be made by government medical officers;
- (4) That planters should report all cases of sickness, births and deaths on their estates.

The medical care of the coolies caused much friction between various groups in the island. (*Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings* 1888. p. xxii C.O. 54: 610 Des. 378 of 5 November, 1893.). The government had maintained from the first that it

had been unnecessarily drawn into the planters' private affairs. Sir Arthur Gordon went so far as to assert that there was no justification for such discriminatory medical facilities for the coolies when they were denied to the rest of the country. The growers felt that the government's concern over medical relief was an example of subtle interference in labour matters which might serve as a precedent for further legislation. The Planters' Association declared that the state should either take complete control of coolie medical matters or leave them entirely to the employers. Indigenous elements resented discrimination in favour of plantation workers. Yet in the face of all opposition the provisions outlined above were maintained till more comprehensive laws regarding Indian immigrant labour were passed in the 1920's.

With the turn of the century the government could no longer stand aloof in other matters either, as it had done successfully in the past. The state first became involved with coolie immigration by providing quarantine facilities for entrants from South India. Labourers were recruited from plague—and cholera-stricken areas and thus brought disease with them. Coolies arrived by two routes; by sea from Tuticorin to Colombo and thence by rail to the central provinces; or by the short sea-crossing to Mannar and via the North Road to the plantations. After the opening of the Colombo-Kandy railway in 1867 the former route was the most used. In consequence the population of Colombo was seriously threatened by frequent epidemics. The second route also created problems, as pointed out by the Assistant Government Agent of the Mannar district. Between 1891 and 1898 five hundred villagers in the area are known to have died of cholera; and possibly the death rate was much higher. (*Ridgeway: Administration*. p. 101.). All places along the highway showed a decline in population. The 1891 census listed Mannar as the only district in the island with a fall in numbers. Frequent epidemics in South India in the nineties resulted in the closing of the North Road and the opening of two quarantine camps, one at Tataparai, South India, and the other at Ragama in the outskirts of Colombo. In 1902 the Government Agent in the Western Province, under whose jurisdiction the camps fell, organised

the 'tin ticket' system through which the state undertook to transport and feed the coolies between the South Indian ports and the plantations, the cost being charged to the estates. This was a significant step since it represents governmental departure from the policy of non-interference in plantation labour affairs. "The introduction of this system," wrote the Governor, Sir West Ridgeway, "forms of fitting climax to the history of coolie immigration in the past few years. That history has been marked by the assumption by the Government of greater responsibility in controlling and supervising the flow of immigration into this country, and at the same time by the ever increasing co-operation between Government and the planting communities. The new system 'tin ticket' marks the consummation of both these developments." (*Ibid*, p. 102) The scheme aimed at improving immigration

conditions. Hitherto the kanganyes had been responsible for bringing over the coolies; both they and their recruits had frequently been stranded at South Indian ports without food or money. The tin ticket system obviated delay and unnecessary expense, and reduced the victimisation of coolies by touts and blackmailers at the ports. Further opportunities for the government to participate in the provision of a satisfactory labour force came when the Planter's Association organised the Ceylon Labour Commission in 1904. (*The Government contributed Rs. 11,000 or 25% of the total cost of the commission, annually until 1914, and increased the contribution thereafter.*) The government readily shared the financial burden of maintaining a supervisory organisation in South India to facilitate the importation of coolie labour to Ceylon.

IMMIGRATION OF COOLIES BY ROUTES 2

	Tuticorin— Colombo.	North Route.	Tondi, Paumban— Ammapatnam—Colombo.
1888	29,902	51,838	—
1889	26,957	34,131	—
1890	42,525	40,695	—
1891	54,849	47,254	—
1892	70,391	45,687	—
1893	56,509	34,564	—
1894	55,745	29,062	—
1895	91,790	31,472	—
1896	99,761	28,231	—
1897	195,314	27,431	—
1898	117,224	19,398	—
1899	67,980	143	9,537
1900	207,299	433	37,200
1901	120,333	29	15,614
1902	87,546	28	9,586
1903	63,135	—	10,485
1904	76,965	—	13,466
1905	160,080	—	25,269

(2 Planters' Association of Ceylon Proceedings 1906. p. 172.)

(To be Continued)

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THE YUGOSLAV SYSTEM OF SELF MANAGEMENT

By LESLIE GOONAWARDENE,

SOcialists the world over are accustomed to hearing the apologists of capitalism trot out their favourite argument against socialism, namely, that nationalisation or socialisation of the means of production results in the destruction of incentive. And they have "ad nauseam" exposed the falsity of this argument by pointing out that this much vaunted incentive exists under capitalism only for a handful of capitalist entrepreneurs, whereas for the vast majority of people, incentive is surely greater in a socialist society where the whole community and not a privileged section of it, reap the results of greater and better efforts.

The capitalist argument, as applied to individuals, is clearly false. But it must be recognised that as applied to enterprises, there is a measure of truth in it. Under capitalism, the incentive of increased profit, accompanied very often by competition between enterprises, provides the driving force towards technological improvements and increased productivity. On the other hand, under the socialist organisation of society, with the state management of enterprises and the rates of remuneration of all employees from the Director downwards fixed by the state, there has been no similar incentive to improvements in each particular enterprise.

The Yugoslavs appear to have found an answer to this question by their system of workers' councils or, more accurately, by their system of self-management of social enterprises. They have in the process not only completely disposed of the 'incentive' argument in favour of capitalism, but also *provided a new incentive to the workers by directly relating increased production in an enterprise to increased material benefit for the producers in that enterprise.*

THE WORKERS' COUNCIL

The system of management of enterprises through Workers' Councils was first commenced in Yugoslavia in 1950, and with various changes made on the basis of experience, exist today in the form described below.

The Workers' Council of an enterprise is elected by the direct and secret ballot of *all* employees working in an enterprise. It is important to realise that, unlike the workers' councils in other socialist countries, whose functions are advisory as regards management, the Workers' Councils in Yugoslavia are in complete charge of the management of the enterprise. Entire responsibility rests with the workers' council for managing all the activities involved in production, sale expansion, borrowing, internal organisation, employment and dismissal of workers (under conditions laid down by the law on employment), *and the manner of disposal of the nett income left to the enterprise.* This it does through a Management Board elected by it, and a Director who is selected by a joint commission elected by the Workers' Council and the Commune of the District, after applications have been called for. The Director is an ex-officio member of the Management Board and works under the directions and the directives of the Workers' Council.

Fundamental to the system of self-management is the manner of disposal of the income and 'profits'. These are categorized in a manner different from what obtains in capitalist society. The first charges on receipts are production costs (these do not include wages), repayment of loans, depreciation, and tax on turnover*. When these charges are deducted we are left with what may be described as the income of the enterprise.

This income of the enterprise is next subject to what we might call an income tax. On the one hand the Federal Government takes its share (which it uses for covering the expenses of the regular federal budget and for financing development), while on the other hand the other organs of government (communes, districts and republics) take their shares. This 'income tax' is levied on a formula, which is graded and also takes into account the number of workers in the enterprise.

* footnote on page 123

The percentage of income that is left after the payment of taxes naturally varies with each enterprise. Where the profitability of the enterprise is high, as much as 70% sometimes goes as taxes, leaving only 30% of the income for the enterprise. This is not, however, usual. The following table gives the overall distribution in the country taken as a whole.

40 % at the disposal of the enterprises.
a little under 30% to the Federal Government.

a little over 30% to the Communes and other organs of Government.

After the payment of the above-mentioned taxes, the next charge on the income is wages. There wages are paid at trade union rates. There is a separate minimum wage guaranteed by law, but the trade union rate is 25 to 30% higher than this wage. The trade union rate is worked out in the following manner. There are wage agreements between the trade unions on the one side and the associations (or chambers) of enterprises (representative of the various workers' councils) on the other. However, these are broad agreements, and the precise wage rates are worked out between the Workers' Council and the trade union.

When the earnings of the enterprise are insufficient to pay the trade union rate of wages, lower wages are paid. The state only guarantees the legal minimum wage and does not step in to subsidise enterprises in order to enable them to pay the higher trade union rates. In such cases, the Workers' Council will discuss together with the commune ways and means of increasing productivity. However, this seldom occurs, the vast majority of the enterprises not only being able to pay trade union rates but also earning quite large sums as 'profits.'

After the payment of wages, the money left over may be described as 'profit.' It is entirely at the disposal of the Workers' Council which is free to use it (a) to supplement wages by the payment of bonuses, or (b) for social amenities (such as dining rooms, housing, holiday homes etc), or (c) for re-investment in the enterprise, or (d) as a reserve fund, or indeed for any combination of the above purposes.

Needless to say, the Workers' Council arrives at its decisions after consulting with the workers at (generally) several meetings of all the employees.

It remains to add that where the Workers' Council decides to re-invest for the purpose of modernising or expanding the enterprise, a long term state loan can often be obtained. Of course, detailed plans have to be submitted which will be scrutinised from the point of view of economic advantage.

AN EXAMPLE

The following concrete example may assist the reader to understand how the system works. The figures are from the Udarnik Hosiery Factory in Zrenjanin, which has 334 workers. The year is 1958.

Total Value of Products	690	Million	Dinars
Production costs,			
depreciation etc:	485	„	„
Income (690—485)	205	„	„
Taxes (Commune,			
District, Republic &			
Federal)	80	„	„
Income after tax			
payments	125	„	„
Wages at Trade Union			
Rates	79	„	„
'Profits' (125—79)	46	„	„

This profit of 46 million dinars was disposed of as follows by the Workers' Council.

		Million	Dinars
Re-investment	22½	„	„
New houses	9	„	„
1 month's bonus to			
employees	6½	„	„
Communal canteen	4½	„	„
Help to trade union			
organisation, youth			
organisation, etc	3½	„	„
Total	46	„	„

It should be noted that the system of self management is not confined to industrial enterprises. There are not only the 4100 big state farms (or self-managed agricultural enterprises), but indeed, when one excludes agriculture and handicrafts, one can say that

all enterprises (including retail distribution) are self managed. In fact, the Federal Law of 1950 on the subject specifically said, "In smaller enterprises, the workers' council is made up of the entire working collective". Indeed, in many small concerns, such as retail shops, it is not unusual to find the handful of employees constituting the workers' council, with the previous owner now functioning as the paid director! Thus it is clear that a very considerable proportion of resources in Yugoslavia are left to the free disposal of the self-managed enterprises. And this creates and puts into practice a new and important principle in the economy of the socialist state.

WHO SHOULD DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF SACRIFICE

In an underdeveloped country economic development demands often painful self-denial from present consumption in favour of future consumption. This does not cease to be so from the mere fact of the transformation of the social basis of the country from a capitalist to a socialist one. In a country with a socialist basis it will of course be generally accepted that sacrifice is necessary in the interests of economic development. But the question is the degree of the sacrifice. And this raises the all important question of who should determine this degree. A supreme state authority which may call upon the masses to carry out a *five* year plan in *four* years and the next moment in *three* years, or the people who have to make the sacrifices? *The significance of the Yugoslav system of self management lies above all in the fact that it is an attempt to embody in the state economic organisation the perfectly healthy, democratic and socialist principle that the extent of the sacrifice should be decided by those making the sacrifice.* This is the real meaning of the workers' council having full freedom to decide what to do with the 'profit' of the enterprise.

This is not to say that this is the only aspect of the system of self management of social enterprises. But from the point of view of constituting an original contribution to socialist thought and practice, it is the most important.

Another aspect of the system we had occasion to refer to earlier. We pointed out that it provided a new incentive to the workers by directly relating increased production to increased material benefit to the producer in the enterprise. Whereas in a state managed enterprise better and improved efforts on the part of a worker benefit him only indirectly through the benefit that results to the community as a whole, in the self managed enterprise he also directly shares in these benefits. In other words, a means was found of making the material interest of each group of producers serve the social interest of the community of producers taken as a whole.

As Yugoslav writers constantly point out, centralised planned management, concentrating enormous power in a bureaucratic apparatus, also carries with it the danger of a bureaucracy dominating all spheres of social and economic life, while the decentralisation inherent in the system of self management helps to combat the danger of bureaucracy. Yugoslav writers also point out that centralised planned management does not always provide the machinery for economic calculations, and that decentralisation of the type undertaken, thanks to its flexibility, permits prompt correction of discrepancies in the state economic plan and encourages utilisation of possibilities not foreseen by a centralized plan.

Finally, the system of self Government, by devolving real power and responsibility on the workers in each enterprise, makes the socialist transformation of society a daily reality to them, helps to develop the socialist consciousness of the most backward of them, and releases their initiative in a manner not otherwise possible.

SELF MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

A pertinent question arises at this stage. Does not such a system defeat the purposes of planning? Or, we might pose the question differently. How do the Yugoslavs carry out their plan in such conditions?

In the first place it is necessary to realise that the Yugoslavs do not have the rigid and detailed planning system of the Soviet Union. The Five Year Plans, prepared first by the

Planning Bureau, discussed in various state organs and committees and in the press, and finally passed by the parliament, is not a detailed plan but plans only the fundamental proportions of economic development and determines only the objectives and proportions to be aimed at. On the basis of this overall plan there is, each year, a more detailed one Year Plan worked out by the Planning Bureau. This one Year Plan works out production targets for each article, but even here there is no decision as to how much each enterprise will produce. This is worked out only on the basis of the plans and estimates submitted by the self managed enterprises, co-operatives, communes, etc.

In this set up, the federal state of course determines investment in relation to those resources controlled by the federation. The next question is, how are the proportions set out in the plan realised in regard to the independent investments of other bodies, notably the self managed social enterprises?

This is achieved principally through the mechanism of the financial and credit system. We had occasion earlier to remark that when an enterprise desired to invest a portion of its profits for modernisation of equipment or expansion this investment could be supplemented by a long term loan from the state. The Planning Bureau goes into thousands of such applications and by its decisions influences to some extent the structure of total investments in the direction of making it correspond to the proportions set out in the plan.

Short term credit policy by giving priority to certain fields, is also capable of influencing the structure of investment. The monopoly of foreign trade and price policy are also instruments in the hands of the Federal Government which can be used for influencing the pattern of over-all development.

However, the ultimate test is experience itself. And well nigh ten years of experience in Yugoslavia has demonstrated that development has proceeded on the lines set out in the plan. In this connection we can do no better than quote from the article of Borivoje Jelic entitled "Characteristics of the Yugoslav Economic Planning System," and appearing in the June 1961 issue of the quarterly "Socialist Thought and Practice:"

"A comparison between the planned and realized indicators of economic development reveal that it was possible with considerable certainty to determine the rate and structure of economic development. As a rule the rate of growth envisaged by the plan served as a minimum target, and has always been exceeded in realization. Long-term structural changes have also been realized (of course, with certain necessary variations) in keeping with the proposed policy of development. It should be particularly underlined that the structure of total investment—in spite of the fact that only one third of the investment funds were distributed by the central plan—was on the whole realized as envisaged by the plan. The increase of personal incomes on the one hand, and the trends in investment on the other, also show that by means of the credit and financial systems proportions have been ensured in the distribution of the total income. Owing to this, the Yugoslav economy has been able for the last eight to ten years to achieve a very high rate of growth and to realize fully the structural changes brought about by this growth".

SELF MANAGEMENT AND ACCUMULATION

When the system of self management was first introduced and developed in Yugoslavia, doubts naturally existed as to whether the desired degree of accumulation would be reached. This was the first time in the history of a socialist country that a departure was being made from the system existing in the Soviet Union and indeed practiced by Yugoslavia herself till 1950, under which by a centralised planned management the rate of accumulation is determined exclusively from above. The question naturally arose, would the Workers' Councils reinvest a sufficient proportion of their 'profits', or would they spend them all on current consumption? No one could answer this question for certain in advance. It had to be tested out in experience. Indeed, in the initial stages there was a certain tendency to fritter away profits on current consumption but this proved to be only temporary.

Experience has demonstrated that devolution of power and responsibility through the system of self management has resulted not in a slowing down of the rate of development

but in fact in its continued acceleration. If one takes the period 1952-58, published figures indicate that Yugoslavia takes second place in the world in the rate of development of her total economy (the first place being taken by the Soviet Union). If the period 1952-60 is taken it is likely that Yugoslavia will rise to the first place. Indubitably, the system of self management of social enterprises has not only worked, but has exceeded the highest expectations of those who introduced it.

APPLICABILITY TO BACKWARD COUNTRIES

There is one last question. And that is the question of the suitability of the system of self management for a backward country when it is first embarking on planned development on a socialist basis. There appears to be little doubt that once the basic framework of the economy has taken shape, the system of self-management provides from every point of view the best method of further development. However, a backward country is faced with the problem of changing its economic structure (generally by a rapid development of industry) in order to provide the basis for future development. Such a situation demands energetic state interventions in the economy which can only be done by strict centralised direction. This is the course that Yugoslavia herself followed in the first period of her post-war development, and with considerable success until the economic blockade by the Soviet Union crippled her economy. It would therefore appear that for an under-developed country embarking on socialist construction the system of self management is unsuitable.

On the other hand, however, can we totally ignore the experience of the system of self management in Yugoslavia, and the extraordinary results both economic and social that have been obtained? Does not this experience embody lessons of a permanent value which are valid—with suitable modifications

—to all stages in the transition to socialism? Although it is unrealistic to put it in this way, the writer's own view is but expressed by saying that, in his opinion, if the Yugoslav leaders had had the advantage of the Yugoslav experience of self-management before them in 1946 they are more likely to have followed a policy somewhere midway between the system of self management and the course actually followed by them.

Viewed historically, one can say that workers' or socialist states are still in their infancy, groping to discover the political and social forms most suited to embody their socialist economic content. The quest appears too slow and too empirical to many of us impatient spirits. But it is precisely in this context that Yugoslavia's frank and non-dogmatic approach to these problems is so refreshing.

We remarked earlier that we considered the Yugoslav system of self management of socialist enterprises to be an original contribution to socialist thought and practice. We might add that it is not an accident that this contribution has come from Yugoslavia. Every great revolution has bequeathed to posterity something of lasting value. And it is a fact—though not sufficiently known—that of all proletarian socialist revolutions that have occurred so far—not excluding the Great Russian Revolution—the Yugoslav Revolution was the most popular in character drawing into active participation the widest possible strata of the masses from both town and countryside. In the last resort, it is to these revolutionary masses that we are indebted for the concept of self-management of social enterprises.

* This tax on turnover varies, and is not levied on all products. For example it is not levied on goods for export, nor on widely used commodities of general consumption. It appears to be a federal tax principally aimed at reducing the consumption of certain commodities by increasing the price. However, communes may also levy a turnover tax for social amenities such as schools, hospitals, etc, but never on food products.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN CEYLON

WILL IT WORK? WHERE WILL IT TAKE US?

By SENATOR DORIC DE SOUZA

Part II. Democracy at Work. Political Developments Since 1931

IN the first part of this article (*Young Socialist*, No. 1) the prospects of democracy in Ceylon were explored through an analysis of social and economic conditions, and particularly of prevailing class relationships. This suggested that one could not expect the smooth working of Parliamentary institutions of the British type within the framework of our colonial-capitalist economy. In what follows, the actual course of events resulting from the introduction of democratic processes in Ceylon is briefly reviewed. This will be seen to enforce the reasoning and strengthen the conclusions drawn in our previous analysis.

Our account of developments falls into three parts. In the Donoughmore era (1931—1947) we take note of the currents and cross-currents set in motion by the introduction of universal franchise though within the context of British colonial rule. The period of the U.N.P. regime (1947—56) shows the Ceylon bourgeoisie shouldering the burdens of democracy when the country was given its independence, and their failure to measure up to the task. The post-U.N.P. period (1956—61) shows the situation arising from the nation's repudiation of bourgeois political hegemony, and its difficulty in finding an efficient alternative leadership.

THE DONOUGHMORE ERA (1931-47)

It was a rehearsal for democracy rather than the real thing that we had in the Donoughmore era, because the British retained wide powers throughout, and moreover suppressed or distorted all the processes of democracy during the War (1939-45). Still, the masses entered the political arena armed with the vote, and exerted growing pressure on the Ceylonese Ministers of the State Council who (as representatives of the native bourgeoisie) were being tested in their capacity to manage local affairs. The last

years of the Donoughmore period are particularly interesting, for we see the bourgeois leaders consciously preparing to meet the future situation in which they would have to rule the country without the protection of the British Governors.

Universal franchise, when it came in 1931, did not at once transform the political scene or rouse the people into political consciousness. The State Councillors elected in 1931 were men of 'good family', landed proprietors, professional men and wealthy persons for the most part. They represented Ceylonese vested interests rather than the masses who elected them because the latter did not yet know what the vote meant. When the masses are passive, as Marx observed, their ideas are solely those imparted by the ruling class. People thought of election to the legislature as an honour they were called on to confer on distinguished and wealthy people. The election contests were thus between persons only, and political questions hardly arose. The one exception to this rule was ominous: the communal problem was raised by the boycott in Jaffna. The question was thereby posed whether, under democratic conditions, there would be a growth of true national consciousness. Without this, the purely administrative unification of the country carried through by the British rulers would not be enough to hold the nation together.

Inside the first State Council (1931-36) politics centred chiefly around Ceylonese efforts to wrest control of the administration from the British officials. The tone and subjects of debate did not suggest that the masses outside were auditors. The Budgets sedately presented by the British Financial Secretary did not reflect mass pressure for social services to any extent. Even in their terrible sufferings during the depression and the malaria epidemic, the common people received little State assistance.

Yet the political climate was bound to change after the masses were given the vote. In the course of the 30's the *infrastructure* of democracy was taking shape. The Suriya Mal movement and several Youth Leagues gave early expression to mass demands. For the first time since 1848 a call was heard for the overthrow of British rule. A sharper impact of radical ideas was registered when the L.S.S.P. was formed in 1935. Public meetings held in the open air, attended by common people and addressed in their own language became an increasingly regular feature. The vernacular Press rapidly increased its influence. Trade Unions began to attract urban as well as estate workers, and to initiate militant struggles.

These changes had not yet affected rural areas very much by 1936, when the second State Council was elected, and its composition was not very different from that of the first. Two Samasamajists had secured entry, however, and broke established traditions by using the Council Chamber as a resonator to carry their voices up and down the country. Partly under their influence, the Executive Committees ceased to worry so much about appointments and transfers, and tended to become transmitting agencies for mass pressure on the government. Budgets consequently showed a steady increase in social expenditures.

The mass movement registered a fresh upsurge in the late 30's as bitter working class struggles took place. The Left began to crystallise politically as representing the working class. Its radical appeal to the rural masses as well was a challenge which bourgeois politicians had to counter. The situation would have justified the prediction that the next elections—then due in 1941—would be largely fought on political platforms. But in 1939 War intervened. The mass movement was ruthlessly suppressed and no fresh general elections were held until 1947. The show-down between the bourgeoisie and the working class in the political arena was postponed.

During the War, the bourgeoisie consciously prepared for the future. Mr. D. S. Senanayake, Leader of the State Council after 1942, had an exceptional sense of

their objectives. He strove tirelessly to get the best terms for them from Whitehall: complete internal autonomy and a Constitution so framed as to insure the bourgeoisie against the anticipated risks of democracy. He got his way. In the Soulbury Constitution the dangerous Executive Committees were scrapped in favour of a Cabinet system under which the administration would be better insulated from mass pressure and power more concentrated. A Second Chamber was set up whose constitution placed it largely under the control of the future Prime Minister, who was also given the right to appoint several M.P.'s in the Lower House. The rules of franchise were deliberately left outside the Constitution, facilitating later change, if thought desirable. The rules of delimitation, however, were carefully written in. Providing that 'area' as well as 'population' should govern the distribution of electorates, *they weighted remoter rural areas*. Mr. Senanayake managed adroitly to disguise some of these undemocratic features of the new Constitution as 'concessions to the minorities'. But they bear a different interpretation. The bourgeois leader who had opposed universal franchise in 1931 and anxiously watched the increase of mass pressure on the legislature, was loading the dice of the Constitution in favour of his class before staking its future on the Parliamentary system. If they had to go to the masses for elections verdicts, the bourgeoisie preferred to place their case before a jury packed by backward rural voters, whose decision they could most hopefully expect to sway. The Constitution arrangements made by Mr. Senanayake were crowned on the very eve of the elections of 1947 by a firm British promise of Dominion Status in the near future, subject to agreements relating to Defence and External Affairs. He was willing to sign these, because the weak Ceylon bourgeoisie felt that it needed the protecting auspices of the British.

The economic base of the Ceylon bourgeoisie was somewhat broadened during the War, and Mr. Senanayake and his Ministerial colleagues played an active part in promoting this development. Their patronage assisted Ceylonese traders to compete with their Indian rivals, scoring measurable success from the import level down to that

of village trading. Native enterprise was assisted to enter several new fields—in trade, transport, building construction and light manufactures—and to fatten on War contracts and Government projects. Beneath the bourgeoisie, the State Council Ministers sought to foster the growth of still wider layers of petty bourgeois elements. In the field of trade, they used the same instruments of patronage employed in favour of bigger bourgeois elements to assist smaller businessmen. In the sphere of agriculture, Mr. Senanayake (using the food crisis to justify himself) expanded the pet schemes he had evolved in pre-War days. He had always been inspired by a great dream—that of Stolypin in Russia. He wanted to create a sturdy yeomanry up and down the country, a class of small but independent farmers who, like petty bourgeois traders, would tend to lend support to a bourgeois regime and thus secure it against radical tendencies. Assisting small landowners in every way possible, Mr. Senanayake, as Minister of Agriculture since 1931, had laid emphasis on huge schemes of land development in hitherto neglected areas. Here he created innumerable small allotments in the hands of 'colonists'. Though this plan drew off immense sums of money in the form of State assistance, Mr. Senanayake did not grudge the cost. Indeed, he was less concerned with the purely economic soundness of these projects than with their social and political aspect. Whether his dream was realisable under Capitalism was still undecided when he died in 1952, when the growing cost of land schemes and also of agricultural subsidies was giving food for thought. But already in the 40's his schemes were paying handsome political dividends, not so much in the support of actual beneficiaries as in the glamour of his promise to restore pristine agricultural prosperity. To a certain extent, he had harnessed the economic aspirations of the villagers as support for the bourgeoisie. In all the ways described above, Mr. Senanayake sought to prepare a broad social base for a bourgeois regime.

In the latter days of the second State Council, Mr. Senanayake sought to create a cohesive national leadership for the bourgeoisie, first by rallying the majority of State Councillors behind the Board of

Ministers, and later in founding the United National Party. Mr. Senanayake approached all communities, with the sole exception of the 'Indian' Tamils, with the offer of a happy partnership. He had a moment of triumph when even Jaffna Tamil State Councillors voted with him for the acceptance of the Soulbury Constitution in 1945. But in the end he did not succeed in weaning away bourgeois politicians from communalism. The sentiments he repeatedly expressed regarding the evils of communalism and the need for national unity were admirable. But appeals to sectarian loyalties—of caste, creed and race—paid such immediate dividends among the people that few bourgeois politicians could resist making them, either overtly or covertly. The Tamil Congress of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam found that a straight racial appeal provided them with happy hunting grounds in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Indian business community formed the Ceylon Indian Congress and rapidly procured for itself the support of hundreds of thousands of estate workers of Indian origin on a similar racial appeal. The latter were thus prevented from making common cause with the urban working class in politics, with ultimately baneful consequences for themselves. The majority of influential Sinhalese bourgeois politicians accepted Mr. Senanayake's leadership and ultimately teamed up with him in the U.N.P. But though such communal organisations as the Sinhala Maha Sabha of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike ceased independent existence, this only meant that communalism, in thin disguises, would appear within the U.N.P. itself. Mr. Senanayake himself could not keep clear of sectarian appeals when addressing himself to the Sinhalese rural masses. As a result, although the U.N.P. could boast of including a number of prominent Tamils and Muslims among its ranks, it could not dispel the distrust of the minorities, which saw it clearly tinged with the Sinhalese and Buddhist colour.

As his delimitation contrivances had indicated, Mr. Senanayake's broad appeal to the masses, as leader of the U.N.P., was directed at the countryside. He knew by instinct that no basis exists in Ceylon for class collaboration between the bourgeoisie and the working class, and neither needed nor used labour lieutenants. He had re-

jected offers of Mr. Goonesinghe and the Communist Party in this connection, correctly treating the workers' movement as the enemy's camp in politics. With fine instincts, if not scruples, he sensed the vulnerability of the Ceylon proletariat in including such large numbers of persons of Indian origin. In the 30's, during Mr. Goonesinghe's anti-Indian' agitation, he had noted the usefulness of this weapon in dividing the workers and in discrediting the Left as champions of aliens. With some cynicism, he refused to distinguish between estate workers who in their majority had been settled in Ceylon for generations and had no other homeland or allegiance, and the birds of prey and of passage that constituted the Indian mercantile community. He stooped to a racial appeal to the Sinhalese masses on the 'Indian' question, promising—what lay beyond his power—to get rid of these 'aliens', the Indian estate workers. This made one glaring exception in his declared policy of avoiding communalism. There was another, though not immediately recognisable as such. He as-

sumed gratuitously the role of protector of religion 'against Marxist threats'. Though not overtly sectarian, his religious appeal to the predominantly Buddhist masses was understood by them as a promise to give *their* religion a special place. The U.N.P. paid dearly later on for thus bringing religion into politics.

When the repressive War regulations were lifted in 1945 and political life recommenced, it became possible to test the ground of the future show-down between the bourgeoisie and the Left in the coming elections. The successful meetings held by Left leaders after their release from jail showed that their radical propaganda had taken some effect in at least the three most populous and advanced Provinces: the Western, Sabaragamuwa and Southern Provinces. Mr. Senanayake must have been thankful that the Left had not yet penetrated other areas, and must have congratulated himself on having suitably weighted the North Western, North Central and Uva Provinces in delimitation. In the Central Province,

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the plantation areas were sure to go to the C.I.C., while he could not expect to win seats in the Northern or Eastern Provinces. Thus his prospects for winning the first Parliamentary elections were not absolutely certain. To add to his worries, great strikes shook the country in 1946 and 1947 as the workers turned to direct action to win better wages and trade union rights. Mr. Senanayake was sufficiently disturbed to induce the State Council in 1947, though at its last gasp, to pass the Public Security Ordinance. This infamous piece of legislation capped the other measures taken in the Constitution to safeguard the bourgeoisie from the perils of democracy. It provided for the legal subversion of democracy by the setting aside of any written law, the passing of any regulation, the detention of any person, the prohibition of strikes, etc., during an 'Emergency'. Parliament could at any time be faced with a *fait accompli* by the proclamation of an 'Emergency' and M.P.'s could be taken into custody even before Parliament deliberated such a proclamation! Mr. Senanayake was taking no chances with democracy.

THE U.N.P. REGIME (1947—56)

The Parliamentary elections of 1947 were qualitatively different from all earlier elections, because in many areas the campaign took the form of a class struggle. The bourgeoisie organised in the U.N.P. and the working class in the Left were competing for the decisive vote of the rural masses. This aspect of the election was not equally prominent everywhere: it was hardly noticeable where the bulk of voters belonged to minorities; it was most evident in the three 'advanced' Provinces referred to above. The 'big families' in the villages, the estate owners, Mudalalis and Government officials (particularly the Headmen) ganged up together. They were flanked by all those whom their powerful influence could sway and whom money could buy. Often, the incumbents of churches and temples gave this 'camp of Property' their support. An 'alternative village leadership' sprang up in opposition: this had, as yet, an unformed and miscellaneous character. If ties with urban areas were strong, there might be a proletarian nucleus to hold it together. It consisted generally of a section of the rural intelligentsia supported

by the village 'Hampdens'—the small men who were ready to clash with the powers that be. It rallied under the banner of the Left, inspired by its radical propaganda, by anti-Imperialist sentiment, and a suspicion of the religious and cultural pretensions of the U.N.P.

The U.N.P. had a near-monopoly of election resources. It had unlimited finances, contributed by foreign and native supporters. The daily Press played up Mr. Senanayake as the 'Father of the Nation', exploited the glamour of national independence soon to be inaugurated, the 'protection' of religion, the land schemes of Mr. Senanayake, and the 'Indian' question'. The alternative village leadership could only be poorly supplied with propaganda and finance by the Left. The 'Camp of Property' monopolised the 'show', plastering the villages with posters exhibiting the 'flames of Marxism' burning up temples, mosques and churches (according to the religion of inhabitants) and with pictures of Mr. Senanayake.

Despite all its efforts, the U.N.P. did not win a majority of seats, only 42 out of 95. By using his power to appoint 6 M.P.'s, and winning over a handful of independents, Mr. Senanayake was able to meet Parliament as Prime Minister. Thereafter, other M.P.'s crossed over to the Government benches, including ultimately the Tamil Congress leader, though without many of his followers. U.N.P. rule was thus stabilised.

Parliament proved a very different arena from the old State Council. The consolidation and monopoly of power by the Prime Minister under the Cabinet system was evident. The importance of individual M.P.'s had dwindled. The Opposition was regularly ignored or steam-rolled by the Government's majority. The Senate turned out to be more or less a collection of the Prime Minister's nominees. The independence of the Public Service was soon proved a fiction.

No startling developments occurred in the first few years of Parliamentary Government. Mr. Senanayake's policy was largely one of maintaining the *status quo ante*. In external affairs he remained subservient to

Britain, which maintained large military bases in Ceylon.¹⁰ Diplomatic relations were not opened with socialist countries. In the economic sphere the colonial pattern remained unchanged. The Finance Minister's 6 Year Plan announced in 1948 contained tame departmental forecasts only. Foreign investment and aid was looked to stimulate development, and offered political and economic inducements. Neither came. But the luck of a series of 'good' years in foreign trade, including those of the Korean boom, and ample Sterling balances accumulated during the War enabled the Government to break even in meeting the increasing costs of routine expenditure, including that of food and agricultural subsidies and expanded social services. The steady rise of unemployment and of the cost of living were ominous signs, but created no real crisis. The communal problem appeared in various forms, as when the national flag was chosen. Mr. Senanayake, having induced the Jaffna leader Mr. Ponnambalam to join his Cabinet, proceeded with a scheme to disfranchise the bulk of estate workers. A citizenship law unique in the whole world in excluding claims founded on birth and lifelong residence was enacted for the purpose. The formation of the Federal Party which covertly, if not openly, campaigned for the division of the country was another ominous sign. In 1951 Mr. Bandaranaike suddenly left the Government, but the stability of the regime was not affected. Early in 1952, Mr. D. S. Senanayake died at the height of his power and fame.

Had he completed the edifice he had sought to build? Had the bourgeois regime acquired the broad base it needed? Had it united the nation? Was the bourgeoisie able to pay 'the price of democracy' in concessions to the impoverished but enfranchised masses? Was the yawning cultural gulf between the privileged minority and the people being bridged?

Mr. Senanayake's son Dudley succeeded him as Prime Minister, and decided to go to the country at once. His landslide victory in the Elections of 1952 appeared to answer all the above questions in the affirmative. The reaction of the People to his father's death, the continued prestige accruing from national independence, and the relative prosperity of the country made him invulnerable by the Opposition. Mr. Bandaranaike

failed to capture the people's imagination with any alternative programme, and he and the Left leaders returned to Parliament with small followings. The disfranchisement of estates workers was reflected in many extra seats in Uva and the Central Province for the U.N.P. Even in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the Prime Minister's candidates won victories. In the villages, the 'camp of Property' and its elections machine overwhelmed the 'alternative village leadership.' Mr. Dudley Senanayake appeared to wield even more power than his father had done.

But appearances were deceptive, and the underlying weakness of the regime was soon to be exposed. In 1952-53, Ceylon fell foul of prevailing trade winds. Our unstable export-import economy was at once violently shaken. The Sterling balances threatened to disappear overnight. The quest for foreign Capital had brought no results. The weak Ceylon bourgeoisie had no reserves of strength to draw upon. The heavy cost of social services and subsidies now took on a very sinister aspect. In mid-1953, Mr. Dudley Senanayake's Government, at the urgent request of the Central Bank, withdrew consumer's food subsidies and the free midday meal given to school-children, while the masses were called upon to pay increased taxes.

The bourgeoisie was in effect refusing to pay 'the price of democracy,' and hitting the umpire of politics in the stomach by asking him to pay 70 cts instead of 25 for a measure of rice. The reaction was immediate, and cost the Government a great deal of its popularity. The response to the Samasamajists' call for a 'hartal' of protest in August 1953 shook the country. Daunted by the ugly situation Mr. Dudley Senanayake proclaimed an 'Emergency' and ordered the use of force against demonstrators, of whom nine were killed and hundreds taken into custody. At the height of the crisis Mr. Dudley Senanayake lost his nerve and resigned, making way for 'strong man' Sir John Kotalawala.

The days of the U.N.P. were from this time numbered, though the aspect of terror maintained by the Kotalawala regime masked the facts for the moment. The masses bore deep and lasting resentment for the blows struck at them in 1953. In the period

between 1953 and 1956, other factors too were militating against the U.N.P. The alienation of the U.N.P. from the masses in the cultural sphere appeared much more glaringly under the Kotalawala regime than under the Senanayakes who were more in tune with the moods of the people. The feeling grew that the Government took no interest in the cultural movements endorsed by the people. The privileges of the English-speaking elite in the administration, in education and in the professions were left intact, whether by policy or through negligence. Buddhists who had hoped that the Government would do something for their religion were turning away frustrated. Sir John went about in his bluff and hearty way talking and acting without circumspection, hurting mass susceptibilities and shocking their religious sentiments, as when he was photographed presiding over a whole-roast at a barbecue party. In 1955, in his clumsy way, he tripped badly over the 'language' question, which promptly exploded in his path. A furore of Sinhalese communalism in which a section of the Buddhist clergy joined, greeted his unwary promise made at Jaffna to make Tamil an official language. Like Mr. Dudley Senanayake before him, Sir John too panicked at the first sign of overt mass hostility. He retracted his promise and undertook to make 'Sinhala Only' the state language. In asking the United National Party to endorse this communal policy, *he stripped the bourgeois Party once for all of its national character*, for all its Tamil members slunk away.

Those whom the Gods wish to destroy they first make mad. Sir John decided on a snap election in 1956, standing on nothing but the jerry-built platform of 'Sinhala Only.' This was stolen from underneath his feet in the election campaign and the U.N.P. crashed in ignominious defeat.

It would be wrong to ascribe this catastrophe for the bourgeoisie to the eccentricities of either Sir John or Mr. Dudley Senanayake. It stemmed from all the fatal defects of the Ceylon bourgeoisie which came to power under fair auspices but had, in the course of 9 years, proved conclusively that it could not carry the burdens of democracy.

THE DEFEAT OF THE U. N. P. AND AFTER (1956—61)

It was by no means certain at first that Sir John would fail in the elections of 1956. The U.N.P. had never depended on popularity alone to win its votes, but also on the heavy pressure it could exert on humble voters at elections time by the use of its 'machine.' This was worked by Sir John at furious pace and with no regard for pretences, as Government officials were made to work openly and the Press shamelessly suppressed or distorted the appeals of the Opposition. The 'camp of Property' in the villages was lavishly supplied with finance and propaganda, and as usual, monopolised the show and used every form of blackmail and bribery. Apart from all this, the Opposition seemed taken at a disadvantage. The L.S.S.P. had lost all its 'hartal' gains in the language explosion of 1955 and could hardly face the Sinhalese masses without rousing hostility. They were in no position to bid for the Government. As to Mr. Bandaranaike's Sir Lanka Freedom Party, which had languished for four years in opposition without firing the imagination of the people, it was ready enough to exploit the 'language' question. But when the U.N.P. itself adopted 'Sinhala Only' as its policy in February 1956, it was doubtful whether the S.L.F.P. could fill its sails with this wind.

Had the masses remained passive, as in previous elections, the U.N.P. 'machine' would have carried them to the polls in sufficient numbers, for it was admirably designed to terrorise, to deceive, and to bribe. But seething discontent and strong aspirations activated an exceptionally large proportion of the voters. Not only the intelligentsia, but the masses too had been drawn into the 'language' agitation. For all its communalist distortion which made Sinhalese clash with Tamils, this question reflected a basic mass urge for social equality and for ending the privileges of the English-speaking minority. The smouldering resentment of the people against the U.N.P. for its deeds in 1953 flamed afresh in the elections atmosphere. Once the masses went into action, the U.N.P. machine was unable to cope with them.

In all areas of Ceylon the masses in their majority adopted the 'alternative village leadership' as their own. In the Tamil areas, this took them straight to the camp of the Federal Party. In Sinhalese areas, which were decisive for the eventual result of the elections, the schoolteachers, ayurvedic physicians, Buddhist monks and miscellaneous radical elements mobilised on a truly formidable scale against the 'camp of Property.' But it needed a political Party to rally this 'alternative leadership' on a sufficiently wide scale to ensure an election victory. The danger of the moment was the division of the anti-U.N.P. vote.

At the critical moment, on the very eve of nominations Mr. Bandaranaike made a rush agreement with various groups and individuals and launched the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna. He had three sets of allies, between whom, however, there was some overlap. One was the group of 'language' extremists. It was *their* support for Mr. Bandaranaike that made the masses sure that it was the latter they should trust, and not Sir John, to make 'Sinhala Only' the State language. Another group came from the Left, consisting of ex-Samasamajists who had surrendered to mass pressure on 'language.' Their presence gave a socialist colour to the new Front, making the masses believe that Mr. Bandaranaike had now adopted an anti-Capitalist position. The third group was composed of militant Buddhists, including influential members of the clergy. As leader of the M.E.P., Mr. Bandaranaike was in a unique position to take advantage of every cause of mass resentment against the U.N.P.

The new Front promptly issued a Manifesto which had an electrical effect in rallying the Sinhalese intelligentsia solidly behind Mr. Bandaranaike. This Manifesto, to which all sections of the M.E.P. contributed their pet schemes regardless of their mutual contradictions, was ideally suited to capture the imagination of an immature electorate. It reflected all the healthy aspirations, all the illusions and all the reactionary prejudices of the Sinhalese masses. It promised everything to everybody: the establishment of a Republic, the withdrawal of military bases from the British and a democratic overhaul of the Constitution and the admini-

stration; the nationalisation of banks, estates and other foreign-owned enterprises; the implementation of the Buddhist Commissions' Report; special protection for Sinhalese culture; tenancy reform and the distribution of lands to peasants; full trade union rights and better wages to workers; equal status for vernacular teachers and ayurvedic physicians with their English-educated counter-parts; a vast extension of social services, and an immediate reduction in the price of rice; and, of course, 'Sinhala Only'. Mr. Bandaranaike had stolen the thunder of both the Left and the Right.

In the last days of the elections all Sinhalese electorates split simple into two camps—U.N.P. and anti-U.N.P. It was a pitched battle between the classes, with the masses displaying marvels of initiative and heroism in resisting the fierce pressure of vested interests. The results of the elections gave the M.E.P. a majority of seats (52). The L.S.S.P. despite their unpopular 'language' stand were caught up in the anti-U.N.P. swing and got 14 seats. The U.N.P. ranks were decimated in Parliament—they had only 8 seats. The Federal Party made nearly a clean sweep of Tamil areas.

The elections victories were won *by the same social forces* in both Tamil and Sinhalese areas. One may construe the M.E.P. victory as the result of the effort of the rural masses to mobilise behind 'their own' intelligentsia, in preference to accepting the leadership of either the bourgeoisie or the working class, i.e. the U.N.P. or the Left. The umpires of politics sought to give the prize of power not to the regular competitors for their verdict, but to themselves. Tragically, in so doing, they failed to solidarise on a national scale, and divided the country instead into warring communities. The saddest feature of the 1956 elections was that neither of the Parties which bid for the Government could even contest a seat in the Tamil areas. Another vital question connected with the people's verdict was: whether the forces that won the elections and the regime it established would be identical in character, in other words, whether the masses had been swindled by the M.E.P. or whether the new Government truly represented the *interests* of the people as well as their choice.

The truth was found to lie betwixt and between these extremes. The chequered record of achievement and failure of the M.E.P. regime between 1956 and 1959, when the Prime Minister was assassinated, reflected its inner contradictions and the conflict of pressures on it and within it, emphasising the nation's difficulty in finding an alternative leadership to that of the bourgeoisie.

The M.E.P. was by no means a stable political formation like the U.N.P. or the L.S.S.P. It lacked a well-defined class character. The rank and file of M.E.P. activists in the villages belonged largely to the rural intelligentsia which itself is hard to classify socially. In part, the Government Parliamentary Party reflected this base: many M.P.'s had come to Parliament straight from the villages, often with no previous experience of politics. Their very dress and speech transformed the Parliamentary scene. But their social character did not necessarily determine the policies of the Government. Because of their inexperience, the M.E.P. back-benchers gave added emphasis to the relative insignificance of the individual M.P. On occasions they served collectively in transmitting mass pressure on the Government, but they did little more to shape the day to day course of its policy.

The leadership of the Front, represented by the Cabinet and those who influenced it from behind the scenes, had a different complexion from the rank and file. Many of the Cabinet members chosen by Mr. Bandaranaike would have been at home in the U.N.P. under different circumstances, and some had only very recently forsaken it. Those chosen from the ranks of the S.L.F.P. were decidedly less radical than those who came from elsewhere to join the M.E.P., like the two ex-Samasamajists.

There were bound to be conflicting viewpoints within the Government. Such conflicts could not be readily ended by reference to the pledges of the Government as recorded in its Manifesto. This document, prepared after hardly two days' discussions by a variety of politicians encountering each other from widely different directions could not have been taken so seriously by its authors as it was by the naive masses. Its internal contradictions were obvious, and it simply could not serve as a blue-print

for a Governmental programme. The real question for the Government was: which parts of the Manifesto it would try to implement, while shelving or jettisoning the others. In 1956, this question was largely left in the hands of Mr. Bandaranaike himself. It was his habit, whenever a controversial question arose, to ask the Parliamentary Party of the M.E.P. and the Cabinet to leave it to him to decide. For the time being, they acquiesced.

In what direction would he draw the diagonals? His past made him an enigmatic figure. An accomplished man, scion of an ultra-aristocratic family, educated at Oxford and the Inns of Court, he had turned surprisingly to politics in the 20's. Breaking with his traditions, he became a Buddhist and donned national dress. He came to the forefront of politics as a leader of the communal Sinhala Maha Sabha. In the State Council he distinguished himself from Mr. D. S. Senanayake by nationalist and semi-socialist utterances, but came to accept the latter's leadership. From 1947 to 1951 he was content to serve in the U.N.P. Cabinet as a lieutenant of Mr. Senanayake. When he left the Party it was to frame no clear-out issues, and his S.L.F.P. was only an alternative bourgeois Party. His alliance with radicals in 1956 had been dictated by expediency. How would he act as leader of the 'People's Government'?

It soon became evident that, as Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike worked to no preconceived plan. He tried to deal empirically with the problems that arose as the logic of the situation following the downfall of the U.N.P. unfolded itself. He relied on his native ability to manoeuvre and his exceptional sensitivity to mass moods to guide him. These personal qualities were insufficient as rudders for the ship of State, for the logic of the situation was far from simple.

On taking office as Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike at once showed timidity vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie. The latter were temporarily prostrate and disorganised politically, and were expecting great blows to fall on them. Had the Government decided to move decisively in a socialist direction, it had a fine opportunity to do so, for it could have relied on the tremendous

mass initiative that had launched the regime. Instead, Mr. Bandaranaike thought fit to give the bourgeoisie assurances which amounted to a repudiation of the M.E.P. Manifesto. He appealed to foreign and native Capital for cooperation, guaranteed a place for private enterprise in the national economy, assured full compensation for all property acquired by the State, and promised estate owners they need fear no danger of immediate nationalisation. In effect, Mr. Bandaranaike undertook to work within the framework of a bourgeois economy—a promise which he in fact kept until his death, despite isolated measures of nationalisation. For running a bourgeois regime, however, the M.E.P. was far less fitted than the U.N.P. Still less could it, on this basis, give the masses the handsome benefits promised. Mr. Bandaranaike could never obtain the help and favour of the bourgeoisie who, at most, sought a *modus vivendi* with the M.E.P. Government thus protecting their interests until the latter could be replaced. With every day that passed, they regained confidence. Later on, they exploited the Government's mistakes to regain a footing among the masses. After the 'Emergency' of 1958, the U.N.P., having reorganised itself with Mr. Dudley Senanayake as leader instead of Sir John, openly mobilised the 'camp of Property' in the villages in preparation for future elections.

Mr. Bandaranaike's repudiation of an anti-Capitalist policy in 1956 may have been a bitter pill for his 'Left' supporters to swallow. But the latter were prisoners in the M.E.P., and their tail could not wag that dog. Moreover, the broad masses showed no disturbance of mind at all regarding the conservative economic policies of 'their' Government. *Their own conception of 'socialism' emphasised its distributive and not its productive aspect.* So long as the Government reduced the price of rice—as it did in 1956) and promised further economic concessions to them, they had no fault to find with it. Moreover, the people's minds were soon occupied by other matters.

But by 1959, when the Prime Minister was assassinated, the weaknesses of the Government's economic policies were evident even to the masses. The cost of living and unemployment climbed steadily from 1956

to 1959. Government expenditure swelled with every year, as was to be expected. But neither luck in foreign nor an expansion of the productive base of the economy increased its financial resources. Foreign aid was hardly more than a trickle, and private investments from abroad were a negative quantity. Huge budgetary deficits were piled up each year, which ate into the Sterling balances and other reserves and also drove the cost of living up further. Profiteers did not help in keeping the latter down. By 1957, it had begun to irritate the masses acutely. Workers resorted to widespread strikes to get higher wages; even the Government workers, despite their essential loyalty to the M.E.P., took this means of gaining their demands. The strikes threatened to create a crisis, but eventually certain sections of workers got a wage increase. The rural masses got nothing, and the popularity of the regime was affected thereby. The Government had not even a long-term policy for economic development, as its insubstantial 10 Year Plan showed. Apart from other weaknesses, the impossibility of assigning neatly supplementary roles of private and public enterprise was demonstrated in the Government's ineffectual efforts to increase production. In its middle-of-the-road economic policy, the Government was being hit by the traffic from both sides, and had only bleak prospects at the time when Mr. Bandaranaike died.

Turning from economic to social policies, we see that the M.E.P. was, in this sphere too, involved from the beginning in contradictions. On the morrow of the elections of 1956, mass initiative reached greater heights than during the struggle, since the U.N.P. was no longer to be feared. A sort of social revolution was threatening to take place in the villages as the small man shed his old subserviences and his passivity. He was expressing his social aspirations in a thousand ways—in dress, in cultural, and religious activities, in forming a variety of organisations, in defying the wealthy and powerful, and in challenging officialdom. Had the Government desired to reshape the entire administration democratically, or to launch collective and nationalised enterprises, with the active participation of the people, it had a unique opportunity. But it had not this sort of courage. When the people

challenged the bureaucracy, the Government seemed to encourage them but on the other hand it relied too much on these same officials to push them aside. An uneasy situation arose from the first days of the M.E.P. Government, in which the bureaucrats in dismay at mass pressure lost efficiency and even loyalty to the regime, while the people were often irritated by Government's failure to cut through red tape.

The Government honestly desired to encourage mass initiative in cultural and religious activities. In responding to this encouragement the masses showed their new sense of confidence and emancipation. Unfortunately, within a matter of weeks, their initiative received a set-back. The contradictions involved in the 'language' policy of the Government threatened to create a national crisis. Correctly administered, the switch-over from English as the official language could have proved an unqualified boon to all sections of the people. But the Sinhala Only Act was unjustly framed so as to exclude Tamils from the benefits of the switch-over. They could not but protest, but their actions only led to counter-demonstrations in the Sinhalese camp. The Sinhalese masses proved incapable of distinguishing between the obvious advantages to them of having their own language as that of the State, and the injustice of denying this same right to the Tamils. The Prime Minister had wished, in framing the Act, to include certain safeguards for the Tamils, but his hands were forced by extremists. In an atmosphere of confusion and communal conflict, Mr. Bandaranaike exerted his fullest efforts to control the situation. Making the 'language' issue one of personal confidence among his own ranks, Mr. Bandaranaike took personal charge of the Language Act, and delayed the implementation of the law in certain aspects. He then began negotiations with the Federal Party for a 'settlement'. He thus gained an uneasy interval of communal truce.

The alternation of uneasy calm and acute crisis became a characteristic feature of the M.E.P. regime. In the intervals of calm, it did carry out several progressive measures. the withdrawal of military bases granted to Britain, the opening of diplomatic relations with socialist countries, the reduction of the

price of rice, the extension of social services, the development of village cooperatives, the nationalisation of Bus services and Port Cargo operations, the starting of a national Provident Fund, the introduction of the Paddy Lands Act and the wage-increases given to certain classes of workers were indeed substantial progressive measures, though they did not add up to a clear-cut policy taking the country in a specific direction. The most progressive role of the Government cannot be referred to in terms of any one measure. Between 1956 and 1959 (though with a temporary reversal of tendency during the 'Emergency of 1958) the common man, particularly in Sinhalese areas, got a 'fairer deal' from the administration and many more or less tangible benefits which he never had under the U.N.P. regime. Officials—the Police, Headman, Kachcheri officers, etc.—were afraid to ride rough-shod over him. He could approach them with more confidence, and address them in his own language. He found his M.P. accessible, and often helpful in obtaining small favours. He got more attention than before as a cultivator, or as an applicant for land. For all these small boons and his own increased self-confidence he was deeply grateful to the M.E.P., and they explain why, despite all the set-backs and disappointments they had, *the rural masses kept their basic loyalty to Mr. Bandaranaike*, and were so deeply moved when he was murdered.

The biggest, set-back they experienced was of course, the catastrophe of 1958. Mr. Bandaranaike had announced a Pact with the Federal Party to settle the communal problem by some form of devolution of power on a regional basis in certain fields. But his authority was then firmly challenged within his own ranks for the first time. When he tore up the Pact to placate the Sinhalese extremists, the situation deteriorated irreparably. Confusion mounted as Tamils organised in protest and the sinister hand of the U.N.P. joined other reactionary forces in fanning the flames of communal hatred. In May 1958 communal riots flared up, taking a terrible toll in thousands of lives lost, innumerable innocent persons injured and harrassed, and destruction of property on a large scale. In desperation Mr. Bandaranaike declared an 'Emergency' which he subsequently prolonged for eight

months. The administration was disorganised, and all schemes of development were blocked. Apart from all this, the cost of the 'Emergency' to democracy in Ceylon was incalculable, for when the masses were treated ruthlessly by the military and the police, their initiative—in *politics at least*—was thoroughly sapped, and they lapsed into cowed apathy. One significant indication of this was seen when the Paddy Lands Act was implemented in certain areas. The cultivation committees in which poor tenants were expected to rally against landlords and for their common benefit proved a caricature of what they should have been. As the heavy hand of the military descended on the country, rumours of a coup d'état were repeatedly heard, made credible by the situation and by the sinister role of the U.N.P. Democracy was in mortal danger.

Using all his skill to pilot the country back to normal, Mr. Bandaranaike was able to lift the 'Emergency' after eight months. But he was destined to face new crises in the last few months of his life. A conflict developed between the 'right wing' and the 'left wing' of the M.E.P. Once again, despite all his resources of temporisation and extemporisation, his assumed role of Buonapartist arbitrator failed. In connection with the Cooperative Bank Bill, the 'right wing'—which had already made sure of its strength in emasculating the Paddy Lands Bill—staged a 'strike' inside the Cabinet, and openly raised the threat of replacing Mr. Bandaranaike as the President of the S.L.F.P. He capitulated to this pressure and got rid of the two ex-Samasamajists from the Cabinet. As a prisoner of the 'right wing' Mr. Bandaranaike was clearly unhappy thereafter. Moreover, the M.E.P. ceased to exist as a Front, and the Parliamentary majority of the Government had dwindled dangerously. His uneasy relations with the 'right wing' were made even more difficult by the attempts of a group of bourgeois racketeers within this 'wing' to run the Government as they wanted. In the end, a foul conspiracy among these elements ended the Prime Minister's life.

In its three and a half years the M.E.P. regime had certainly taken a number of progressive steps, though they made no distinctive pattern. But it had led the country very near an economic impasse; it

had nearly shattered the unity of the nation; and it had brought democracy into mortal danger. In the end the Front itself had collapsed beneath its own contradictions leaving the Prime Minister in a state of near-isolation amidst its ruins.

After this brief review of its record, we can return to characterise the M.E.P. more surely. It was essentially an impracticable attempt at class collaboration. Miscellaneous elements, ranging from the bourgeois racketeers above mentioned to humble villagers, and including conservatives, liberals, radicals and near-Marxists, had endeavoured to make common cause in taking advantage of popular discontent against the U.N.P. The only cement of this alliance proved to be its common communalism. In the face of communalism's own dangerous consequences, and of the economic problems which arose, the alliance presently broke up into its component parts, with its reactionary forces in ascendancy at the time of Mr. Bandaranaike's death. Since all parties to the M.E.P. alliance willingly or unwillingly accepted the bourgeois economy as its framework the M.E.P. Government constituted a *variety of the bourgeois regime*, like the Labour Party regimes in Britain. But the bourgeoisie in general refused its support. The M.E.P. failed to solve the basic problems of the people, and only emphasised the nation's difficulty in finding a sound alternative leadership to the bourgeoisie.

* * *

The nightmare regime of Mr. Dahanayake between September 1959 and March 1960 emphasised the danger of a complete subversion of democracy in Ceylon. The new Prime Minister declared a fresh state of 'Emergency' which he prolonged until just before he dissolved Parliament in December 1960. The people were reduced to a state of helpless shock and fear. It was not clear to them whether further developments of the assassination conspiracy would be seen or whether the conspirators had achieved their objective. Resolute action of the Samasamajist Opposition soon undermined Mr. Dahanayake's position in Parliament, while he also lost the confidence of his Cabinet colleagues. He had to dissolve Parliament and appoint fresh elections. But

until March 19th 1960, nobody was certain whether they would be held or whether a dictatorship would be set up.

The elections were completely vitiated by this atmosphere. Even if the masses had been in a state in which they could soberly review their experiences over the past three and a half years and draw the necessary conclusions from them, the multiplicity of the anti-U.N.P. Parties confronting them bewildered them utterly. This multiplicity of Parties resulted from feverish realignments of the politicians who had earlier joined in the M.E.P. A natural development which might have been expected after a period of rule by a 'Centre Party' was a polarisation of the electorate towards the right and the left. The split in the M.E.P. which arose in May 1959 appeared to presage this. But in the confusion succeeding the assassination, the M.E.P., 'right wing' itself broke up. Mr. Dahanayake, carried away by personal ambitions, formed an entirely new Party around himself, without the slightest pretence of a principled basis. The S.L.F.P. tried to reorganise itself without those who followed Mr. Dahanayake, appealing to the people in the name of the dead Prime Minister. This Party might have capitalised on the emotion roused by his murder, and also on the gratitude of the rural masses to him for their 'emancipation' referred to earlier. But it was leaderless in the early stages of the campaign, and not even free from suspicion in connection with the assassination. When Mrs. Bandaranaike came forward to address its elections meetings, the situation of the S.L.F.P. vastly improved. But her entry on the scene was belated. The 'left wing' of the M.E.P. which had broken away in May 1959 did not seek to make common cause afresh with the Left. Instead, it succumbed to the temptation of raising religious and racial issues which in effect cut right across lines. They made an opportunist alliance with racialist Buddhist extremists, forming a 'new M.E.P.' In this situation, the L.S.S.P. decided to make a brave effort in making an independent bid for the Government, contesting seats on a widespread scale and distinguishing itself from all other Parties by offering its straight socialist programme to all communities alike. It was thus the only *national* Party in the campaign. But its effort to offer the rural

masses working class leadership was foredoomed to failure. The voting strength of the proletariat itself was at its lowest ebb since 1931. In 1952 it had lost the voting power of the estate workers; in 1960 this voting power, instead of merely being cancelled, had been in effect *transferred* to the rural voters of plantation areas who were given additional electorates on the basis of population figures *including* disfranchised estate labour. The socialist programme on which the L.S.S.P. sought to build a worker-peasant alliance had not yet been widely enough understood by the rural masses. Their experience of the past had not been adequate to convince them of the need for radical economic measures, even if the confusion of the moment had not warped their judgment. Most important of all, communal and sectarian loyalties persisted. The L.S.S.P. was put out of court by its 'language' and 'citizenship' policies.

In the upshot, the masses in Sinhalese areas were confronted by *four* different anti-U.N.P. Parties bidding for the Government, in a tense and confused situation. The U.N.P. had most to profit from in this. Ever since the 'Emergency' of 1958, Mr. Dudley Senanayake had been busy reorganising its once-shattered ranks. The U.N.P. shamelessly exploited communal hatreds, and also sought to contrast the 'stability' of U.N.P. rule with the repeated crises that occurred in the Bandaranaike era. In the elections campaign they swiftly and surely organised the 'camp of Property' in the villages. But it became clear that the masses in their majority stoutly resisted the pressure of the bourgeoisie, thus making their decision of 1956 definitive. They did not know, however, in which camp to rally solidly against the U.N.P. The 'alternative village leadership'—the rural intelligentsia—found itself divided. The 'new M.E.P.' in certain areas (the three 'advanced' Provinces) drew a section who were attracted by its radical appeal and also succumbed to its racial and religious extremism. The broad masses moved feverishly in different directions from moment to moment in the course of the three and a half months' campaign. The voters were behaving like jurymen who, instead of being asked for a simple verdict, (such as the masses gave in 1956 and were prepared to give again, i.e. 'against the

U.N.P.) were asked to find their way through a maze of conflicting and overlapping arguments on a wide variety of issues. In the end, after Mrs. Bandaranaike came on the scene, they rallied in large but indecisive numbers behind the S.L.F.P. The Federal Party made a clean sweep of Tamil areas.

The U.N.P. thus succeeded in its manoeuvres, to the extent that it gained more seats than any other single Party. But Mr. Dudley Senanayake as Prime Minister could not meet Parliament successfully, being defeated roundly when the Throne Speech was voted on. Even if it had surmounted this hurdle, the country would not have tolerated a U.N.P. regime again. The Governor-General accepted Mr. Dudley Senanayake's advice and dissolved the fourth Parliament after 33 days. The country thus faced yet another election.

In this occasion, the masses were asked for a simple verdict. In the Sinhalese areas, the L.P.P. of Mr. Dahanayake was wiped out. The anti-U.N.P. Parties—with the exception of the 'new M.E.P.' which by going its way independently discredited itself as in fact assisting the U.N.P.—entered into a no-contest Pact. The S.L.F.P. was naturally allowed to contest the vast majority of seats. In agreeing to this, the L.S.S.P. realistically recognised (a) that the main danger came from the U.N.P. and (b) that the confusion resulting from the assassination and persistent communal loyalties had in fact *put the clock back to 1956*. The Sinhalese masses could only be asked to stand by their decision against the U.N.P. Under all the circumstances, no more could realistically be expected. In the Tamil areas, the Federal Party went practically unchallenged in the July elections.

The S.L.F.P. won a majority of seats in Parliament in July elections 1960. The character of this Party had undergone many changes since May 1959, when it represented the 'right wing' of the then-M.E.P. Many bourgeois politicians deserted the S.L.F.P. after September 1959, finding shelter either in the L.P.P. or in the U.N.P. itself. Bourgeois forces which had backed the 'right wing' of the M.E.P. in May 1959 rallied in 1960 in the U.N.P. On the other hand, many elements who would normally have rallied

behind the 'left wing' of the M.E.P. were disappointed by the policies followed by its leaders. The decision of the 'new M.E.P.' to vote 'neutral' on the crucial amendment that brought down the U.N.P. in April 1960, and its subsequent disruptionist policy also cost it a large measure of radical support which thus went back to the S.L.F.P. Broadly speaking the S.L.F.P. in 1960 had come to resemble very closely the original M.E.P. of Mr. Bandaranaike.

Thus, in effect, the country stands committed to a repetition of events. It would be idle to expect from the S.L.F.P. any basic solution of the country's problems. On the other hand, like the old M.E.P., it is a regime capable of taking certain progressive steps, and in the context of the moment, the only insurance the people have against an open dictatorship of big Capital, such as a U.N.P. regime would prove. We have had the take-over of schools, legislation to nationalise certain classes of insurance and the Bank of Ceylon, and to enable State trading in petroleum. We have seen tentative efforts to attack Capitalist monopolies in the import sector. The Government is capable, under pressure, of taking other isolated progressive actions. On the other hand, its situation is worse in many ways than that of Mr. Bandaranaike's regime in 1956. For the bourgeoisie today stand powerfully organised both in Parliament and outside, while in 1956 they were politically prostrate. Further, events are threatening to repeat themselves with frightening rapidity and at a higher pitch of intensity. Of the fifteen months of its rule, the Government has maintained a state of 'Emergency' for nearly six, as a result of another communal crisis resulting from the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act. The Federal Party stands proscribed, its M.P.'s are detained, and Tamil voters are denied even the right of a by-election in Mutur. Throughout the whole country, as a result of the 'Emergency', the right of meeting and demonstration stands curtailed, the Press is censored, and strikes are forbidden. The shallow roots of democracy in the country make this situation extremely dangerous, and it cannot be prolonged without disaster. Another serious source of danger has arisen in the form of a financial crisis, from which the S.L.F.P. has found no

better way out than to tax the masses more heavily, just as the U.N.P. did in 1953. No one can say that in the S.L.F.P. as it is constituted at present the nation has found a satisfactory alternative leadership to the bourgeois U.N.P.

If democracy has not hitherto guided the nation to a basic stability, it is because this is impossible to attain within the framework of the bourgeois economy, and because the narrow communal loyalties of the rural masses constantly threatens the disruption

of the nation itself. The leadership of the bourgeoisie has been repudiated by the masses. This is one great achievement of the people under democracy. But to find a stable alternative leadership, they have to go much further. Objectively, under modern conditions, the only other class that can take the helm of State efficiently is the proletariat. Can the working class in Ceylon surmount the handicaps in its way in time? If not, for how long can we reasonably expect a continuance of the democratic regime itself?

FOR BETTER BREAD

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THE MYTH OF WOMEN'S INFERIORITY

By EVELYN REED

ONE of the conspicuous features of capitalism, and of class society in general is the inequality of sexes. Men are the masters in economic, political and intellectual life, while women play a subordinate and even submissive role. Only in recent years have women come out of the kitchens and nurseries to challenge men's monopoly. But the essential inequality still remains.

This inequality of the sexes has marked class society from its very inception several thousand years ago, and has persisted throughout its three main stages: chattel slavery, feudalism and capitalism. For this reason class society is aptly characterized as male-dominated. This domination has been upheld and perpetuated by the system of private property, the state, the church and the form of family that served men's interests.

On the basis of this historical situation, certain false claims regarding the social superiority of the male sex have been propagated. It is often set forth as an immutable axiom that men are socially superior because they are naturally superior. Male supremacy according to this myth, is not a social phenomenon at a particular stage of history, but a natural law. Men, it is claimed, are endowed by nature with superior physical and mental attributes.

An equivalent myth about women has been propagated to support this claim. It is set forth as an equally immutable axiom that women are socially inferior because they are naturally inferior to men. What is the proof? They are the mothers! Nature, it is claimed, has condemned the female sex to an inferior status.

This is a falsification of natural and social history. It is not nature, but class society, which lowered women and elevated men. Men won their social supremacy in struggle against and conquest over the women. But this sexual struggle was part and parcel of a great social struggle—the overturn of primitive society and the institution of class society. Women's inferiority is the product of a social system which has produced and

fostered innumerable other inequalities, inferiorities, discriminations and degradations. But this social history has been concealed behind the myth that women are naturally inferior to men.

It is not nature, but class society, which robbed women of their right to participate in the higher functions of society and placed the primary emphasis upon their animal functions of maternity. And this robbery was perpetrated through a two-fold myth. On the one side, motherhood is represented as a biological affliction arising out of the maternal organs of women. Alongside this vulgar materialism, motherhood is represented as being something almost mystical. To console women for their status as second class citizens mothers are sanctified, endowed with halos and blessed with special "instincts", feelings and knowledge forever beyond the comprehension of men. Sanctity and degradation are simply two sides of the same coin of the social robbery of women under class society.

But class society did not always exist; it is only a few thousand years old. Men were not always the superior sex, for they were not always the industrial, intellectual and cultural leaders.

Primitive society was often organized as a matriarchy which, as indicated by its very name, was a system where women, not men, were the leaders and organizers. But the distinction between the two social systems goes beyond this reversal of the leadership role of the two sexes. The leadership of women in primitive society was not founded upon the dispossession of the men.

In this early society maternity, far from being an affliction or a badge of inferiority, was regarded as a great natural endowment. Motherhood invested women with power and prestige—and there was very good reasons for this.

Humanity arose out of the animal kingdom. Nature had endowed only one of the sexes—the female sex—with the organs

of maternity. This biological endowment provided the natural bridge to humanity, as Robert Biriffault has amply demonstrated in his work *The Mothers*. It was the female of the species who had the care and responsibility of feeding, tending and protecting the young.

However, as Marx and Engels have demonstrated, all societies both past and present are founded upon labour. Thus, it was not simply the capacity of women to give birth that played the decisive role, for all female animals also give birth. What was decisive for the human species was the fact that maternity led to labour—and it was in the fusion of maternity and labour that the first human social system was founded.

It was the mothers who first took the road of labour, and by the same token blazed the trail toward humanity. It was the mothers who became the chief producers; the workers and farmers; the leaders in scientific, intellectual and cultural life. And they became all this precisely because they were the mothers, and in the beginning maternity was fused with labour. This fusion still remains in the language of primitive peoples, where the term "mother" is identical with "producer-procreatix."

We do not draw the conclusion from this that women are thereby naturally the superior sex. Each sex arose out of natural evolution, and each played its specific and indispensable role. However, if we use the same yardstick for women of the past as is used for men today—social leadership—then we must say that women were the leaders in society long before men, and for a far longer stretch of time.

Our aim in this presentation is to destroy once and for all the myth perpetuated by class society that women are naturally or innately inferior. The most effective way to demonstrate this is to first of all set down in detail the labour record of primitive women.

CONTROL OF THE FOOD SUPPLY

The quest for food is the most compelling concern of any society. For no higher forms of labour are possible unless and until people are fed. Whereas animals live on a

day-to-day basis of food-hunting, humanity had to win some measure of control over its food supply if it was to move forward and develop. Control means not only sufficient food for today but a surplus for tomorrow, and the ability to preserve stocks for future use.

From this standpoint, human history can be divided into two main epochs: the food-gathering epoch, which extended over hundreds of thousands of years; and the food-producing epoch, which began with the invention of agriculture and stockbreeding, not much more than 80,000,000 years ago.

In the food-gathering epoch the first division of labour was very simple. It is generally described as a sexual division, or division of labour between the female and male sexes. (Children contributed their share as soon as they were old enough, the girls being trained in female occupations and boys in male occupations.) The nature of this division of labour was a differentiation between the sexes in the methods and kinds of food-gathering. Men were the hunters of big game—a full time occupation which took them away from home or camp for longer or shorter periods of time. Women were the collectors of vegetable products around the camp or dwelling places.

Now it must be understood that, with the exception of a few specialised areas in the world at certain historical stages, the most reliable sources for food supplies were not animal (supplied by the man) but vegetable (supplied by the women). As Otis Tufton Mason writes:

"Wherever tribes of mankind have gone, women have found out that great staple productions were to be their chief reliance. In Polynesia it is taro or breadfruit. In Africa it is the palm and tapioca, millet or yams. In Asia it is rice. In Europe cereals. In America corn and potatoes or acorns and pinions in some places." (*Women's Share in Primitive Culture*.)

Alexander Goldenweiser makes the same point:

"Everywhere the sustenance of this part of the household is more regularly and reliably

provided by the efforts of the home-bound women than by those of her roving hunter husband or son. It is, in fact, a familiar spectacle among all primitive peoples that the man, returning home from a more or less arduous chase, may yet reach home empty-handed and himself longing for food. Under such conditions, the vegetable supply of the family has to serve his needs as well as those of the rest of the household.”(Anthropology)

Thus the most reliable supplies of food were provided by the women collectors, not the men hunters.

But women were also hunters—hunters of what is known as slow game and small game. In addition to digging up rootes, tubers, plants, etc, they collected grubs, bugs, lizards, molluses and small animals such as hares, marsupials, etc. This activity of women was of decisive importance. For much of the small game was brought back to the camp alive, and these animals provided the basis for the first experience and experiments in animal taming and domestication.

Thus it was in the hands of women that the all-important techniques of animal domestication had its roots in maternity. On this score, Mason writes:

“Now the first domestication is simply the adoption of helpless infancy. The young kid, lamb or calf is brought to the home of the hunter. It is fed and caressed by the mother and her children, and even nourished at her breast. Innumerable references might be given to her caging and taming of wild creatures Women were always associated especially with the milk and fleece-giving species of domestic animals.” (Ibid)

While one aspect of women’s food-gathering activity was thus leading to the discovery of animal domestication, another aspect was leading to the discovery of agriculture. This was women’s labour in plying their digging-stick—one of the earliest tools of humanity—to procure food from the ground. To this day, in some backward areas of the world, the digging-stick remains as inseparable a part of the woman as her baby. When the Shoshone Indians of Nevada and Wyom-

ing, for example were discovered, they were called “The Diggers” by the white men, because they still employed this technique in securing food supplies.

And it was through this digging-stick activity that women ultimately discovered agriculture. Sir James Frazer gives a good discription of this process in its earliest stages. Using the natives of Central Victoria, Australia, as an example, he writes:

“The implement which they used to dig roots with was a pole 7 or 8 feet long, hardened in the fire and pointed at the end, which also served them as a weapon of offense and defense. Here we may detect some of the steps by which they advanced from digging to systematic cultivation of the soil.

“The long stick is driven firmly into the ground, where it is shaken so as to loosen the earth, which is scooped up and thrown out with the fingers of the left hand and in this manner they dig with great rapidity. But the labour in proportion to the amount gained, is great. To get a yam about half an inch in circumference, they have to dig a hole about a foot square, and two feet in depth. A considerable portion of the time of the women and children is therefore passed in this employment.

“In fertile districts, where the yams grow abundantly, the ground may be riddled with holes; literally perforated with them. The effect of digging up the earth in the search for roots and yams has been to enrich and fertilize the soil, and so to increase to the crop of roots and herbs. Winnowing of the seeds on the ground which has thus been turned up with the digging stick would naturally contribute to the same result. It is certain that winnowing seeds, where the wind carried some of the seeds away, bore fruit.” (The Golden bough).

In the course of time, the women learned how to aid nature by weeding out the garden patches and protecting the growing plants. And finally, they learned how to plant seeds and wait for them to grow. On this A. S. Dimond writes:

“Some of the food-gatherers discovered, for example, that the crowns of yams, after

removal of the tubers for eating, would grow again when put back into the earth. Once the technique was learned for one plant or root or grain it could be extended to others. In the process of cultivation, not only was quantity assured, but the quality began to improve." (*The Evolution of Law and Order*).

Not only were quantity and quality improved, but a whole series of new species of plants and vegetables were brought into existence. According to Chapple and Coon:

"Through cultivation, the selective process had produced many new species or profoundly altered the character of the old. In Melanesia people grow yams six feet long and a foot or more thick. The miserable roots which the Australian digs wild from the ground is no more voluminous than a cigar." (*Principles of Anthropology*).

Mason sums up the steps taken in agriculture as follows:

"The evolution of primitive agriculture was first through seeking after vegetables, to moving near them, weeding them out, sowing the seed, cultivating them by hand, and finally the use of farm animals." (*Op. cit.*)

According to Gordon Childe, every single food plant of any importance as well as other plants such as flax and cotton, was discovered by the women in the pre-civilized epoch. (*What happened in History*).

The discovery of agriculture and the domestication of animals made it possible for mankind to pass beyond the food-gathering epoch, and this combination represented humanity's first conquest over its food supplies. This conquest was achieved by the women. The great Agricultural Revolution which provided food for beast as well as man, was the crowning achievement of women's labour in plying the digging-sticks.

To gain control of the food supply, however, meant more than relying upon nature and its fertility. It required, above all, women's reliance upon her own labour, her own learning and her own capacities for innovation and invention. Women had to find out all the particular methods of cultivation appropriate to each species of plant

or grain. They had to acquire the technique of threshing, winnowing, grinding, etc., and invent all the special tools and implements necessary for tilling the soil, reaping and storing the crop, and then converting it into food.

In other words, the struggle to win control over the food supply not only resulted in a development of agriculture, but also led to working out the first essentials in manufacturing and science. As Mason writes:

"The whole industrial life of women was built up round the food supplies. From the first journey on foot to procure the raw materials until the food is served and eaten, there is a line of trades that are continuous and born of the environment." (*Op. cit.*)

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

The first division of labour between the sexes is often described in a simplified and misleading formula. The men, were the hunters and warriors; while the women stayed in the camp or the dwelling house, raised the children, cooked and did everything else. This description has given rise to the notion that the primitive household was simply a more primitive counterpart of the modern home. While the men were providing all the necessities of society, the women were merely puttering around in the kitchens and nurseries. Such a concept is a gross distortion of the facts.

Aside from the differentiation in food-getting, there was virtually no division of labour between the sexes in all the higher forms of production—for the simple reason that the whole industrial life of primitive society was lodged in the hands of the women. Cooking, for example, was not cooking as we know it in the modern individual home. Cooking was only one technique which women acquired as a result of the discovery and control of fire and their mastery of directed heat.

USES OF FIRE.

All animals in nature fear fire and flee from it. Yet the discovery of fire dates back at least half a million years ago, before

humanity became fully human. Regarding this major conquest Gordon Childe writes:

"In mastery of fire man was controlling a mighty physical force and a conspicuous chemical change. For the first time in history a creature of Nature was directing one of the great forces of Nature. And the exercise of power must react upon the controller.... In feeding and damping down the fire, in transporting and using it, man made a revolutionary departure from the behaviour of other animals. He was asserting his humanity and making himself." (Man Makes Himself.)

All the basic cooking techniques which followed upon the discovery of fire—broiling, boiling, roasting, baking, steaming, etc.,—were developed by the women. These techniques involve a continuous experimentation with the properties of fire and directed heat. It was in this experimentation that women developed the techniques of preserving and conserving food for future use. Through the application of fire and heat, women dried and preserved both animal and vegetable food for future needs.

But fire represented much more than this. Fire was the tool of tools in primitive society; it can be equated to the control and use of electricity or even atomic energy in modern society. And it was the women who developed all the early industries, who likewise uncovered the uses of fire as a tool in their industries.

The first industrial life of women centred around the food supply. Preparing, conserving and preserving food required the invention of all the necessary collateral equipment: containers, utensils, ovens, storage, houses, etc., The women were the builders of the first caches, granaries and storehouses for the provisions. Some of these granaries they dug in the ground and lined with straw. On wet, marshy ground they constructed storehouses on poles above the ground. The need to protect the food in granaries from vermin resulted in the domestication of another animal—the cat. Mason writes:

"In this role of inventing the granary and protecting food from vermin, the world has

to thank women for the domestication of the cat.... Women tamed the wild cat for the protection of her granaries." (Op. cit.)

It was the women, too, who separated out poisonous and injurious substances in foods. In the process, they often used directed heat to turn what was inedible in the natural state into a new food supply. To quote Mason again:

"There are in many lands plants which in the natural state are poisonous or extremely acrid or pungent. The women of these lands have all discovered independently that boiling or heating drives off the poisonous or disagreeable elements." (ibid.)

Manioc, for example, is poisonous in its natural state. But the women converted this plant into a staple food supply through a complicated process of squeezing out its poisonous properties in a basketry press and driving out its residue by heating.

Many inedible plants and substances were put to use by the women in their industrial processes or converted into medicines. Dr. Dan McKenzie lists hundreds of homeopathic remedies discovered by primitive women through their intimate knowledge of plant life. Some of these are still in use without alteration; others have been only slightly improved upon. Among these are important substances used for their narcotic properties. (*The Infancy of Medicine*).

Women discovered for example, the properties of pine tar and turpentine; and of chaulmoogra oil, which today is a remedy for leprosy. They invented homeopathic remedies—acacia, alcohol, almond, asafoetida, balsam, beetal, caffeine, camphor, caraway, digitalis, gum, barley water, lavender, linsid, parsley, pepper, pomegranate, poppy, rhubarb senega, sugar, wormwood and hundreds more. Depending upon where the natural substances were found, these inventions came from South America, Africa North America, China, Europe, Egypt etc.,

The women converted animal substances as well as vegetable substances into remedies. For example, they converted snake venom into a serum to be used against snake bite (an equivalent preparation made today from snake venom is known as "antivene").

In the industries connected with the food supply, vessels and containers of all types were required for holding, carrying, cooking and storing food, as well as for serving food and drink. Depending upon the natural environment, these vessels were made of wood, bark, skin, pleated fibres, leather, etc.,. Ultimately women discovered the technique of making pots out of clay. Fire was used as a tool in the making of wooden vessels.

The industries of women, which arose out of the struggle to control the food supply, soon passed beyond this limited range. As one need was satisfied new needs arose, and these in turn were satisfied in a rising spiral of new needs and new products and it was in the production of new needs as well as new products that women laid down the foundation for the highest culture to come. Science arose side by side with the industry of women. Gordon Childe points out that to convert flour into bread requires a whole series of collateral inventions, and also a knowledge of bio-chemistry and the use of the micro-organism, yeast. The same knowledge of bio-chemistry which produced bread likewise produced the first fermented liquors. Women, Childe states, must also be credited with the chemistry of potmaking, the physics of spinning, the mechanics of the loom and the botany of flax and cotton.

FROM CORDAGE TO TEXTILES.

Cordage may appear to be very humble trade, but cordage weaving was simply the beginning of a whole chain of industries which culminated in a great textile industry. Even the making of cordage requires not only manual skill, but a knowledge of selecting, treating and manipulating the material used.

Out of the technique of weaving there arose the basket industry. Depending upon the locality, these baskets were made of bark, grass, bast, skins, roots. Some were woven, other types are sewed. The variety of baskets and other woven articles is enormous. Robert H. Lowie lists some of these as follows: burden baskets, water bottles, shallow bowls, parching trays, shields (in the Congo), caps and cradles (in California), fans, knapsacks, mats, satchels, boxes, fish-creels, etc. Some of the baskets are so tightly woven that they are waterproof and

used for cooking and storage. (*An Introduction to Social Anthropology*.) Some are so fine that they cannot be duplicated by modern machinery.

In this industry, women utilized whatever resources nature placed at their disposal. In areas where the coconut is found, a superior cordage is made from the fibres of the husk. In the Philippines, an inedible species of banana furnished the famous manila hemp for cordage and weaving. In Polynesia, the paper mulberry tree was cultivated for its bark; after the bark was beaten out by the women, it was made into cloth, and from this cloth they made shirts for men and women, bags, straps, etc.

The textile industry emerged with the great Agricultural Revolution. In this complex industry there is a fusion of the techniques learned by the women in both agriculture and industry. It, moreover, requires a high degree of mechanical and technical skill, and a whole series of collateral inventions.

Hunting, apart from its value in augmenting the food supply, was an extremely important factor in human development. In the organized hunt, men had to collaborate with other men, a feature unknown in the animal world where competitive struggle is the rule. On this point, Chapple & Coon state:

"Hunting is fine exercise for body and brain. It stimulates and may have 'selected for' the qualities of self-control, co-operation, tempered aggressiveness, ingenuity and inventiveness, and a high degree of manual dexterity. Mankind could have gone through no better school in its formative period." (Op. cit.)

LEATHER MAKERS.

However, because hunting was man's work, historians are prone to glorify it beyond its specific limits. While the men, to be sure, contributed to the food supply by their hunting, it was women's hands that prepared and conserved the food, and utilized the by-products of the animals in their industries. It was the women who developed the techniques of tanning and preserv-

ing skin and who founded the great leather making industries.

Leather-making is a long, difficult and complicated process. Lowie describes the earliest forms of this type of labour as it is still practiced by the Ona women of Tierra del Feugo. When the hunters have brought back a gunaco hide, the women, he tells us,

"...kneels on the stiff raw hide and laboriously scrapes off the fatty tissue and the transparent layer below it with her quartz blade. After a while she kneads the skin piecemeal with her fist going over the whole surface repeatedly and often bringing her teeth into play until it is softened. If the hair is to be taken off, that is done with the same scraper." (Op. cit.)

The scraper that Lowie speaks about is, along with the digging-stick, one of the two most ancient tools of humanity. Side by side with the wooden digging-stick that was used in vegetable collecting and later in agriculture, there evolved the chipped stone, scraper or 'fist-axe' used in manufacturing. On this subject Briffault writes....

"The 'scrapers' which form so large a proportion of prehistoric tools were used and made by women.... Much controversy took place as to the possible use of these scrapers. The fact that went farthest towards silencing scepticism was that the Eskimo women at the present day use instruments identical with those of their European sisters left in such abundance in the drift gravels of the Ice Age.

"The scrapers and knives of the Eskimo women are often elaborately and even artistically mounted on handles of bone. In South Africa the country is strewn with scrapers identical with those of Paleolithic Europe.... From the testimony of persons intimately acquainted with the Bushmen, these implements were manufactured by the women." (Op. cit.)

Mason corroborates this:

"Scrapers are the oldest implements of any craft in the world. The Indian women of Moatana still receive their trade from their mothers, and they in turn were taught by theirs—an unbroken succession since the birth of the human species." (Op. cit.)

But leather-making, like most other trades, required more than manual labour. Women had to learn the secrets of chemistry in this trade too, and in the process of their labour they learned how to use one substance to effect a transformation in another substance.

Tanning is essentially a chemical alteration in the raw hide. Among the Eskimos, writes Lowie, this chemical change is achieved by steeping the skin in a basin of urin. In North America, the Indian women used the brains of animals in a special preparation, in which the skin was soaked and the chemical alteration thus achieved. True tanning, however, requires the use of oak bark or some other vegetable substance containing tannic acid. As part of the process of leather making, the women smoked the leather over a smouldering fire. The shields of the North American Indians were so tough that they were not only arrow-proof, but sometimes even bullet-proof.

Leather products cover as vast a range as basketry. Lowie lists some of the uses of leather: Asiatic nomads used it for bottles; East Africans for shields and clothing; among the North American Indians, it was used for robes, shirts, dresses, leggings, mocassins. The latter also used leather for their tents, cradles and shields. They stored smoking outfits and sundries in buckskin pouches, and preserved meat in rawhide cases. The elaborate assortment of leather products made by the North American Indian women never ceases to excite the admiration of visitors to the museums in which they are collected.

Briffault points out that women had to know in advance the nature of the hide they were preparing, and to decide in advance the type of product for which it was best suited:

"It varies infinitely according to the use for which the leather is intended; pliable skins smoothed out to a uniform thickness and retaining the layer to which the hair is attached; hard hides for tents, shields, caoes, boots; thin, soft washable leather for clothing. All these requires special technical processes which primitive woman has elaborated." (Op. cit.)

Mason writes:

"On the American Continent alone, women skindressers knew how to cure and manufacture hides of cats, wolves, foxes, all the numerous skunk family, bears, coons, seals, walrus, buffaloes, musk, ox, goats, sheep, antelopes, moose, deer, elk, beaver, hares, opossum, musk-rat, crocodile, tortoise, birds, and innumerable fishes and reptiles.

"If aught in the heavens above, or on earth beneath, or in the waters wore a skin, savage women were found on examination, to have a name for it and to have succeeded in turning it into its primitive use for human clothing and to have invented new uses for it undreamed of by its original owner." (Op. cit.)

POT-MAKERS AND ARTISTS

Pot-making unlike many of the other industries of women, entailed the creation of entirely new substances which do not exist ready-made in nature. On this point Gordon Childe writes....

"Pot-making is perhaps the earliest conscious utilisation by man of a chemical change.... The essence of the potter's craft is that she can mould a piece of clay into any shape she desires and they give that shape permanence by 'firing' (i.e. heating to over 600 degrees C.) To early man this change in the quality of the material must have seemed a sought of magic trans-substantiation—the conversion of mud or dust into stone....

"The discovery of pottery consisted essentially in finding out how to control and utilise the chemical change just mentioned. But, like all other discoveries, its practical application involves others. To be able to mould your clay you must wet it; but if you put your damp plastic pots straight into the fire it will crack. The water, added to the clay to make it plastic must be dried out gently in the sun or near the fire before the vessel can be baked. Again, the clay has to be selected and prepared.... some process of washing must be devised to eliminate coarse material....

"In the process, firing the clay changes not only its physical consistency but also its colour. Man had to learn to control such changes as these and to utilise them to enhance the beauty of the vessel....

"Thus the potter's craft, even in its crudest and most generalised form was already complex. It involved an appreciation of a number of distinct processes, the application of a whole constellation of discoveries.... Building up a pot was a supreme instance of creation by man." (Man makes himself)

Indeed, primitive woman, as the first potter, took the dust of the earth and fashioned a new world of industrial products out of clay.

Decorative art developed side by side with all of these industries in the hands of the women. Art grew out of labour. As Lowie writes:

"A basket-maker unintentionally becomes a decorator, but as soon as the pattern strikes the eye, they may be sought deliberately. The coiling of a basket may suggest a spiral, twining the guilloche, etc. What is more, when these geometrical figures have once been grasped as decorative, they need not remain reverted to the craft in which they arose. A potter may paint a twilled design on his vase, a carver may imitate it on his wooden goblet." (Op. cit.)

The leather products of women are remarkable not only for their efficiency but also for the beauty of their decorations. And when women reached the stage of cloth-making, they wove fine designs into the cloth, and invented dyes and the techniques of dyeing.

ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER

Perhaps the least known activity of primitive women is their work in construction, architecture and engineering. Briffault writes:

"We are no more accustomed to think of the building art and of architecture than of wood-making or the manufacture of earthen ware as feminine occupations. Yet the huts of the Australian, of the Andaman Islanders, of the Patagonians, of the Botocudos; the rough shelters of the Seri the skin lodgers and wigwams of the American Indians, the black camel-hair tent of the Bedouin, the 'yurta' of the nomads of Central Asia are all the exclusive work and special care of the women.

"Sometimes these more or less movable dwellings are extremely elaborate. The 'yurta' for example is sometimes a capacious house, built on a framework of poles pitched in a circle and strengthened by a trellis-work of wooden patterns, the whole being covered with a thick felt, forming a dorm-like structure. The interior is divided into several compartments. With the exception of the wood, all its component parts are the product of the Turkoman woman, who busies herself with the construction and putting together of the various parts.

"The 'pueblos' of New Mexico and Arizona recalled a picturisque skyline of an oriental town; clusters of many storied houses rise in terraced tiers, the flat roof of one serving as a terrace for that above. The upper stories are reached by ladders or by outside stairs, and the walls are ornamental crenellated battlements, . . . courtyards and piazzas, streets, and curious public buildings that serve as clubs and temples . . . as their innumerable ruins testify." (Op. cit.)

The Spanish priests who settled among the Pueblo Indians were astonished at the beauty of the churches and the convents that these women built for them. They wrote back to their European countrymen:

"No man has ever set his hand to the erection of a house. . . . These buildings have been erected solely by the women, the girls, and the young men of the mission; for among these people it is the custom that the women build the houses." (Quoted by Briffault, Op. cit.)

Under the influence of the missionaries men began to share in this labour, but their first efforts were greeted with hilarity by their own people. Today, just the opposite is laughed at—that women should engage in the building and engineering trades!

ON WOMEN'S BACKS

Women were not only the skilled workers of primitive society. They were also the haulers and drayers of goods and equipment. Before domesticated animals released women from part of their loads, it was on their backs, that primitive transportation was effected. They conveyed not only the raw materials used in their industries, but entire households of goods being moved from one place to another.

On every migration—and these were frequent before settled village life developed—it was the women who took down the tents, wigwams or huts, and put them up again. It was the women who transported the loads along with their babies, from one settlement or camp to another. And in everyday life, it was the women who carried the heavy loads of firewood, water, food and other necessities.

Even today, the women among the Ona tribes of Tierra del Feugo, as Chapple and Coon point out, carry loads of well over 100 pounds when they change camp sites. Of the Akikuyus of East Africa, the Routledges write that men were unable to lift loads of more than 40 to 60 pounds, while the women carried 100 pounds or more. Regarding this aspect of women's work, Mason writes:

"From women's back to the car and stately ship is the history of that greatest of all arts which first sent our race exploring and processing the whole earth. . . . I do not wonder that the ship-carpenter carves the head of a woman on the prow of his vessel, nor that locomotives should be addressed as she." (Op. cit.)

Does all this extensive labour activity mean that women were oppressed, exploited and ground down, according to our modern notions? Not at all. Quite the reverse was true. On this score, Briffault writes:

"The fancyful opinion that women are oppressed in savage societies was partly due to the complacency of civilized man, and partly to the fact that women are seen to work hard. Wherever women were seen engaged in laborious toil, their status was judged to be one of slavery and oppression. No misunderstanding could be more profound. . . .

"The primitive woman is independent because, not in spite of her labour. Generally speaking, it is in those societies where women toil most that their status is most independent and their influence greatest; where they are idle, and the work is done by slaves, the women are, as a rule, little more than sexual slaves. . . .

"No labour of any kind is, in primitive society, other than voluntary, and no toil is undertaken by the women in obedience to an arbitrary order. . . .

"Referring to the Zulu women, a missionary writes 'Whoever has observed the happy appearance of the women at their work and toil, their gaiety and chatter, their laughter and song... let him compare with them the bearing of our own working women,' (Op. cit.)"

It is not labour, but exploited and forced labour, that is galling to the human being.

When women began their labour, they had no one to teach them. They had to learn everything the hard way—through their own courage and persistent efforts.

THE FIRST COLLECTIVE

But because women began their labour in so humble a fashion, many historians have presented women's industries as merely "household crafts" or "handicrafts". The fact is that before machines were developed there was no other kind of craft than handicraft. Before specialised factories were developed in the towns and cities there was no other factory but the "household". Without these households and their handicrafts, the great guilds of the Middle Ages could not have come into existence. Nor, indeed, could the whole modern world of mechanised farms and streamlined industries have come into existence.

When women began their labour they pulled mankind out of the animal kingdom. They were the initiators of labour and the originators of industry—the prime mover that lifted humanity out of the ape-like state. And side by side with their labour there arose speech. As Engels pointed out:

"The development of labour necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by multiplying cases of mutual support and joint activity... the origin of language from and in the process of labour is the only correct one... First comes labour, after it and then side by side with it, articulate speech." (The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man).

While men undoubtedly developed some speech in connection with the organised hunt, the decisive development of language arose out of the labour activity of the women. As Mason writes:

"Women, having the whole round of industrial arts on their minds all day and every day, must be held to have invented and fixed the language of the same. Dr. Brinton, in a private letter says that in most early languages not only is there a series of expressions belonging to the women but in various places we find a language belonging to the women quite apart from that of the men."

"Savage men in hunting and fishing are kept alone, and have to be quiet, hence their taciturnity. But women are together and chatter all day long. Apart from the centres of culture, women are still the best dictionary, talkers and letter writers." (Op. cit.)"

What labour and speech represented, first of all and above everything else, was the birth of the human collective. Animals are obliged, by nature's laws, to remain individualistic competition with one another. But the women, through labour, displayed nature's relationship and instituted the new human relationships of the labour collective.

"HOUSEHOLD" THE COMMUNITY

The primitive "household" was the whole community. In place of individualism, social collectivity was the mode of existence. In this respect, Gordon Childe writes:

"The neolithic crafts have been presented as household industries. Yet the craft traditions are not individual, but collective traditions. The experience and the wisdom of all the community's members are constantly being pooled... It is handed on from parent to child by example and precept. The daughter helps her mother at making pots, watches her closely, imitates her, and receives from her lips oral directions, warnings and advice. The applied sciences of neolithic times were handed on by what today we should call a system of apprenticeship...."

"In a modern African village, the housewife does not retire into seclusion in order to build up and fire her pots. All the women of the village work together, chatting and comparing notes; They even help one another. The occupation is public, its rules are the results of communal experiences... And the neolithic economy as a whole cannot exist without co-operative effort." (Man Makes Himself).

Thus the crowning achievements of women's labour was the building and consolidation of the first great human collective. In displacing animal individualism with collective life and labour they placed an unbridgeable gulf between human society and the animal kingdom. They won the first great conquest of mankind—the humanizing and socializing of the animal.

It was in and through this great work that women became the first workers and farmers; the first scientists, doctors, architects, engineers; the first teachers and educators, nurses, artists, historians and transmitters of social and cultural heritage. The households they managed were not simply the collective kitchens and sewing rooms; they were also the first factories medical centres, schools and social centres. The power and prestige of women, which arose out of their maternal functions, were climaxed in the glorious record of their socially useful labour activity.

EMANCIPATION OF THE MEN

So long as hunting was an indispensable full-time occupation, it relegated men to a backward existence. Hunting trips removed men for extended periods of time from the community centres and from participation in the higher forms of labour.

The discovery of agriculture by the women, and their domestication of cattle and other large animals, brought about the emancipation of the men from their hunting life. Hunting was then reduced to a sport, and men were freed for education and training in the industrial and cultural life of the communities. Through the increase of food supplies, population grew, Nomadic camp sites were transformed into settled village centres, later evolving into towns and cities.

In the first period of their emancipation, the work of the men, compared with that of the women, was, quite naturally, unskilled labour. They cleared away the brush and prepared the ground for cultivation by the women. They felled trees, and furnished the timber for construction work. Only later did they begin to take over the work of construction—just as they took over the care and breeding of livestock.

But, unlike the women, the men did not have to start from first beginnings. In a short time, they began not only to learn all the skilled crafts of the women but to make vast improvements in tools, equipment and technology. They initiated a whole series of new inventions and innovations. Agriculture took a great step forward with the invention of the plough and the use of domesticated animals.

For a fragment of time, historically speaking, and flowing out of the emancipation of the men from hunting, the division of labour between the sexes became a reality. Together men and women furthered the abundance of food and products, and consolidated the first settled villages.

But the Agricultural Revolution brought about by the women, marks the dividing line between the food-gathering and food-producing epochs. By the same token it marks the dividing line between Savagery and Civilization. Still further, it marks the emergence of a new social system and a reversal in the economic and social leadership role of the sexes.

The new conditions, which began with food abundance for mounting populations, released a new productive force, and with it, new productive relations. The old division of labour between the sexes was displaced by a new series of social divisions of labour. Agricultural labour became separated from urban industrial labour; skilled labour from unskilled. And women's labour was gradually taken over by the men.

With the potter's wheel, for example, men specialists took over the potmaking from the women. Men took over the ovens and kilns—that had been invented by the women—and developed them into smithies and forges, where they converted the earth's metals: copper, gold and iron. The Metal Age was the dawn of Man's Epoch. And the most common name today, "Mr. Smith" has its origin in that dawn.

The very conditions that brought about the emancipation of the men brought about the overthrow of the matriarchy, and the enslavement of the women. As social production came into the hands of the men, women were dispossessed from productive

life and driven back to their biological function of maternity. Men took over the reins of society and founded a new social system which served their needs. Upon the ruins of matriarchy, class society was born.

From this labour record of the women in the earlier social system, it can be seen that both sexes have played their parts in building society and advancing humanity to its present point. But they did not play them simultaneously or uniformly. There has actually been an uneven development of the sexes. This, in turn, is only an expression of the uneven development of society as a whole.

During the first great epoch of social development, it was the women who pulled humanity forward and out of the animal kingdom. Since the first steps are hardest to take, we can only regard the labour and social contribution of the women as decisive.

It was their achievements in the fields of production, cultural and intellectual life which made civilization possible. Although it required hundreds of thousands of years for the women to lay down these social foundations, it is precisely because they laid them down so firmly and so well that it has taken 4,000 years to bring civilization to its present state.

It is therefore unscientific to discuss the superiority of men or women outside the framework of actual processes of history. In the course of history, a great reversal took place in the social superiority of the sexes. First came the women, biologically endowed by nature. Then came the men, socially endowed by the women. To understand these historical facts is to avoid the pitfalls of arbitrary judgement made through emotion or prejudice. And to understand these facts is to explode the myth that women are naturally inferior to men.

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A HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT IN CEYLON

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

Part II—The Growth of Plantation Labour

FOREIGN CAPITAL AND LABOUR

THE Colebrook Reforms which constitute a very important landmark in our historical development mark also the beginning of the second phase of the subject of our study. The legal abolition of Rajakariya and the system of government monopolies in trade meant that labour could now become mobile and that free enterprise was firmly enthroned. Hence the second phase from 1832 to 1918 witnesses a phenomenal growth of both of a predominantly British-owned coffee plantation industry and of a predominantly South Indian plantation labour force. It has been estimated that there were about 5,000 acres of Coffee planted before 1857 with about 10,000 Indian labourers working on them, (if we are to go by an informative and most helpful book named "The Indo-Ceylon Crisis" by K. Natesa Aiyar, published in 1941). In 1841 the acreage of planted coffee had become 35,596 acres while 7 years later about 367 plantations had arisen covering about 60,000 acres.

The coffee industry had declined by the 1880's and by 1889 the acreage under cultivation had dwindled to about 50,000 acres, after reaching a peak of over 275,000 cultivated acres in 1878. With its decline there was a corresponding growth in the tea industry, which although it had only 250 acres under cultivation in 1873 had about 70,000 acres in 1884. By 1890 the acreage had rapidly grown to 220,000 and by 1904 it was 388,753.

As regards the imported Indian labour, we may form some idea of what took place if we study the early census statistics of the estate population which are as follows:

1871	..	..	123,654
1881	..	..	206,495
1891	..	..	262,262
1901	..	..	441,601
1911	..	..	513,467

There is of course no doubt that South Indian labour constituted the vast bulk of

this population. Thus had capitalism fully emerged in Ceylon with both capital and labour largely foreign. In our earlier article we indicated why labour was not so readily available in Ceylon. South India on the other hand proved a happy hunting ground for the supply of cheap labour for the British planter. Abject poverty in a land which nature had not favoured with her bounty drove the Indian from certain parts of South India to seek his fortunes in a more prosperous habitat. Capital too had to be largely foreign in the new and rapidly developing plantation industry for in an underdeveloped colonial country subject to the most powerful and prosperous capitalist country of the world of the 19th century it was almost inevitable. However, it must not be assumed that the influx of foreign capital and labour was solely due to the particular position that Ceylon was placed in especially as a subject-colonial state. Even in Britain during the period of her great industrial Revolution we are told that both Dutch capital and Irish labour played a great part in her economic development during that particular period. The fact is that this new influx of foreign capital and labour into Ceylon was also a part of the process of the development of capitalism, which economically ties up the countries of the world helping to bring into being an interdependent world economy.

Thus it was that estate labour, mainly immigrant and Tamil grew by leaps and bounds. There was however no corresponding growth in trade union organisation and activity. The explanation for this state of affairs is to be found largely in the paternal tradition inherent in the caste-bound Indian (as well as Sinhalese) social system, the cultural backwardness of the worker and the methods of recruitment and employment of estate labour which fully exploited these social and cultural features. Although in theory estate labour was supposed to be employed on the basis of a free contract between the employer and the labourer there was a rigid regimentation under the Kangany

system, and for all practical purposes, as we shall see, the estate labourer came to lead the life of a semi-slave. Viewed in its historical perspective, this fact can be well understood, when we realize that up to 1832, governments in this country had exploited a feudalistic form of serfdom for commercial and industrial purposes.

REGIMENTATION OF ESTATE LABOUR

The South Indian worker in his own country led a life of near starvation and was a villager who had been nurtured in the age-old traditions of a kind of serfdom that always tended to be degrading. In any case he was by no means used to a way of living in which individual rights and liberties mattered but lived as a member of a family group within a large caste group.

In such a situation the kangany system was found to be the most convenient and profitable method of recruiting and organising estate labour as far as the employer was concerned. (In those days the employer,

of course, laid down all the terms). As the report of the Clifford Commission on Immigrant Labour (1908) states, "This system provided the soundest basis for the recruitment and employment of labour and was of a purely patriarchal character in its origin and principles. The kangany or labour headman was in the beginning and still is in a large number of the older and more solidly established estates, the senior member of a family group composed of his personal relatives to whom may be added other families drawn from villages in South India, from the vicinity of which he and his relatives also come." The labourer himself was brought over not as an individual but in whole family groups.

Till the first decade of this century, the method of recruitment was for individual employers to send a kangany with sufficient money to collect a labour force. What miseries the labourers and their families had to undergo may be realized when we remember that in those days they had to make lengthy marches to the Indian East coast from their villages, and at the ports had to

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suffer detention till they were shipped, while again in Ceylon they had to trek down to the plantations. Worse still was the conditions under which they worked. We shall not attempt to dwell on the wage rates which of course were designed to keep the labourer and his family on a bare subsistence level. Mention must be made however of the iniquitous **tundu** system (abolished only in 1921) which tied down a labourer to an estate and deprived him of mobility. By this system the miserably paid and exploited labourer who invariably incurred a large debt to the **kangany** and to his employer was unable to seek new employment unless he discharged his debt to his former employer. The manner in which the debt was incurred is in itself a telling comment on the whole system of semi-slavery which bound the labourer. Money spent while recruiting, i.e., any cash inducement paid to the immigrant to come over, the commission paid to the **kangany**, the cost of transport from India and other expenses incurred in that connection were all treated as advances paid to the labourer. This debt would be subsequently increased by further loans for festivals, marriages, etc., or by credit purchases at a shop, in which in most cases the **kangany** had a vested interest.

Moreover under this system, all wages were paid not direct to the labourer, but to the **Kangany**, who in turn paid the labourer. In 1889 an ordinance passed authorised payment of half the wages, into the hands of the person authorized by the labourer. This did not however improve matters very much since it was the **kangany** who usually became such an authorized person. It was only in 1927 that laws were passed abolishing this pernicious practice and enabling the labourer to receive directly into his hands his entire wages.

Thus with the worker sunk to the level of a semi-slave and the employer in a privileged and powerful position able to exploit to the full his employees and victimise any who dared to organise themselves to fight for their rights, it is easy to understand why during this period no trade unionism of any sort manifested itself amongst the estate workers. The absence of any legislation to safeguard trade unionism only further helped to add to the oppressed helplessness of the worker.

The lot of the estate worker then was one of almost irredeemable exploitation and oppression. It is not surprising then that discontent appears to have been rife amongst the estate labourers. In the absence of any legal and organised institutional channel through which such discontent could be expressed, the desperate worker individually resorted to direct action of a most drastic type i.e. bolting from the estate of his employer or even at times open defiance of the employer. As there were periodical shortages in the supply of labour such boltings might some times have availed the labourer, but usually it led to his demoralisation and turning vagrant: according to the Administrative Report of the Controller of Labour (1913) we are told that there were over 3500 prosecutions of labourers by employers, which were mainly connected with offences like bolting, alleged neglect of work or insolence. In a letter to the Rt. Hon. L. Harcourt dated 16th July, 1916, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam states that: "Cases have occurred where even women were repeatedly sent to goal for refusing to go back to their employer on the estate, and where a labourer's remonstrance as to insufficient pay or erroneous pay has been punished as insolence, with imprisonment."

What little was done for the labourer on the estates was partly due to the pressure of the Indian Government and partly due to the intervention of the Ceylon Government, which was itself recruiting labour for the P.W.D., and which had to act at least in the interests of the health and sanitation of the Ceylonese community as a whole. Another factor that helped were the developments in Britain. Thus in 1865 the Contract for Hire and Service Ordinance (a Parliamentary Committee had sat in 1864 in connection with this subject in England), made it obligatory for a master to spend on a servant when he was sick, and in 1912 was passed the Medical Wants Ordinance which made it compulsory for medical attention to be provided in estates. But all this legislation in practice amounted to very little especially in the absence of any effective machinery for inspection by the Government, and it will suffice to quote Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam in 1916. "It will be a surprise to learn that, in this the premier Crown Colony of the Empire, after over hundred years of British rule, there is a labour system which

in some of its aspects is a little better than an organized slavery though it lurks under the name of free labour."

As regards labour connected with the other spheres of the economy this period witnesses the beginnings of the growth of a large labour force mainly under the Government in connection with the transport and communications that were fast developing in the latter half of the 19th century. Here too the Government had to depend largely on Indian labour for some time and it was really not till the turn of the century that we see indigenous labour increasingly employed by Government.

The construction of the railway in Ceylon began only in the 1850's while the Colombo harbour was completed only in 1882. In 1852 the Pioneer Force was transferred from military to civil control, and by 1867 was said to have had a strength of 4,000.

Further by 1910 about 200,000 acres of rubber had been brought under cultivation

employing both Indian and Indigenous labour. In the case of the latter class of labour it was a part time and subsidiary form of employment.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Thus by the end of this second phase, i.e., about 1918, wage labour had emerged under a modern and developed capitalist system. It was however a capitalism connected with light industry. Thus although labour was heavily regimented and exploited in such an economy it could numerically never be on the same scale as under capitalism based on heavy industry where thousands of workers are employed in one factory. The numerical rate of employment in a tea estate works out generally to about one man per acre the most. This comparative paucity in the numerical strength and concentration of a labour force in one work place was an additional factor in limiting the growth of trade union organization. Moreover in Ceylon it was with a tradition and background of political autocracy that capitalism and with

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it labour evolved. There was also the persistence of the old caste-bound forms of serfdom inherited from the past. The fact that the heavily oppressed and semi-servile condition of the worker affected mostly the imported and foreign Tamil labour force did not help to rouse the class consciousness of the worker in the same manner as it would have had indigenous Sinhalese labour also been reduced to the same miserable plight. Another factor to be reckoned with was the fact that the Colonial government itself was recruiting and regimenting labour, although perhaps not exercising the same degree of harassment and exploitation as did the plantation employer in the private sector. Hence the question of legal safeguards for the combinations of workers in their own interests did not even arise. We must also remember that in a subject colony the concessions, economic or political that could be given to the working classes are always strictly limited. Finally there was the very significant fact that the growth of the plantation industry which was a light one took place in a rural environment and atmosphere involving the

growth not of big cities but only of little bazaar towns. Hence Ceylon's major industry did not help to produce one big city with any large concentration of workers in any single place of work or residence. Colombo alone developed into a fairly big city (and that not even by world standards) mainly because she was found to be the most convenient spot in the fertile and productive wet-zone both for a port of call and for an administrative centre.

Hence it is that during this phase of study the working class makes its appearance in modern Ceylon as a highly regimented segment of society which, especially with regard to plantation labour was sunk in semi-slavery possessing few or no individual rights or liberties, and which furthermore was ominously for the future communally cut in twain. Nor under the circumstances of its early growth did this working class at this stage manifest any tendency to fight in a class-conscious manner for the assertion of its rights.

(To be Continued)

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THE ALGERIAN WAR AND FRENCH YOUTH

By PIERRE FRANK

ON November 1st will start the eighth year of the Algerian war, of the Algerian revolution. It is a war waged by the Algerian masses against French imperialism which has mobilised in Algeria the bulk of its armed forces, over half a million men. It is a revolution, because beyond national independence, the Algerian masses are fighting for a regime belonging to them. The new Algerian Government, led by Ben Khedda is the result of the strong intervention of the masses in the struggle and of their political development. This new government is a kind of power *a la cubaine*, a government leading towards a socialist Algeria. We intend to deal with this development and its consequences in another article, because of its importance for all colonial revolutions. In the present article we intend to present some of the consequences of the Algerian revolution in France, specially on the French youth.

The Algerian revolution was not only abandoned but also betrayed by the big traditional organisations of the French working class. It is the Socialist Party led by Guy Mollet, which, participating in the government, carried on for many years the war of French imperialism against Algeria. The Communist Party, the leading force of the French working class, took various positions, but never supported clearly and unconditionally the Algerian Revolution; the C.P. voted confidence in the Mollet government when the later amplified its measures against the Algerians; at the beginning of the struggle the C.P. denounced the slogan of independence; today though it is for independence, it expels from its ranks members who are arrested for their clandestine help to the F.L.N. (the Algerian Front of National Liberation).

Under such circumstances, with only very small formations in France supporting the Algerian revolution, the French working class has done practically nothing to help the struggle of the Algerians, even in France itself where three to four hundred thousands of Algerians are living in the poorest condi-

tions and are hunted in the most brutal manner by the police.

On the contrary, for many years the reactionary forces in France, and among them were not only right wingers but also so-called leftists, had full licence to wage the most chauvinistic campaigns. They failed because of the strength of the Algerian revolution, and also because in spite of everything the war in Algeria, as a war, found really no support among the French masses. With time there has developed a mood of weariness for such a protracted and hopeless war.

* * *

French youth was and is still very much involved in this war. During the war in Vietnam the French government waged it only with volunteers, men who for various reasons had joined the army by contract. The youth at the age of 20 are all conscripted in the French army, but they were not sent to Vietnam. This was not the case in Algeria. Since 1956 each batch of conscripts has been sent to Algeria as soon as they had received some military instruction in France. Now French conscripts are doing 27 to 28 months of military service. In other words we have now in France an actual majority of men between 20 and 28 years of age who have spent over two years of their lives in Algeria. What are the results of such a tremendous experience?

The first batch which was called up in 1956, a couple of months after leaving the barracks, started by protesting in France, stopping the trains transporting them to the ports from where they were to be sent to Algeria, and even rioting in some cases. Their movement—of a very elementary nature—had the sympathy of the masses, but received no lead from the working class organisations. On the contrary, the C.P. warned against “provocateurs”. This first movement collapsed. It resulted in disillusionment, scepticism and even political hostility, when these men came back to France, against the organisations which had abandoned them. These moods continued for some time, and to some extent it was a part of the

general feeling of apathy which had developed and which enabled de Gaulle to come to power.

But, happily, the revolutionary struggle of the Algerians has been stronger than the betrayal of the working class leaders. The French youth in Algeria saw the misery of the Algerian people, and the greed and ferocity of the Europeans. They have seen also what were the political aims of the "colons" and their supporters in the French army cadres. They have also seen the methods of terror used against the Algerians. So it happened that after a few years, this youth who had heard only the propaganda of the army machine, the propaganda dictated by the "colonels of the psychological war", became in a confused manner, opposed to the war. Their relations with the Europeans had become as bad as possible. Many when coming back to France after being demobilised, alerted the people against the war that was being carried on. As a matter of fact, almost from the beginning onwards, the French high command did not use the conscripts in Algeria for actual fighting, but mainly for "occupation" duties. The fighting and the dirty work was done mainly by army professionals and special troops. (Foreign Legion, paratroops, etc.)

In the last two years, there have been two reactionary and fascist attempts at putsch in Algiers, one by civilians in January 1960 and the other by generals and colonels in April 1961. In the first the cadres of the army pretended to be "neutral", therefore there was not much trouble among the soldiers, though it is known that many wanted to fight the small groups of fascists of Algiers. In April 1961, the soldiers were deeply involved in the events. The leaders of the putsch had used only the special troops to seize official buildings in Algiers. They thought that as most of the officers were favourable to them, these officers would be able to keep the other troops under control. It was the biggest mistake they had made in organising the putsch. As soon as the soldiers were aware of what was really going on, they first started by passive resistance to orders; but, very rapidly soldiers started to gather together, to organise committees here and there, to send delegations to officers, in some cases arresting the latter when they took up positions in favour of the putsch.

This brought the collapse of the putsch. The French authorities and the French bourgeoisie were at first pleased with this development as evidence of the fact that the soldiers were "faithful to de Gaulle." But they soon realised that this was a very dangerous development: soldiers thinking politically and judging their officers according to their political attitude—No bourgeoisie army can exist in such conditions. At present, the French army is precisely in very bad shape, with mutual suspicions from top to bottom.

* * *

Whilst this was going on, a mass development with little political conscienciousness, there have been also other developments of a much more political character but within smaller layers of the youth, notably students. In the past, students, the majority of whom notably come from the bourgeoisie, had in their overwhelming majority been politically indifferent. But the war in Algeria has so affected them that the majority of students are opposed to it. Their official organisation, the 'Union Nationale des Etudiants de France (U.N.E.F.) has taken a position against the war, and openly established relations with the U.G.E.M.A.—the Algerian student organisation which is banned by the French authorities. Today the government is vainly trying to build another student organisation with small groups of fascists and other "ultras".

One may say that the students were pushed into a position against the Algerian war because for many of them 28 months in the army brings an end to their studies, or prevents them following higher studies. No doubt such immediate causes have had their effect; but other considerations have also entered into the minds of the students, especially sympathy for the aspirations of the colonial world. The U.N.E.F. would not have been able to take such a strong and open position if it had not a real support from the bulk of the students. It alone took the initiative last year to organise a demonstration in the streets of Paris which was a great success.

The Algerian revolution has also stimulated among the youth, though mainly among students, small groups which have gone much further than an opposition to the war. For

many years already there have been in France people and groups who were helping the Algerians in their struggle for national independence and social liberation. There are the people who are doing only humanitarian help, towards arrested or prosecuted people and their families. But even that cannot always be done legally. There are also many others who are devoting themselves to helping the Algerians in all their illegal activities (printing, circulation of people and material, etc...). There have been also groups helping French young men who have refused to obey in the army or who have refused to go into the army. This insubordination has received a big support from French intellectuals.

All this illegal work has been denounced by the working class mass organisations and is subject to prosecution by the French authorities. It is being carried on by people, most of whom have no political affiliations, and who have reacted very soundly against the barrage of propaganda and against the betrayals of the official leaderships of the working class. It is very symptomatic that

Paris, 25th, September, 1961.

by themselves they have rediscovered the *defeatist* orientation which has been forgotten for so many years by the Stalinists.

* * *

These developments among the youth can be seen properly in perspective only against the background of a working class which, from the end of the 2nd World War to the coming to power of de Gaulle, has accumulated only disillusion, setbacks and defeats. Consequently one should not think that the bright colours we have mentioned occupy a large area in the picture. The recovery of the French working class will be a long and hard one, with many more battles to come and more than one before victory is won. But these developments among the youth are of importance because they are not passing signs, but reveal deep evolutions which are taking place. They show that the spell of the old leaderships—the Stalinist particularly—which was so big after the end of the war is now broken and that among the new generations many are seeking for new policies and for radical solutions against bourgeois society.

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ESTATE SCHOOLS IN CEYLON A NATIONAL SCANDAL

By S. CHELLIAH

SCHOOL education of a proper kind for all children is nowadays recognised as a *human* right. The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights—which the Ceylon Government has endorsed—obliges every signatory State to provide a school education to all children living within its frontiers. The right to education cannot be limited by the political status of the child or its parents. No State is entitled to say that some category of the population is excluded from school education because it is disfranchised or denied citizenship rights. Ceylon, of all countries, has the least moral right to use such an argument because its citizenship laws are unique in the world in denying citizenship to large numbers of persons *born and bred* in the country and having no other home and no allegiance to any other State. Moreover, all recognised political Parties and the Government are agreed that our citizenship problems still await a final solution. To deprive those temporarily excluded from citizenship rights also of the human right of education is absolutely indefensible.

Rights are very fine things, but, alas, they do not enforce themselves automatically even if they are written into the Statute Book. The enforcement of even the most sacred human rights is often determined both qualitatively and quantitatively by the actual relations of forces in *politics*. Thus although Ceylon can be said to have recognised the human right of education more than fifty years ago when Compulsory Education was decreed by Ordinance, we know quite well that before the masses were armed with the vote they were either left unschooled or given the barest pretence of Primary Education only. In the 1930's the State spent only some twenty odd millions of rupees on schools, and this largely on schools which, by charging fees, kept the poorer classes out. Today, because of the pressure of the enfranchised masses, the position has changed, and the State spends some three hundred millions on education. Unfortunately, one section of our children whose parents for the most part do not have the vote have been

virtually excluded from the benefits of 'Free Education.' These are the children of Estate workers. The National Commission on Education which is deliberating today has the opportunity of remedying this injustice by securing the take-over of Estate schools into the new National Scheme of Education.

Reference was just made to the large sum of money now spent by the State on Free Education. Where does this money come from? Ironically, it comes to a large extent from the very Estate sector which is deprived of the benefits of Free Education. The Estates produce some 30% of our entire National Product, though only about 9% of the population live on them. Since, of all sectors of the economy, the Estates produce the largest surplus, the revenues of Government are largely siphoned off from this convenient source. Probably 50-60% of the Government's revenues are drawn directly or indirectly from Estate production. How unjust, therefore, that the workers in this sector should be the most neglected section of the toiling masses, and that their children should be deprived of a human right for which they pay when it is exercised by others!

* * *

The legal position regarding Estate schools is worth explaining. Some fifty odd years ago, acting on a Report made by S. M. Burrows, C.C.S., the Government decided on the important step of *compelling* Estate employers to provide schooling for the children of workers. This obligation was cast on employers in the Ordinance No. 8 of 1907. Not much was really asked of them except to provide Primary Instruction for children aged 6 to 10 years in the '3 R's' only.

In a subsequent Ordinance—No 1 of 1920—provision was made for State assistance in the maintenance of schools on Estates, which were thereafter classified as "assisted schools"—though the regulations which governed their syllabus and other conditions were different from those of other schools.

It is well known that even the minimal provisions of the law were scarcely complied with by the Planters in those 'bad old colonial days.' Still, Estate workers had some protection *in the law*.

Ironically enough, the 'Free Education' era which brought such undeniable benefits to the other sections of the masses coincided with the *removal* of the legal protection above referred to. For in Ordinance No 26 of 1947, Estate employers were *freed* from the legal obligation to maintain schools. Instead, an obligation was cast on them to set apart a building suitable for a school-room and another as a teacher's house. The law provided that the Director of Education *could* establish a Government school on the premises set apart on the Estates. One can hardly suppose that the obvious *lacuna* in these provisions was deliberate, but the State Council which—at its last gasp—passed the famous 'Free Education' Ordinance apparently did not contemplate the possibility that both employers and the State might decline a responsibility not cast on them *by law*—to run Estate Schools. What actually happened after 1947 was that most of the previously existing Estate schools continued to run as in past years—as "assisted schools" with government grants. That is to say, the employers maintained them *voluntarily*. The Director of Education used the right vested in him to set up Government schools on 24 Estates only. As to the matter of compelling Estates to set apart school buildings etc, only a start was made by the U.N.P. Education Minister in enforcing the law. Protests and representations made by Planters carried weight with the U.N.P., needless to say. Then the path of the Government was made very easy by the exclusion of Estate workers in their vast majority from the franchise. The U.N.P. Government elected in 1952 was totally free from the political pressure of estate workers, and in 1954 the Minister of Education made an administrative order that the Education Department should cease issuing orders to Estate employers to comply with the law! This infamous administrative decision was a repudiation of the *moral* obligations of the Government, and is largely the cause of the present situation under which very large numbers of Estate children are denied the human right of education.

The legal and administrative aspects of the matter would not have been very important if, in practice, Estate children were supplied with decent schooling. But what are the facts? The following figures and explanations will go some way in indicating the miserable conditions obtaining in such Estate schools as exist, and also the total lack of educational facilities on many Estates. The figures—where no other source is given—come from the Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1959, which was issued in January 1961, giving returns as for 31-5-59.

There are 875 Estate schools in the island. They are all Primary Schools, although our present education laws make schooling compulsory up to age 14, by when the Primary stage should have been long passed by all average children. The syllabus of teaching in Estate schools is still confined to the '3 R's' and such subjects as Religion, Needlework, Physical Education etc., which are part of the curriculum in all other schools are not included.

The total numbers of pupils on the rolls of Estate schools is 77,687 and the average attendance is 58,621. 72,886 Estate school-children are of Indian origin—largely of stateless parents.

The meaning of the figure just quoted can be understood when compared with the figure of 864,000 quoted in the Statistical Abstract of 1960 as the 1958 figure for the total Indian-origin population of Estates. The ratio is just under 8.6%, i.e. that of school-going children to total population. Compare this with the ratio of other school-going children to the total population exclusive of persons of Indian origin on Estates. There are 2,026,055 other school-going children out of a population of some 8.8 millions, giving a ratio of 22.7%! This striking difference brings out the denial of education rights to Estate children.

The neglect of the Government and of the Employers to provide schools on Estates is not the *only* reason for this shocking state of affairs. A more important reason, perhaps, lies in a vicious system of exploitation of child-labour that prevails on Estates. As we know, the law provides that children should be at school till 14 and that they are

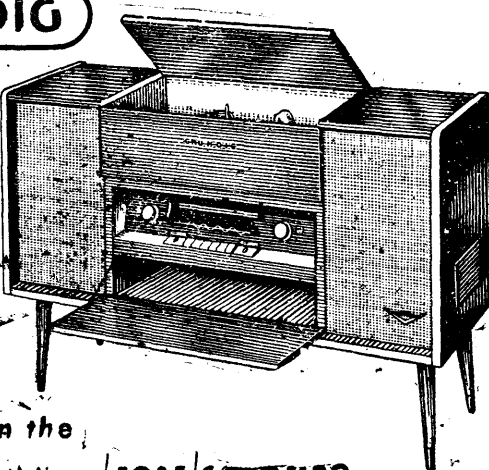
not to be employed. Estate Superintendents get round this provision by recourse to a system of contract-work. The contract is given to the parents of children, but the Superintendents well know that the actual work will be carried out largely by children who thus have no chance of going to school. Estate Superintendents are supposed to report cases of non-attendance of children at school, but they conveniently neglect to do so. Administrative provision has been made for inspections and surprise visits to Estate schools to check on attendance etc. But they are either not carried out or very casually made.

The total number of Estate school teachers is 1162, which means a ratio of less than 1.5 per school. Thus one teacher normally teaches the pupils of all grades in a school. One supposes this does not matter because so little is done in school anyway! What teacher can do much with 51 pupils of different grades on his hands! That is the figure of attendance units per teacher in Estate schools as compared with 22-25 in Govern-

ment and 22-28 in other Assisted Schools. This glaring contrast at once reveals the relative poor quality of the teaching in Estate schools as compared with all others.

Even more revealing, perhaps, is the tally of "qualifications" possessed—or not possessed by Estate school teachers. 57 of them are called "English" teachers, 22 "Sinhalese" and the rest, 1083 are "Tamil" teachers. 54 of the first category are uncertificated, and so are 20 of the second and 865 of the third category! The "qualified" ones are a motley crew—7 first class trained, 43 second class, and 12 provisional Trained; 3 first class certificated, 16 second class and 25 third class; 1 Tamil service certificate, 1 approved teacher of Oriental dancing, 100 approved teachers in Oriental languages, (approval must go by favour, like kissing) 1 Drawing Certificated, 4 Arabic teachers and 5 third class provisional certificated teachers!

But how can anyone expect the Estate school teacher to have any qualifications



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at all when the salary approved for Estate teachers by the Education Department is Rs. 35 per month for uncertificated and Rs. 45 for certificated teachers where there is a single session and Rs. 55 for all teachers where there is a double session. An allowance of 25% of the basic salary is payable. But we may ask of what use qualifications are to an estate teacher when even the highest academic qualifications will not make it possible for him to do a decent job under prevailing conditions.

Some idea of these conditions can be given in figures, but this is inadequate. Anyway, the figures of the grants received by Estate schools are useful. Government usually pays about Rs. 20 per child per annum as a grant, a figure which is ridiculously low in comparison with what the humblest of other schools receive. Attendance grant is paid as Rs. 11 per annum per unit of average attendance; a result grant ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 6 per unit depending on 'examination' results, provided the total grant does not exceed the expenditure on teachers' salaries and Rs. 1 per unit of attendance for maintenance.

A graphic account of what is done in Estate schools with this munificent grant appeared in a Report prepared by Mr. A. Rajagopal which has remained unpublished. It was a survey of Estate schools in the Nawalapitiya District, including some on Estates which are among the best run in the whole Island. He found that 32% of the children in these Estates were *not* in school, even though there were schools on the Estates. They were more profitably (for whom?) engaged in contract work. The teachers were unqualified and hardly able to exist on their miserable pittances. One teacher had to deal with more than fifty pupils. This sort of fact one could predict from the statistics quoted above. But what the figures could not do is to indicate some of the following interesting facts. 'Not a single school had any reading material available to the students in their schools' says the Report! Again "I found one blackboard for all the classes in the schools and in one case saw that the teacher had written on this sums for five different sets of pupils"—no doubt a painstaking teacher! The Report found the type of thing ordinarily encountered in Kindergarten classes conspicuously absent—

e.g. beads, coloured paper, crayons, Montessori sticks, etc. Sessions were from 2 to 2½ hours a day which were considered sufficient for coolie children, no doubt, particularly because only the '3 R's' were taught. The Department of Education stipulates that 10 square feet per child should be provided in constructing school buildings. Where the Reporter found this rule complied with, he also noted that this space *was not used!* In one corner of the schoolroom there were a few benches, and all the rest of the schoolroom was bare. Possibly the cattle used it at night. The number of benches, he reports in restrained language, 'bore no relation' to the number of pupils or to the size of the schoolroom. He saw seven little children trying to squeeze themselves into sitting on a bench which was evidently meant for four children. He looked in vain for a Playground in many of the schools, but since physical education was not thought of, perhaps he was wrong in looking.

If one was moved to laughter by this sort of absurdity, it would be interesting to give more and more references to the details recounted in this Report. But alas, this would need a warped sense of humour, so we need not quote any more from Mr. Rajagopal's excellent account of Nawalapitiya schools, except on one point. "The Circuit Inspector only visits once a year to collect Annual Returns and give promotions".

It is lucky for the teachers that these visits are only annual because they are so severely harassed by Inspectors when they do turn up. The latter have an arbitrary role to play in giving promotions, for which they conduct "examinations" which would compare well with those conducted in Dotheboys Hall. On the promotions given depends the grant, and often the job of the poor unqualified teacher, and the Inspectors know and use their unbridled power over Estate teachers. Unfortunately, the Report does not tell us much about these examinations.

Readers will now have some picture of what Estate schools are like. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that the entire education of a child is in these institutions would give him or her just enough knowledge to permit his deception throughout his life by the Kanakapulle in calculating wages, by the Superintendents in denying them their rights

as workers, and by the country generally in taking over their valuable products and giving them such a miserable deal in return!

* * *

Three arguments have recently been trotted out and supported even by members of the Education Commission against the take-over of Estate Schools into the projected National Scheme. One is that these children are not "nationals" and therefore have no place in a National Scheme. This has been dealt with above. Another is that such a take-over will add new financial burdens to the load carried by the Education Department. How cynical this argument is has also been explained above, where it is noted that the money for the Education

Department itself comes largely from the labour of Estate workers. But the most cynical suggestion made is that a condition of the take-over should be that the medium of instruction in these schools should be Sinhalese! If it is a sacred educational principle that children should begin their education in their own mother tongue, and this principle is invoked for Sinhalese children, how is it inapplicable to Tamil children? To teach Tamil Estate children in Sinhalese would create a situation resembling that of the medieval European schoolroom where children were taught exclusively Latin, and had to learn to read and write before they ever knew what it was they were reading and writing. If the Education Commission commits itself to such an absurdity, it will deserve the opprobrium it will earn.

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SOVIET INDUSTRIAL GROWTH 1917-1961

By V. KARALASINGHAM

TODAY, our Government is timidly tinkering with the idea—only the idea—of planned industrial development. It has not made up its mind even on the question whether this should receive priority over the expansion of agriculture; still less whether the capitalist motive of private profit or the socialist motive of public utility should be given chief place as the stimulant of economic growth. On this question, our rulers seem to be hoping, with blind optimism, that these two contradictory motives can be harmonised in Ceylon, though this has never happened anywhere else. They would have more courage in making their choice in favour of a socialist plan if they took a close look at the impressive record of Soviet industrial development under the famous Five Year Plans. The industrial development of the Soviet Union was carried out without the help and favour of the bourgeoisie, and on the basis of State ownership of banking and industry and a monopoly of foreign trade. There was no need to provide 'incentives' to capitalists, whether native or foreign, as our Government is vainly trying to do. The Soviet workers had only the incentive of working for higher levels of production in the interest of society as a whole. In responding to this incentive, they had no anxiety that the more they worked and made sacrifices, the more would some capitalist fill his money bags with profits. Let us look at some of the achievements of the Soviet Union in the field of heavy industry

This note does not pretend to summarise the whole economic history of the Soviet Union or to analyse all connected problems. It will not refer to agricultural production which, in the Soviet Union was not nationalised but collectivised for the most part. Collective farming in the Soviet Union has had a chequered history, and its lessons for Ceylon are both negative and positive. The

structure of industry, including the proportions of heavy and light industry development, is likewise not considered, although this remains one of the most controversial questions, and has an important bearing on agricultural problems in particular. For the collectivised peasant needs the 'incentive' of consumer goods to increase his production. On the other hand, the heavy military pressure of Imperialism imposes on the Soviet Union the need to develop armaments on a huge scale, and forces the tempo of heavy industrial production. These problems and the connected policies of the Soviet Government are not gone into in the present article. Suffice it to say that, if policy dictated, the heavy industrial base already laid in the Soviet Union could very readily be adapted to the production of immense quantities of consumer goods for the people instead of rockets, atom bombs jet planes and tanks. The tremendous growth of heavy industry which we shall illustrate below is entirely sufficient to prove the economic feasibility of socialist planning and its superiority over capitalist methods.

* * *

In 1917, Russia resembled Ceylon in 1961 in several characteristics. It was a land of impoverished peasants and the bulk of production was agricultural. The backwardness of its industrial development made Russia proverbial in Europe. Capitalist enterprise had developed unevenly and inadequately and was moreover subject to a degree of foreign control. The working class, as in Ceylon today, numbered less than one fifth of the population. A comparison of the class composition of the population in 1913 (the last year of peace under the Czarist regime) and 1956 will show the results of the industrial revolution that has occurred in the Soviet Union.

CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION

	1913	1956
Factory and Office Workers	17. %	59. 5%
Individual Peasants	66. 7%	5%
Collective Farmers and cooperative handicraftsmen	nil	40 %
Landlords, Upper and Petty Urban bourgeoisie; traders and rich peasants	16. 3%	nil

When the Soviet State was established in 1917, the backward Russian economy had already suffered the ravages of War for over three years. It continued to suffer in the terrible wars of Imperialist intervention and civil war for several years longer. When the Soviet people were at last left in peace in 1922-23, they found their country in ruins, with industry nearly erased. The economic situation was so bad that they could not go ahead with socialist construction at once. Indeed, they had to retreat from the policy of socialist measures taken under 'war communism' and adopt a 'new economic policy' which allowed private enterprise a limited role in the economy. But the dominant heights of the economy, banking, big industry and foreign trade, were kept in the hands of the State. Political complications delayed the launching of the first Five Year Plan until 1928. In this Plan first priority was given to the rapid construction of a heavy industrial base as the absolute prerequisite of economic development for the Soviet Union as it stood isolated in a hostile capitalist world.

Only 32 years have passed since then. Of these 5 were taken up by the second World War in which the Soviet Union suffered more than any other combatant, whether victorious or defeated. Hitler's forces marched into Soviet territory and occupied an area which in peacetime had contained 40% of the Soviet population, 65% of its coal, 68% of its pig iron, and 58% of its steel production, not to speak of 38% of its grain. Both in invasion and in subsequent retreat, the German forces resorted to insane destruction. Tens of millions of Soviet citizens were killed—an immense waste of labour power, apart from everything else. Nevertheless, such was the vitality of the socialist forms of production established that during the War itself, great new centres of industrial production were created far from the battle fronts, a feat which would have been impossible under any system depending on private profit as its motive. Taking away these 5 years of War, we can reckon that the Soviet workers had only 27 years to build their industrial system under peace conditions. And what peace conditions have they enjoyed in these 27 years? Between 1928 and 1939 they were subjected on one side to a cruel economic blockade which denied them raw materials and markets abroad, and on the other side to a growing

threat of military attack which compelled the diversion of an immense amount of productive energy and a distortion of economic patterns of growth. During these last 16 years of 'peace' the threat of War has remained, with the same evil results for economic development. When we think of all the severe handicaps under which the six Five Year Plans were undertaken, we must increase our wonder at the marvels of transformation indicated below.

For let us remember that in the great capitalist countries, the industrial revolution took not 27 years, but many generations to accomplish. Britain, France and the U.S.A. for example, though first in the field with modern industry and thus enjoying every advantage, and though they had free access to all raw materials desired and could exploit vast colonial markets as well as their home markets, took a very much longer time to build up heavy industry than the Soviet Union.

* * *

What have the Five Year Plans accomplished since 1928? We have selected below figures relating to certain basic spheres of heavy industrial production which tell a story of fantastic rates of growth. In 27 years the Soviet Union has risen from the level of a pauper country to that of a competitor with the most advanced capitalist nations. In bulk of production, all capitalist countries except the U.S.A. have already been overtaken. The continued rapid rate of industrial growth contrasts sharply with the near-stagnation of the capitalist countries and is such that (given continued peace) the Soviet Union will soon catch up and overtake the U.S.A. itself. Prospects are all the more favourable because today the isolation of the Soviet Union is at an end, and it stands flanked by a series of socialist States with whom economic co-operation can further stimulate development.

* * *

The first set of figures we give relates to the period before World War II. They relate to the annual production of coal, steel, pig iron, oil and electric power. Figures are given for 1913 the last year of peacetime Czarist rule, 1928—the year of commencement of the Five Year Plans, 1933—the year of completion of the first Five Year Plan, and 1940—the year in which the Soviet Union became embroiled in War,

FIGURES IN MILLIONS. Source: THE USSR ECONOMY—**A STATISTICAL ABSTRACT
(Lawrence and Wishart 1957)**

	1913	1928	1933	1940
Coal—tons	29.12	35.5	76.3	165.9
Steel (crude)—tons	4.2	4.3	6.9	18.3
Pig Iron (tons)	4.2	3.3	7.1	14.9
Oil—(crude)—tons	9.2	11.6	21.4 (1932)	31.1
Electric Power (kilowatt hours)	1900	5000	13500 (1932)	48300

We see that in this short twelve year period, despite the disadvantages referred to above, the base of heavy industry—as indicated by these key sectors—had been expanded several times over.

engulfed Europe, the bulk of heavy industrial production in the Soviet Union could fairly be compared with that of such advanced countries as France, Germany and Britain, though by no means as yet with the U.S.A. Here are figures enabling such comparisons:—

By the end of the thirties, when War

**SOVIET AND WORLD FIGURES COMPARED FOR THE YEARS
JUST BEFORE WORLD WAR II-**

Figures in Millions. Source: United Nations Statistical Yearbook for 1958

Year	Item	World Totals	U.S..A	France	Germany	U.K.	Soviet
1939	Coal (tons)	1253	402	49	175	235	124
„	Steel (crude) (tons)	135	48	8	24	13	18
„	Pig Iron (tons)	99	32	7	17	8	15
„	Oil (crude) (tons)	284	170	—	1	1.3	30
1939	Electric Power (kilowatt hrs)	459000	146000	21000	55000	26000	39000

The comparative indices of heavy industrial production since World War II for the Soviet Union and capitalist countries suggest a race between Achilles and the Tortoise—though the advantage the latter had in the

mathematical problem is not available to the capitalist countries for time is on the side of the Soviet Union, as shown by the targets for 1965 quoted later!

COMPARATIVE INDEX NUMBERS OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

For the U.S.A., U.K. and the U.S.S.R. (1953 = 100)

Source: U.N. Bulletin of Statistics, June 1961

	1938	1958	1960
U.S.A.	53	100	119
U.K.	75	100	128
U.S.S.R.	30	100	212

The levels of production in the following items for 1959 prove that the Soviet Union has now outstripped all other countries than

the U.S.A. in the bulk of heavy industrial production and is racing to overtake the U.S.A.

COMPARATIVE PRODUCTION FIGURES FOR 1959

Figures in Millions	Source:	U.N. Statistical Yearbook 1960					
Coal	tons	1896.3	57.6	126.4	209.4	388.4	365.1
Oil	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 kilo- Energy watt hrs.		206200	64500	103200	121000	794500	265000

Whereas the capitalist countries are with few exceptions, talking about recessions, and hoping at best to hold up or slightly improve on the levels of production reached in the 1950's, the Soviet Union is looking forward with confidence to a tremendous forward

leap in heavy industry in the Seven Year Plan, due for completion in 1965. The goals fixed for Coal, Steel, Pig Iron, Oil and Electric Power are indicated below, for the sake of comparison with the figures cited above.

TARGETS FOR 1965 IN THE SEVEN YEAR PLAN

Figures in Millions	Source: Soviet Handbook 1959-65
Coal	tons 600—612
Steel	tons 86—91
Pig Iron	tons 65—70
Oil	tons 230—240
Electric kilowatt Power hours	500000—520000

The figures we have cited for the post-war era, even apart from these stupendous targets, are sufficient to indicate the possibilities of socialist planning and their superiority to all known forms of capitalist enterprise.

If such miracles of transformation have been possible on the basis of the economy of one backward country only, and have been accomplished under isolation and blockade by the rest of the world, and amidst the realities and the threats of War, what should we conclude about the possibilities of socialism if applied on a world scale? If the entire industrial base already laid down in all

countries were at the service of socialist planning, as well as the resources of this entire planet, without the distractions of war to interrupt development, then we can safely say that our most fantastic dreams of wealth and prosperity for all humanity could be realised in short order.

Even our little country, Ceylon, could profit immeasurably from immediate socialist planning. We have many advantages which Russia lacked in the initial stages of development and could therefore secure much quicker returns than were gained in the Soviet Union,

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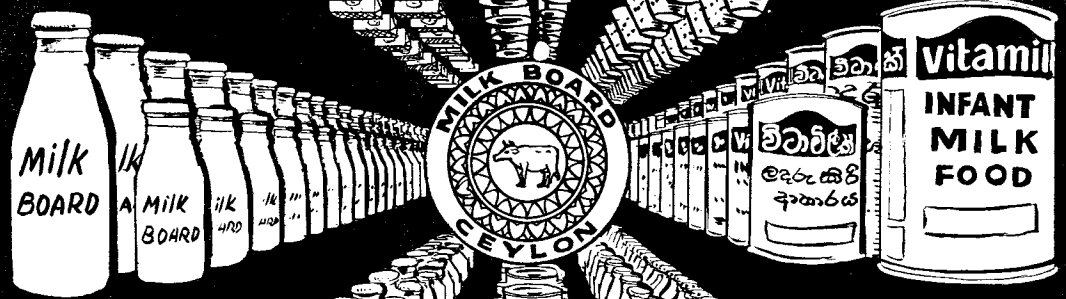
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