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EDITORIAL NOTES: Forward Against Vested Interests

Private Sector in Education (part 3)

by **Sydney Wanasinghe**

Middle-Class Fantasy in the "Sinhala Cinema"

by **L. O. de Silva**

Self Management, Socialism and Planning

from *Sous La Drapeau Socialisme*

Education in Ceylon Before & After Independence

a Review

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# YOUNG SOCIALIST

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## Editorial Notes

### FORWARD AGAINST VESTED INTERESTS

Recent events have made clear in no uncertain terms the general policy direction of the United Front Government. Clearly, the emphasis is upon the expansion of the public sector of the economy as against the private, upon the welfare of the masses as against the privileged and anti-social elements who have so long fattened on the miseries of the people. The dust and thunder of the budgetary storm have not yet died down as swindlers and hoarders, blackmarketeers and company bosses, medical specialists and Q.C.'s scamper around seeking legal and illegal loopholes to protect their ill-gotten gains. The Business Undertakings (Acquisition) Bill gives the Government power to deal with this errant tribe, to undertake a course of planned nationalisation which is the *sine qua non* of socialist development. The forthcoming State Trading Corporation Bill and the Paddy Bill will further strengthen the hands of the Government in curbing monopoly and creating the first essentials for a planned development of our economy.

In the wake of all this the first signs of a rightwing counter-offensive have already begun to emerge. The capitalist newspapers which, in the immediate aftermath of the General Election, vied with each other to establish their bona fides with the new government, have now begun to emerge in their true colours. The "Times" group of newspapers can hardly contain their venom at the threat posed to vested interests by the Business Undertakings (Acquisition) Bill. Once again the familiar slogan of "democracy" is being used in a shameless attempt

to protect vested interests in the country. The Lake House group, however, fearful of the consequences of the Royal Commission presently inquiring into its activities, is more subtle in its attacks.

In the drawing rooms of C7 and the go-downs of "distinguished citizens" they continue hopefully to predict the collapse of this government in the next few months! In 1962 these same elements rallied to organise the abortive police-army coup. In 1970, however, with the massive peoples' victory of May 27th, any widespread subversion in army-police circles does not appear to be an immediate possibility. Other techniques are therefore being resorted to in order to sow disaffection against the government of the United Front.

Merchants and retail traders have now begun a deliberate campaign of creating artificial scarcities and jacking up the prices of the people's necessities. No sooner is it rumoured that in the near future the import of dried chillies may be banned than the price of a pound of this commodity rockets to a phenomenal Rs. 8/- or more! And every consumer is frequently treated to a subtle discourse on the responsibility of the Government for this state of affairs! It is a welcome sign that the projected State Trading Corporation Bill envisages the take over, as and when necessary, of even retail establishments.

In many private industrial enterprises workers are being retrenched on one pretext or another. And this in the context of the unconscionable profits being made by industrialists, as a recent Ministerial investigation showed! But this will soon be looked after by the new Bill to be presented in Parliament by the Minister of Labour, which makes retrenchment, dismissal or lockout of any worker illegal without the written sanction of the Commissioner of Labour.

One of the most recent of rightwing techniques is the subtle character assassination of Government leaders. The immediate target is the Minister of Education who in the past aroused the ire of vested interests by his bold take over of assisted schools and abolition of private medical practice. We have read of tea parties and things and the most improbable statements attributed to the Minister. The new standardisation procedure adopted for this year's admissions to the Universities with the sole purpose of giving some weightage to the underprivileged rural student, has come up against a barrage of criticism from interested parties. Obvious rightwing elements in the Universities, who lapsed into silence soon after the elections, have become vociferous again. By subtle means they try to fan the fires of student discontent.

These and other weapons will be increasingly drawn out of the bourgeois armoury as the United Front Government forges ahead in its attacks on capitalist privileges. After all the subtle wisdom of imperialism and the notorious C.I.A. will be at their disposal. The possibility of capitalist interests seeking extra-parliamentary methods of subverting the Government cannot be ruled out. Such attempts could very well make witting or unwitting tools of frustrated and disillusioned elements of the unemployed youth. We have the recent example of Indonesia as well as Germany and Italy between the two world wars.

To be successful every step the Government takes against capitalism must by its own logic be followed by further inroads into vested interests. There can be no stabilisation of the status quo until the foundations of Capitalism are overthrown. In this situation the bourgeois counter-offensive becomes a real possibility in the future.

The defence of the Government and its socialist policies cannot lie with traditional institutions like the army and the police, both adjuncts of the very bourgeois state apparatus it is necessary eventually to destroy. Only the mobilisation of the people can meet the threat. The people must be armed with legal powers to fight profiteers, exploiters and all those who stand in the way of progress. This is why it is so regrettable that the proposed Janata Committees have not yet come into being. Time waits for no one, least of all for a Government pledged to radical measures against the existing social framework. Through the employees' councils, the advisory councils and the Janata Committees the people must be mobilised fast to back the measures of the Government. In the face of a rightwing offensive even the question of physically arming the people may have to be posed. There can be no hesitation on this score. Either the Government pushes forward relentlessly on the socialist road or capitalist reaction will triumph in the end.

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# Private Sector in Education (Part 3)

by SYDNEY WANASINGHE

## 9. THE FEE LEVYING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Special Committee decided that it was undemocratic to prohibit the setting up of Private Unaided Schools. They thought that such a step would be an unwarranted encroachment on individual liberty. Hence they recommended that, "no undue restriction be placed on Unaided schools but that power be taken to inspect them to ensure that they maintain a minimum standard regarding accommodation including playground, equipment, staff and efficiency of instruction given. Unaided schools except Private Tutories should have the right to enter candidates for school examinations held by the Department." (37)

This in other words amounted to an official blessing for the continuation of the system of Private Unaided Schools. The former Assisted Schools which stayed out of the Free Scheme were given time till 1st October 1948 to finally decide whether they would join the free scheme or not. Later this deadline was extended till 1st May 1950. The following were some of the schools that decided to remain unaided after the deadline.

### *Anglican Church:—*

1. St. Thomas College, Mt. Lavinia
2. St. Thomas Prep. School, Kollupitiya
3. St. Thomas College, Gurutalawa
4. St. Thomas College, Bandarawela
5. Ladies College, Colombo 3.
6. Hillwood College, Kandy
7. Mowbray Girls' School, Kandy
8. Bishop's College, Colombo 3.
9. Trinity College, Kandy

### *Roman Catholic:*

10. St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo 7.

### *Baptist Mission:*

11. Carey College, Colombo 8.

### *Buddhist*

12. Musaeus College, Colombo 7.

These were some of the 15 schools that came under the category of Fee Levying Private Schools under Act No: 5 of 1951. In the Administrative Reports of the Director of Education all Registered Unaided Schools are grouped together. This included a large number that were registered after 1951. All of them are run by individuals with the profit motive in mind. The Administrative Report for the year 1952 states that 344 Unaided Schools applied for registration but that only 15 were issued with certificates of approval.

Year	Schools	Students	Teachers	Uncertificated Teachers	
				No:	%
1946	33	4,438	214		
1947	21	3,418	156		
1948	31	4,711	158		
1949	55	5,941	282		
1950	62	6,740	317		
1951	185	29,514	1566		
1952	39	13,798	777		
1953	58	17,157	836		
1954	87	19,311	921		
1955	64	16,288	786		
1956	109	20,411	946		
1957	98	23,666	1341	411	30.6%
1958	104	24,046	1478	627	42.4%
1959	99	24,700	1341	453	33.8%

Year	Schools	Students	Teachers	Uncertificated Teachers	
				No:	%
1960	94	26,635	1403	624	44.4%
1961	90	26,332	1374	571	41.6%
1962	82	24,362	1300	508	39.1%
1963	72	23,556	1227	488	39.7%

Statistics for Fee Levying Private Schools are available in the Administrative Reports of the Director of Education only up to the year 1963. From 1964 onwards each district in charge of Assistant Directors has been dealt with separately but the figures given are for both categories of Private Schools, Fee Levying and Non Fee Levying.

The sudden increase in the number of Private Fee Levying Schools in 1951 seems to be due partly to the grouping together of the schools that waited until the final deadline to enter the Free Scheme as Unaided Schools. This may account for the sharp drop in the number of these schools in the following year from 185 to 39. When we consider the figures available, excluding those for the year 1951, we see a definite pattern of gradual development up to the year 1956 and then onwards a decline. The fact that even though the number of schools was reduced, a proportionate reduction of the number of students on roll did not take place, shows that the schools that closed down were mushroom schools that came up to cater to a temporary need.

After the coming in of the Free Education scheme the numbers in State and Aided schools increased in geometric proportions. As a result where there was overcrowding, an age limit had to be enforced and the number of times a student could sit for a public examination as a School Candidate had to be restricted. Those who had to leave Government and Aided schools on account of these restrictions sought entry to Private Fee Levying Schools. This accounts for the gradual expansion of the numbers in these schools from 1947 onwards.

From 1957 onwards the Administrative Reports provide detailed information regarding the qualifications of Teachers. From these reports we are able to give the number of teachers categorised as uncertificated for each year from 1957 to 1963.

Those with the Senior and HSC also belong to this category. But only a small percentage of the uncertificated teachers have the HSC certificate. When compared with the total number of teachers in these schools we find that they form a very high percentage of the total. The percentage has been kept down even at this level by the employment of retired teachers. Retired School Inspectors and Teachers, those who retired due to their inability to work in the Swabasha or on the take over of schools, those who retired on reaching their maximum, some of whom are now in their seventies have found these schools a useful avenue of employment in their period of "retirement".

There are no fixed salary scales for teachers in these schools. They are not paid according to their qualifications. Their salaries depend on the arrangement they have been able to make with the management. With the increasing unemployment amongst those educationally qualified the exploitation of Teachers in the Private Sector continues to grow. It would suffice here to record the salary scales of Teachers in a Private Fee Levying School in the Colombo Central Electorate. This School pays a Graduate Teacher Rs. 150/-, a Senior qualified teacher Rs. 75/- and one who has been appointed to teach religion who has only the J.S.C. qualification Rs. 30/-. These amounts are all inclusive and are not subject to increments. The Education Department officials to whom matters were represented confessed that they were unable to take any steps to remedy this situation as there are no stipulated salary scales for Teachers in Private Schools. This School was closed down in 1969 due to gross mismanagement and the children were admitted to Government Schools in the neighbourhood.

There is also no security of service for Teachers in these schools. They are hired and fired at the will of the employer. Neither the

Education Department nor the Labour Department have framed rules to ensure security of service of these teachers. Cases of victimisation have to go through the long, tedious and expensive process at the Labour Tribunals and often some compensation is obtained.

These Private Schools are unable to recruit Trained Teachers. Those who are trained at the expense of the Government have to enter into a bond to serve the Government. As all the Teacher Training Colleges now belong to the Government, hardly any Trained Teachers have joined these schools since 1960. Even after the period of the bond is completed, these teachers will not join Private Schools as they would forfeit their pension rights if they were to do so. Even though there is a possibility for Teachers in Private Schools to enter Training Colleges, they prefer to join a Government School before entering the Training College, as they would then be entitled to two years full pay study leave. Even the established Private Schools have so far been unable to work out a satisfactory scheme of Teacher Training despite the resources at their command. The three Universities take in a quota of teachers from Private Schools for post graduate training. But the large majority of Private Schools do not give their teachers full pay study leave to follow this course. The leave authorised by Managers to their teachers to follow this course is subject to the condition that they accept half their salary, or they pay the salary of their substitutes or as in some cases forego their pay altogether. As a result of this policy these Private Schools are staffed by a sprinkling of graduates at the top and a whole horde of GCE qualified below.

As compared to those institutions that became unaided in 1960, these Private Schools enjoy a privileged position as they are able to decide the fees they should levy. The tuition fees of these schools are governed by the theory of supply and demand. They vary according to the class each school is compelled by force of circumstances to serve. The White Paper of September 1966 stated, "all approved Fee Levying Private Schools will conform to the following condition—(a) there shall not be charged from the pupils attending the school any

fees or any other levy in excess of such amount as may be prescribed." (38) This indicated that the Government had an intention of controlling the fees at a future date.

Teachers in Unaided schools were permitted to contribute to the School Teachers' Pension Fund. The amendment to the existing pension rules were introduced in May 1951 for this purpose. (39) But this concession was withdrawn in 1960 after the Act No: 5 of 1960 was passed. This is a cause for great dissatisfaction amongst the new recruits in Private Schools. In a few schools provision has been made for those teachers who do not enjoy pension rights to join the Employee's Provident Fund. Any employer of three or more persons has to get his employees to contribute to this fund. The Employer's contribution to this fund is 6% of the basic salary while the employee contributes 4%. Despite the severe penalties for the violation of these regulations only a minority of these non pensionable teachers are in the Provident Fund Scheme.

All these factors have contributed to dissatisfaction amongst teachers in Private Schools. The denial of Rent Allowances until the consolidated wage came into force in 1969, and the denial of Railway Warrants in the present context of rising cost of living, the fact that they are destined to serve their full period as Assistant Teachers until retirement without any opportunity to improve their employment prospects have added to this discontent. As a result most of the new recruits do not consider teaching in Private Schools as a permanent employment. For them it has become a convenient stepping stone for better jobs. Thus the old tradition in these schools, of Teachers growing with the institutions has now become a thing of the past. Unable to attract talent because of their adverse terms and conditions of service, these schools are destined to rest content with the bottom of the barrel, and hide their nudity with the achievements of the days gone by.

The result of this is seen in the academic performances of these schools. In the University Entrance results they no longer occupy the pride of place that was theirs a

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decade or two ago. With the coming up of Central Schools their performance has been very poor in the admission to Arts and Oriental Studies courses for quite some time. With the development of laboratory and other facilities in the provincial schools, these public schools have been forced to eat humble pie in the admission to the other courses as well. The GCE O/L results show the same trend.

These schools are the best examples of the best that the Private Sector has been able to provide during the 17 years they were compelled to go it alone. They are also the cumulative effort of the Missionary Organisations, Private Philanthropists, educationists and businessmen. What purpose do these schools serve? Should they be permitted to continue as their abolition would be construed to mean an infringement of individual freedom, or should these schools be made to serve the people? It is best that we answer these questions after we take into account the other categories as well in the Private Sector.

#### 10. THE NON FEE LEVYING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

There were no further changes in the educational set up until 1960. But the period from 1951 to 1960 was an eventful period in our political history. After the death of Mr. D. S. Senanayake, Mr. Dudley Senanayake who succeeded him as Prime Minister sought a fresh mandate a few months before the life of the first parliament was scheduled to end and obtained an overwhelming majority for his party at the polls. During its very first year in office, the Government being compelled by the maturing of the innate crisis in the Capitalist system and the class character of its own composition to take the unpopular decision of removing the rice subsidy, was forced by the direct intervention of the people to resign and reconstitute itself under the leadership of Sir John Kotelawala. Having survived the crisis the Government waited until the rice issue had subsided and faced the hustings one year ahead of time on the communal cry of Sinhala Only. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike faced the polls on the same slogan and was elected to office in 1956 having reduced

the ruling United National Party to an insignificant minority in Parliament. This change of Government by the use of the vote fed the illusions people had begun to develop on the Parliamentary system. Those returned to Parliament in 1956 were more representative and had closer contact with the people than the Members of the first two parliaments. This was bound to influence the issues raised, the matters discussed and the legislation enacted in Parliament. The vested interests who were managing the Aided Schools were bound to come in for criticism. The Buddhist Commission Report released prior to the 1956 elections had directed sharp criticism on the Christian dominance in the field of education. Now it was clear that radical changes would soon be made in the educational structure of the country.

The take over of the management of Assisted Schools was one of the first steps taken up by the 5th Parliament elected in July 1960. This had become an issue in the elections as well. Against the determined opposition, almost leading to religious riots, the management of all but 41 Grade One Schools and 14 Grade Two Schools came under the management of the Director of Education with the passage of Act No: 5 of 1960. These schools that opted to remain Private and Unaided formed the Non Fee Levying Private Schools, referred to earlier as the ugly duckling of our educational system.

Section 3 of the Act states, that, "Provided that, where the proprietor of any Assisted School to which the Act applied, has, at any time before the date specified in such order, served under Section 5 a written notice on the Director under this Act to the effect that he has from that date elected to carry on the administration of such school as an Unaided School, such order shall with effect from the date specified in the notice, cease to apply to such school."<sup>40</sup> Thus the decision whether the school should opt to remain Private or not was to be made by the Proprietor of the School. The parents of the children who were served by the Schools, the Teachers who served the Schools were not given any opportunity to have their say in the matter. In this manner forty odd Roman Catholic Schools, a few Anglican Schools and two Methodist

Schools and one Hindu School decided to remain unaided and non fee levying. Some of these schools have since been handed over, while Zahira College, Colombo which was taken over by the Government had to be handed back to the former management, after the Privy Council to which they appealed decided in their favour. As a result of this Act, fifty seven thousand students and two thousand three hundred Teachers had to fall in line with the autocratic decision of the management. The Government was unable to provide the students or the teachers of these schools with alternate accommodation.

Section 6 of the Act states, that, "The Proprietor of any school which, by virtue of an election made under Section 5, is an Unaided School shall not levy fees other than fees for facilities and services which are permitted by regulations made in that behalf under the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939." (41) This clause prevented the managements of these schools from levying tuition fees from the students. This was in order to safeguard the interests of those students who joined them when they were in the Free Scheme. This did not require the managements of these schools which opted to be Unaided and Non Fee Levying to show how they were going to finance these schools. The Managements came to this ill conceived decision to remain private fully expecting that this would be a temporary phase. They hoped that a change of Government would give them back "their" schools. History has proved that these hopes were based on false premises and will never be realised. Mr. Iriyagolle, the Minister of Education (1965-70) remarked to a delegation of the ACUT that requested that these schools be permitted to levy fees, that, "he will undo the wrong done by the last Government but not undo the good." At least in the matter of Private Schools, his remark and the White Paper proposals of 1966 indicated that the UNP led Government was not prepared to go back on what the previous Government had done.

Even though it is illegal to levy fees in these schools, the proprietors soon found a method of circumventing the law. They set up Welfare Societies to undermine the financing of these schools. These Welfare Societies collected donations from parents and well-wishers to run these schools. The enthusiasm with which these monthly donations were promised began to fade as the months rolled on and the income from this source began to shrink. Then it became necessary to resort to moral compulsion to collect these levies and these contributions became to all intents and purposes fees charged for the tuition provided in these schools.

Section 7 of the Act provides for a poll to be taken for the purpose of deciding whether these schools should be permitted to levy tuition fees. This poll was to be conducted by the Director of Education at the instance of the Proprietor. If 75% of the total number of votes of persons entitled to vote were cast in favour of the school been permitted to levy fees, the Director was to permit the school to do so. It is very significant that none of the proprietors made use of this opportunity. Despite the direct action which led to a spate of demonstrations, meetings, attempts to occupy schools and even burn down some schools none of the proprietors who encouraged and sponsored these actions had the courage to accept the challenge offered by the Government to go fee levying after a democratic decision as provided for in the Act. Demonstrations could very well be organized and directed by a minority but the success of the poll depended on obtaining the consent of the majority. In this matter it is necessary to record that almost all these schools which had a majority of their own denominations, despite the rigidity of their organisations, could not trust their own flocks to toe their line.

The figures available for the Non Fee Levying Private Schools are as follows.

Year	Schools	Students	Teachers	Uncertificated Teachers	
				No:	%
1961	61	57,674	2328	524	22.6%
1962	59	53,444	2173	380	17.5%
1963	52	46,475	1926	402	20.8%

The figures for the years after 1963 are not available in the Administrative Reports of the Director of Education. We see a gradual decrease in the number of schools, students and Teachers in this category. This is due to the subsequent handing over of some schools as the managements were unable to finance them. The percentage of uncertificated teachers employed in these schools went down in 1962 and went up again in 1963. This is due to the fact that a number of teachers who retired from the schools that were taken over in 1962 were re-employed by the Non Fee Levying Private Schools. A large number of them had been heads of schools and as such are quite unsuited for full time teaching work. In a leading Non Fee Levying Private School in Colombo there were 6 retired Principals who have been recruited after 1961. But as the supply of retired teachers who can be employed is limited, the number of uncertificated teachers in these schools is bound to increase. These schools are not only unable to attract qualified teachers but are also not in a position to pay those teachers with higher qualifications. They are compelled to count every cent and the financial difficulties have brought down the standard of these schools considerably.

These Non Fee Levying Private Schools can be divided into two broad groups. Those who have had to face competition from the State and Director Managed schools belong to one category. They have been battered beyond recognition in this uneven contest. They are unable to collect sufficient donations and as a result the monthly salary bill has to be met by the proprietor himself. They are unable to maintain the buildings and equipment. Their numbers have depleted as the students have joined the State schools. After 10 years of existence as unaided schools they have been reduced to a shadow of their former self. Those Schools that are situated in areas where the State has not been able to give them any competition are in a slightly better position. At least they have been able to maintain their numbers on roll. There is also a rush for admission to these schools as the State does not have sufficient schools under its management, to provide adequate suitable accommodation to the increasing population. This is the position in most of the towns like Colombo, Galle,

Negombo, Kandy and Jaffna. The prior permission of the Director of Education is required by the Act No. 5 of 1960 to admit children of unlike denominations to these schools. But this permission could be obtained without any difficulty. Even though the numbers in these are large and the "donations" they receive are substantial their other problems remain.

Owing to financial difficulties these schools are always engaged in fund raising efforts. Carnivals, fun fairs, sales, exhibitions, collecting campaigns, raffles organised by the Welfare Societies of these schools take much of the school time. The Staff as well as the students have to devote their time for these efforts, As such these efforts which are a burden on the parents affect the work of the school as well.

"You must bear in mind that you have the right to earn as much as you like, but not the right to spend as much as you like. Anything that remains after the needs of a decent living are satisfied, belongs to the community"

Mahathma Gandhi.

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Terms and conditions of service of teachers, quality of the staff and academic standards of these Non Fee Levying Private Schools are the same as those in the Fee Levying Private Schools. Having taken an important decision affecting thousands of students and teachers, in a fit of enthusiasm while being emotionally worked up, the proprietors of these schools have had ten long years to ponder at leisure on the consequences of their action. Despite the bitter experiences they have had to undergo they do still continue to linger in hope, waiting for something to turn up that would put things right.

11. THE ASSISTED SCHOOLS  
Section 2 of the Act No: 5 of 1960 stated,

that, "this Act shall apply to every Assisted School other than any such school as is Specified in the Schedule to this Act. (42) The Schedule mentioned five types of schools. They were, any school maintained exclusively for the education of children suffering from any mental or physical disability; any school maintained for the teaching of dancing, any night school, that is any school providing education for pupils over 14 years of age whose circumstances prevent them from receiving instruction in a day school; any Estate School; Pirivenas. All these five types still remain Assisted Schools. Only the first three types are dealt with in this section as the Estate

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Schools and the Pirivena Schools are dealt with separately.

The figures available for these schools for the year 1963 are as follows.

Category	Schools	Boys	Girls	Total	Teachers	Uncertificated Teachers	
						No:	%
Special Assisted Schools for handicapped children	4	332	215	547	55	26	47.3
Night Schools	16	2772	—	2772	113	89	78.7

Thus, according to the figures of the Department the total number of Assisted Schools that are still in existence is only 20. While 4 Special Schools are run by Private managements as Assisted Schools there are 4 others that are run by the State. They

are situated in the Wattala, Negombo, Attanagalla and Ja-ela constituencies and give instruction to children in the Sinhala and the Tamil mediums. The Assisted Schools are spread out in the country in the following manner.

	Night Schools	Special Schools
Western Province	13	2
Central Province	1	—
Southern Province	2	—
Northern Province	—	1
North Western Province	—	1

The percentage of Uncertificated Teachers in these Schools and the way in which these schools are situated shows clearly that no proper attention has been paid to them by the state. The Government has merely tolerated the existence of these handful of schools.

According to figures obtained from a survey of handicapped children carried out by the Department of Social Services through the Village Headmen in 1958 there were 3475 handicapped children between the ages one to fifteen, in the whole Island. But in addition the Department considers the total number of mentally defective children to be in the region of 20,000. The National Education Commission recommended that parents should be permitted to admit handicapped children to Special Schools when such a child reaches the third birthday. They further recommended that all existing institutions for handicapped children be taken over by the State and that their internal administration be entrusted to Boards of Management. (43)

The White Paper of 1964 proposed certain changes in the management of these Assisted Schools. It stated, that, "The existing Grant in Aid Special Schools may continue to be maintained by their present

proprietors provided that the management thereof shall be by a Board of Management constituted in the following manner:

## 2. Evening and Night Schools

- (a) The Proprietor of the School or a nominee of the Local Authority (Chairman).
- (b) The Principal (Secretary)
- (c) Two representatives of approved teachers employed in the school,
- (d) Three members of the public nominated by the Proprietor or the Local Authority,
- (e) Two representatives of the past pupils or two nominees of the Education Officer until a past pupil's Society can be formed.

## 3. Schools for Physically and Mentally handicapped children

- (a) The Proprietor or a nominee of the Society that is in charge of the School (Chairman),
- (b) The Principal (Secretary)
- (c) Three members of the public nominated by the Proprietor or the Society that runs the school,
- (d) Four Nominees of the Education Officer

The Board of Management shall be charged with the responsibility of conducting and managing the Special School according to regulations framed for the purpose. All grants shall be paid to the Secretary who shall disburse them according to the directions of the Board and keep and render accounts for examination by the Department of Education.

“Evening and Night Schools shall continue to receive grants at the existing rates. New Evening or Night schools may be established only by the local or other public authorities and shall be financed by them.

“The appointment of Teachers, the payment of grants and the provision of facilities shall continue to be as at present. Voluntary Organisations will be encouraged to set up such schools. Only Boards of Management as provided for... shall be entitled to manage such schools in the future.” (44)

No further action was taken on the White Paper proposals as the Government went out of Office in December 1964 and was defeated at the polls in March 1965. The proposals for Reforms in General and Technical Education presented to Parliament by the Minister of Education Mr. Iriyagolle on 26th September 1966 also deal with the question of Assisted Schools. Regarding schools for the mentally and physically handicapped children it contemplated the setting up of Boards of Management as proposed in the earlier White Paper. But he introduced two significant changes. While permission was to be given to any person to set up such schools it also states that the grants will be handed over to the proprietor of the school and not the Principal as was stated in the earlier White Paper. (45) The 1964 White Paper categorically stated that, no new Special School may be established, maintained or run by any person other than voluntary organizations and local or other public bodies.

If the classification of pupils on the conclusion of their Elementary Education at the 8th Standard as contemplated in the 1966 White Paper proposals was implemented there would have been a high percentage of school leavers at the age of 14. It was the in-

tention of the White Paper that their further study may be provided for in Evening and Night schools. At present there are only 16 such schools in the whole Island which receive State Assistance. If the Evening and Night Schools were to be used for this purpose there should be a considerable increase in the number of such schools. The White Paper of 1966 is silent on this question of Evening and Night Schools. On the other hand the White Paper of 1964 categorically stated that, “New Evening and Night Schools may be established only by the Local or other public authorities and shall be financed by them.” (46)

The quality of the teaching staff of these schools was seen from the figures given earlier. The standard of these schools cannot be raised if they are permitted to remain in the hands of private managements. There are only a handful of schools of this category. Even at present a large share of the expenditure on these schools is met from the grant received from the Government. If the Government is serious about the necessity of these schools it should take over the control of these schools without delay.

## 12. THE PIRIVENA SCHOOLS

The Pirivena Schools are what is left of the indigenous system of Education. During the period of the Sinhalese Kings the Monks were responsible for education and the Buddhist Traditions of education centred round the Monasteries and the Temples. There were monks as well as lay students receiving instruction in these Pirivenas. Besides religion, subjects like Medicine and Astrology were also taught in these institutions. The Maha-Vihara and the Abaya-Giri Vihara were Pirivena Universities with international reputation. With the coming of the Westerners these institutions declined. Mass conversions to Christianity, provision of an efficient system of education by the Missionaries, denial of the privileges these Pirivenas enjoyed under the Sinhalese Kings and the gradual transformation of our society were responsible for the decline of the Pirivenas. However, they did not die off altogether. They lingered on as small institutions and imparted instruction to a handful of students

in the Oriental Languages. The figures given below shows their expansion during recent times.

Year	Pirivenas	Students	Teachers
1946	116	4,846	427
1947	124	4,991	448
1948	124	4,818	495
1949	131	4,882	533
1950	133	5,269	526
1951	154	6,089	617
1952	142	5,929	579
1953	151	6,175	604
1954	147	5,561	593
1955	150	5,848	609
1956	155	5,292	610
1957	179	6,688	711
1958	187	7,251	754
1959	185	7,081	760
1960	186	9,189	862
1961	187	11,888	967
1962	182	17,518	906
1963	204	—	—

In 1962 they were distributed in the following provinces as follows.

	Pirivenas	Teachers
Western Province	45	93
Central Province	29	163
Southern Province	51	292
North Western Province	23	175
Uva Province	9	46
Sabaragamuwa Province	25	137
	—	—
	182	906

These figures show a steady improvement made in these institutions up to 1959 and from then onwards a rapid development. While the number of Pirivenas remained more or less the same during these three years from 1959 to 1962 the number of students increased from 7,081 to 17,518—an almost 147% increase. During the same period the number of teachers increased only from 760 to 906. This rapid expansion is due to the enactment of the Code of regulations for Pirivenas in July 1969. These regulations superceded those made under Section 32 of the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939, and published in Gazette No. 9,724 of 17th June 1947. They were formulated on the initiative of Mr. W. Dahanayake, the then Minister of Education.

Those regulations provided for three types of Pirivenas—Junior Pirivenas, Senior Pirivenas and University Pirivenas. They were to provide classes of instruction for any one or more of the following examinations.

1. Examinations conducted by the Oriental Studies Society, Colombo
2. GCE O/L
3. Entrance Examination of any recognised University
4. The HSC
5. GCE A/L
6. Any examination of a recognised University in a case where the Pirivena has been permitted by such University to prepare candidates for any of the examinations conducted by such University.

Besides these, the Principal of a Pirivena may with the approval of the Director, conduct classes in the Pirivena for any other examination which he may deem necessary or useful.

The grants that were fixed for these Pirivenas were to say the least, very generous. Every Pirivena was entitled to a annual library grant calculated at the rate of Rs. 3-00 per unit of eligible attendance. This was in addition to the initial grant of Rs. 2000/- to a Junior Pirivena, a further Rs. 1000/- when it was upgraded to the status of a Senior Pirivena and a further Rs. 2000/- when it was raised to the status of a University Pirivena.

The Annual grant was to be calculated on the following basis. If the average attendance does not exceed 100 units, at the rate of Rs. 150/- per unit; where the average attendance is between 100 and 200 units at the rate of Rs. 150/- for the first 100 units and Rs. 100/- for the balance; where it exceeds 200 units at the rate of Rs. 50/- for all those additional units.

With the grant in aid calculated on this generous basis it was not surprising that the Pirivenas began to expand rapidly with the passage of these regulations. The enactment of these regulations must be looked from another angle. They caused a rapid expansion of a category of Assisted

Schools which catered mainly to the Buddhist community on the eve of the take over of Assisted Schools and Training Colleges which were run predominantly by the Christian Missionary Organisations.

The proposals contemplated in the White Paper 1964 makes it clear, that the necessity to have greater control of the Pirivenas that were thus resuscitated was soon realised by the Government. The Pirivenas which were intended to serve the clerics became institutions for the laity run by monks with state funds. Hence the White Paper proposed that, to be registered, a Pirivena had to be established and maintained in the premises of a Buddhist Vihara, the Director of Education had to be satisfied that it was necessary to provide education to Bhikkhus and that it had to have a minimum number of Bhikkhus in attendance. These proposals were aimed at ensuring that these Pirivenas will not become Buddhist denominational schools. They were intended to see that the Pirivenas would cater primarily to Bhikkhus. But even these proposals were not adequate for this purpose. There were changes proposed in regard to the payment of grants and the disbursement of income as well. A Bhikkhu approved as a Principal of a Pirivena was to be paid only an allowance of Rs. 250/- per month and those approved as Teachers, allowances of Rs. 150/- per month. Registered Pirivenas were to receive as Grants from the Government the full salaries and allowances of eligible approved teachers and a maintenance grant calculated on the basis of Rs. 100/- per unit of attendance of Bhikkhu pupils and Rs. 20/- per unit of attendance of lay pupils.

These proposals were intended to arrest the deterioration of Pirivenas into old type Assisted Schools, which despite the fact that they were educational institutions were fountains of corrupt practices. Resorting to all manner of devices to obtain more grants, ill paid teachers, distribution of patronage, appointment of favourites as teachers which were identified with the Assisted Schools of the past began to develop at a very rapid rate in these Pirivena Schools. Perhaps the proprietors of these new type of Assisted Schools made full use of the vast fund of experience their

predecessors had collected over the years. It would have been very interesting if the White Paper proposals of 1964 came up to the implementation stage. Then we would have been treated to the grand spectacle of these newly rejuvenated vested interests rallying round to war, to fight and to shed their last drop of blood for 'religion and culture'.

### 13. THE ESTATE SCHOOLS

The Census Report of 1901 referred to the inadequacy of educational facilities provided to the children of Plantation Workers of recent Indian origin. It stated that a large percentage of these children of school going age were not in school. These references attracted attention in Ceylon as well as in England. Questions were raised in the British House of Commons and as a result of this agitation Mr. S. M. Burrows of the Ceylon Civil Service was appointed to report on this problem.

His report which has been published along with the Report of the Wace Committee provides interesting reading. It attempts to justify the inadequate provision of educational facilities to these children. It states that, "Any child can do the work who can reach the top of a tea bush. The climate is nearly always healthy, sometimes an ideal one. The child is thus a valuable asset to his parents without physical detriment to the child. In the days of Coffee this was not so and infanticide was incredibly common. It has become exceedingly rare under the changed circumstances of tea labour. To deprive the parents of this natural aid by a drastic measure of education would deal a serious blow at the labour supply, on which the prosperity of the island so largely depends and would certainly reintroduce infanticide which is hardly what English philanthropists would desire." (47) The Report further states that, "It is this interference with labour that makes aided schools unpopular with coolies. Nor have they yet reached the age of civilization which makes it necessary to treat them as English children are treated. Instead it must be refreshing to the philanthropists to know that their present condition is far healthier and happier than that of a large majority of children in England." (43)



Thus the failure to provide proper educational facilities is thus pointed out to be a favour done to these people. Provision of educational facilities would only lead to an increase in infanticide. Education is unimportant to them as they have not reached a high level of civilization. But that unless they are educated they will remain in the same level of civilization, and that it is education and education alone that will enable them to get on to a higher cultural level, is conveniently lost sight of.

Mr. Burrows refers to the children of the newly emerging Industrial Working Class in England, who in his opinion were worse off than the children of our plantation workers. There is an element of truth in what Mr. Burrows says. The English children were unhappy in the knowledge that better conditions existed and could be made available to them. The children of our Plantation Workers were comparatively happier, blissfully so in their ignorance. Blessed are the ignorant, for the hell they are in is their heavenly kingdom. Teach them the three 'R's, make them literate, and you have in your hands a disgruntled rebellious generation.

Mr. Burrows argues that separate educational facilities are not necessary for these children because when "a cooly makes money and becomes a Kangany he has the choice of many schools within easy reach to which he can and does send his boys and where he can get for them not only an ordinary but when an advanced education at extraordinarily low rates." (49) This practice continues to date and a number of private schools cater to this need. But what percentage of these children of Estate Workers are fortunate enough to climb the social ladder this way. Even though figures are not available, it is definitely a very small number. If not, this development would by now have had repercussions on the Estates. It would have helped to forge an independent leadership for these exploited workers, and thereby made a tremendous impact on the politics of the country, as these workers control our economic artery, the tea industry.

What Mr. Burrows wanted to ensure was that on every Estate where there are ten

or more boys of school going age there shall be in the course of the year a line school which shall meet for a sufficient number of days to give these boys a fair chance of learning the rudiments of Tamil and Arithmetic. Therefore he made the following recommendations.

1. To utilize existing material and proceed on existing lines.
2. To work through Planters and their associations for the present instead of by direct Government interference.
3. To ensure to the children of every estate of reasonable size the chance of obtaining an education appropriate to their wants during the course of a year.
4. To await results. (50)

The Wace Committee considering this question referred to other aspects of the problem. They pointed out that the Estate Population was of an extremely migratory character. In 1904 itself 77,302 persons arrived in the Island while 56,246 persons departed. The total Estate Population was estimated at 308,465 of which 23,690 boys and 22,510 girls were of school going age. In 1905 a total of 2139 students, 1936 boys and 203 girls received instruction in schools. This gives a percentage of 4.5 of those in the School going age group in schools. The Committee also pointed out the diversity of dialects spoken by the Estate Workers as an obstacle to bringing them under the schedule of instructions in Tamil provided by the Code.

The Committee recommended the setting up of line schools by the Estate Superintendents which were to be inspected by the Inspectors of the Department. These recommendations were embodied in Ordinance No: 8 of 1907, the first Ordinance to cover the schools in the Estates. In Section 29 it stated, that, "It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of every Estate to provide for the vernacular education of the children of the labourers employed on the estates between the ages of 6 and 10 and to set apart and keep in repair a suitable school room." In Section 28 it laid down, that, "Two or more Estates may with the sanction of the Director of Public Instruction combine for the purpose of providing a

common school under a joint manager for the instruction of such children on such estates." (51) In this manner the responsibility of educating the children of estate workers was thrust on the management of the estates. The Government merely undertook to check the progress made through the Inspectors. To this date there has been no fundamental change in this position. Even today the education of these children of plantation workers is the responsibility of the Estate Superintendents.

Ordinance No: 1 of 1920 amended the regulations to read thus; "It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of every estate to provide for the vernacular education of the children of the labourers employed in the estate between the ages of 6 and 10, to appoint competent teachers and to set apart and keep in repair a suitable classroom". (52) The addition of the words, "to appoint a competent Teacher" is significant. This shows that the regulation had to be amended as the quality of the Teachers in these schools was grossly inadequate. This was at a time when the quality of the teachers employed in the other schools was also very poor. This Ordinance No: 1 of 1920 is closely modelled on that of 1907. It went further than the latter by imposing a prohibition on the employment of children between the ages 6 and 10 in estates, imposing a fine of Rs. 10/- on the Parents for failure to send their children to school, insisting on the maintenance of Registers in these schools and providing for inspection of these schools by Inspectors appointed by the Department.

The Ordinance No: 31 of 1939 while maintaining the lower limit of the school going age for children of Estate workers at 6 years, increased the upper limit from 10 to 14 years. It also omitted the word "Vernacular" from the regulation and left it as, "it shall be the duty of the Superintendent of the estates to provide for the education...."

The Donoughmore Constitution extended the franchise to all irrespective of community, wealth or education and this provided for the estate workers of recent Indian origin to be placed on a par with the rest of the population. Perhaps this may

have influenced the decision to extend the upper limit of the School going age from 10 to 16.

The Special Committee on Education headed by Mr. Kannangara did not interest itself with the education of the children of Estate Workers. Yet the Ordinance No: 26 of 1947 enacted to give effect to the recommendations of the Special Committee dealt with this question as well. Section 8 of this Ordinance deals with the Estate Schools. This Ordinance once again amended the compulsory school going age. Now it was to be from 5 to 16 years, a eleven year period of schooling. In all those Estates which had more than 27 children of school going age it was obligatory for the Superintendent to provide for their education. The parents were compelled to see that their children attended schools. It was the duty of the Superintendent to see that Education was promoted on the Estate. By this Ordinance the Estate Schools were brought in line with the National System.

In the elections to the first Parliament 8 nominees of the Ceylon Indian Congress representing the plantation workers were elected. This was a sizable number in a house of 101 and they could have obtained redress to some of their just grievances with the assistance of the other representatives of the working class in Parliament. But these hopes were short-lived.

The Citizenship Act of 1948 decitizenised the estate workers of recent Indian origin. Henceforth, they were categorised as Stateless. They were neither citizens of India nor of Ceylon. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva commenting on the plight of these workers after the passage of this Act states, "The responses of a Parliament are ordinarily to the pressures of the electors. It is only in exceptional situations that the pressures, demands and needs of the unfranchised reflect themselves in the Parliamentary process. The reason of course is that a member of Parliament is answerable to his electors, who after all determine whether he shall be in Parliament at all. Parliamentary Government too responds in the same way. Accordingly those who fall out of the electoral process, just like those who have

never come into it, lose their power to influence Parliament ordinarily, directly and continuously. And this precisely is what happened to the Ceylon 'Indians' when they lost the franchise and lost representatives whom they had helped to elect to Parliament" (53)

Thus reduced to the level of "pariahs" in the country of their choice, to whose economic growth they had contributed so much, quite out of proportion to their numbers, this unique category of stateless persons continued to flounder, helpless, unattended, unwanted and uncared for, a living monument of racial discrimination that capitalist rulers resort to in times of crisis. This is very clearly seen in the attitude of the state towards the education of the children of these plantation workers.

The Ordinance No: 26 of 1947 provided for the Director of Education to establish and maintain a Government School on the premises set apart by the Estate for the estate school, if it was considered necessary to do so. But only 24 estate schools were taken over in this manner and the other 879 were allowed to continue as Assisted Schools. (54)

The Act No. 5 of 1951 reduced the upper limit of the period of compulsory education from 16 years to 14 years. It did not change the position as regards the onus of Education. With the introduction of the Free Education Scheme the opportunity of educating oneself from the Kindergarten to the University, without paying tuition fees, was provided for all except the children of the plantation workers. The vast majority of the existing denominational schools entered the free scheme. Central Schools and Senior Schools began to be opened up in response to electoral pressure in the areas not catered to by the denominational schools. But the children of the Plantation Workers, whose labour provided the income to meet this ever increasing expenditure on education, were to rest content with the knowledge of the three "R"s, imparted by teachers who had neither the training nor the inducement to undertake this onerous task, under conditions to which the reference "apologies for education" would itself be a compliment.

As referred to earlier, 1948 marks the turning point in the history of the Plantation Workers. Henceforth the ebb and the tide of politics left them severely alone. The Act No: 5 of 1960 which took over the management of Aided Schools and Training Colleges left the Estate Schools which also belonged to the category of Assisted Schools, untouched. As far as Parliamentary Politics was concerned, the Estate Worker did not count.

The National Education Commission recommended that the present category of Estate Schools be abolished beginning with the lowest class in 1963, that Schools be set up on a zonal basis as according to their recommendations on the school system and that children of Estate Workers should be admitted to the schools along with the local children provided that their education will be through the Sinhala medium. (55) This in the words of the Commissioners was in order to provide the greatest social cohesion. The examples of Puerto Ricans in USA, Indians and Pakistanis in England, Italians, Germans and the Dutch in Australia were cited to prove that no formulae of instruction through the mother tongue has been allowed to intervene and prevent the process of social cohesion in the various cities in the countries referred to. But these examples are hardly a parallel to the situation in Ceylon.

These Tamil Speaking Plantation Workers were brought down to the Island by the European Planters during the period of British rule. The first immigrants came as far back as the first quarter of the 19th Century. From then on there was a regular flow to and from the Island which ceased in 1948 with the passage of the Citizenship Act. In this process about 10 lakhs of them developed permanent or semi permanent interests in Ceylon and the vast majority of them lost contact with India altogether. The Plantations where these people worked developed as more or less self contained units which had hardly anything to do with the world outside. Hence the failure on the part of these Tamil Speaking people to mix up and integrate with the Sinhalese Speaking indigenous people of the country. Even the bazaar towns that

grew up in the Plantation areas, the higher rungs of these plantation workers monopolised the trade. Thus, these people had hardly the necessity nor the opportunity to learn the Language of the Sinhalese people and become assimilated with them.

According to the 1931 Census figures The Estate Population is enumerated as

	Total	"Indian" Tamil	Percentage
Kalutara District	523,550	34,308	7%
Kegalle District	471,605	58,247	12%
Ratnapura District	421,555	87,088	21%
Matale District	201,049	40,655	20%
Kandy District	840,382	255,914	30%
Badulla District	466,896	166,265	36%
Nuwara Eliya District	325,254	192,578	59%

Those figures show that while these Tamil Speaking Plantation Workers of recent Indian origin are a majority in the Nuwara Eliya District, they are a sizable minority in the Badulla and the Kandy Districts as well.

Unlike the minority races referred to in the report, these workers were brought down to Ceylon when English was the official Language and when both Ceylon and India were a part of the British Empire. As far as the British were concerned this was a transfer of workers from one part of the empire to another. Also unlike the minority races referred to in the report, these plantation workers speak the same language and profess the same religion as a important section of the population which is now considered as indigenous. The Tamil Speaking people number one million in the Plantation areas and one and a half million in the Northern and the Eastern Provinces. This gives them a total of 2½ Million, nearly one fourth of the total population of the Island. These Plantation Workers do not live in small pockets isolated from each other but in large concentrations in the midst of whom are pockets of Sinhalese speaking businessmen and villagers. This is the picture in the High grown tea districts in the up country.

The Commission in its report refers to the appeal of the Kandyan Youth League, that, "the duty both fell heavily on this commission to liquidate these manifestly

75,686 Sinhalese Speaking as against 693,081 Tamil Speaking workers. Thus the proportion in the Estate is almost 1:9. This does not take into account the population of the Villages and the Bazaar towns where the Sinhalese speaking people live in larger concentrations. The Census figures compiled in 1953 give the break up in the plantation areas as follows.

anti-national pockets, lock stock and barrel and divert their school going population to their nearest State institutions. This appeal may have influenced the recommendation of the Commission, which in their opinion would provide the greatest social cohesion. There were only three members who opposed the enforcement of Sinhala as the medium of instruction for these children. Their arguments against this recommendation are worthy of record. "We have no doubt whatever that the effort to impose Sinhalese compulsorily upon the Estate children will retard rather than hasten national integration. While language can serve as an instrument of harmony, it becomes a bone of contention and a source of bitterness when it is forced upon an unwilling people....The country's linguistic context is a question of fact and not of law, and the fact is that Ceylon is by and large a bilingual country with the Sinhalese speakers predominating. That the legislature has declared Sinhala the one and only official language of the Island does not have any effect on the linguistic context of the Island and has no bearing on the question of permitting the Estate children to receive their education through the mother tongue. Since the Ceylon Tamils, the Tanils of Indian extraction and the Muslims are all Tamil Speakers, it is difficult to see how the linguistic context operates against permitting the Estate Children to pursue their studies in the mother tongue." (56) These views were expressed by Messers: Natesan and Perimbanayagam

in their dissent on the recommendation on this question. Perhaps it is this very affinity of language between the sections referred to, that has led to this suggestion that these children be educated in the Sinhala medium. That would be a method of preventing a consolidation of the Tamil Speaking people as a united force. Another Member of the Commission, Mr. Simitharatchy stated, that, he is "not in agreement with them as they appear to me to be coercive and therefore likely to create a standstill in the education of Estate children."

This recommendation to enforce Sinhala as the medium of instruction of these Tamil speaking children was made in the context of an estrangement of feelings between the Tamil Speaking and Sinhalese speaking people in the country. Right from the day that we obtained political independence in 1948, the various Capitalist parties that held office used communalism to divert the attention of the people from the economic issues. The Citizenship Act of 1948, The Sinhala Only Act of 1956, The Communal carnage of 1958, the tearing of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact under pressure from the chauvinists, the use of the Federal and DMK bogey to deceive and mislead the masses are highlights of the communalism of this period. With whatever good intentions the recommendation is made, if the children of the Tamil Speaking Plantation workers were to be compelled to receive their education in the Sinhala medium, it would only add another to the above mentioned acts of racial discrimination which we have been able to pile up during the short period of our existence as an independent nation. Hence the necessity, to use the

words of Dr. N. M. Perera made in 1955 in the heyday of his public life, "To swim against the current than to float with the tide."

The White Paper of 1964 proposed that, "all Estate Schools will be taken over to the State and will be run as basic schools and the medium of instruction there will be the official language." A basic school is one which caters to Grades 1 to 8. While this recommendation is an improvement on the present situation where the schools teach only up to Grade 5, the failure to provide for higher education of this category of the population is a serious drawback.

The White Paper 1966 was in every sense a retrograde step as far as education of the plantation workers is concerned. Once again we find the old record being placed, "It will be the duty of the proprietor of every Estate in which there are more than 25 children who are of compulsory school age and whose parents are resident in the Estate to provide educational facilities for such children..." (57) No mention is made of the grants that are paid by the Government now on the basis of attendance and results. Not a word about any assistance from the State. No reference to any facilities to train teachers who instruct these children. The education of these children is to be left to the tender mercies of the Superintendents. If these White Paper proposals were to be accepted Education in the Plantation sector is bound to deteriorate further. This is the price the Plantation workers are been made to pay for that brazen act of political chicanery of Mr. D. S. Senanayake. Their present plight is seen from the figures given below.

Year	Schools	Students	Teachers	Uncertificated Teachers	
				No.	%
1946	849	35,886	840		
1947	900	45,712	997		
1948	968	51,451	1100	603	55%
1949	955	56,168	1094	614	56%
1950	945	59,475	1079	678	63%
1951	942	60,294	1100	633	57%
1952	934	66,089	1122	682	61%
1953	917	64,727	1096	728	66%
1954	899	66,280	1078	717	67%
1955	891	67,110	1078	776	72%

Year	Schools	Students	Teachers	Uncertificated No.	Teachers %
1956	884	69,918	1087	808	74%
1957	881	73,047	1115	862	77%
1958	879	75,000	1133	862	73%
1959	875	77,687	1162	930	81%
1960	874	78,733	1199	957	80%
1961	873	80,148	1236	903	73%
1962	877	80,193	1269	953	75%
1963	875	80,853	1197	766	64%

These figures by themselves are sufficiently eloquent. Between 1946 and 1963 the number of students increased from 35,886 to 80,853 an increase of 125%, the number of Teachers from 840 to 1197 an increase of 40% while the percentage of uncertificated Teachers increased from 55 in 1948 to 64 in 1963. This is the proud achievement of the Estate Superintendents in the field of education.

In 1958 while 75,000 children of Tamil Speaking Estate Workers were in schools there were 132,000 of them within the 5 to 14 school going age group, not in school. Thus for every three of these children in school there were 5 out of school. The Committee that looked into the question of Non School Going Children in 1958 has stated in their report that all Estate Children stop their education at the 5th standard and that the vast majority of those between 11 and 14 are now in school. While the Tamil Speaking Estate Workers form only 10% of the population their children form 24% of the non school going population (58) This wastage of human potential is the price the Working Class has had to pay for its tolerance of Capitalist class rule in this country.

The following analysis of the Teachers in the Estate Schools according to their qualifications is still more revealing.

1. English Trained	2	
2. Sinhalese Trained	2	
3. Tamil Trained	53	57
4. English Certificated	6	
5. Sinhalese Certificated	5	
6. Tamil Certificated	124	135
7. Diploma in Tamil	1	
8. Commercial Certificate	1	

9. Teachers of Music	1	
10. English Assistant's Certificate	28	
11. Provisional Certificate—Tamil	8	
12. Agriculture Certificate	2	
13. Agricultural Instructors—Tamil	106	
14. Physical Instructors	10	
15. Sinhalese Science Teachers	1	
16. Drawing Certificate	1	
17. Arabic Teachers	3	162
18. H.S.C.	2	
19. Uncertificated English	117	
20. Uncertificated Sinhalese	17	
21. Uncertificated Tamil	630	766
22. Approved Teachers	77	
		<hr/> 1197

Such a motley collection of individuals is hard to find. These 1197 teachers are distributed amongst 875 schools run by 875 Superintendents of Estates who function as managers of schools. It is also clear from these figures that these certificates these teachers have managed to collect are purely accidental and were not demanded of them for appointment to these schools. While there are 875 Schools there are only 433 teachers with some sort of Paper qualifications. Even if we distribute these 433 Teachers at the rate of one per each school there would be at least 442 schools manned by Teachers who have absolutely no qualifications. As there are only 1197 Teachers for these 875 Schools there would be at least 553 One Teacher Schools. As there are 80,853 Students on roll in these Schools manned by 1197 Teachers the average number of students per Teacher comes to 68. As the Schools cater to

from Standard 1 to 5 there would be about 553 Teachers teaching 5 parallel classes at the same time while the balance 644 Teachers do the work of two or three classes at the same time. The salaries paid to these Teachers also have no parallel. In a single session School an Uncertificated Teacher gets Rs. 35/- and a Certificated Teacher gets Rs. 45/-. All Teachers in double session schools are paid Rs. 55/- per month. An allowance of 25% on the basic salary is paid to them in addition. (59)

There is no dearth of Teachers for appointment to these Schools if the medium of instruction were to remain Tamil. There is an abundant supply of educationally qualified youth in the North who will fit into this task with ease. If it is the aim to bring about national integration we should set about it that way. If the medium of instruction of these children were to be made Sinhalese it would be necessary to teach them Sinhala through their mother tongue, Tamil and this would only result in a further deterioration of whatever standard of education there is at present. This 10% of the population engaged in production in the Plantation sector bring in 30% of the National Income. Yet they are denied their basic human right—the right to educate themselves. We are quick to protest against racial injustice in USA or South Africa. But we forget that we have our own “little Rock”. As long as we shut our eyes to it, as long as we permit our “Meridiths” who count by the Lakhs to suffer in silence, we practice racial discrimination in Education and should take our stand along with South Africa, Rhodesia and USA on the forum of world opinion, in all our nakedness.

#### 14. THE PRIVATE TUTORIES AND ACADEMIES

This category of Private Schools caters to those above the Compulsory School age. The rules of the Education Department do not permit students to stagnate for a long period in a particular class. Therefore those who fall back in their work and become overage ultimately find their way into these schools. The rule that a student is permitted to repeat the GCE

O/L only for one year has also been of benefit to these tutoreries. They are situated mainly in large towns and they expand as the situation demands.

The outlook of these schools is different. It is governed by the fact that they cater to those within the adolescent age. There is more freedom and little discipline in these institutions. The students attend the classes or keep away as they please. The Management is only particular about the payment of fees and the students are left free to do whatever they like. Most of these institutions are co-educational and this adds to the problems that are inherent in them.

The fees charged in these schools are not subject to any control. They are determined by the demand that they have to cater to. The salaries of teachers are also not governed by any stipulated scales. They depend on the agreement that each teacher is able to reach with the management. Most of these schools pay the teachers for the number of hours or the number of periods they work. There is no security of service for the Teachers in these schools, None of the teachers in these schools are eligible for pension. Even though the Employees Provident Fund Act governs them, very few of these schools have joined this scheme.

Commenting on these schools the Special Committee on Education headed by Mr. Kannangara stated in their report, that, “Provided that they do not admit children who are within the age of compulsory school attendance, we do not think that there should be any undue restriction on their (Private Tutoreries) activities. They should of course not be permitted to enter candidates for school examinations held by the Department. The approved Un-aided schools may be allowed to enter pupils for such examinations.” (60) This line of thinking prevails to date. Tutoreries have got over the difficulty regarding the entering of candidates for Public Examinations by presenting them as Private Candidates and giving publicity to their achievements when the results are out through the medium of the Press and leaflets. As these tutoreries cater to students who have

already sat for these examinations from approved schools there are occasions when they are able to secure a number of passes. But this is a small fraction of the number of candidates they present for the Examinations.

Mr. E. L. Bradby, the Principal of Royal College who was also a member of the Special Committee on Education advocated the enforcement of the same amount of control for Private Tutorials as for Private Schools. Perhaps he was beginning to feel the competition of these tutorials which began to spring up around Royal College, and their influence on his students. These Tutorials in Colombo 7 form the cream of this category of schools, even today.

The National Education Commission, referring to these schools stated, that, "It is extremely doubtful whether these cram-shops or coaching establishments, euphemistically called academies or tutorials, have the right atmosphere associated with seats of learning. The absence of a good moral tone in a place of learning is harmful to students and the country at large. Some Private Tutorials or Academies are known to practice all sorts of deception on the public. There are cases of institutions that assume overnight such designations as "University Colleges" or "Universities"... The time has now come to investigate the devious methods employed by Private Academies or Tutorials to earn huge profits and the kind of influence exercised by them on the life and character of our youth. We strongly recommend that legislation should be enacted immediately to control the scale of fees charged, the qualifications of personnel employed to give instruction, and the disbursement of income earned by all Private Academies or Tutorials or similar institutions in this country until such time as they are absorbed into the structure of a unified National System of Education." (61) This is a recommendation which demands the immediate attention of the Ministry of Education.

The 1964 White Paper proposed that the functioning of all Private Schools, Tutorials and the manner in which they conform to the National System of Education be reviewed every three years by a Committee appointed for the purpose. The 1966

White Paper made no reference to these schools. But the classification as contemplated in the 1966 White Paper, if implemented, would have been a great fillip to these tutorials. The parents unable to gain admission for their children in the Academic courses in Government Schools would have sought to do so through Private Tutorials and Academies. As such we would have witnessed a great expansion of these schools, if the proposals in the white Paper were implemented in the original form.

## 15. THE NURSERY SCHOOLS

These are centres which provide pre-school education. With the raising of the minimum age for admission to school first to 4 years 9 months, then to 5 years and later as was contemplated to 6 years, the necessity for these schools is beginning to be increasingly felt. The 1966 White Paper stated that, "Elementary education in Kanishta Vidyalayas will be free and compulsory to all children who have attained the age of 6 years and have not attained the age of 14 years." If this were to be accepted a child can enter school only after he is 6 years of age. This creates the problem of his education before joining the Primary School.

As the National Education Commission remarks, the ideal place for them at this stage of their life is the home itself, under the affectionate care of the parents. But there is a definite change in the pattern of our social life since the second world war. The wage freeze policy that has been followed by successive Governments have driven the mothers who have hitherto stayed at home, to seek employment to augment their family income. With the expansion of the economy in the post-war years, employment of women of all sections of the community in various sectors of our economy, became a very common feature. Employment of women is no longer looked down in our society. This changing pattern has naturally come into conflict with the raising of the age of admission to schools. It therefore created a need for institutions to provide pre-school education. The Private sector willingly stepped in to meet this need as the Government failed to provide it. Profit being the motive in Private enterprise, all the ills



that are inherent in such enterprises are seen in these Nursery Schools as well.

The Special Committee on Education of 1943 headed by Mr. Kannagara took note of the growing need for Nursery Schools. But due to administrative and financial difficulties they merely recommended the setting up of experimental schools in the principal towns with the help of Local Authorities.

The National Education Commission made a deeper analysis of the problem. They spotlighted the fact that there was no control exercised over these schools by the Education Department. They suggested the establishment of "neighbourhood centres" or "pre-school centres" in areas where there was a need for them. They stressed the need for the provision of adequate facilities for the physical and psychological development of children. They were of opinion that the care of the pre-school child should be entrusted to the local bodies and that the Education Department should provide the personnel to be in charge of them and pay their salaries while the Health Department should provide free milk, vitamins and arrange for periodical medical examinations of the children. Finally they remarked, that, "at present the Education Department has no control whatsoever over the institutions claiming to provide pre-school education. Today any person can open and run an institution claiming to provide pre-school education without observing any standards regarding the qualifications of the 'teachers' employed, the floor space, garden space provided, the fees that can be charged, etc. We consider this a very unsatisfactory state of affairs and strongly recommend that legislation be enacted immediately to control the establishment and running of such schools and to make them conform to certain standards, pending the establishment of pre-school centres by Local Bodies." (62) The keenness of the Local Bodies to take part in educational activity has yet to be tested. The earlier attempts to get the Local Bodies to share the responsibility for education ended in failure.

Leave alone education, hardly a single Local Body has so far succeeded in provi-

ding adequate library facilities to its residents. For a population of 6 lakhs the Colombo Municipal Council has so far provided only four libraries, three of which have no reference facilities. A large number of local bodies have not even thought of establishing libraries. In such a context whether these local bodies would interest themselves with pre-school education which would be far more expensive is very doubtful. Hardly a single local authority is financially solvent. Most of them depend very heavily on the grants paid by the Central Government to meet their current expenditure. Under these circumstances pre-school education will be too costly an undertaking for these local bodies.

Finally party politics has seeped into Local Government to such an extent that everything is looked at from the angle of narrow political advantage. It is bound to effect whatever responsibility that is given to these local bodies. This is the tragedy of our local politics. It would be very unfortunate if this were to affect pre-school education. Hence the necessity to have firm control by the Department of Education if and when the responsibility of pre-school education is handed over to Local Authorities.

Further we have the experience of other countries which have entrusted a share of the responsibility for education to the local authorities. Mr. Lester Smith, commenting on the administration of education by local authorities says, that, "But in some areas the administration of this important statutory function is far from satisfactory. 'Unfortunately', writes one critic, 'it seems that under some local authorities, Governing bodies are reduced to ineffectiveness. They exercise no real responsibility..... Moreover, the composition of governing bodies (which is determined by the local authority) may be such as to exclude or reduce to a minimum that wise experience of education and of life which their members should possess, and to make each body of governors a replica in miniature of the full education committee, faithfully reproducing the same political divisions and dominance of power. Thus educational considerations are subordinated to politics and the poten-

tial value of governing bodies lost.’” (63) If this is the situation in England where there is a stable two-party system operating how much worse would it be under our multi-party system. Hence the necessity to act cautiously in this matter.

The Commission has not referred to the conditions of service of teachers in these schools. Perhaps they have taken for granted that matters would be put right once the legislation they contemplate is enforced. At present these teachers in Nursery schools are paid a monthly salary of Rs. 75/- or Rs. 100/- without any allowances. Like the Tutories they are also excluded from the operation of the National Provident Fund. None of these teachers are eligible for the pension as the Government does not recognise these schools. Obviously these conditions are far from conducive to the development of a contented teacher service.

The 1964 White Paper totally disregarded these recommendations. It stated, that, “The best place for a child of pre-school age is his or her home under the affectionate care of parents and the security of the home environment.”

“The establishment of schools or other educational institutions for children below the minimum age of admission is not considered either necessary or desirable and will therefore not be permitted. Accordingly, the word ‘school’ shall not be used in connection with institutions offering care and attention to children below the compulsory school going age. Any institutions at present catering to children below the compulsory school-going age and which carry the word ‘school’ shall cease to use the word ‘school.’”

“The establishment and maintenance of creches or institutions for the day-time care of children of working parents is not a function that comes within the purview of the Ministry of Education.” (64)

The Minister happily disposes of the problem in this masterly fashion characteristic of a magician. Obviously the arguments of the National Education Commission went completely above the heads

of those who drafted the White Paper. They seem to consider that only ‘Schools’ and not ‘Education’ comes within the purview of the Ministry of Education. This is a knave attempt to avoid one’s responsibility by shutting one’s eyes to the problem.

The 1966 White Paper did not refer to pre-school education. Perhaps the Minister thought that discretion was the better part of valour. What should be remembered is that the atmosphere under which these children of the pre-school age group are brought up has an important bearing on their later development. They should be handled by trained personnel temperamentally suited for the purpose. The private effort in this field of education was not undertaken with the missionary zeal of the days gone by. It was profit that motivated these “educators” to undertake this responsibility. As such they are the least capable of handling this responsibility in the desired manner. Hence the need to abolish the Private Sector at the bottom of the educational ladder as well.

## 16. THE PRIVATE SECTOR TODAY

In the previous pages we traced the history of Education in the Island from 1796 to the present day to show the expansion of the Public Sector and the corresponding decline of the Private Sector. The Government which had for various reasons been content with permitting private organisations and individuals to attend to the work of education, gradually intervened and took over a large share of the management and control of educational institutions in the Island. Now only 8% of it remains in the hands of the private sector. This intervention was not the result of a deliberate change of policy but of giving way to pressure that was brought to bear at various times from various quarters. In this process of asserting greater control over management and administration of non-government schools, small sections fell apart and began to revolve independently in the educational orbit, thus constituting the various segments which collectively form the Private Sector in Education.

Thus the Fee Levying and Non Fee Levying Private Schools and the Assisted

Schools came into being as a result of the Education Acts No: 26 of 1947 and 5 of 1960. The Pirivena Schools are now governed by the Code of Regulations for Pirivenas of 1959, which made them more stable than even the earlier denominational schools. The Estate Schools are a result of the continuation of the policy enunciated in the Ordinance No: 8 of 1907 of entrusting the responsibility of educating the Estate children to the Superintendents of estates.

On the other hand the Private Academies, Tutories and Nursery Schools are the result of the refusal on the part of successive Governments to take upon itself the responsibility to meet this ever growing demand to provide for the pre-school child and the early school leaver. The figures for the last two categories are not available. Those for the others are listed below, in order to place the Private Sector in its proper setting.

### THE SCHOOL STRUCTURE IN 1963

	Schools	Children	Teachers
Fee Levying Private Schools	72	23,556	1,227
Non Fee Levying Private Schools	52	46,475	1,926
Assisted Schools	20	3,104	168*
Pirivena Schools	182	17,518	906
Estate Schools	875	80,853	1,197
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,201	171,506	5,424
Government Schools	7,545	2,190,115	72,898*

The defects of the Private Sector were enumerated in the earlier pages. It is crystal clear that it has now been reduced to the status of a poor relative of the Government Sector. It will continue its ill fed and ill clothed existence until it finally gets its well earned rest. The fond hopes entertained by those who look to the "glorious past" for inspiration, that the onward march of progress will be arrested if not reversed have now been blasted to smitherings. The granting of Universal Suffrage in 1931 is a historic landmark in the annals of our country. It laid the foundation for the building up of a politically conscious nation. The awakening of this consciousness which emerged as a little streamlet in 1931 has now, over the years, turned into a mighty river smashing every obstacle that lies in its way. The little pockets of vested interests in the field of education can linger on only for a short time. The writing on the wall, bright and bold for all to see, does not give them much time to live.

Even the most ardent exponents of the Private Sector of Education do not speak for it in its entirety. When they refer to Private Schools they have in mind only the Fee Levying and Non Fee Levying Private Schools which once occupied the pride of place in the Educational set up of the Island.

Hence it is best to meet the arguments sponsored on behalf of each category, separately.

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## NOTES

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\* For the Year 1962.

*(To be continued in the next issue)*

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# Middle-class Fantasy in the "Sinhala Cinema"

## Towards a Socially Responsive Cinema

by

L. O. de SILVA

An artist who wishes to communicate surrenders his freedom and the individuality of his authorship to a greater or lesser degree. To the extent of this surrender the audience to which he consciously addresses himself participates in his artistic effort (albeit unconsciously); it shapes both the form and the content to that extent. The act of artistic creation is therefore not a personal act exclusively; it is a social act and the artist is a social being. We praise the artist who stimulates our imagination and illuminates that which we already knew but as it were, through a glass, darkly. We denigrate the work of an artist to which we do not respond or to which we react adversely. In the former case we have "participated" in the act of creation; in the latter we have not. This pre-natal influence of the audience is found in its most extreme form in the cinema—the all-pervasive box-office. Even a filmmaker who addresses himself to a minority audience is a captive of that audience. He is not free. When we speak of the freedom of the artist what we mean is that he must be free to choose his audience.

The quest for the social roots of a work of art through an analysis of the socio-economic climate from which it emanates and the psychology of classes in that time and place is essentially a Marxian methodology. But, since Marx's time the methodology has been used in more disciplines than one and outside of a Marxist commitment. If its validity is not universally accepted it is at least respectable. It has been freely used in writings on the cinema, notably by Dr. Siegfried Cracauer (From Caligari To Hitler), George Huarco (Sociology Of Film Art), J. P. Mayer (British Cinemas And Their Audiences) and Edgar Morin (The Stars). The social critique of the "Sinhala cinema" has yet to appear and it is not the purpose of this article to provide one.

Such an undertaking must necessarily take a few years of painstaking research. Even then one doubts whether the material for adequate documentation is available—unless one finds it in the archives of Lake House!

Several critics (besides the present writer) have observed that the parents of our cinema are the Tower Hall 1 stage and the South Indian film. Undeniable as this statement is, the matter cannot surely be left at that. It does not explain why this bastard still gets by as a legitimate offspring bearing so misguidedly a patriotic name as "Sinhala cinema". Still less does it explain why our films remain so unrelated to the social pressures of our time; so aloof from the contemporary spirit; so absurdly antediluvian and bucolic in this Space Age. Tower Hall was one means through which a Sinhala, Buddhist elite, conscious of its cultural deprivation and striving to find its national and spiritual identity, laid bare its very soul in strident melodrama. But what did these very gestures and accents mean when they appeared once again through the "Sinhala cinema" of the Madras studios 2 in the very years of our newly-found political independence? 3 If they had any significance at all it would lie in their very irrelevance. Even while the drums were heralding the transfer of power, which made Lanka 4 politically free after four and a half centuries, our cinema was making its supreme gesture with Eddie and Jossie frolicking in the kitchen! 5

Between the political independence of Ceylon and the present day lies a period of intense political activity and turmoil; of social and economic developments which have, if not profoundly, at least materially altered the face of the country and its people. Yet the cinema which spans this period shows a serenity of indifference which

would render a socially analytical chronology virtually impossible. Not even from so obvious a clue as the attire of the players can one date a film although, since the end of World War II, our sartorial habits have changed in a marked manner (there are exceptions of course—notably *Dahasak Sithuvili* and *Goluhadawatha*).<sup>6</sup> By and large the feature film has remained the prisoner of a single pre-occupation—thwarted love between the swains and virgins of Sri Lanka. This is a cinema of romantic delusions and of escape; a cinema which has turned its face resolutely away from social realism and social concern. (Since we are here examining social issues we shall leave the question of aesthetics out of the discussion). The most significant failure of our cinema was (and is) the failure to absorb the documentary idea. True enough the Government Film Unit was formed in 1948 and it did produce a few good documentary films. We are not concerned here with its performance. It is the influence of documentary on feature film-making which is our real concern and which we find so signally lacking in our country.

Flowing from the abdication of social realism and documentary is the complete lack of concern with work. The “Sinhala cinema” is concerned exclusively with leisure, not work; so perpetuating the legend that the Sinhalese are lazy good-for-nothings! It is difficult indeed to find exceptions here. *Indunila* started well in the gem pits and then petered away into the habitual preoccupation. *Goluhadawatha* would be an exception if in “work” we include school-work. The strength of this film is the bringing to life of a semi-urban secondary school. Here is the essence of the documentary idea; it upholds the dignity of everyday working life and of social institutions; it is creative, socially-positive cinema. To pepper the usual dish with a “leftist” hand, as in *Seethala Wathura*, does not meet the case at all; neither does the “working-class” type (*Jeevitha Satana*). The pride of the working-class is that it is socially productive and if we are to be given a film of working-class life let us not be palmed off with a lot of miserable bums. Where we do find people at work it is either as part of the background (like waterfalls, mountains

and the sea) or as incidental action for a shot or sequence. There was a film in which a well-known actress was shown plucking a tea bush in a manner that would have made a Kangany<sup>7</sup> weep.

It has been suggested that the cause of this lack of social relevance and of the low aesthetic level of our cinema is referable to the control exercised by non-Sinhalese over the industry.<sup>8</sup> The fact may give an ironical dimension to the term “Sinhala cinema” but otherwise its implications are purely vestigial. As it was suggested at the outset the dominant factor is the audience.

The oppressed of every age have produced their own communal forms of escapism. Religion, mythology, astrology and folk art have each played their part in assuaging the pain of living. In the industrialised and acquisitive societies of today the need for escape through romance and myth-making is universal and can be satisfied only through a mass medium. The cinema is that mass medium. It is the modern equivalent of the ancient Roman circus. Its star system is the modern pantheon or community of saints. Edgar Morin in “The Stars” explains in thus:

“The star is a goddess. The public makes her one. But the star system prepares her, trains her, moulds her, moves her, manufactures her. The star corresponds to an affective or mythic need which the star system does not create, but without the star system this need would not find its forms, its supports, its excitants”.

This is fairly put. But it must not lead us to the mistaken belief that the role played by the industry is the modern process of myth-making is a passive one. After all, the cinema has its competitor in organised sport which has its own star system (the champion gladiators in our modern Colossia). The notion that the film industry merely provides the audience with what it desires is the naively disingenuous claim of every advertising agency. The cinema has from the time it grew into a self-conscious industry, created and perpetuated its own audience. Through the star system, the film magazines, and gossip columnists, publicity agents, the fashion magazines and

cosmetics industry the cinema has provided behavioural matrices for the millions. Hollywood in particular has influenced speech patterns, modes of dress and habits of thought and feeling as no political dictator has ever succeeded in doing.

Sex is the glutinous medium through which the stars are fixated upon the audience and because they are sex idols their appeal transcends the finite reaches of mere copulatory fulfillment. They are an inner need, an object of worship and fetishism, a cult; and to the extent that any star is thus needed and worshipped the box office takings from her (or his) films soar into the billions. The star system is primarily a commercial one; necessary for film-selling, not film-making. Here again Morin is worth quoting:

“The star system is a specific institution of capitalism on a major scale. Before the period of Stalinist hero-worship, the Soviet cinema attempted to eliminate not only the star but even the leading player. Now great character actors common to stage and screen generally play the leading parts. Their prestige of course extends beyond the screen, but it has hitherto been channelled and ‘ennobled’ by politics. The genius of Soviet leading actors, like that of any Stakhanovite record-breaker, runner, prima ballerina, or eminent writer, is used to prove the excellence of the Soviet system and attests to a political merit eventually worthy of consecration by service to the Supreme Soviet. A certain kind of star might eventually appear in the USSR to satisfy the imaginative needs which are at present meagerly fulfilled. But any cinema which in the contemporary world situates itself either outside of, on the margins of, or in competition with capitalism, even at an under-developed capitalist level, does not have stars in the sense of the term as we understand it in the West. The tendency of the ‘cinema of truth’ in its ‘documentary’ or ‘neo-realist’ developments, from Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* to Renoir’s *Toni* and Visconti’s *La Tera Trema*, radically eliminates the star and, eventually, even the profes-

sional actor. It is precisely the fundamental tendency of the cinema that is independent of trusts and combines or is in rebellion against them.”<sup>8</sup>

Between the procurers of idols, drug-dreams, the sense of well-being associated with vicarious achievement, and their customers (the mass audience) there is a complex and continuous exchange of information regarding ideas, tastes and feeling: through voluminous fan-mail, reviews in the press, radio and TV appearances and the box-office. The public relations and publicity aspects of cinema are in themselves major trades. Beauty contests held all the world over, in which the personal quality we call beauty is quantified by the tape measure and the weighing scale, is an adjunct of the cinema (and of the cosmetics industry which itself grew out of Hollywood).

The manufacture of romance and fantasy is necessarily a process of self-projection and since we are social beings our fantasies must bear some relation to the society in which we live. A broad sweep of the American or Indian cinema conveys a picture of two fairly clearly definable sets of values, two types of imaginative expression, and it is always a valid exercise to enquire what segment of society provides the cinema with its ideational and emotional content. An aristocracy (if there still is one) cannot possibly present its class view of the world and society objectively without causing a violent revulsion among the mass audience. In any period film, if the Queen-heroine is to win and retain the sympathy of the audience, her feudal keep must be stormed and she must be portrayed from the inside, invested with basically the same emotional reflexes as the typist. The wealthy bourgeoisie, so essentially vulgar in habits of thought and living, have difficulties of an entirely different kind. Their very existence depends on concealing, not revealing, the exploitative ideology of their class. The bourgeois is rarely, if ever, the role of a great star. Neither for that matter, if one crosses over to the other extreme of the social spectrum, is the true industrial worker. The working-class, by its very nature, tends towards realism. It cannot manufacture glamour or make-believe—it cannot produce stars. True enough, the

French cinema of the thirties tried hard to provide a "working-class" hero but the Gabins and Arlettys were no proletarians. It is significant that the characters which best brought out their star qualities were waifs and criminals.

It is the amorphous middle class, spanning the social distance which separates the business tycoon from the factory foreman, which provides the cinema with an "ideology", an emotional content and a commercial viability. An intellectual elite which springs from the middle class has to shed its specific class character if it is to provide a role of leadership in society. Not so in the cinema. It is by upholding petit-bourgeois values and morals that commercial feature film-making retained its "ideological" vigour and financial stability. It is not accidental that the decline of the big studios and the commercial cinema in general was accompanied by a break-down in the traditional values of the middle class in Europe and America. Today, in competition with television (modern youth of Europe and America were dubbed "the television generation" by McLuhan) the screens have become bigger, the sound more deafening, the depth of focus sharper and the sex more prurient in order to stun a jaded audience. It has been the proud boast of the American Establishment that its affluent society has converted the working-class into a middle class. The American cinema provides evidence that the converse may also be true—that the middle class is becoming "proletarianised" in outlook. No highly industrialised urban culture can escape this.

From the giant cinema of international finance and distribution to the "Sinhala cinema" is a long haul and as Morin has indicated, the particular elan and stance of the cinema of the "West" can in no way be related to it. We have no star system—only half-baked ambitions in that direction. We are epigones in all that we do—and worse, we are shameless plagiarisers of the South Indian cinema. We are too small and too poor to imitate anyone successfully. Indeed, our very smallness and poverty are pointers to a way out of the emasculating commercial ethos but before we can take that way out we must be conscious of the

social roots of what we blithely call "Sinhala cinema".

The first Madras-cooked length of animated celluloid to come to Ceylon as our own product was called a "Sinhalese film". Who is the villain who perpetrated this baneful terminological impropriety? Was it the producer himself or some scribbler posing as a film critic? It is exasperating not to know. An expression once invented is retentive of life and the metamorphosis from "Sinhalese film" to "Sinhala cinema" represents only a small cultural shift.<sup>9</sup> The confusion between the language of cinema and the language in which the players converse remains. To what extent this misnomer has been responsible for our present situation is hard to say. One suspects that it has added a certain psychological weight to the tendency which has made our cinema one exclusively for the Sinhala people. This is a tragedy; it has played its part in creating the worst possible traditions—because what was palmed off as "Sinhala" was really South Indian film fantasy and also because we looked towards a moribund theatre and adopted a thought-emotion complex that was no longer valid to our contemporary situation.

Our cinema then, is the cultural expression of the Sinhala middle class translated into the terms of a mass medium. It is perhaps more accurate to speak of a lower middle class to distinguish it from that culturally bastardised and privileged urban middle class which does not as a rule patronise "Sinhala cinema". Our cinema upholds all the virtues of a middle class looking backward over its shoulder to its not so distant peasant origin; looking back wistfully, for this is a middle class which is conscious of the contemptible and insignificant role it plays in the economy. It curls in upon itself and pours out its sentimental heart over the loyalties and vicissitudes of family life. It stands for all the traditional virtues, myths, misconceptions and superstitions and heaps curses upon the foreign intrusions to which most vices are related. The family (its unity and sanctity) is the matrix of all moral and social judgments. The hero is he who protects and preserves the family; the villain is he who divides and destroys it. There is only one



condition to which the family must bend— young love. This is the crucible in which the integrity of the family is tested. Here it is the obtuse parent who is the villain— his refusal to accept truth and beauty (love, young and pure) threatens the family. In the final sequence, when all conflicts are resolved and difficulties removed, the family is re-united. This theme, in all its variations, is worked out in terms that are so remote from the actuality of contemporary living that it disturbs no one's equanimity. We weep copiously and return home, tired but happy.

Yet, though the outer shell of the drama is unreal it has a core of truth which can be related to the economic and social condition of the middle class. The source of all security for the middle class (this is true of all communities in Ceylon) is the family, and no greater tragedy can be conceived than its distintegration. How excellently *Sath Samudura* brought this out! This being so it is not hard to trace the significance attached to young lovers. The marriage of son or daughter<sup>10</sup> is one of the great moments of triumph in a family: it is also the cause of its greatest strains and anxieties. Playing incessantly on this theme our cinema partakes of the quality of the folk or morality play with its elements of ritual and sympathetic magic. The playing out of this drama to its happy ending is a repeated assurance of social stability and well-being.

It is not necessary for the purpose of this discussion to consider whether art is an expression of personality or an escape from it. It is often claimed that most Asian art is impersonal, stylised and decorative. This is outside my competence. But it is certainly true that the conservative middle-class Sinhalese considers it unseemly to relate art (whether on the stage, screen or canvas) too closely to life. He finds it difficult to comprehend why the unpleasant fact or the discomfiting image should be etched in when the beautiful and pleasing is so readily available. It is very easy to fall into the error that the source of this prejudice is the traditional Sinhala-Buddhist approach to art. It is more likely that the source of our prudery and squeamishness is Christian missionary teaching;<sup>11</sup> its influence cannot be lightly brushed aside. It has reinforced the social need for security and assurance.

Today, when the family is no longer able to fulfill its social obligation to the extent that it did, the younger generation has wiped out our inhibitions from the Sinhala theatre. They persist on the screen.

One of the most revealing characteristics of our cinema is its approach to class— Money is the source of all evil and the cardinal sin is class snobbery. An under-privileged middle class in an under-developed country sees heaven-on-earth in a society where the rich share their wealth with the poor; the tycoon invites the beggar to his table and gives his daughter away to the chauffeur. The poor are virtuous and the wealthy can only redeem themselves from their sinful ways by co-habiting with the poor. By an ironical yet wholly unconscious appositeness this philosophy is most often propounded by a clown or a bum. And it is in keeping with this philosophy that our films usually shun the cities and bask in the photogenic countryside peopled by unwordly innocents and the louts who prey on them. The village is the source of all purity; the city the source of all sin (the hoary fallacy). Once the rich the city-dweller has been converted there is peace—perfect social peace. It is natural that the urban working-class can find no place in this scheme of things. Even the plantation worker whose surroundings are so photogenic is not countenanced; he stands outside the concern of the "Sinhala cinema" on two counts! <sup>12</sup>

The way out is to take stock of our own peculiar resources and to suit our ambitions according to them. We must develop a cinema that is truly cinema; secondly, we must build a cinema that is truly indigenous. We are a plural society<sup>13</sup> and we must take advantage of the cultural richness of such a condition. Mr. Tissa Abeysekera<sup>12</sup> wrote not long ago that before we can develop genuine cinematic traditions the "Sinhala cinema" of today must be killed and buried. He certainly did not overstate the case. In the passage quoted from Morin there is an approving reference to Flaherty—the man whose work gave birth to the word "documentary". It would be even more relevant to our case to speak of Grierson, the inventor of the word and the man who worked out a philosophy of cinema round it. In the following passage he announced his manifesto to the world:

First principles. (1) We believe that the cinema's capacity for getting around, for observing and selecting from life itself, can be exploited in a new and vital art form. The studio films largely ignore this possibility of opening up the screen on the real world. They photograph acted stories against artificial backgrounds. Documentary would photograph the living scene and the living story. (2) We believe that the original (or native) actor, and the original (or native) scene, are better guides to an interpretation of the modern world. They give cinema a greater fund of material. They give it power over a million and one images. They give it power over more complex and astonishing happenings in the real world than the studio mind can conjure up or the studio mechanic can recreate. (3) We believe that the materials and stories thus taken from the raw can be finer (more real in the philosophic sense) than the acted article. Spontaneous gesture has a special value on the screen. Cinema has a sensational capacity for enhancing the movement which tradition has formed or time worn smooth...."

(*Grierson on Documentary* edited by Forsyth Hardy)

If we recollect that at the time these words were written the writer had the early experience of the Soviet cinema to draw on; that Britain built up a cinema (documentary as well as feature) almost from scratch on this theory; and that in the thirties the US, in the throes of the Great Depression, was producing films like *Dead End*, *You Only Live Once* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, the validity of Grierson's thinking would be apparent. And it remains valid to this day.

It is only fair to point out that our cinema has in fact learnt some of the lessons. *Rekawa* and *Sandesaya* were shot entirely (or almost so) on location and when *Gamperaliya* was shot in private residences the message got home. The makers of these films had begun on documentary. Today most of our films are shot outside of the studio. Having no professional theatre,

no dramatic schools, we draw our players from their homes, offices or the street. Ceylonese have a natural gift of mimicry and this saves us a great deal of bother and expense. We must not decry our make-shift arrangements. They are a blessing and we must make the most of them, as the early neo-realism of Italy did.

Documentary will help us to overcome the tribal, Sinhala exclusivity of our cinema and to stop this nonsensical talk of "Sinhala films" and "Tamil films". Documentary will forge more relevant mental attitudes: teach us respect for facts, for reality (not excluding the inner reality beneath the surface of things); the importance of documentation which is so sadly neglected in Ceylon. Should anyone attempt a thesis on the brief history of our cinema he will run around through lack of a film archive. Documentary does not exclude the poetic vision or even lyricism (see the films of Flaherty and *The Song of Ceylon*). Documentary is propaganda in the best sense of that word and it is educational, once again, in the best sense of the much-abused word. Documentary is a sobering and a rational influence and a much-needed corrective to our almost incorrigible sentimentalism. It will turn our eyes away from Chandala<sup>15</sup> maidens to more worthy causes. A few years ago two lads from Ananda College made a little film in 16 mm. They called it *Verra* (effort)—physical, academic and spiritual effort. Those who are in films and have passed the years of indiscretion should start learning from schoolboys and undergraduates (*Niyandarata*). The latter is a documentary that fits Grierson's definition in every way. Right effort in relation to our cinema points the finger to documentary which is a necessary concomitant of any sensible economic developmental effort; of an effort to build a people, not simply in isolation but in meaningful relation with their fellows. Documentary is inescapably humanist and international. These values are still to be established in our part of the world (if they can be said to be established anywhere at all) and the documentary idea, in straight documentary as well as in feature films, has an extraordinarily creative role to play. There is a mistaken notion in Britain that Grierson is a played-out theorist. These are notions based on transient fashions of thought. The

ideas embodied in the documentary film movement are fundamental and are as valid today as they ever were. They are certainly imperative for us.

But documentary is not a word to conjure with. The problem of the mass audience remains. Flaherty once said that the best film audience in the world is the uncorrupted, virgin audience. Such an audience responds directly to the visual image—it has no conditioned reflexes (acquired through indiscriminate film-going) to impose upon and distort a film. He said he found it among the Samoan islanders, while making *Moana*. Even if we accept this sweeping statement as valid (one supposes Flaherty wanted to emphasise a point) where can we find such an audience in Ceylon today? The cinema is ubiquitous, the sole medium of mass entertainment besides organised sport. We cannot find the audience we want by imitating the ancient Greek philosopher who lamp in hand, searched for an honest man. **We must create that audience. We must create a minority audience.**<sup>16</sup> The present writer was once taken severely to task by a critic for suggesting this need. A minority audience is not a snob audience. It is quite the reverse. It is an audience which is free from the supercilious notion that to take the cinema seriously is not quite respectable—not pukka. The “high-brow” intellectual snob is no longer a factor in our social complex. It is the arrogant snobbery of the “low brow” that we have to contend with. We conceive it our duty to create a minority audience out of a frank recognition of the nature of the mass audience and out of a belief that today’s minority audience (avaunt garde, if you like) is tomorrow’s mass audience.

The most daring and unconventional film-maker in the world still needs an audience as was indicated at the beginning of this article. If we lack such a film-maker it is surely because the social milieu denies him that audience. The role of leadership must come from the front of the cinema screen as well as from behind it. It is precisely here that a film institute,<sup>17</sup> the film society movement and amateur, experimental film-making play their part. It is a creative, educational function.

Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that in this place and time it is the most vital social responsibility that falls upon a progressive elite, outside of politics. In 1966 an audience of 500 at the New Arts Theatre of the Ceylon University, Peradeniya, only 75 sat through *Citizen Kane*, a film made a quarter of a century ago. What worried them was not the English dialogue; it was the unfamiliar language of cinema. And we are a nation of cinema addicts!

We have already indicated how the cinema has shaped the ideas, emotional reflexes and behavioural patterns of millions all the world over. And it has been for the worse because the giant film industries are motivated by the interests of big business. We also know how effectively the cinema was used by Dr. Goebbels to instill the Nazi myth among the German people. How then might not a cinema, directed towards humanist and progressive social ends, change the lethargy of our people into energetic, social purposiveness? It was not for nothing that Lenin announced that of all the arts the cinema was the most important to the young Soviet state. The early Soviet cinema was used as an agent of the great social reconstruction programme which followed the end of the civil war. It was a revolutionary cinema as critics all the world over now freely acknowledge. Only a cynic can doubt the potent social force which the cinema is capable of releasing. It may be good. It may be evil. Either way, film education is a vital need—protective as well as creative.

A vigorous film society movement, a sizeable minority audience—an audience of young people—can call forth the kind of films we want to see made in this country. By international standards our technical equipment may be scrappy and our budgets beggarly but these are mere details when compared with new ideas. Let us recall that out of conditions infinitely worse came *Open City* and *Bicycle Thieves*. We want a cinema that draws its material from our native source—from the soil, the roots and the labour of our own people. Not an insular, tribal and narrow-minded cinema—that is what we want destroyed. We want a cinema which reflects the contem-

porary world but through our native eyes. We do not want a cinema that comforts and lulls. We want one which disturbs and activates; a cinema which directs a searchlight upon our society; which is capable, when the occasion demands, of rousing us to moral indignation. We want a cinema which has a social sense and a sense of history; a cinema which, alongside all the other forms of expression and communication, can act as a social cataclysm in our

time. We want a cinema that will examine social and personal relations in a serious, relevant and exciting way. We want our cinema to develop a modern attitude, a scientific, rational outlook to replace our nostalgia and moralising sentimentalism. These are many wants to be satisfied and we can make a beginning if we start where we should start. We must start by educating the audience. There is no other way.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The collective name by which the Sinhala theatre of the twenties and thirties came to be known, after the hall in which the plays were usually staged. It was one of the focal points of a politico-cultural revival. The term is also used to denote a style and tendency which is now regarded as archaic. The Tower Hall was converted into a cinema many years ago.
2. The first two full-length feature films produced by Ceylonese were *Asokamala* and *Kadavunu Porunduwa* (Broken Promise), the latter being the first to be released. This was in 1947. Both films were shot in film studios in Madras, with a Ceylonese cast. Ceylon films continued to be shot in Madras for some years until Mr. S. M. Nayagam, a businessman and film-producer, set up his own studio at Kandana. Others, including the leading distributor-exhibitor-Ceylon Theatres Ltd., followed suit. "Broken Promise" was based on a popular play of the same name which followed the Tower Hall tradition.
3. Full Dominion Status was formally conferred on Ceylon on February 4th, 1948. In substance "independence" dates from the first Parliament, elections to which were held in 1947.
4. One of the names by which ancient Ceylon was known. It is now the standard term in Sinhala. Tamil has its own variant.
5. Eddie Jayamanne and Jemini Kantha (Jossie) provided the comic element in Broken Promise. As a pair of domestic servants they parodied the heavy drama enacted in the drawing room. Their song and dance and love-play in the kitchen was enormously popular with the audience.
6. By consensus of critical opinion the best films of 1968. They were contemporary in technique and content. The films were directed by G. D. L. Perera and Lester James Peries in that order.
7. A plantation worker of the supervisory grade.
8. In the agitation for the banning of "Tamil" i.e. South Indian films from Ceylon this fact has (unavoidably, in the circumstances) assumed undue prominence. The adoption of a rational approach to the problems of Ceylon's film industry calls for maturity and a great deal of restraint lest the whole question deteriorates into a racial squabble.
9. The ascent to power of Mr. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1956 brought about the official change from "Sinhalese" to "Sinhala" wherever the term was used in English.
10. This applies equally to younger brother or sister, especially the latter. This theme was treated with some delicacy in *Dahasak Sithuvili*. But in a film called *Suhada Sohoyuro* (the love of brother and sister) it was heated to such a pitch of hysteria that an audience unfamiliar with our social climate and dramatic traditions would surely take it for ultra modern permissiveness towards incest!
11. Although the bulk of Ceylonese clung to their traditional beliefs (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam) and customs throughout the various phases of European conquest these beliefs and customs were held in contempt and abhorrence by the rulers. The predominant position granted to the Anglican Church and the favour shown to Christians generally under the British Occupation drew large numbers of the Ceylonese social elite, especially the Sinhalese, to Christianity. The principal means by which 19th century Christian prejudice was disseminated were the missionary schools to which the entire elite flocked, irrespective of religion. To this day Buddhists cling to Victorian notions of conduct, quite unconscious of their true source.
12. The bulk of Ceylon's plantation labour are Tamils who were brought from South India during British times. Most of them are stateless persons whose citizenship is now being determined under the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of 1964.
13. Ceylon's major racial communities are the Sinhalese, the Ceylon Tamils, the Muslims (Moors and Malays). Indian Tamils and Burghers (many of whom have now emigrated to Australia). There are also small groups of Indian origin such as the Scindis, Borahs, Parsees. The Veddahs ("aborigenes") have now been

(Continued in Page 74)

# Self Management, Socialism and Planning

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## SELF MANAGEMENT & SOCIALISM

The criteria upon which we class the different tendencies appearing at the present time inside the world revolutionary movement, depend greatly on the attitude of these tendencies' towards the essential question of the democratic structure of Organisations and Governments claiming to be working-class and Socialist.

For both the already long and rich experience of the Workers States and of the States of the **Third World** which have become independent, show that victory over capitalism or imperialism is not sufficient to avoid next the rise of bureaucratic regimes which gravely deform the content of socialism, or prevent rapid and healthy progress towards socialism.

The combat for socialism is therefore intimately and organically tied to the combat against the bureaucratic danger.

The revolutionary struggle of the worker and peasant masses, and the oppressed people against imperialism, carried out by genuinely democratic organisations, must be orientated towards setting up a democratic power in which the masses are effectively organised into ruling classes, managing the economy, State, and Society as directly as possible.

In that lies the genuine content of Socialism and the real social development and liberation of the exploited and oppressed.

But the bureaucratic danger lies in wait for any revolution, any party and any Revolutionary Power.

It is certainly sufficient to speak in general of bureaucratism and the bureaucracy. The truth is concrete, and the need to specify the phenomenon in each case is imperious.

The bureaucracy which exists in the different Workers States is very different to that which emerges in the States emerging from Colonialism to Independence. In the case of the Workers States, it is a question of a bureaucracy formed through the exercise of Power in the framework of a State which has carried out the radical structural transformation of the country, thanks to the victory of the Proletarian Revolution, led by a Party calling itself Marxist-Leninist.

The bureaucracy in these cases is a product of the general degeneration of the original Proletarian Power, or of an original deformation of this power, due to the fact of the importation of the Revolution from outside by an already bureaucratised Power.

What is important in these cases, is that it is a question of a bureaucracy of States which have already acquired the economic and social structures of a Workers State, that is where there is a largely, if not almost totally, nationalised and planned economy.

Thus the bureaucracy draws its privileges and power from these structures, and as a result feels in some way or another the need to defend these structures in its own way against the danger of capitalist restoration and imperialist invasion. But in the case of the countries becoming independent, the exercise of power forms a specific bureaucracy in which are grouped elements of the former privileged classes of the country, together with elements coming from the petty bourgeoisie and from the national revolutionary movement (where the latter exists and has played a role).

This bureaucracy quickly becomes the major privileged social layer above all in the countries with a weak economic and a social development.

Starting from that moment, the road to Socialism is blocked.

For either this bureaucracy becomes the instrument of imperialism and of the comprador bourgeoisie through the State and the neo-colonialist regime in the service of these two forces in alliance, or it proliferates as a managerial bureaucracy of a more and more substantial Stated sector of the economy.

The latter case already exists in certain African States and poses naturally a new theoretical question of the social characterisation of this bureaucracy and of these States.

### ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

On the purely theoretical plane, these States have curiously certain curious analogies with a question which is already an old one, with what Marx called **the Asiatic mode of production** and which is again being discussed in certain Marxist circles.

**The Asiatic mode of production** corresponds, schematically, to those primitive societies composed of an assembly of village communes run by a functional bureaucracy, itself commanded by a despotic king, the supreme incarnation of collective property.

The State bureaucracy in this case is both the regulator and the guarantee of the collective economy and at the same time the force which in the long run undermines this economy.

This economy in effect either evolves towards slavery, or directly towards feudalism. In both cases, the privileged social layer, the bureaucracy, which has emerged from the primitive classless communal society, becomes a genuine ruling class in a veritable class regime.

**The Asiatic mode of production** is marked by the role of the functional bureaucracy in the framework of a primitive communal society, during the latter's passage to a class society.

We are now seeing the phenomenon of certain colonial societies achieving inde-

pendence with weak economic and social development, and the rise of the formation of a bureaucracy managing a more and more substantial State sector of the economy.

Theoretically, such a development has the possibility of an evolution either towards a genuine Workers State or towards a frankly neo-colonial State. The question is whether the State bureaucracy in these cases is a social layer or a class. What also is the definitive class character of these transitional regimes? These questions will be only clearly settled in practice by the possibility or not of the masses stemming the development and omnipotence of the bureaucracy and to structure their own power of democratic management of the Economy, State and Society.

From these questions arise the extreme importance of the experience of self management in Algeria, of the new developments of self-management in Yugoslavia and of the discussions occurring now also in the USSR, Czechoslovakia and other Workers' States on the method of managing the Nationalised economy.

It is necessary, moreover, to also note the renewed interest among certain vanguard elements of the European workers' movement in problems of **Workers' Control** and of workers management, even in connection with efforts to extend the domain of the staid economy in Capitalist countries and to oppose to **capitalist programunation**, propaganda for the democratic socialist planning of the economy.

The struggle undertaken from the viewpoint by certain circles of the Labour Left in England to have the State sector of the British economy (or the sector to be nationalised) placed under the control and even management of **Workers Committees** has much wider importance than for Britain alone.

### SELF-MANAGEMENT GAINING GROUND

Self management can be said to be, in a general way, once more gaining ground in the international workers movement and can become a renovating idea for this movement and for socialism.

The need to democratise the management of the economy and its planning, as well as the management of the State and Society, is being universally felt. But as well as the resistance of the capitalists and the bureaucrats to these objectives, while both recognise the need to associate the producers more closely to the running of production, account must also be taken of opposition from bureaucratic and conservative tendencies inside the international workers movement itself.

The latter see Self Management as a danger, which threatens to question the necessary planning of the nationalised economy, and as a uncontrollably strengthening of capitalist tendencies which exist for a whole period in the transitional economy.

The centralist and **Statist** tradition is certainly strongly rooted in the communist movement and the economy managed in this tradition is generally considered as the **classical model** for a workers state.

But anyone who has understood how much this method of management has led fatally, above all in under-developed countries to the irresistible development of a managerial and controlling bureaucracy in the statified economy, can only conclude that it is absolutely necessary to rethink the questions of the management and planning of transitional economy with a new perspective.

## 11. SELF MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

There can be no doubt that, theoretically, Self-management is the best system for increasing labour productivity at the level of **the basic economic unit**, of the factory or farm. This system gives the best combination of the two essential stimulants for such a result: the moral and material interesting of the direct producers in production.

By applying Self-Management integrally at the level of the basic economic unit, by really giving its management to the collective of its workers, and by having them really take part in the profits resulting from the increase in productivity, the op-

timum conditions for the increase in productivity and for the best running of the enterprise are created.

Certainly, even in this case, Self-Management supposes a collective of conscious self-disciplined workers who voluntarily accept to follow the directions in the execution of the work of those whom they have freely chosen; that of a Director assisted by a Management Committee and Workers Council (the Yugoslav System) or of a President of a Management Committee and Workers Council, assisted by a Director and other technical cadres (Algerian System). The unity of technical and administrative direction still appears to be a principle which any work group has to obey.

Some raise this argument as an example of **the duality of power** which exists in the Algerian system, where the daily direction of a self-managed enterprise is shared between the President of the Management Committee and the Technical Director, the latter acting, according to the Decree of the 28th March 1963 **under the authority of the President**.

But all these real difficulties become secondary and are even eclipsed when we have a collective of conscious workers who have democratically elaborated and adopted internal regulations for the enterprise which fits in with the specific and exact role of each in the running of the enterprise.

It is necessary then to apply strict discipline whose dispositions have been democratically elaborated and adopted, including those on possible sanctions to be taken against the breaking of this discipline.

It is on the other hand true that Self-Management demands a combination of the productive work of the workers in an enterprise with intensive work in technological, political and general training, so that the workers may intensify their professional qualifications, and progressively raise their understanding of the economic, social, political and national context in which their enterprise operates.

For, must not Self-Management, which in effect seeks to abolish the proletarian

wage conditions of the worker through his direct moral and material interest in production, also seek to abolish his proletarian condition from a **cultural** point-of-view, which in reality determines the rest of his proletarian conditions?

A multi-form cultural effort would have to be combined in a Workers State based on Self-Management, in a permanent way with the daily productive effort, by the obligatory attendance of workers in schools, with workshops, laboratories, or experimental farms attached to each enterprise or group of enterprises or Commune.

Self-Management as a managerial system of the Economy, State and the whole of social life, widely bypasses the framework of management of basic economic units by the workers left to themselves, which is **at the cultural level characteristic of the proletarian condition under capitalism.**

For if that was done it would only be easy to demonstrate the multiple real weaknesses of the workers, and starting from that to theorise the rule of the technocratic and administrative bureaucracy, managing the economy, the State and Society itself in the place of the masses.

Self-Management's success—as we have continually repeated—supposes the real aid of the State, Party and Trade Unions, to the workers, to the class they claim to represent, so that the working class may be able to pass through their apprenticeship in social management in the best possible conditions.

#### AID TO SELF-MANAGEMENT

The organisation of this aid to Self-Management must become the *raison d'être* of the State, of the Party, and of the Trade Unions in a really socialist regime. Certain sections will argue that such a conception of Self-Management combining the direct moral and material interest of the workers in management with the abolition of their cultural backwardness (technologically, politically and in general) through free compulsory education, included as part of their working day week, is only economically possible at an advanced stage or a transit-

ional period in which there is a nationalised and planned economy, centrally administered by the State bureaucracy and technicians.

It is extremely probable however, that a strict national accounting of the unproductive expenses incurred from a bureaucracy of functionaries in a centralised State, acting as controller and manager and of the whole of Social life as well as for bureaucratic planning, and a plethoric police and army, exceeds by a long way the expenses demanded by cultural investment to the profit of the working masses. The relatively rapid yield from such investment is beyond doubt.

Such a conception of Self-Management, however, of course puts in question the general conception of Planning, and of the **Economic Model** to be applied in a regime which makes this choice.

Some see Self-Management in relation to planning as being open to criticism and inoperative.

How, they ask, can the liberty inherent in Self-Management be combined with the imperative character of centralised planning?

How can the **egoism** of each enterprise, the **localist** and **regionalist** spirit, and harmful results of competition among different economic units, or even different communes also be combined with centralised planning?

These criticisms are nourished by the tenants of the myth of bureaucratic planning, which appears to dominate the economic facts which planning has to struggle against in the transitional period.

Planning, moreover, is not a goal in itself, to be carried out in no matter what conditions and at no matter what economic and social price.

Planning in a socialist regime seeks to aid the most rapid and harmonious economic and social development possible, and to orientate it towards the strengthening of the socialist tendencies of the economic and the whole of society.



Planning, is only **ideal** where there is a society with a very high level of productive forces, a high cultural level of man and with a completely nationalised economy.

In such a situation all those problems arising from the survival of the money and market economy, of sectors of the economy which are still not socialised, of the inequality of technical equipment among enterprises, or the cultural backwardness of the workers, etc., no more exist.

But in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism we have to take account of these economic, technical and cultural realities which are essentially different from those under socialism, and which give rise to a planning which is necessarily fitted in with these realities.

For the question is, by starting from these realities, of drawing the best results able to give the most rapid and balanced economic and social development possible in the general direction of socialism.

### AGONISING REVISION

The inconveniences of centralised, bureaucratic, and imperative planning based upon a statised economy, have become so flagrant in all the Workers States that the bureaucracy itself is obliged to carry out an **agonising revision** of the **economic model** taking account of economic realities which have been neglected for a long time, as well as the decisive importance of the human factor.

Results can be obtained for a whole period when planning for an extensive economy, which does not take account of the cost and quality of production, of the profitability of investment, or of consumers' needs. But that occurs to the detriment of the balanced evolution of the economy, and of the well-being of the workers.

It is not however a question of building any sort of economy and society, but of a regime which places itself right from the beginning in conditions which will assure it progressively genuine economic and social supremacy over the most advanced capitalist society.

By artificially isolating a given regime through the bureaucratic and centralised planning of its economy, from the world market, the illusion of building socialism is created, without daring to confront the cost and quality of production under the plan with that of capitalist production.

But in the long run such an experience becomes untenable, placing the very existence of the social regime in permanent danger.

Care should be taken then right from the beginning to plan in such a way as to approach as near as possible to cost and quality on the world market, which is in constant and rapid evolution.

That is only possible on the basis of self-management which essentially modifies the methodology, the elaboration, application and goals of bureaucratic and centralised planning based on a statised economy.

Planning under Self-Management is elaborated beginning from the existence at the base of the relationships of production characterised by self-managed economic units in the framework of a self-managed Commune.

Each unit at the base freely elaborates its own plan, taking account of information supplied by the Central National Plan on the market, supplies of primary material possibilities of credit and investment prices, etc.

Each Commune elaborates its own Social Plan (economic and general) taking account of the plans of economic units in its territory and general information supplied by the Central National Plan.

Each economic Region in turn elaborates its social plan taking account of the plans of the Communes and of the Central Plan.

### ELABORATION OF CENTRAL PLAN

The Central Plan, in turn, is elaborated on the basis of the plans supplied by the economic units, Communes, and Regions, which have already taken its directives into account.

Thus the Central Plan emerges as the result of the collective elaboration of all the economic and social cells at the base, which in turn act in the general framework of the information, means, and orientation given to them by the Central Plan.

A double process therefore exists—supple and dynamic between the base and the summit and vice-versa—for the elaboration and the application of the Central Plan and plans of the Region, Commune and of each enterprise.

The Central Plan has important economic means to orientate the whole of economic activity towards the desired goals, to correct inequalities and disproportions which arise here or there and any excess or faults arising from the liberty left to the economic cells at the base in the Communes and even in the Regions.

The Central Plan, through taxes, prices and investments, fixes the framework of general economic activity and regulates it in the sense described above.

The Central Plan has the task of making investments for infra-structure work in the national interest, as well as to create all new economic units and services in the national interest. The Central Plan also dictates national policy on taxes, credit, certain prices and currency rates, in the framework of which the basic units, the Communes and Regions will have to act.

Thus the economic liberty to the units at the base is tempered by the Central Plans attributions and means, which orientate economic activity according to the broad lines fixed by the Plan.

It will be said that this conception considerably reduces the principle of Self-Management. The enormous difference however, between the above conception of the Plan and that of the bureaucratic centralist Plan consists in: the liberty of the basic economic units on questions of the volume and quality of production, of prices, of self-investment, of commercialisation remains very grave; it sees the Plan imposing its general views on the local, Communal and Regional economic units not through administrative constraint, but by economic means: and these economic means whither away in parts to the profit of Self-Management to the degree that the system is “**running in**”, is consolidating and is developing.

Thus in Yugoslavia for example, following the recent YLC Congress, a profound reform of the whole policy of investment, taxation and credits is proposed in favour of the considerable broadening of the resources left at the free disposition of each work collective, for the latter to use them for self-investment in enterprises, or for the more substantial improvement of the workers' living standards. To find the correct balance—which can moreover only be a dynamic one—between centralist interventions and the tendency at the base to extreme centralisation, is the goal of Planning under Self-Management.

The eulogists of Schemes of Planning which work exactly **like clock work** will not be satisfied with a dynamic conception of Planning which seeks to find a balance by a perpetual effort to harmonise the different factors which determine economic life in the transitional period: the autonomous forms of relationships of production at the base (Self-Management of social property), and autonomous forms of the market and money economy which continues to exist for a long period.

But only a concrete reality is **planned** and not an **ideal** economy which is arbitrarily declared to be **socialist**. January 1965.

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(Continued from page 68)

largely absorbed by both the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The major religious groups are the Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Roman Catholics and Protestants (Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians etc.)

14. Well-known script and dialogue writer. He was assistant director to Lester James Peries on *Gamperaliya* and *Delovak Athara*.
15. Outcaste—A recurrent sentimental theme on stage and film.
16. The film society movement began in Ceylon in 1945 with the founding of the Colombo Film Society. Other societies have sprung up since then. The Ceylon Federation of Film Societies was founded in 1964. But the entire movement is struggling for its very existence. There are no specialist cinemas in the country. The film society movement today is less of an organization than a state of mind!
17. The Government has now decided to set up a Film Institute and at the time of writing, the legislation is being drafted.

## Education in Ceylon Before And After Independence

by Prof. J. E. JAYASURIYA

Education has been a major theme of controversy in Ceylon ever since nationalist opinion emerged among the Buddhist elite and assumed a progressively sharpening form and a challenge to the established ideological concepts and the social attitudes of the governing elite under British rule. The struggle for the creation of a coherent Buddhist opinion and leadership, inspired by such men as the Anagarika Dharmapala and Col. Olcott, passed through various phases and a thousand frustrations until it reached its explosive confrontation in 1956. The long, protracted struggle had by then created an emotional climate of such intensity that it made its own contribution, in a totally unintentioned and unexpected way, to the terrible events of 1958. These events recall to mind a similar explosion four decades earlier—the so-called “Riots” of 1915—in the course of which all Buddhist leaders of any prominence were imprisoned without trial and indeed, some of them were in jeopardy of their lives. It has always been a characteristic of foreign occupation that, when its power was too strong to be challenged by the subject peoples, their accumulated frustrations turned inwards and drove them to internecine warfare and genocide. No other aspect of imperialism is quite as tragic in its implications as this. The Roman cynic who first uttered the words “divide at impera” was the Devil himself, for no one understood social psychology better than he!

The fact that the transfer of power took place fully ten years before the events of 1958 in no way contradicts the general relevance of this theme to those events. In fact, it is at this point that these reflections, provoked by Professor Jayasuriya’s book, converge upon the thematic material of the book itself. I do not mean that the year 1958 occupies a focal position in the book. The communal disturbances of that year are not mentioned at all and there is no explicit tracing of a chain of causation in that direction. What I do mean is that

any reader whose interests run that way, as mine do, will discover in Professor Jayasuriya’s book material, as well as a line of thought, that is greatly illuminating.

The pattern of education which evolved under the British occupation was a dual system of state-aided denominational schools and state-managed secular schools, which were further divisible according to the media of instruction English, Bilingual and Vernacular. “Education in Ceylon” demonstrates (as the agitators against what Professor Jayasuriya calls “the Nugawela-Howes era” in the fifties demonstrated in public speeches, pamphlets and articles to the Press) that this system created the most glaring regional, denominational and linguistic disparities in educational opportunity. Opportunity for employment follows educational opportunity anywhere in the world, but in a stagnant import-export economy dominated by British capital, such as Ceylon had, in which the opportunities for small-scale private enterprise and gainful self-employment were extremely limited, this nexus was (and is) particularly acute.

It would be natural to expect from the head of the Department of Education of the Ceylon University a book of high academic preoccupation, devoted to the philosophy of education and to the psychology of the learning process. Such an expectation, if there be such on the part of readers, is bound to be disappointed. This is not a criticism of the book that I would press, for such an approach raises the question whether an academic treatise, of relatively esoteric interest, is of greater relevance to our situation than the kind of book which Professor Jayasuriya has chosen to write. The book is a socio-political survey of the educational scene, written from the standpoint of certain commitments which the author makes explicit in the closing paragraph of his Preface:—

"In connection with the whole work, it is necessary to point out that two commitments underlie my approach to education and the assessments I make. I am deeply committed to the ideal of a system of education which guarantees a genuine equality of opportunity to all children irrespective of their ethnic origin, social and economic class, and religious or other affiliations. I am also deeply committed to the defence of the freedom of learning and thinking from the forces that seem determined to destroy this freedom by the exercise of an excessive control over the community of school and university teachers."

Nothing could be more explicit as regards the author's aims.

Although education is a matter of enormous personal interest to every individual in our society, especially to the student and the parent, it is doubtful whether there is a general understanding of the historical development of modern education in Ceylon; of the social forces which have been drawn into conflict in the process of giving a truly national and "socialist" character to our educational system; and of the implications of certain trends which are manifesting themselves all too clearly today. In this context and in the context of the Centenary Year of Education in Ceylon which was celebrated in a style which made democratically-minded people distinctly uneasy, Professor Jayasuriya's book is very timely. The historical approach to our educational problems places them in a perspective which is clearly within the grasp of the non-academic mind. This is precisely what is needed today.

It is not the case that the book is unconcerned with the content of education. The author's attitude to this question is implicit in every line he has written. Over and over again, especially in Section III of the book, the point is made that the school curriculum has been enslaved by an expressively academic approach which has no relation to life in general and to the social context of the pupil in particular. In fact, the book makes it abundantly clear that this question is inseparably bound up with the larger question of privilege and

class-bias which underlie all our educational problems. My chief criticism of the book is not that it ignores fundamental questions but that its mode of presentation tacitly presupposes on the part of the reader an attitude of mind akin to that of the author. In leaning backwards to avoid a possible charge of polemical writing (a fear understandable in a university don) he leaves a great deal to the reader to read into the book. Documentation in place of exposition will please the older reader already familiar with the political background, but the younger reader may find it somewhat disconcerting. In fairness to the author I must say that this is a difficulty which will confront anyone writing on a serious theme today, especially in English. Perhaps this criticism is just another way of emphasising all that the author says in his book. One hundred years of English-missionary-biased education in Ceylon has been a complete failure, or to put in another way, has succeeded all too well in the aims it set for itself.

"Education in Ceylon" is by no means devoid of the dramatic. Section I, entitled "The Background", briefly surveys the educational scene up to the year 1939. Here is the dubious gift of an educational system bestowed upon our people under the British occupation, and here lie the roots of all our present woes. Section II describes the system of Free Education which was inaugurated in the closing years of the State Council and the fierce battles that were waged during that time. That struggle still continues. It is to the credit of the book that one single line of development, connecting the issues of 1944/45 with the issues of 1960 and the tendencies of 1969, is brought to the surface and imparts to the reader a sense of involvement and a sense of urgency. If Professor Jayasuriya is thus able to engage the reader, it is at least partly due to the independent spirit which informs his descriptive, as well as his analytical writing.

Had Professor Jayasuriya been of a journalistic frame of mind, he might well have titled Section II "The Rise And Fall of C. W. W. Kannangara". (The title he has given is "The Struggle Against Privilege"). The figure of the late Dr. Kannangara dominates this chapter, which

is devoted to the twin struggle for free state education and against denominationalism. When he leaves the political scene in 1947, after the truly historic struggle which he fought in the last four years of the State Council, he is seen as a lonely and tragic figure moving from the centre of a brilliantly lighted stage into as complete an oblivion as it is possible for a man who had once enjoyed state power to inherit. We now know that, when he died a few months ago, he had been destitute for some years. A pension had to be voted for him in Parliament and a state funeral accorded to his corpse as a fitting adjunct to the Centenary Celebrations no doubt! Even if one regards human history as an impersonal process, it is difficult to contemplate with equanimity the terrible revenge which overtook this renegade who dared to challenge the power of social privilege and the sacred mission of the soldiers of Christ.

How was it that this conservative politician and traditionalist was able to conceive of so radical a departure from his natural bent? It has been often suggested that free education, like certain other measures, was a means to forestall the Left. There may be some truth in this, but it is not the basic answer to the riddle. I wish the author had paid some attention to the social background of Dr. Kannangara. Here was a Sinhalese and a Buddhist politician functioning in the context of universal adult franchise and representing an electorate that was not only Buddhist but also largely composed of "the traditional castes" of Sinhalese society, living in rural poverty and quietude, undisturbed by such modern benefits as missionary education. Here were the orphans of British rule. Kannangara himself did not belong to the Sinhala-Buddhist landed gentry who were now on the threshold of enjoying the fruits of that transfer of political power for which they had so zealously petitioned Whitehall for decades. The acknowledged leader of that class was D. S. Senanayake and he is the arch villain of Professor Jayasuriya's book. In 1944/45 with the British still in the Island and the class lines not so sharply defined as they are today, the political spectrum was sufficiently blurred as to permit such an "anomaly" as C. W. W. Kannangara.

The only politicians who took a prominent part in the Free Education agitation

of those early years (1944/47) to emerge with their political honour unscathed are Dr. N. M. Perera and Dr. S. A. Wickramasinghe. All the other opponents of denominationalism and class privilege in education succumbed one after the other to the subtle forces of the social establishment. Messrs. J. R. Jayawardene, A. Ratnayake, P. de S. Kularatne and W. Dahanayake do not come out of the book in a favourable light, while we are reminded of the role played by the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike within the Establishment in those years. The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake was at least consistent in his opposition to the whole idea of free education for all from the nursery to the university, and the author very pertinently points out that his death removed from the scene the only man who had the personal force and will to oppose this measure openly. He goes on to show that what could not be done overtly is still being done by covert and subtle moves with the active participation of the bureaucracy.

Those aspects of the historical survey which are covered by Section III relate more closely to the province of the teacher, but they are by no means outside the frame of reference of the general reader. Unfortunately for the latter, the complexity of such matters as school curricula, selection tests, the Universities and higher education have permitted the author barely space enough to provide a broad guide to the issues involved and to the various Commissions and Committees which have considered them from time to time. In the chapter dealing with religious instruction in schools we are back on familiar ground that the author is not concerned to hide his distaste for the casuistry in which interested parties indulged in this controversy. Indeed, the central theme of the book runs like a strong red line through the manifold issues which this Section traces, namely, the persistent defence of social privilege which has either frustrated or perverted every endeavour to construct a more democratic framework for education in the country. The saddest chapter of all is devoted to Estate Schools those lepers of our educational systems. Just as the parents were turned into helote in this land of their birth, the children were not considered worthy of education. No Government to date has paid as much as

a passing glance to the children of those very people whose labour provided the money for free education and other social amenities enjoyed by the rest of the community. From Kannangara to the present day reminders of the existence of estate schools draw an invariable rejoinder from official sources which everyone knows is only a formal gesture to human piety.

The other commitment to which the author refers in his Preface is academic freedom. Chapter XIV in Section III is titled "Politics, Bureaucracy And Totalitarianism In Education" and contains perhaps the most forthright condemnation of educational authority in the entire book. This is to be expected, for he is dealing with a contemporary situation which touches every teacher in the most immediate sense. Education today is languishing under the crude sandal of narrow-minded and opinionated ignoramus assisted by a compliant and mediocre bureaucracy. The impact of this caucus was so oppressive that it prompted the Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula, in giving his

reasons for his resignation as Vice-Chancellor of the Vidyodaya University, to allege "that the country is heading towards a dictatorship" (quoted by the author on page 195). Professor Jayasuriya very rightly fixes the blame for this situation on the bureaucracy as heavily as on the politicians. Petty careerism rules the Education Ministry. Ignorance and incompetence carry the plums, as evidenced by the puerile text-books which are forced on teacher and pupil alike.

Professor Jayasuriya has written a book which will be of great value for many years. It is a book which many will decry but none can ignore, for its documentation is formidable and its message crystal clear. As I said earlier, the book makes no pretensions to Parnassian scholarship, and this is indeed a blessing. In our present situation the ivory tower is not the place for the University don. A war of a kind is being waged and the place of all teachers is in the front line. Professor Jayasuriya must be congratulated for taking his place there.

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C. W. E.

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