



## FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

### Chorus

Freedom isn't free,  
Freedom isn't free  
You've got to pay a price  
You've got to sacrifice for your liberty.

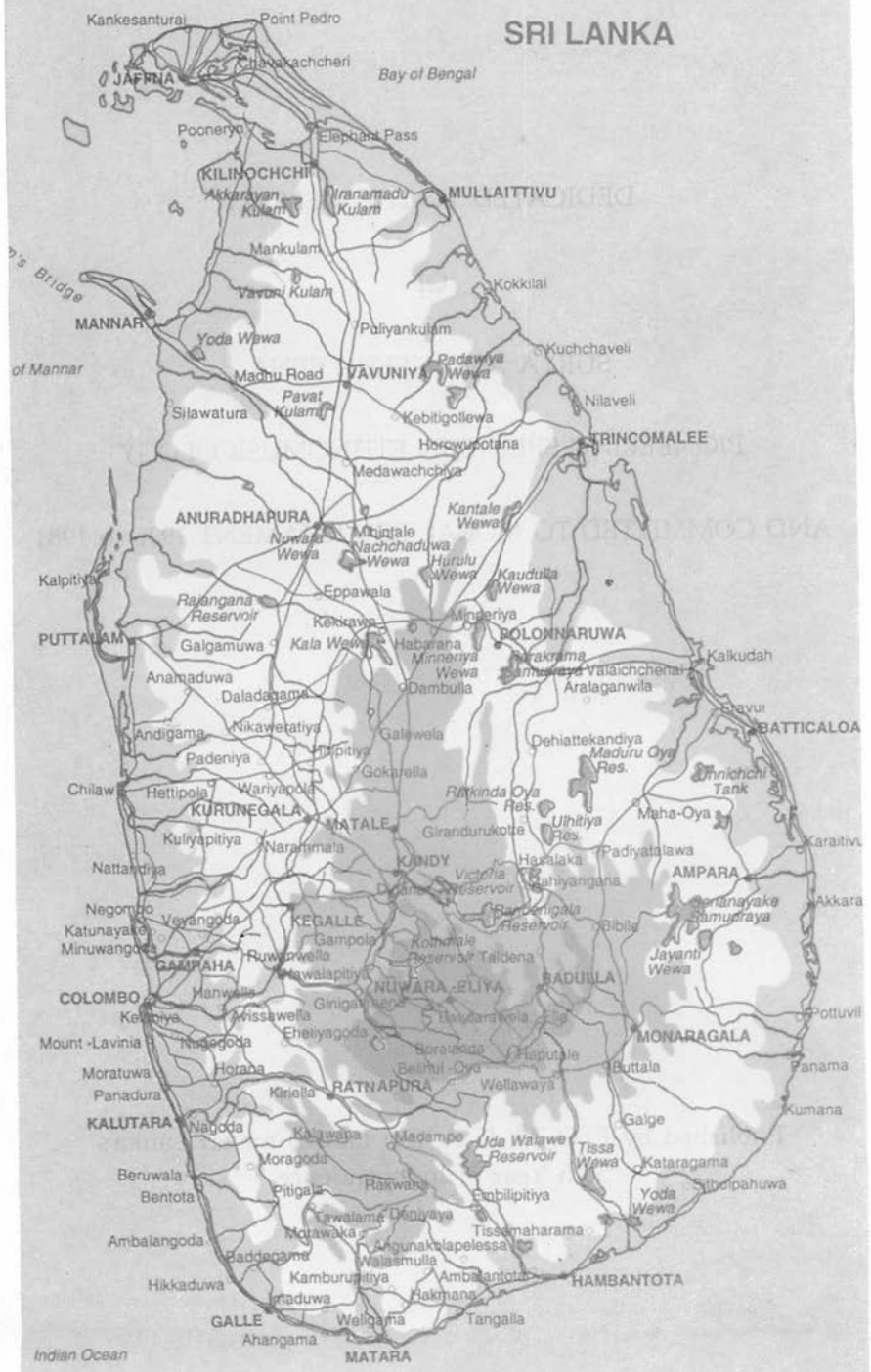
1. Freedom is a word often heard today,  
But if you want to keep it, there's a price to pay;  
Each generation's got to win it anew  
Cause it's not something handed down to you.
2. In ancient Rome they felt so free,  
Doing what comes naturally.  
They were so busy being merry ones,  
That they didn't notice the Barbarians.
3. Now in Lanka we know what our freedom costs,  
But the fight of our fathers will all be lost.  
If we let things go on just the same,  
Always finding somebody to take the blame.

M. R. A. Song 1965

FREEDOM would mean to serve, to make a better world for our children to live in, to restore relationships, to tackle bitter legacies in the world. To discover, to invent, to create.

To be free of Hate Fear Greed

# SRI LANKA



Indian Ocean

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
SURYA AND NELUN SENA  
PIONEERING SPIRITS IN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY  
AND COMMITTED TO MORAL RE-ARMAMENT 1936 to 1981

Published by F. O. M. R. A. (Sri Lanka) for Sri Lanka's  
50th Year of Independence.





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Devar Surya Sena Arts Centre- Library for photographs.

Photo of Author by David Beatty

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## FOREWARD

It is a privilege to write these words for a book that chronicles the long and wonderful journey of Moral Re-Armament with the Island's people since 1952. For a book inspired by an experience with Godly things, and written by one who was there from the start. Saw it all. Felt the hurt. Recognised the need. As much as this is about the Moral Re-awakening in Sri Lanka, it is also about its exceptional author. A look inside her heart, and that takes courage. It's about people here and abroad who by their encounters brief or otherwise, with the people of this country have shaped many destinies.

This work had to be written. In memory of those wonderful pioneers, Devar Surya Sena and his wife Nelun. In memory of countless others who in their own way, did something to make the world a better place. It had to be written for all those who have made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of peace. For posterity, for the peace-makers of the world. And it must also be a reminder to us of those magnificent young men and women out there in the North and East of this country doing their duty to preserve the unity of a great people - the Sri Lankan people. How rich we are. This multi ethnic, multi cultural, multi religious nation. How poor and barren we would be if even one these wonderful communities with its colourful history and culture were lost to us.

In this backdrop the author Rohini has been somewhat of a pioneer. Strong willed and courageous she was one of the first women to break into hitherto male dominated fields. A racing car enthusiast for many years, an ardent equestriene and sports personality, wildly popular Rohini could easily have taken the easy way out. Instead she chose to apply the MRA principles to her lifestyle. No doubt of course, she was greatly helped by a strong Christian background, and a family of philanthropists fighting for social reform.

Rohini, one of twins was born in London. Marjorie their mother soon noted that Rohini was the more aggressive of the two girls, but wisely did not attempt to crush her high spirits. The young Ro, showed a love for horses, which ofcourse had to be curbed, so her parents felt, till she finished her schooling at C.M.S. Ladies' College. Therefore the impatient young filly had to be content with tennis and swimming

which ofcourse she excelled in. Later in life she took up golf, and was able to indulge in her life long passions of horses and fast cars. On the track or in the field in these dangerous sports she led a charmed life. Trained in a West End Studio, Madame Yevonde's in Berkeley Square, on her return to Sri Lanka, she opened her own Studio and specialized in Portraits and Child Studies. In recognition of her work in this field she was presented a Zonta Award (through an all island voting system)

When the young Rohini first met MRA in a meaningful way, she was already termed as "a perpetual headache and pain in the neck" by an exasperated father. "Wild and untamed" even he could not stop the bolting filly. But the words "As I am so is my nation and I am the disease or I can be cure in my country", struck a vital chord in her heart and she "pulled up"

These pages that follow, chronicle the finding of a philosophy. A way of life. For the past thirty something years she has been an immense encouragement to youth. Likewise she has taken young people and other personalities to Caux and Panchgani (MRA Centres in Europe and Asia) frequently.

This is a monument to Moral Re-Armament in Sri Lanka. To people who had the courage to take risks. The vision to mould and encourage others, and the commitment to dedicate their lives to that most noble cause - reconciliation and peace.

I cannot conclude before I say, that for myself personally, 'Aunty Ro' as I call her has been an invaluable source of inspiration. I will not forget our travels abroad together on MRA work, sometimes deviating to take a look around us. Especially those wonderful adventures in the magical city of Jaipur, where I often lagged behind breathless, as she scaled mountains on temperamental pachyderms, and shot down precarious stairways capturing on film the beauty that is India.

This is a remarkable book, because it is a book of love.

**Sonali Samarasinghe** - Attorney at Law-LL.B (Hons) London  
Notary Public & Commissioner for Oaths  
Journalist - The Sunday Leader

## PROLOGUE

It has been my intention since 1988 when I bought a Word Processor, to record how Moral Re-Armament (M. R. A.) came to Ceylon (Sri Lanka). I would also like to introduce some people influenced by this idea. I was one. Perhaps the tension created by the Jathika Vimurthi Peramuna (J.V.P.) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elaam (L.T.T.E.) in the north did not create the right atmosphere to sit and write, though it should have. Maybe the two cataract operations in 1988 and 1991 could be an excuse?

In 1995 when I was very close (500 yards) from a bomb explosion (5.8.95) and escaped unhurt in Independence Square, I thought I better do something quickly. I had taken friends from U.K. to their Bank. I was seated in my car, while they went in. The car was lifted. People rushed from the Bank. My friend had a severe earache and headache after the blast. We were the lucky ones - 15 were killed. The bomb was brought by a man pushing a cart-load of King coconuts. This was meant for the Minister of Home Affairs, who arrived later in the day. At the moment of writing, Colombo has the tightest security ever, as some politicians fear for their lives. All of us run the same risk. There have been two other occasions when I missed bomb explosions by 8 to 10 minutes. Perhaps I'm being given a chance to live and write?

More years have passed. It is now 1998. There have been bigger bombs in Colombo at the Central Bank and Twin Towers (1996 & 1997), as well as The Temple of the Tooth in Kandy in 1998.

Whatever I write is for those residing in Sri Lanka and others with care and concern for our Island, once known as "Paradise" and also with much gratitude for those who have come and spent weeks, months and years, hoping to form a network of friends. A creative minority of thinkers, writers, artists, professionals, planters, businessmen and sportsmen who could influence politicians to become statesmen.

In 1952 when Dr. Frank Buchman was leaving at the Colombo jetty - with his casts of four plays and 200 others he looked at me with those clear blue eyes and said, "You are coming with us aren't you?" I had no intention at the time, so I simply smiled. Later whilst thinking about it I felt "someone" was calling. I was curious to find what it was those young people had that I did not have for their faces shone with a certain light. I did join them later and found out their Secret-Purity. I learnt how to cleanse my heart and mind from pollution to Right Thinking. It was a beginning.

Clean hearts and minds free of hate, fear and greed were needed to think together HOW to 'REMAKE THE WORLD' which was the vision of Dr. Frank Buchman and the AIM of Moral Re-Armament.



## CHAPTER I

### "THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR"

#### brings change

Surya and Nelun were pioneers, who as international concert artists were trotting around the world to bring better understanding, between the Orient and the West, through FOLK MUSIC.

They met the OXFORD at a House Party in U.K. in 1936. This led them to spend a couple of years with Dr. Frank Buchman, the initiator, who was an American with Swiss antecedents. In 1939, whilst walking in the woods of Freudenstadt, Dr. Buchman had the thought that, what was needed in the world, was moral and spiritual re-armament, not the re-arming of guns and weapons of war. Thus the name MORAL RE-ARMAMENT was born. Dr. Buchman was a man of great vision derived from his love of God and deep care for people. Commitment to SERVICE was his life.

In 1940, Irene de Silva wife of Cholmondley (Chummy) met Surya and Nelun after they had been with Dr. Buchman. Irene was struck by Nelun's serenity. She wanted to find out more and they made an appointment to meet. Nelun shared her experience with the Oxford Group friends and their decisions "To Re-make the World". Firstly by putting things right in their own lives; having times of quiet meditation and writing down the thoughts that flowed. Then checked with the absolute standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love, one could move forward.

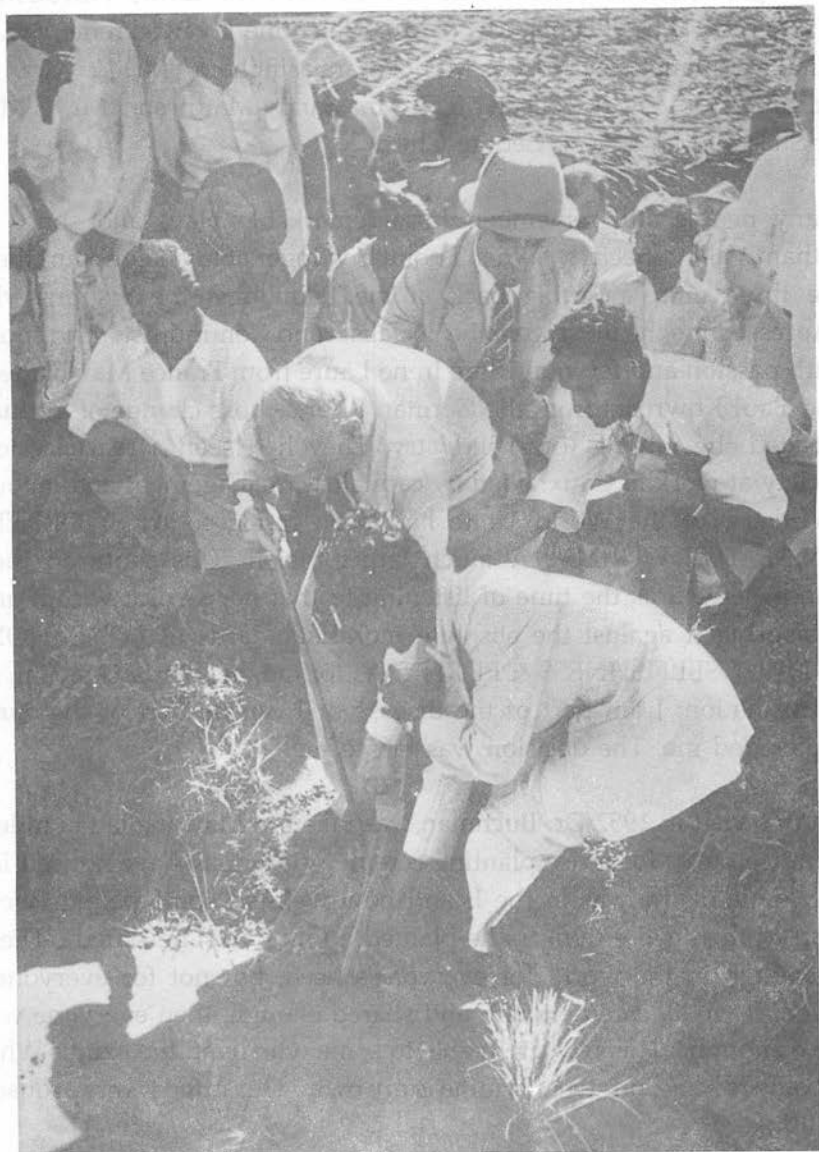
As Both Surya and Nelun had been educated in Europe (U.K. and Belgium) and were both Christians, they understood that God could guide us, if we listened and obeyed "the still small voice" within. That Divine Spark is available to everyone. The personal decisions to be honest about temptations, living to make each other great and think for the whole world, committed them to Moral Re-Armament. It was

difficult for their families to grasp this fact, and so unkind jokes were made such as "they have got the Call" They remained committed musicians with an added plus factor. Both were used greatly with their music and songs to bring reconciliation and change in the Rhur (Germany), America and Asia. To my mind, they were the best Ambassadors Sri Lanka ever had. Their knowledge of many languages, Culture through music and song, and their deep faith added to their talents. After a full life, Nelun died in 1978 and Surya in 1981. The President Mr. J. R. Jayewardena who visited the funeral house said "He is the man who brought Moral Re-Armament to Sri Lanka." Today their home is a Trust and Centre for the Arts, Music and Education.

Later Dr. C.C. de Silva (Chummy) became a leading Paediatrician and Professor who was greatly loved by his students. They were the first team mates of Surya and Nelun.

Thus it was that Surya and Nelun with a Committee of leading citizens invited Dr. Buchman to visit Ceylon, after our gaining Independence from the British. He came with a cast of four plays and, two hundred others. Sri Lanka was the first Asian country to see those memorable plays in 1952. They were the "Forgotten Factor", "Jotham Valley", "Annie the Valiant" and "Air Lines" play. Sir Claude Corea who was our Ambassador at the U.N. at the time said, "Two significant events took place in Asia after the Second World War; the gaining of Independence to Burma, India, Pakistan, Ceylon and the coming of Moral Re-Armament to Asia." That was his evaluation. Sir John Kotalawala was the Prime Minister and he gave a Garden Party for the visitors 200 as well as their local hosts. He was struck by the phrase "WHAT IS RIGHT NOT WHO IS RIGHT". His mother's house was next door to ours, and after a stormy family dinner he used this quotation whilst getting into his car. He was a family friend, who taught me to ride and later played polo with. A genial hearty man with a loud voice, who loved his country.

Surya and Nelun had a good team who organised accommodation,



hospitality, transport, Press and Publicity, Theatre arrangements etc. Amongst whom were; Dr. & Mrs. C.C. de Silva, Mr. & Mrs. F.B. de Mel, Mr. & Mrs. D.B. Ellepola, Mr. & Mrs. Valentine Jayawickreme, Mr. & Mrs. Vaithianathan, Mr. & Mrs. Pararajasingham, Mr. & Mrs. A. Gardiner, Dr. & Mrs. Kaleel, Mr. & Mrs. Sandy Mattheson, Mr. & Mrs. G. Sharpe, Mr. & Mrs. George Chitty.

Many people still remember those remarkable plays and songs in Jotham Valley specially "When I point my finger at my neighbour, there are three more pointing back at me." Amongst the visitors who impressed me the most were the Socialists and Communists who spoke with passion and fervour. Mme Irene Laure from France Max Bladeck and Paul Kowroski from the German Rhur, whose change of attitude affected the mining (coal) industry. They had seen a real classless society at work in Caux, lived by capitalists, management and labour. "Workers, of the World Unite had been re-placed by "WORKERS UNITE THE WORLD". A much larger vision. This captured their minds as well as the time of listening to that deep voice within and measuring it against the absolute moral standards of LOVE, HONESTY, UNSELFISHNESS & PURITY. As for me the words "As I am, so is my nation; I am part of the disease or I can be part of the cure" challenged me. The decision was left to me.

On this visit in 1952 Dr. Buchman was taken to Mawanella (40 miles) from Colombo for a rice planting ceremony. He may have noticed for the few days he was in the Island how well-fed some people, were whilst others were thin. As he planted a few stalks, he stated, "There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed. If we all cared enough and shared enough, then everyone will have enough." This was preferable to some who lived the axiom, "What is yours is mine, but what is mine is my own." Our minds were aroused to think.

PAUL LACEY an English Tea Planter of Pitakande Group, was asked by his Aunt in the U.K. not to miss the MRA plays being staged at the

Regal Cinema, A typical planter of that era he did not mix with the locals. He made the journey of 100 miles. Paul was moved by the Industrial play written by Allan Thornhill an Oxford Don, which was called "The Forgotten Factor". It was set in the home of Capitalist family and a Trade Union leader's family. It dealt with a strike that was settled on the basis of "What is Right not who is Right." These words went home to Paul. He had the thought to put right extra wages he had not paid his workers for "overtime." He invited the T.U. leader Rajamani to tea. This was unheard of, and Rajamani being nervous, asked whether he could bring three others along. Paul explained to them he had decided to put right some of the things that were wrong, he apologised and paid them their dues. This act was transformation and won the hearts of the men and Rajamani. The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) begun by Mr. Thondaman was the Union Rajamani belonged to. Paul met Mr. Thondaman and other T.U. men like S.N. Banda and made friends with his enemies. At Labour Tribunals the Magistrate called him the "MRA man" and they settled cases amicably. He also was the target of the rival Democratic Workers Congress led by the Communist, Mr. Aziz. Perumal the cook of the Lacey home following in his Master's footsteps returned a pair of spectacles he had stolen from an American tourist. As I was a friend of Ambassador Philip Crowe and family it was given to me to return. This led to one of the Crowe daughters showing interest in MRA. Pitakande Estate under the supervision of the changed English planter was fast becoming a model for Management Labour Relations (1952-1954). Paul installed electricity to the lines or living quarters of the workers. Margot his wife encouraged them to have home gardens, sew curtains for their windows and gave prizes. She also helped in the Maternity Hospital and Dispensary. In fact the ROSS INSTITUTE at that time said, "Pitakande Estate in Ceylon was a model for India & Kenya."

It must be mentioned that when Paul decided to stop drinking and gave benefits to his workers, it riled the other British planters who derided and laughed at him. It was a difficult time for Margot; Mr. Aziz finding it difficult to win over workers for his DWC, had someone

throw a home-made hand grenade. Margot was entering the verandah and just missed it. The target was Perumal, the cook who had decided to be honest and return stolen property. Nearly thirty years later (1988-89) the JVP (followers of Che Guevara) killed 28 Sri Lankan planters, while their leader Rohan Wijeweera lived in luxury disguised as a tea planter in Walapane. He was later caught, and finally killed.

It might be pertinent to mention here the story of S.N. Banda a trained Communist T.U. man, who met Paul Lacey and recognised a better way than violence to bring change. "S.N." ran away from home when he was 14 years as a result of a cruel step-father. He stowed away on a ship to Bombay (Mumbai). As a living, he became a paper boy and lived on the streets there. He was chosen by a Naxalite leader, trained for many years in India, before being sent back to infiltrate the tea district from Kandy to Badulla. He was from the Kandy district and had contacts. He said, "I was like a reed blowing in the wind, till I met MRA through Mr Lacey. It is very sad that those out on a passionate pursuit of violence and evil did not meet enough of those out for a passionate pursuit of good in our Island.

In Colombo after the plays and meetings held at the Grand Oriental Hotel to which many came, a group met weekly in fellowship. Of these were Ted & Chrissie Pieris, a proctor and teacher; Mrs Irene Cooray a music teacher at the Alethea School, Themis a peon, Ruben a carpenter, Guneris an apprentice jockey as well as the Senas, Valentine Jayawickrema's Prof. C.C. de Silva and wife, E.C.S. Perera Noel de Costas, Azal Cader & wife Shaila, Cissy Cooray, Marjorie de Mel. This comprised the Colombo Team. Irene Cooray taught the songs from "Jotham Valley" to the Alethea Girls school and Mrs. Hapugalle, the Principal became a good friend. This play dealt with two factors pertinent to Sri Lanka. Water and sharing, and the problem of alcohol in families. The feud of the two brothers due to an accidental death of a son, caused by alcohol and their reconciliation with a heartfelt apology. A very moving song "Some-where in the heart of a man there is a key that can unlock the door, and you can throw the key away and



Mr. [Name] (right) with other men in suits. We were grateful.





then forever there will be sunrise on a summer day". A "high tech" sunrise accompanied the song and many were the tears that filled our eyes.

Many families had put things right, which we learnt of much later. The story of Noel and Rowan de Costa who were separated and re-united is one. "Bunny" Austin the Davis Cup tennis player and his wife, actress, Phyllis Konstam, well known on the British stage were also part of Dr. Buchman's team of 200. Noel was a very keen and a good tennis player. He was instrumental in arranging for a game of tennis at the 80 Club with C.I. Gunsekera. After tennis, the talk centered on MRA and listening to the Inner Voice. This resulted in Noel and Rowan deciding to reconcile and have remained together since. Through the years they have had many people stay in their home. One of these was the Ford Dealer of Horsham, Leslie Mace who later with other British businessmen sent us two Land Rover Jeeps. One with a generator and projector for showing 16mm films, and the other for the Mi-Oya Agricultural Training Farm for youth. We were grateful.

Today with the video cassettes and T.V. we do not reach the masses as we did in schools, port, in doors or out under the coconut trees or tea bushes. Technology marches on!



## CHAPTER II

### "THE VANISHING ISLAND"

In 1956 Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had a landslide victory with his "Sinhala Only" in 24 Hours, campaign. I remember my Aunt Esme sailing into our home declaring loudly, "We are going to have a landslide victory!!" She was a staunch supporter of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. My father, brother and sister and I were United National Party voters. My mother and aunt had followed keenly the Socialist Movement in Europe and were avid of followers of socialist programmes. I remember "S.W.R.D.'s" reply to my mother's question, "Why did you say Sinhala in 24 hours? He said, "I did not think I'd win." How factual this was I do not know. HOWEVER IT WAS A DEADLY BLOW to the Tamil politicians.

It was at this time in 1956 another play called "THE VANISHING ISLAND" written by Peter Howard, the well-known journalist turned playwright came to Ceylon (Sri Lanka). This was the age of ideologies - Democracy and Totalitarianism. The play, a musical depicting two sets of people - "I Love Me" and "We hate You". Due to their hate and lack of unity, the island was fast disappearing. However at the last moment the ruler of "I Love Me" decided to resign and offer friendship to those whom he hated. They reconciled and the Island stopped disappearing. This was again beautifully executed by the stage crew. The well known British actor Reginald Owen acted as the ruler, and there were moving songs which touched many hearts.

Peter Howard and "S.W.R.D." were Oxford men, who met and became friends. I believe Peter Howard helped to publish the story "The Vampire" written by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike.

In 1957 Mr. Bandaranaike sent a delegation of 15 members to an M.R.A. Conference in Mackinac island in Michigan, USA. It was the only such Government Delegation ever sent to an M.R.A. Conference.

However not everyone agreed with the Sinhala Only policy and it being the National Language, when another old language - Tamil also existed in the island. Only 11% of the population spoke it. This became a bone of contention and was greatly used by the Tamil politicians. This became the "Sword", as later English became the "Sword" for the Sinhalese. Of course the Tamil language flourishes in Tamil Nadu (India) and will never die. As for the Sinhala language derived from Pali, only about 16 million in the world speak it. This is the primary fear of the Buddhist clergy, who are guardians of the Sinhala language. I remember at the time thinking, it was not such a good step, as we need all three languages if we were to keep abreast of world affairs, and English was a well-established world language and many in Sri Lanka were conversant in it.

A person in the delegation that visited Mackinac Island for this MRA Assembly was known to Paul Lacey, the English planter. He was V.N. Navaratnam, and his sister was married to the S.D. (Sina Doray) on Pitakande Estate. Later "Nava" became M.P. for Chavakachcheri in the Jaffna peninsula. At this same Assembly was Mr. D.B. Ellepola, a senior Civil Servant. A sincere man and a committed Buddhist. He apologised publicly to "Nava", as a Sinhalese for the hurt caused by the majority community, by the introduction of Sinhala Only as the Official Language. "Nava" and his wife became friends and we met them many times. Surya Sena, D.B. Ellepola, Paul Lacey and V.N. Navaratnam were some of the men in our MRA team in the early years.

In 1958 "Nava" became the Treasurer of the Federal party. A group from Colombo visited Jaffna. The Surya Senas, D.B. Ellepola, E.C.S. Perera, Ted and Chrissie Pieris and this writer. At a meeting Justice H.W. Thambiah District Judge, at the time, Mr. K. Nesiah (Educationalist), O.I.C. Police and others were invited, and we met at the Rest House. Seated on the verandah of the Rest House, "Nava" told us about the ANTI SRI campaign they were about to begin. They were going to tar all the sign posts written in Sinhala. I have never forgotten the words of Justice Thambiah to "Nava". "DO YOU REALISE THE MONSTER

YOU ARE LETTING LOOSE?" Mr. Thambiah was a wise man who tried to warn the eager young politician. Today we have a monster who has killed his own people and eliminated other Tamil political opponents beginning with Mayor Duriyappa, when he was 16 years old.



YOUR ALL BETTING LOOSE, Mr. Thompson was a wise man who  
years ago with the great young politician. Today we have a monster who  
has led the way and eliminated other capital political oppo  
nents of the Mayor Thompson when he was 10 years old.



## CHAPTER III

### NEW DIMENSIONS YOUTH

#### REACHING GRASS ROOTS

In the early 1960's, a young man Chandra de Zoysa, an United National Party worker organising port workers, suggested we take 19 dockers, some youth and a Buddhist priest to an M. R. A. Conference in Kerala. We set out by train from Colombo via Talaimannar, Madras and Trivandram. In our party was docker Goonaratne, a heavy drinker, and gambler whose wife and family were neglected had suffered. He heard other dockers and Trade Union men talk of their experiences, and decided to stop drinking. He described, how the port workers took shifts to work, whilst some played cards and gambled during the day. Surya, Nelun and I had visited his home in Kadawatte, and had seen the youngest child, mal-nourished. Goonaratne was drinking and gambling away his pay and bringing less than half home. He returned, decided to live differently, and with the money he saved, he was able to buy a plot of land next to his house.

On their return, it was arranged by Surya, Chandra and Paul Lacey, to take these dockers to Pitakande Estate in Matale to speak to the workers and other staff. Rajaratnam the Tamil school teacher, was being trained by the Communist leader Pieter Keuneman to be a public speaker. He translated from Sinhala into Tamil. He was moved by Goonaratne's story, who told them how he had lifted a crow-bar to kill a Tamil worker in the port, when something stopped him. He apologised for his hatred towards the Tamils and to Tamil tea workers. Rajaratnam later journeyed to Kadawatte to check with the Buddhist priest of the temple whether this was true. The priest confirmed his story.

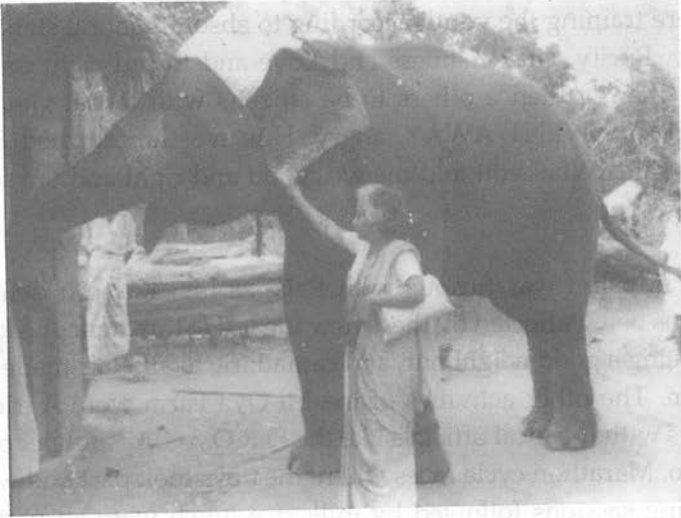
The tea workers were happy to meet the dockers; the English tea planter, Tamil tea pluckers and Sinhala port workers who loaded the ships were then the backbone (of our Economy) for our tea industry

which was famous. The tea workers contributed a days pay (totalling Rs. 500/-) for the dubbing of "Men of Brazil" to Sinhala. This film dealt with the dockers of Rio de Janeiro, who had decided to deal with corruption in their port. The dubbed film was shown several times in the port. It was found that absentism and theft dropped considerably. However, there was a lot of opposition to this film because it dealt with port workers who were putting things right in their lives. In fact three 35mm films that were sent of the film "Men of Brazil" to us could never be traced. This was at the time of the coalition Government which had three Marxist Ministers.

Rajaratnam (Raja) also took various steps in his life such as paying old bills he had chosen to forget to the boutique and stopped smoking. He was made the Welfare Officer of Pitakande Estate. Raja was a stateless person, since his mother was deserted by his Indian Tamil father. Later on several occasions his father asked him to come over to India, but he would not leave his mother. A cheerful positive character, he was a willing worker. It was thus natural that when Paul Lacey left Ceylon a few years later, that Rajaratnam offered the post of Co-Manager of the M.R.A. Mi-Oya Agricultural Training for Youth.

In 1967 "The Friends of Moral Re-Armament" was formed as a Registered Charity by Valentine Jayawickreme (a former Minister of Justice), E.C.S. Perera a lawyer, Noel de Costa a Chartered Accountant, D.B. Ellepola a senior Civil Servant and Surya Sena a lawyer. These men and a few others formed the Committee which nominated a Board of Trustees. We were very grateful to the British Businessmen headed by Leslie Mace, a Ford Dealer in Horsham who sent us two Land Rovers, a generator and 16mm film equipment for the promotion of the work in Sri Lanka. These were greatly used all over the island for showing films.

At this time two films "FREEDOM" with an African cast and an Englishman, and the "The Crowning Experience" with an American cast featuring the Black American singer Muriel Smith as Mary Mc



Leod Bethune (who started the first University for Black Americans had its premiers in Colombo. These films were screened in Kandy, Kurunegala, Galle and Jaffna later.

As an effort in the Food Production Drive we leased land from the U.N.P. Government and cleared 60 acres of jungle, training boys in Agriculture and character based on M.R.A. principles. Victor Gunewardene a former tea planter, and friend of Paul Lacey was our Visiting Agent. Rajaratnam and Upali Gunewardene were the Co-Managers living on the site, along with 10 to 12 lads who had opted to be trained. Menike, the elephant, was our bull-dozer, and cleared the jungle, and the boys built huts, kitchens and sleeping quarters. The day began with a time of Meditation, singing the National Anthem and hoisting the flag. Many interesting episodes took place. We had a permit to sell our timber and to pass checks points, as felling of timber was strictly forbidden. One day a policeman approached Raja and

offered him a "deal" to look the other way while he took a lorry full of timber. This gave Raja the opportunity to talk about M.R.A. and how they were training the youth according to absolute moral standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love and to put right one's own life and then influence others to be citizens with moral values THE POLICEMAN WENT AWAY, angry. However he returned the next day and said "What you told me was good and right and I'm sorry for my suggestion."

Another Muslim was furious with Raja, as his "Kassipu den" (illicit brew) was being affected by these new ideas. He threatened to kill Raja, but by being a good neighbour, and camadarie to all, Raja made friends with him. The other activities of the Mi-Oya Farm were Agricultural Seminars with the local officials like the D.R.O.,<sup>1</sup> G.A.<sup>2</sup> and people from Colombo. Marathon cycle races where the boys took part and won and Harvesting sessions followed by milk rice lunch were all part of the life which everyone enjoyed. The town folk and country folk met and exchanged ideas. The A.G.A. commended our work and the values we were trying to inculcate. Later 30 boys trained in the 3 years all found employment due to the MRA Training they had received. Raja left after two years to get married. He postponed his marriage in order to work at the Mi-Oya farm. I am sad to say that after he left, corruption set in, and it was the A.G.A. who sent Surya a message that our Manager was using our permit to sell timber for himself. We held an inquiry and had to dismiss the Manager. The Manager did not have the commitment Raja had and did not live MRA.

Let me mention some of the problems the boys had and learnt to tackle when they returned to their homes. Alcoholic fathers, domineering mothers, unhappy homes, where the fathers had deserted were some. However Barrington a lad from Colombo found employment in a tourist hotel, did very well and emigrated to Australia. Joseph joined

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1. D. R. O. - District Revenue Officer

2. G. A. - Government Agent





the Mahaveli Development Project; Somawira told me many years later, "Had I not known about MRA I would have joined the JVP (Che Guevarra Movement)". Today he is happily married with two children and has a good job, in the Distilleries Corporation as Store-keeper due to his honesty. Another youth, Alan de Costa, from St. Joseph's College in Colombo, helped to initiate this Farm. He was to study Medicine and used to walk with his little black bag treating the villagers in the area. He loved the jungle, flash floods, leopards and wild elephants that used to visit this site. Alan went abroad to study and is now a Surgeon (FRCS) married to a doctor. They spent many years in Papua New Guinea, finally settling in Sydney, Australia. At St. Joseph's College, Alan was a leading student, debater and cricketer. His class-mates who met a group of MRA singers called the Four Tune Tellers, composed the song "Lanka Ape Rate Naythe?"<sup>3</sup> which has been greatly used around the world. Thirty to forty students would meet at my home weekly, sing and have fellowship and later at "Westover" where Geoffrey and Fiona Daukes stayed for a couple of years. They helped many of the youth to make positive decisions. Donatus de Silva led a opposing group coming from a Marxist background and later trained as a journalist working on the paper Himmat with Russi Lala and Rajmohan Gandhi, editors of Himmat. Vijitha Yapa, from St. Thomas' College; Mohan Bhagawandas, Shanti Mathes, Niranjan Deva Additiya, Nihal de Silva top students came together to think for the country and the world.

It is interesting at this time, 1965-68 a young Britisher Howard Grace came over to work with our Youth Programme. Being a good rugby player, he visited our Universities and played with the teams. He met Ranil Wickremesinghe and later after a Youth Camp, Ranil was part of a mob, in the play "Forgotten Factor". Later Ranil entered politics became Minister of Education. It was he who encouraged us to print "Which Way Sri Lanka?" in all three languages and helped to distribute them to school libraries, scouts and other organisations. As it is in

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3. "Lanka is our country - isn't it?"

cartoon form, it is quick, to assimilate and contains the basics of M.R.A. Other countries such as Cambodia and Zimbabwe have followed this pattern.

It was in 1968/69 that three young men from the Colombo University and Law College joined a delegation to Asia Plateau, Panchgani. Ananda Amaranath, a student of law and a good hockey player, and athlete, had become President of the Student Union. He saw how he had to put a certain dishonest act right. He had rigged the elections in order to win. He felt he had to tell the authorities and resign. He did so, but lost some whom he thought were his friends. They were upset because he resigned. However Ananda followed the thoughts he had in his time of meditation and was free of deceit in his life. He passed out well and later married and today lives in Australia.

The other two D.L Mendis (Lucky) and Rohan Perera are also doing well. Lucky is a legal expert (OPAS) working in the Legal Draftsman's Office in St. Kitts. Meeting him years later he remembered how he had acted in "The Ladder" a play written by Peter Howard about ambition and how he had played the piano for the song "To walk the old chalk line."

Rohan Perera is working in the Foreign Office as a Legal Aid Secretary. Perhaps the values they inculcated have stood them in good stead. Both Lucky and Rohan were friends of Ananda who stood by him in his courageous and bold step. I remember a discussion they had with Rajmohan Gandhi about "ambition" and was it right to have it? By now the three men must know the answer.

Then in 1968 Mme Irene Laure, with a translator Hanni Blundell (from Switzerland) came along with an Australian couple Stan and Aileen Shepherd on a visit. I drove them in my little Wolseley 1500 to Nuwara Eliya to meet Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who had invited us to tea. Mme Laure having been a Socialist M.P. in Marseilles had much in common. They kept this friendship over the years, and when Chandrika, the daughter went to Paris and the Sorbonne, Mme Laure kept in touch

with her. As I write (1995-98) Chandrika is President of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. *Read References Page*

Mme Irene Laure's story of change from a bitter woman to become a reconciler of two countries (France and Germany) who had little love for one another, may still be in President Chandrika's memory as she has tried to bring her plans of Devolution to Sri Lanka. One must give her credit for her courage.

## CHAPTER IV

### FORAYS TO THE NORTH - TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS

In 1967, Surya and Nelun invited Constance Smith a recently retired Principal of "Penrhos" College, North Wales and Jill Robbins, a teacher to visit Sri Lanka. They brought the film "GIVE A DOG A BONE" by Peter Howard written for children, with the message that human nature can change. The teachers were invited to Jaffna, by Mr. Kandeswamy, who had attended an Education Conference in Bombay (Mumbai) the previous May. They were the guests at what had originally been a Church Missionary Society girls' boarding school. After the schools had been taken over, this particular school opted to remain private. Consequently they received no grants or fees but survived with contributions from parents.

The programme arranged by Mr. Kandeswamy included four showings of "GIVE A DOG A BONE"; an hour long talk to 60 teachers at Jaffna College with 400 pupils in attendance; followed by a talk to the VI Form boys at Central College; the Jaffna Teachers Union, the Rotarians and students at a Teachers Training College. In Colombo many heads of schools were invited and as a result many invitations to screen the film in schools was received. These included a showing to 900 children at Muslim Ladies College and to a packed audience at Bishops College. It was shown to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education.

In 1968, "THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR" with an Indo-Ceylon cast led by Rajmohan Gandhi grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and Maternal Grandfather Rajagopalacharya visited Sri Lanka. Others from U.K., Switzerland, France, Australia and India accompanied the group. Vijitha Yapa, Mohan Bhagwandas from Sri Lanka, and Kalpana Sharma and Suresh Khatri from India took the lead roles. After a Seminar in Colombo at which Senator A. Ratnayake, President of the Senate presided the group went to Jaffna. Mme Irene Laure, the former

Socialist M.P. from Marseilles, who had got rid of her hate for the Germans also spoke at the meetings in Jaffna. She spoke of her first visit to Caux in 1947 (head-quarters for MRA in Europe) after the Second World War. She was shocked to find Germans were present. She decided to leave and was walking out, when she met Dr. Buchman. He asked her, "How do you hope to bring unity in Europe through Socialism without the Germans?" This made her stop and she decided to think. She confined herself to her room for three days and hardly ate. When she came out and spoke on the platform at Caux, she said, "I cannot forget the past but I can forgive. I am sorry for my hate." This was a transformation. Soon afterwards Irene Laure played a key part with Chancellor Adenauer of Germany and Mr. Robert Schuman of France and Mr. Marshall from the US, the initiator of the MARSHALL PLAN which heralded the E.E.C. and saw recovery for those who suffered. A woman's decision to give up and let go hate, saw so many doors open, and enemies become friends.

Vijitha Yapa, a young journalist at that time, who took the lead role also spoke after the play and apologised for the resentment he had towards the Tamils. This made another Tamil-journalist Guy de Fontgallen come forward to say he would like to work with such Sinhalese. In CBO a special show of the play was arranged for Mrs. Bandaranaike leader of the opposition. She brought a party of 50 people to the Ladies College Hall. Mr. T.B. Illangaratne also a script writer of plays remarked what a well crafted play Alan Thornhill had written.

In 1970, when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and the S.L.F.P. came into power with the Marxists, they were greatly helped at the grass root level by youth inspired by Che Guevara and who labelled themselves as Jatika Vimukthi Peramuna (J.V.P.) During the last two weeks of electioneering, they were responsible for getting the youth vote in the South. They were to be rewarded with three Cabinet posts. However these promises were not kept by the Coalition Government. On 5th April 1971 they planned a takeover of the country. Their plan was to kill those over 40 to 50 who held key posts, so that they could "take-

over". They communicated across the country through the radio and death notices in the press. "eg. D.E.M. Ocracy to be cremated at 5 p.m." was the last signal. The insurgency misfired, as a section attacked the Wellaway Police Station too early. The aim was to attack 200 Police stations simultaneously. However in the deep south, Matara, Wirawila to Deniyaya the insurgents held sway for three weeks with "kangaroo courts" and the women insurgents being more ruthless than the men. May be this was re-action to the male chauvinism in the villages the girls had endured? Friends of mine living in Wirawila discovered that their cattle keeper was the leader of the gang in that area. Mrs. Bandaranaike acted firmly. She brought the situation back to normal in three weeks time. It is not known exactly how many perished but 10,000 deaths is an approximate figure.

During this period Colombo had a curfew for three days. A young teacher trainee was staying with me. Her name was Ramini Jayalath who had been to Asia Plateau and written a song in Sinhala called "The New Asia" which many others sang at the M.R.A. Training Centre. We decided to translate the pamphlet "Student Power New Style". We were thinking of the J.V.P. and other Youth in the island. The Indian "Standard Motor" strike had gone on for eight months with no solution in sight. Some of the workers were selling their children, other workers were committing suicide. At this time an M. R. A. musical with European youth and others called "ANYTHING TO DECLARE?" visited Madras. A group of University students came along with Professor Renganathan to see the musical show and playlets. They met Rajmohan Gandhi and others travelling with the play and were interested to see whether these methods of listening to the voice within one's heart worked. They said they did not believe in God. However, a group of them listened and had the thought to visit the workers on strike, the Union leaders, the Company directors, the Vice Chancellor and finally the Minister. It took them three weeks to visit all these people and finally a settlement was reached. The students found the experiment worked. Francis Matthew the student leader who was inspired to try this experiment worked on the paper "Himmat" with

Rajmohan Gandhi and Russi Lala, the Editors of the magazine in Bombay. Today he is a leading lawyer in Bombay.

Ramini Jayalath translated this pamphlet into Sinhala and we published it in 1971 for distribution. Ramani is today a Vice Principal of a Government school in Colombo.

There were many visits to Jaffna made by people from the South with visiting groups from M.R.A., showing films and talking to students in schools. In 1976 Vijitha Yapa and I visited 16 schools with films such as "THE HURRICANE", "GIVE A DOG A BONE" "CROWNING EXPERIENCE" - we felt the tension mounting. On our return we visited Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, who was then the Leader of the Opposition and Vijitha the keen journalist, interviewed him with his tape recorder. I remember with amusement when "J.R." asked him to turn it off and asked, "What do you think I should do first if the UNP get into power?" "Sir, you must deal with this Tamil question first." replied Vijitha. Unfortunately, in the euphoria of the landslide victory by the U.N.P. in 1977 this was not heeded. The Economy came first and tackling Employment for Youth. The five dams to be built were all in the South and the Tamils felt they were over-looked. Later some of the hard core LTTE were from the 10,000 Engineers educated free by the Government at the Peradeniya University. They built their super bunkers at Mullaitivu and did not hesitate to resort to violence to obtain their dream of ELAAM, a separate state which the Tamils could rule.

The fear of the Sinhala majority not understood by the rest of the world is that Tamil Nadu is only 23 miles from the North of Sri Lanka. Fifty five million Tamils in South India, some of whom wait a link up with Elaam. Thus the desire for the natural deep harbour in Trincomalee and the NORTH EAST MERGER as India does not have a suitable port in the South. However, as India does not wish states to secede Sri Lanka's fears could be allayed.



However I have good Tamil friends in Sri Lanka and India who have come over to help with M.R.A. programmes, whether visits to Jaffna, Colombo Seminars or House Parties (Seminars) upcountry, in my heart there is no hate on this issue and therefore no fear. But this cannot be said of most of my countrymen and women who seem to think all Indians are Tamils from the South.

As children, we were taken often to India for our holidays. Our parents followed keenly India's Independence Struggle. We grew up to admire Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhai Patel, Kripalani, Jawahal Nehru and of course Rabindranath Tagore. In fact family members visited and studied at Shantiniketan and one such relative returned and began a school "Sri Palee" on his tea, and rubber estate in Horana, while another took the folk songs he and his wife collected in India and Sri Lanka to the West. They hoped to bring better understanding through music and song. The memory of Tagore with his flowing beard who came to lay the foundation stone for Sri Palee is vivid even today.

Mahatma Gandhi taught us how to fight "the system" with nonviolence and soul force; a moral victory against a mighty foe. Yet today 50 years later so much violence has erupted. We have forgotten the good men of our age.

In 1977 the U.N.P. Government swept into power with a big majority led by Mr. J.R. Jayawardene led. The following year under a New Constitution where Sri Lanka became a Republic, Mr. Jayawardene became the President and Mr. R. Premadasa the Prime Minister. It was a DREAM COME TRUE for both men. A New Age, where two leading political families, the Senanayake's and Bandaranaike's were replaced by new names. This team stayed together in power for 17 years.

However, after the July elections riots broke out in Colombo and Tamil houses were being attacked. My friend Janet Mace from U.K. was staying with me at the time. Some of us had the thought to form

Vigilance Committees and work with the Police. We were able to visit all the Tamil homes down Horton Place and Gregory's Road for a week every evening when the curfew was on. We apologised for the suffering being inflicted by some of our "thugs" and said we would come to their aid as friends should the need arise. They were most appreciative and it was most rewarding to see the fear leave their faces.

In 1979 another group of M.R.A. people led by Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma visited Sri Lanka. The others were Pierre Spoerri and Eliane Maiffer (Switzerland), Haridas Nair (Malaysia), Suchobha Bharve (India), Mohan and Nivanka Bhagwandas (Australia) and the Sri Lankans, students Malinde, Lochana, Prasanna and the Police bodyguard, Deva Corea given by the President for Rajmohan Gandhi. Usha, Rajmohan's wife and young daughter aged three years were guests of Mr. & Mrs. Premadasa and stayed at Temple Trees, the residence of the Prime Minister.

The group went to Kandy and spoke to the Engineering students at the Peradeniya Campus. We encountered angry Tamil students burning with hate, and offered a better way of change without violence. At this time the LTTE were recruiting for violent change. We proceeded from here to Jaffna and stayed in the home of Mr. Kadiravellupillai, a TULF lawyer, a Gandhian who wanted change by peaceful means. Incidentally, my nephew Prasanna who was 10 years old, told me before we left, "Here, you are taking us to Jaffna where they will kill us." I told him, "Nonsense, we are going to stay with friends."

At St. John's College where the two older lads stayed, the Tamil boarders had lit fire crackers and thrown them under their beds at night, to frighten them. However, the next morning when asked to speak to the 1000 boys at Assembly, Lochana said, "This is my first trip to Jaffna. I did not know it was so beautiful. I will come again." The cheers he received from the school boys was deafening. Rajmohan who was seated next to me on the platform said, "Your nephew, Lochana (17) is a real diplomat." I include here Lochana's version. "Arriving in

the dark Malinde and I were met by the Principal of St. John's College and shown to our room. There were two hard planks for our beds and semi darkness with writings on the wall, "Kill all Sinhalese, drive them out of Jaffna". We were meeting HATE for the first time and fear came into our hearts. Later fire-crackers were thrown into our room so that we hardly slept. Bells rang at 4.30 a.m. for study and breakfast, so the masters came and we felt safer. Most of them told us how they had been attending LTTE classes, were trained to come South to "Take-over" one day. Tamil boys sent by their parents from Colombo to study in Jaffna, were more friendly. It was a real experience to visit the North and see first-hand how Hate was being used to harness youth'.

Mr. Anandaraja, the Principal was a fine man, and knew the bid the LTTE were making to recruit his students Some were sent back by them as they volunteered. Others were selected to fight whilst others were selected to be couriers abroad of drugs, and to build bunkers. In 1987, Mr. Anandaraja encouraged his school cricketers to play with the Army. He was warned not to by the LTTE, then shot and killed when returning home on his scooter. Friendship was threatening hate. Tragic.

Lochana's impressions of the visit to the students of the Peradeniya University Engineering Faculty is still vivid in his memory. Rajmohan dealt with the questions fired at him with hostile and vituperant force. His cool calm answers made them even more angry, that another way was possible without violence. It showed the visiting group the anger, frustration of these students for employment and the growing gap between "the Haves" and the "Have nots."

Of Mr.. Amithalingam, Lochana remembers him as "a sly, smooth operator" relating with conviction dates and atrocities dealt by the Army, to the foreigners present while the Sinhalese in the party namely Lochana, Malinde, Prasanna, Deva and myself were asked to go to another area. It was the "Mis-Information" technique for the world used to near perfection by the LTTE, which was "Swallowed" abroad for years.

After listening to Mr. Amithalingam, Rajmohan Gandhi said, "Well, we have a person from the South whom you should hear. This caught me unprepared, but as I walked up I remembered what I had read that morning in my time of quiet reflection. It was 'In any crisis situation, change has to come from both sides' and then I said how the words. 'As I am, so is my nation. I am the disease in my country or I can be the cure' challenged me. How I tried the experiment of listening and had the thought to apologise to my father for resentment, as he tried to discipline me and to my brother for jealousy. The decision I made to keep these times of quiet daily so that I could make the right decisions for my life. I remember shadowy figures moving about in the dark shadows in the large garden listening to what we were saying. In the south we had heard of smugglers who had faster boats than the Navy and how they were cleverly hidden. Later at a Public Meeting I said how in my youth we had all been educated in English together with all races and there were no ill feelings among the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims or Burghers, and I hoped English would return to be the link language as many want to be friends. At the end when I was stepping down from the stage, both Mr. & Mrs. Amithalingam came up to me and thanked me for my words and said, "It is the Press and Media who exaggerate and stir the people." That was in 1979.

Later in 1983 after the onslaught in Colombo, I was in Edinburgh and I heard Mr. Amithalingam say on the radio, "We will fight against the slavery of the Sinhala Government." I could understand his bitterness but told my hosts, "It can't be slavery, if his passport has not been impounded and he had access to travel abroad." In 1989, Mr. Amithalingam and Mr. Yogeswaran who had entertained us to lunch and who were moderates were shot dead in Colombo 7 by the LTTE at point blank range. It was sad to hear of those who had shown friendship being eliminated.

There were other trips made with M.R.A. friends Vijayalakshmi Subramanyam, Janet Mace, (U.K.) and Mohan Bhagwandas (Australia) to Jaffna the most interesting being in 1987 with a writer, from abroad.

This writer and her husband visited Sri Lanka on the advice of friends who had loved their time in Trincomalee, one of the finest natural harbours in the world. It hid 400 ships and submarines of the British in the Second World War. It is envied by many. Added to this, are the whales which many come to study, besides rumours of off-shore oil. A great prize. It is now known even by the LTTE who were being trained by RAW<sup>1</sup> in India that their training was to keep Trincomalee safe.

These friends stayed in a hotel in Nilaveli, 11 miles north of Trincomalee, when a certain event took place. Masked men came and attacked the neighbouring hotel, injuring people. They threatened others not to help taking the injured to hospital, and that, if they did, they would return and burn the other hotels too. The neighbours did help taking the injured to hospital by sea as the roads into town were mined by the LTTE. The Manager of the Hotel asked the visitors to leave, and added that the men who came spoke a foreign language unknown to the people of the area. Who were these men? Who sent them? They returned and burnt the other Hotel whose workers had helped to carry the injured by boat to hospital.

The woman writer returned to Sri Lanka. While in U.K. that summer we met, and as I liked her invited her to stay with me. At that time, another Englishman was visiting Sri Lanka and we took him on our visit to Anuradhapura in a car hired from a Travel Agent., After a night at the Tissawewa Rest House we set out for Jaffna and Francis drove the car as the driver refused to go North with us. As we approached Killinochi, we saw the Army Camp which had been attacked at 3 a.m. by the Tigers. They had sent in a lorry loaded with barrels of kerosene and ignited it. The trees and leaves besides the buildings were all burnt and the tarred road was melting and hot as we stepped out of the car. The young soldiers were in a state of shock. We spoke to them and moved on to Elephant Pass and the Army Camp where we were

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1. R.A.W. - Research Analysis Wing

stopped. We waited here for five hours till we got permission from Colombo to proceed. At that time, Lalith Athulathmudali was the Minister for Defence. By the time we set out it was dark, but as we had made arrangements to stay at the Ashok Hotel, we did not worry. The Army warned us that we might meet the Tigers on the way to Jaffna town. Francis and the writer sat in front while I concealed myself in the back with a hat.

A vehicle approached and the writer asked Francis to keep a steady speed and not accelerate. They went past and having noticed foreigners, returned and asked us to stop. When the writer was asked for her passport, she asked them, "Who are you?" The reply came back, "We are the Freedom Fighters"" Have you not heard of us? We are the ones that attacked the Killinochi Army Camp last night." She said, "No, we have not heard about you. You may look at my passport you can't have it." Fortunately, they forgot about me or did not see me in the dark. They took Francis' passport but returned it as another car approached just then. They carried T 56 rifles and hand grenades in their belts. We told them we were going to the Ashok Hotel. As we approached the town all the sign posts had been blackened, and as I was the guide, being the only one who had been to Jaffna before, I had to direct Francis. No-one would unlock windows or doors at the houses we stopped at, to ask for directions. It was eerie. When we finally reached the Hotel around 11.30 p.m. the gates were locked and it was nearing midnight. Francis had to jump over a high gate and we heard a yell as he landed! He had sprained his ankle. However by that time, the Hotel staff awoke and opened the gates. We were famished and hungry but the cook had gone home. One of the staff made noodles and a prawn curry. I decided to have a shower. By this time the Tigers on the outskirts of town had radioed the Tigers within the city limits to check on us. I was in the shower and they saw Francis and the journalist fortunately.

Early next morning, Francis and I appeared for breakfast but there was no sign of our writer friend. She had gone for a walk. After



A typical hut built by Rehabitee's family Sylvia Vedamuttu and Dr. de Mel inside



Doctors Brighty de Mel (Nutritionist) and Donatus de Silva talking to a former J.V.P. Group leader now a Rehabitee at Pelwatte Sugar Corporation



breakfast we went looking for petrol in the market. It was being sold at Rs. 400/= a bottle! We moved freely and saw lot of grapes which could not be sent South for sale. On our way back to Anuradhapura, our little Fiat "packed up" with a petrol block due to inferior petrol they had sold. Fortunately, people were kind and took us to a mechanic, and together with Francis they managed to put it right. When we finally arrived at the Tissawewa Rest House, the staff came out to greet us warmly, as they had not expected us to return. I shall never forget that welcome!

The next day we set out for Batticoloa, and stayed at the SUN and SAND Hotel which had a lovely beach. Whilst walking on the beach in the evening we were followed by two hefty looking youth, till we returned to the Hotel. I had hoped to get news of our friend K.S. Rajaratnam who had taken his family there, but failed to do so. It appeared that the LTTE were here in a big way. We returned to Colombo via Buttala and stayed with a friend Sylvia Vedamuttu and her husband Freddy at the Pelwatte Sugar Company, where Sylvia was P.A. to the General Manager We had met her in N'Elia in 1982 as she did part time teaching at the famous Paynter School, where Sumitra Ratnayake was the Principal. Her subjects were Speech and Drama. Sylvia's son spent two years in Australia and India with MRA Families and later worked in the Middle East. Sylvia helped J.V.P. rehabilitees sent by the Army, to be trained as farmers, with the assistance of the Pelwatte Sugar Company. They were given half an acre to build a homestead and grow minor crops during the first year and later three and half acres to grow sugar. Those who worked hard earned as much as rupees sixty thousand to eighty thousand per annum. Besides her work in the office, Sylvia was out every evening caring for the families and organised a Co-operative Shop for them. She put into practice "How to create a caring society" which we had discussed at a House Party earlier. It was an example of God's continuing strategy at work.

Visits to Jaffna became less due to the guerilla type of fighting and I.P.K.F. (Indian Peace Keeping Force) that came to help the Govern-



ment. Jehan Perera who worked with Dr. Ariyaratne and the Sarvodaya Movement were the only ones who could move in freely due to their branches in Jaffna. Later Jehan Perera working with the National Peace Council was able to visit with other journalists to discuss Conflict Resolution. There is still no light at the end of the tunnel. However miracles are known to happen.

MR. R. PREMADASA former Prime Minister saw the M.R.A. plays in 1952 and visited Surya Sena to gather more information. He had said then, that he too believed in the four principles of M.R.A. It is interesting to note that his "Sucharita" movement conceived by him when he was in his teens, is based on these principles. It showed he was an idealist at one point of time.

Mr. Premadasa began his political career by contesting Colombo Central Municipal Council seat in the city. He lived here and his "Sucharita" office is also sited here. I remember helping a UNP Youth group on election day, driving my new Wolseley 1500. We tied a huge poster of Mr. Premadasa in the front of the radiator and as a result the engine became heated and started to boil. We had to remove the poster.

After he married, Surya, Nelun and I visited the couple several times in their flat in Ward Place. We kept in touch with them over many years and it was in 1973, after the UNP had been badly defeated in 1971, a break away group calling themselves the Young Turks sought Mr. Premadasa. They believed themselves to be more dynamic than the old guard with wider experience. Others believed "United we stand, divided we fall." However the temptation to be a leader of another democratic faction was appealing. Thus it was then that those in M.R.A. decided to invite him to "Asia Plateau" the Centre in India. It was there in the atmosphere of reconciliation, responsibility and renaissance, that Mr. Premadasa decided not to break-away. The next day he received a call from Colombo that the leader of the UNP, Mr. Dudley Senanayake had suffered a fatal heart attack. He rushed back and together with Mr. J.R. Jayewardene formed a strong Opposition

party. At "Asia Plateau" Mr. Premadasa helped to translate "Re-Making Men", a booklet written by Peter Howard and Paul Campbell, into Sinhala. Later the UNP Manifesto included ideas such the "new type of man" and a Dharmista Society. Rising at dawn to meditate besides writing down the distilled thoughts that came after the mind had been purified.

Nivanka (Fernando) Bhagwandas writes about the visit. It was at the time of their Holi Festival in 1973. A group of young people from about 17 nations were creating a musical show called "SONG OF ASIA" and Nivanka was representing Sri Lanka.

Mr. Premadasa was speaking to the group, on his first evening there. He obviously enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and the caring spirit of the place. He recounted with great pleasure and a sense of fun, an experience earlier in the day. He was walking back to the centre from the playing field area, in his immaculate white S.L. National dress, when, he said, two girls from the first floor of the building poured a bucket of "Holi" water on him as he passed underneath. Only a minute before that, my room mate was telling me, it would be fun to give Mr. Premadasa a 'holi shower'. After all it was the days festival spirit and nobody usually escaped. I, meanwhile was trying to convince my friend, that this was a member of Parliament from my country and it might be better if we spared him. No way was she convinced of my apprehension, and so the water was thrown on him. I immediately ducked down, so as not to be seen but Mr. Premadasa stood there waiting for us to look over the balcony wall, and when we did, there was a smile of amusement on his face. He certainly entered the spirit of our youthful and mischievous sense of fun. I remember this incident vividly. The next day whilst at lunch, Mr. Premadasa received a phone call telling him of Mr. Dudley Senanayake's demise. The news shocked and saddened him. About 70-80 of us at the Centre gathered to bid him farewell, and the cast of "Song of Asia" (from 17 countries) sang the Sri Lanka National Anthem. He was profoundly moved. It was an experience he never forgot. Years later when Mr. Premadasa became

Prime Minister, he asked if Mrs. Premadasa could visit "Asia Plateau" which she did.

In 1977, the UNP swept into power with a large majority and were led by Mr. J.R. Jayewardene. The following year under a new Constitution where S.L became a Republic, Mr. Jayawardene became the President and Mr. Premadasa the Prime Minister. It was a DREAM COME TRUE for both men. In 1989, when Mr. Premadasa became the new President, he had very difficult and turbulent years with JVP and LTTE rebels and terrorists. He tried to woo and win them over but the POWER GAME was on. Violence escalated (as it did around the whole world) till finally even Mr. Premadasa was killed, brutally assassinated by those he thought were his friends. It was a suicide bomber of the LTTE on May Day in his own Constituency in Grandpass. As he had become a Dictator, there was a certain sense of relief too, sadly. Mr. Premadasa, a man of vision (not only for himself) could have been a great reformer, with original ideas for the people, as he knew the urban poor and their daily trials. His Janasaviya Programme for the alleviation of poverty was inspired. It was raw Human Nature - greed and envy, that prevented it flowering. The "Lotus Eaters" not only from the elite, but at all levels of society did not want change. Early rising at 4 a.m. to give interviews at 5 a.m. His "Roving Cabinet" and visits every weekend to all parts of the island; his punctuality and mania for cleanliness of the city and all offices spelt hard work. All quite foreign to the average South Asian worker. It could not last.

On the negative side, were the friends of Mr. Premadasa. Those whom he had cultivated to get into power and whose means to wealth were suspicious. Mr. Premadasa was "rocking their boat" with his egalitarianism. "It becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to achieving an end. Yet a lion only hunts its prey when hungry." Even though he wished, when he became President to forget his past means, he was trapped. Towards the end he became a dictator, as he could trust no-one. He felt the impeachment brought against him keenly, and

must have been a lonely man. Did power corrupt him? Some say "Yes". I think of Mahatma Gandhi who believed "the means to the end mattered more". His fight for India's Independence, and freedom from the British, had no hate or bitterness towards the rulers. Does ambition have as its driving force, seeds of bitterness? The message of M.R.A. to deal first with ourselves, did not go deep enough with Mr Premadasa. Ambition, the power to control lives took over. Those of us in M.R.A. did try to show a path of truth. In 1978, Mr. Premadasa met a group from Latin America, Switzerland and U.K. We showed him slides "Build on Solid Ground" - the story of Luis Pereira, a tiler from the favelas in Rio de Janeiro, whose change and actions made the Government build new flats, for those who had worked with Luis, to put things right in their own lives of cheating and gambling was seen by him in 1978. The million houses for villages was another inspired thought of Mr Premadasa's.

In Mr. R. M. Lala's book "In Search of Leadership" which should be read by all those wanting to lead, he says in his opening chapter "Power and purpose"....." There are also different levels of leadership. There is leadership based on great causes; pragmatic leadership; leadership emanating from the barrel of a gun; leadership based on principles a leader adheres to and finally that rare level of 'transforming leadership' that ennobles the leader and the follower in pursuit of their goal."

"Central to the question of leadership is the concept of power and the leader's attitude to it. A balanced leader recognises that he may exercise power but it does not belong to him. He is a trustee for the time being, accountable to others. 'Power always corrupts unless it is accepted as a humble service to a higher authority; an authority not concerned with success or failure, only with right or wrong', says Admiral Sir Dennis Boyd and adds, 'Without a moral yard stick, constantly applied to action, the possession of power, large or tiny, is always subject to misuse.'

"There is an Urdu couplet which says, 'Intoxication of liquor leaves you; but intoxication of power continues to grow, takes hold of you and

finally drowns you. "Alexander the Great of Macedonia, in a fit of drunkenness, ordered the Palace of Persepolis and its treasures of literature and of Persian civilisation to be set on fire. Yet historians have labelled him 'Great'."

## CHAPTER V

### NUWARA ELIYA HOUSE PARTIES

reaching out to N.C.P. - A'pura & Kalawana

In 1982 some of us felt the ugly wind that was beginning to blow as the gaps between the "have-nots" and "haves" had widened. Not only the LTTE but the J.V.P. was raising its vicious head, as greed was overtaking needs. Pajeros, gold chains & watches studded the scene, whilst others looked for food and employment. Rohana Wijeweera the insurgent leader of 1971 had been released by Mr J. R. Jayawardene in 1977 and asked to form a political party and contest elections instead of using violence as a means of gaining power. Sadly, this did not happen.

The thought was to have a House-Party in the tea district of N'Eliya with the theme, "How to create a Caring Society" based on the principles of M. R. A. The tea planters, who were responsible for 60% of our foreign revenue, were prime targets though they did not know it. Having seen and met Naxalites in India who had met MRA and given up their swords, knives and pistols, the friends from India who came amongst others from Europe, Australia and New Zealand, 13 from 7 countries attended, were able to share some of the incidents. Of the senior planters who attended were P.A.N. Dias, Ralston Tissera, Manilal Dias, Christopher Stork, then a junior planter and others.

We obtained a large house called "Netherleigh" situated round the N'Eliya lake others lived in a house in St Andrews Drive, a few miles away. Miss Sumithra Ratnayake, Principal of the Paynters School was our contact who sent her senior pupils to take part in our evening activities. Her Father, Canon Ratnayake, had met us in the Cathedral at Kurunagala asked us to seek her assistance. Later that year Sumithra took a team of 6 to 9 students to the MRA Asian Centre "Asia Plateau", in Panchgani, Maharastra. Canon Ratnayake now Archdeacon, was a close friend of Paul Lacey's and had planned many meetings in Kandy.

This group from 7 countries visited Kandy and Anuradhapura before returning to Colombo to meet other leading citizens. In Anuradhapura Rani Adikari whose husband was then the Deputy Minister for Land & Land Development, arranged meetings in the town as well as in Kalawewa Govt. Schools.

The themes for discussion were; How to transform suspicious attitudes into care and vision for others; to share responsibility; to create teamwork and greater productivity; to turn fine sentiment into creative action; The Family an Institution in decay or a form of renewal? how could Sri Lanka help in creating a Dharmista Society for the whole world. Articles and reports from those who came from Europe are included in the following pages, to show their appreciation of Sri Lanka. Little did we know at this time that the Tamil tigers were being trained in Tamil Nadu by the P.L.O. and R.A.W. and in camps in Mullativu and Vavuniya, in guerilla warfare.

Translation of 'House-Party' Account in 'Caux Nachrichten'

March 1982

Amongst Sri Lanka's green hills, at the height of 6 000 feet, nestles Nuwara Eliya, the 'City of Light'. Dark green jungle intermingles with the shining light green of the tea bushes stretching out over wide expanses.

Deft hands pick the outer three leaves of each tea bush branch. They belong to the gaily coloured groups of Tamil women who pluck these much sought after leaves in a steady rythm all through the year. These girls carry big wicker baskets on their shoulders into which they throw the leaves and then carry them to the weighing station. From there the green tea leaves find their way to the tea factory- an essential item of every tea plantation. During the night the day's harvest is being dried, rolled, fermented and sieved. The following morning 16hrs later the tea gets packed into the ready chests for shipping all over the world.



The higher up the tea bushes grow, the better the quality of the tea!

Nuwara Eliya itself boasts of one street of bazaars, in which predominantly Muslim traders sell their ware. Otherwise the town consists of mostly still British built bungalows usually surrounded by colourful gardens and grounds.

Early February an MRA House-Party was held in one of these spacious bungalows. People had come to it from India, Europe, Australia, New Zealand - and together with their Sri Lanka friends, spent ten rich days in this 'City of Light' and surrounding.

Each evening the living rooms of the home were bursting with men and women of all ages. Many came walking, others in jeeps from plantations, often up to two hours away. Those were simple evenings reaching out into the life of the family, the town, the nation and other nations. Among those present were Hindus, Buddhists, Christians... and all agreed that the four absolute moral standards are the basis of every religion. The rich supply of films and slide stories of MRA added much to those evening.

The Municipal Commissioner and his wife came on the opening day.. He had known of our hostess, Rohini de Mel, as a rally driver, polo player and daring horse-woman. He referred to this in his welcoming speech and then expressed his pleasant surprise in finding this lady speaking with a broad vision for her country and the world. He asked her to take this idea of Moral Re-Armament to his town. A few days later- on his initiative - there was a public showing of the film 'Men of Brazil' in Sinhala. Sixty chairs had been set up in the Public Libray, and two hundred people came!

"The whole town talks about 'Men of Brazil'" commented the Principal of a school with 500 pupils. Earlier, as guests of honour, we had participated in this school in the inauguration of a stage built by the pupils themselves. On their new stage the pupils sang and danced for



us. We too were able to produce two or three songs, and Vijaylakshmi, the classical dancer from India, delighted the audience with her Indian dances. "The people not only look at us, they talk to us", said one of the girls afterwards to her principal.

The days were full: a visit to the Tea Research Institute, the biggest part of one night in a tea factory high up in the mountains, many visits in families....

The Government Agent came to see us on our last evening. As a convinced Buddhist he encouraged our Sri Lanka friends to continue firmly on the road lined out by MRA.

On our return trip to Colombo we stopped off in Anuradhapura and surroundings, where one finds the remains of the island's oldest civilisation. The wife of the Deputy Minister for Lands and Development had asked us to accompany her on a visit to two big Government schools in this region of paddy-fields, bush and jungle where wild elephants still roam.

How these students impressed us! During a two and a half hour meeting they listened to us, with Mrs. Adikari constantly encouraging us to talk about the four absolute moral standards and the 'guidance of the inner voice! Some of the younger pupils sang for us, individually, and in small chorus!. And then three of the elder boys were asked to comment on what they had heard. It is with the words of one of these young men that I would like to close this short account: "Countries are going from bad to worse. Sri Lanka is being influenced. Grateful to this organisation for bringing us this idea. We are selfish but in order to create a dharmista society we must learn to be unselfish. If I improve, then others will improve and then there will be no wars. Let us be unselfish and do something for our country".

The Houseparty group left Kandy and went on to stay at the lovely Tissawewa Rest House, now a Hotel owned by Quickshaws Ltd, right among the ruins of the old city of Anuradhpura. The naughty monkeys

who ran on the roof and put in their long arms to steal, added spice to our stay. Mrs Rani Adikari who had been to the MRA Centre in India arranged our programme. The Galnewa C Central School with its Principal Mr Yapa, was the most interesting. We heard a young student Jayawira Kumarasinghe give a vote of thanks to our group who had spoken, acted, and danced as well as sing. Jayawira had a few years earlier led a strike in the school and was a good speaker. Later in the same year when Sumithra Ratnayake led a team to Panchgani, Jayawira, was one of them. Apparently not being as good as the others in spoken English, he understood what was being said. They kept a common diary; each student writing daily in turn what had impressed them. On their return by train, there was a delay at Dhanushkodi (in India) for 48 hours, and while they sat on the sandy beach, Jayawira shared with Sumithra his story. He said, he saw a cousin of his being burnt alive for something he did not do. His cousin was travelling in a bus from Anuradhapura to Galnewa, when the bus was stopped and the people asked to dismount. His cousin grabbed a suitcase near him and stepped out. When asked to open their cases, his cousin found he had taken the wrong case and instead of his clothes he found parts of a gun. His story was not believed and the Police put tyres around his cousin and set fire. This memory still haunted him and it made him bitter and angry against the Establishment. He asked Sumithra, "Is it wrong to be bitter?" Sumithra replied, "Keeping anger in your heart is not good." Bitterness is a part of hate and corrodes the heart." Having brought this out into the open Jayawira changed and the Principal made him a prefect. He wrote a play about students striking and how they met MRA ideas and decided to try them out. The play was thought provoking and had some good lines. He wrote, produced and acted in it and the following year a group of Galnewa students, musicians & teachers went to the the Paynter School in N'eliya and presented the play. It was well received and the following day they all climbed Pidurutalagala our highest mountain together with the House Party group too.

When Jayawira left school a year or two later he taught English in his home, having built an extra shed for the students. He came from a

farming family and other members grew rice and minor crops like chillies and plantains etc. he was doing well as he had a part time job reading water meters for an New Zealand project. For teaching he used the booklet we had produced "Which Way Sri Lanka?" in all three languages. I was keen to produce a short video documentary of his life and engaged a young man and his team to use my equipment (16mm Bolex) We enjoyed going out into the district and making them act in some lovely settings. Unfortunately one day the young man rang me and said all the equipment was stolen. He did not even give the video films he had shot. Added to this mis fortune was what happened to Jayawira.

As Jayawira was reaching many of the youth in the village, he seems to have been wooed by the JVP. The Principal Mr Yapa found that he was issuing JVP/Marxist literature after his English classes. The parent of a student brought the pamphlet to show Mr Yapa. Soon after this, the Police caught (Jayawira) and when Mr Yapa rushed to the Station to rescue him, Jayawira was tied upside down and being beaten to confess. He was admitting he was helping the JVP. Mr Yapa could not help him and he was imprisoned. Later he escaped and was hiding in the jungles. This is a sad story for a highly intelligent youth who saw a better way to bring change but perhaps it was not quick enough. Whether he is alive today I do not know. I hope that he is alive and that I will meet him again.

In 1984 - 85 Mohan Bhagawandas, Gamini Wickremesinghe and later myself helped with the translation of the booklet "Which Way Sri Lanka?" It is also a fact that Ranil Wickremesinghe then Minister of Education asked Mohan (with whom he had acted in the play "Forgotten Factor") to translate the English copy into both Sinhala & Tamil. This was done and distributed to all Government School libraries and to Jaffna and Batticaloa too. In hind-sight it looks as if we were competing with guns, explosives and more exciting ways to youth, than inner sources of real strength which is everlasting.

There is an incident of how girls from a leading school in Kandy (Kandy High School) were chosen by a teacher herself a JVP person. Five girls who were intelligent but who had grievances with their families and were unhappy, were taken for weekend classes and taught to make hand grenades. The Minister of Finance Ronnie de Mel was coming for the School Prize giving. However one girl who was more attached to her family sent home a post card and the parents informed the Police and together caught them all and saved the day for the Minister. So "Families" do play a big part?

Nivanka Fernando, Shireen Deen, Premala de Mel, Heather Loyola, Druki & Tiru Fernando, Oranea Perera, Ramini Jayalath, Rani Agnes, Sriyani Candappa were interested. The three Nivanka, Shireen, Premala trained in London and Oxford to be secretaries and later helped to administer the Asian Centre "Asia Plateau" in India which was opened in 1968 and to which for the next 25 years we from Sri Lanka have taken delegations to keep our hearts and minds open. The Friendship of our neighbours is our best defence it is said. Most of those mentioned have worked on the paper "Himmat" which had a world circulation. In fact Vijitha Yapa (7 years) became the best Circulation Manager. He later joined the "Island" and enjoyed working with Upali Wijewardene, as the Editor. He then joined "The Sunday Times" and worked for Ranjith Wijewardene when he was forced to leave with death threats against him, Ranjith told me "He was their best Editor". Today Vijitha has a chain of Book Shops in Colombo, Kandy, Galle which lead the way. He still writes for papers abroad and has published a Travel book on the Maldives. Another of these students was Niranjan Deva Adittiya who went to Loughborough Engineering College; he did so well he was asked to stay on, researched on the Hover-craft and is an ex-Member of the British Parliament having won a seat in Hammersmith as a Tory M.P.! He lives in London married to an Indian and is a world citizen.

Donatus de Silva another voracious reader and journalist was invited by the UNEP (Environment) after he wrote an article in the paper Himmat. He lived in Nairobi for many years and married a Pakistani

and has three children. Later he lived in Bangkok and travelled many a time to China and Russia but never forgot S.L. He held Seminars for environment establishments and journalists. Donatus came from a divided home but was instrumental in bringing his parents together because of his care for both. He had a traumatic experience too when a jealous brother tried to shoot him. Don lives now in London with his family of two daughters and son.

Mohan and Nivanka live in Melbourne and have a daughter and son. Mohan with MRA men worked closely in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville to bring better understanding with the Australian Govt. He is now a Computer Consultant visiting Malaysia often. Premala de Mel too has an interesting post in co-operation with the S.L. Govt. planning many Seminars all over the island and meeting interesting people.

The sad note is Rajaratnam who had his home in Matale and Warakapola burnt by Sinhala mobs and decided to go to Batticaloa, to educate his family. He once told me how the LTTE Tigers whom the daughter admired and wanted to join, was wooing her; by offering her a bicycle. He forbade her to take anything from outsiders and said he would give the bicycle. I have not heard from him for years now as not even his yearly X'mas Card arrives. I can only presume he has been killed, for if he went to India he would have contacted us. He is the only Tamil in S.L. who felt committed to the work of MRA and gave two committed years at the Mi-Oya farm. I met Raja 10 years later. Of the "Silent Years" he said, "I got lost" He had been in India. Now he is part owner of a Shop in Colombo.

Another remarkable woman Rani Adikari, then Rani Agnes from Agalawatte was a village lass who loved her country and sought to serve the country through politics. A fluent and dynamic speaker she belonged to the United National Party along with her father and family and family members. I met her in 1965 when I served on the Womens Branch of the U.N.P and together with her sister Daisy and another good speaker Lilangani Fernando; it fell to some of us older women to chaperone these girls around the country for election meetings. In Balangoda I heard Rani speak. After her opening sentences, "My very dear brothers & sisters," said with feeling and movingly, I saw the mountain moving. People on either side of the hill moved forward simultaneously towards the centre maiden, to hear more. These women speakers were instrumental in winning over the womens votes from the S.L.F.P. Government then in power. The U.N.P. won the 1965 elections and Dudley Senanayake became the new Prime Minister. Unhappily these women who had done so much were neglected and became bitter. Fortunately, at this time Rajmohan Gandhi & others in India were holding a Camp for Youth, in Peermade, Kerala. A group of us consisting of Alan de Costa, Rani & Lilangani, Mr. Kuruppu editor of a Sinhala paper and Tillekeratne another UNP worker, set out for Madras and then by bus to Kottayam, where we stayed over-night and then proceeded to Peermade in the hills to a tea estate. Meetings and sessions followed by work-shops for journalism, drama, songs, besides helping to cook, wash up and serve which always forms an internal part of MRA sessions, was enjoyed by our group. It was a chance to meet and make life long friendships. I say this because years later when Rani & Lilangani married they named their daughters after Kalpana, Neerja & Anasuya whom they had met at Peermade, thus forming Indo-Sri Lanka links for life!

During the electioneering moving from home to home, a poisoned fruit drink was served and Rani's sister drank it, though it was meant for Rani. The girl died. Years later her father too was killed over a private vendetta. This area in the South is known for its violence and it is not amazing that later two sisters and a brother left the country for Europe.



Rani a born fighter and patriot did not leave. After her return from India she was given a post in the S.L. Broadcasting Corporation as a script writer and it was at the time she met the Four Tune Tellers, and other youth. Rani wrote a play and this was acted one evening. The Sinhala language was by this time predominant and we should have produced far more films, books or translations to reach the intelligentsia. Our Mi-Oya Farm for boys was the only effort we made to reach those at grass roots level, to develop not only agriculture but character and values for the youth and others.

Rani was fortunate to meet and marry another politician A.M.S. Adikari in Kekirawa and they had a common interest. They lived in their Constituency and served the people as many of us who visited them saw. Early morning to mid-night the people came for requests. They had four daughters and finally a son born on June 4th, Dr. Frank Buchman's birthday, which made Rani very happy.

Finally I cannot refrain from recalling Rani's historic Peace Walk in 1986 when she appealed to the women of the North Central Province, to join her after observing "Atasil" (fasting and praying for eight hours). In order to remember those 100 women and children who had been killed by the LTTE Tigers, whilst they were praying at the famous Sri Maha Bodhi Temple the previous year on 5th May. Women from village after village joined the procession to the Sri Maha Bodhi dressed in white and carrying flowers silently and sadly. Ten thousand women led by Rani congregated together to be silent and remember and recite more Buddhist stanzas. As I walked taking photographs, it was the most moving experience of my life.

Today Rani is a Minister of Education in the Provincial Council in her district Anuradhapura.

### Report by Major M. Nosley

February 1984, Brigadier Dennis Hapugalle introduced Capt. Dick Channer and myself (Major Maurice Nosley) to Colonel Denzil Kobbekaduwa, who was then based in Colombo and in command of the First Armoured Car Division. A few months before there had been riots and looting in Colombo when an estimated 300 lives were lost. Tamils who had been living peacefully with the Sinhalese. What had been shocking in these riots even more than the death toll was the inability of President Jayawardene to send Police or the Army to stop the killings and protect the civilians. This went on for three days, and the Government were unprepared to cope with a civil war. We were introduced to Kobbekaduwa as veterans of World War II. Dick Channer had served as an artillery officer on the North East Frontier of India, as the Japanese had planned the invasion of India through Burma and Nagaland. He was given the Military Cross. Likewise Kobbekaduwa was interested in me because I had fought the Germans underground, and was an Agent of the Intelligence network set up under the occupation of France, by the German army.

We were asked to give our experiences to each on the officers in the Armoured Corps. We did not want to appear as heroes, whose example had to be followed. On the contrary we spelled out the weakness in everyman's life, which sometimes opens the door to breaches in alertness and discipline, and all sorts of things that weaken the will. In the following years Kobbekaduwa was known as the finest Commander of the Army and made (Joint Operations Command). Unfortunately he died when his jeep was blown up by a land mine.

Using these experiences and others Kobbekaduwa in his turn gave his men the elementary training in guerilla warfare which was of utmost importance.

The next in line was a close friend of Dick Channer who became eventually Chief of Staff of the Army. He too perished in an ambush.



Cyril Ranatunge was also among the finest officers of Sri Lanka. He had been trained in Sandhurst where he became a close friend of an instructor named William Stallybrass. Surprisingly for a Westerner Cyril Ranatunge was a wise and expert military man but he was entirely bent on peace.

Among the young officers we met in the First Armoured Corps Division, in 1984 were Capt. G.A. Chandrasiri, Capt. R.H.G. de Livera, Major. G.D.S. Basnayake LT. H.K.W. Ranasinghe and Major Gamini Hettiarachchi.

They all showed great interest in what MRA was offering. It would be interesting to know if some of them were successful in their careers."

Mallik Deen was a student of Trinity College. A sportsman, debater, actor when he met people from M.R.A. An excellent mimic he could emulate Rajmohan Gandhi and his speeches to perfection. Mallik and his family were hosts in Kandy and made firm friends. He later joined the Army and was posted to the North and North West where the fighting was. He would ring me from Pesali an out-post at 7 p.m. when he had time to relax. He soon became Captain and was sent for further training to Pune and became Major. The last time I saw him in my home he seemed to have lost heart and we tried to cheer him and gave him reading material to build his faith. Therefore, it was tragic that on New Year's Eve in 1984, he was accidentally blown up examining a box containing a bomb, with three other soldiers. He was the only son. How many such sons of excellent calibre we have lost due to power hungry politicians.

Father Stephen Abrahams, the dynamic Principal of St. Anthony's College, who had arranged many MRA video shows in the school, through a former teacher M/S Therese Pieris in Katugastota, had a visit from a group of J.V.P. insurgents. They were at the time in 1988/89 a force in the Kandy district trying to recruit students for their cause. They said they wanted to address the whole school. Father Stephen

invited them come to his office. He questioned them and found them hard core rebels, committed to violence. He advised them to go back to their schools, colleges, Universities, sit and pass their exams and then be fit to contest elections so that they would be able to govern should they come into power. He ended by saying, that it will be only over his dead body that they would be able to talk to his students. One of the five who came, was a former student of Father Stephen's. It was he who persuaded the leader to leave and pulled him away. Yet a week later they came with chains and stones and attacked the school and walked out with a few of the boys. They were asked to demonstrate and shout obscene words at their teachers and those in authority.

I believe this happened in many of the suburban schools in the Kandy District. Students were dragged out unwillingly to demonstrate and shout. Some were made to walk miles in the heat before they could return. It was Mr. Premadasa who in 1991 with Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Defence Minister who eliminated the leader Rohana Wijeweera (13th Nov. 1991) and many thousand others of the J.V.P. while the IPKF were tackling the LTTE rebels in the North. It was a very tense and sad period for the country.

During this period Vijitha Yapa then editor of the "Sunday Times" featured a series of articles from R. M. Lala's book "In Search of Leadership". A man who read these articles and was deeply concerned with the youth of the island, wanted to translate the book into Sinhala. He thus wrote to Mr. Lala and obtained his permission to do so. This is how I met Mr. T.H. Karunatilake, who worked at the Asian Development Bank. He not only translated the book but published it and gave a copy to Mr. Premadasa. This was featured on T.V. It is a book all schools should study in order to acquire qualities of leadership.

Mr. R. M. Lala was a journalist and is today a prolific writer. Both he and Shri Rajmohan Gandhi started the weekly journal "HIMMAT" and many Sri Lankans including Vijitha Yapa worked on this paper in India, for many years.

## EPILOGUE

### FRIENDS OF MORAL RE ARMAMENT (CEYLON) SRI LANKA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 12th March 1998

#### CHAIRPERSONS WELCOME ADDRESS

I wish to thank all those who have scarified TIME on a Poya Holiday to be with us. We thought it a good idea to celebrate our 50th Independence Year in this home where 46 years ago Moral Re-Armament was introduced by Surya and Nelun Sena. With a Committee consisting of 30 people, some of whom were S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Sir John Kotalawala, Dudley Senanayake, A. E. Goonesinghe, Dr. Kaleel, Sir Razik Fareed, Mr & Mrs Pararajasingham and other leading citizens.

Surya & Nelun met the Oxford Group at a House Party in Oxford, which was the custom in the 1930's. However in 1938 when war clouds were moving over Europe, the name was changed to Moral Re Armament as Dr. Buchman the initiator felt it was not guns that were needed but re-arming with moral and spiritual values. Dr. Buchman chose 6 Asians to work with him. They were Surya & Nelun Sena, Mr & Mrs Mitsui (Japanese Industrialist) Daw Nyien Tha and Katie Wu both Educationalists from Burma and Hong Kong, respectively. His greatest weapon was teamwork. Thus it was that Dr. Buchman brought 4 plays and 200 people with him to Asia in 1952.

Sir Claude Corea at that time our Ambassador at the U.N. evaluated the visit thus. "Two significant events took place after World War II. The coming of Independence to our countries and the coming of Moral Re-Armament to Asia". Sri Lanka was the first to open its doors. Today in India we have the Training Centre in Panchgani called "Asia Plateau". Since 1968 delegations have gone practically every year to participate in seminars and conferences.

In Japan the Odawara Centre has now been made into an University. The Industrialists have organised Caux Conferences for Business and

Industry starting with Japan and USA and now Europe. Last year M.P.'s came to Caux to meet others.

The Youth Groups in Malaysia, Taiwan & Korea link up with the Pacific, Philippines, Australia and New Zealand and many new ventures are afoot planning for the 21st century.

M. R. A. has now been recognised by the U. N. as an N.G.O. and for this purpose a flat in New York to meet delegates specially from Africa and Asia has MRA full time workers.

I recall the words of Daw Nyien Tha "God's Continuing Strategy for the World". Its not that we are being presumptuous, but we are reaching out beyond our own limitations to this broader thing that we belong to...within this universality we are in a battle, a search, a task, however you want to see it."

Before Dr. Buchman died in 1961 he said, "You will see Communism vanish, but not in my life time." In 1987 Gorbachev, glassnost, perestroika all came to pass. From the time Caux began (1946) people from the Iron Curtain countries would slip across for 24 hours to listen to alternative ideas of change. In the 1990's 500 Russians have come to Caux. Russian was the 2nd language in 1997.

I would also like to mention Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala presently 12-3-98 leading a fact finding mission to Iraq. Together with Mr. Bernard Tillekaratne, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Dubai he met Rajmohan Gandhi and others at "Asia Plateau" on two occasions. When in Geneva Mr. Dhanapala visited Caux and in New York has met MRA friends and so we rejoice that he has put Sri Lanka on the map.

I would like to conclude by quoting a few sayings of that great visionary Dr. Buchman.

"Better to set 10 men to work than do 10 mens work."

"You've got to learn to read people like a page of print."

To an Oxford student who loved fast bikes and fast girls.

"You know how to mend bikes. Come with us and learn how to mend people"

That to me is our real role. HOW TO BRING HEALING to a bleeding world.

The most recent assassination in Jaffna of the elected woman Mayor Mrs Sarojini Yogeswaran, who had been one of our hosts in 1979, is tragic. She refused to have any security as she wished to live in a democratic way. We salute her for her courage and commitment to peace and for opting to be involved rather than withdrawing for the sake of personal comfort and safety. We value and honour such country-women who add stature to our land.

What first caught my imagination was how to "RE - MAKE THE WORLD" It was a challenge. Mrs Yogeswaran accepted it and gave her life.

**Rohini de Mel**

Chairperson - F.O.M.R.A.

## LANKA

*Chorus:* Lanka ape rata neda  
sith kalu mavu bima mae  
ae ape sama dena diyunwukaranata (repeat)  
jeevitha puda karamu

Dupath pohosath samma samadena  
ath val benda gena mae  
pihitath katath lokae samatama  
jeevatha apa sarase

*Chorus:* Jathiya aagam beda da durahera  
ath val benda gena mae  
phithath katath lokae samatama?  
jeevitha apa sarase?

Isn't beautiful Sri Lanka our motherland?  
Let all of us sacrifice our lives to improve  
her development.  
Let the rich and the poor hold hands  
ignoring caste, creed and religions  
differences and join in harmony  
throughout our lives  
in building a prosperous Lanka.

**DEVAR SURYA SENA, OBE, M.A., L.L.B. A.R.C.M.**  
**1899 to 1981**  
**by Janet Mace (U.K.)**

It was fitting that a meeting of gratitude for the life of Devar Surya Sena should be held during the recent House Party for Moral Re-Armament in Nuwara Eliya. Before his death on 1981 November 11th, at the age of 82, he had taken part enthusiastically in the planning for the House Party. There, among the high hills of the land he loved so well, people from many lands remembered him.

He was the second son of Sir James Peiris, a loved pioneer of Ceylon's Independence struggle. Surya Sena, after taking a degree at Cambridge and being called to the Bar in London, seemed set for a distinguished career in the law and politics; but in 1923 he married Nelun Devi, like himself a gifted musician, and soon they decided to make a career together in the world of music. They travelled widely in Asia, going from village to village and collecting, with skill and scholarship, the folk music of many regions. Later, in recitals in America, Europe and Australia they interpreted for the West these riches of the East.

It was at another House Party, held in Oxford in the nineteen thirties, that Surya and Nelun first met Dr. Frank Buchman and found in Moral Re-Armament "this revolutionary way of life" which he later described as "the pearl of countless price I'd been searching for".

Last November when President J. R. Jayewardena, accompanied by the Minister of Lands and Land Development, called to offer his condolences after Surya's death, he said: Surya was the man who brought Moral Re-Armament to Sri Lanka, wasn't he?" A former Ambassador, speaking of Surya's work in many countries, said, "He was Sri Lanka's best ambassador ever."

Between their finding "the pearl of countless price" and these farewell assessments there stretched for Surya and Nelun nearly fifty years of

travelling and comradeship, learning and battle with the world force of Noral Re-Armament.

That afternoon in Nuwara Eliya, people spoke of his patriotism and his artistry, his faithfulness and his capacity for friendship. We heard of the miracle in the life of an "untouchable" water carrier in Burma when Surya was staying as a guest with the Bishop of Rangoon. Another incident occurred when an Indian diplomat called to see him a few months ago. Surya's memory was failing and several times he forgot who was the guest, sitting beside him in the gloaming; but his conviction for his country and the battles to be fought was undimmed. Later the diplomat wrote: "I am grateful for the chance of meeting Devar Surya Sena at his Colombo home... his inscribed book will be a valued memento of Sri Lanka."

Surya and Nelun's life work and commitment shine through the pages of his book "Of Sri Lanka I Sing" and also through the letters received after his death.

Paul Lacey, for many years a tea planter in Sri Lanka, wrote from Wales: "He was always such an encouragement and help to me.... He was m first real Ceylonese friend I have often quoted his priceless remark, 'If a British planter can change then anything can happen'."

A British school teacher wrote of the days in 1967 when she had visited Sri Lanka with the film "Give a Dog a Bone", recalling "all that Surya and Nelun did to launch that film and us into the schools. They were tireless and single minded."

Another letter referred to "the months with Surya and Nelun in Vietnam during the fighting. They gave so graciously of their talents and it was not easy." Rajmohan Gandhi wrote from India about a meeting in Bombay where "different ones paid tribute to Surya Sena's life and service and recalled with gratitude the contribution he and Nelun made over decades to the cause of friendship among nations."



Others wrote expressing gratitude for Suryas contribution at the many world assemblies for Moral Re-Armament in which he took part, for the hospitality of his home in Colombo and for the way in which they both helped people all around the world to love and understand Sri Lanka.

Surya never ceased to pray and work for the unity of heart of the Sinhala and Tamil communities. He was a Sinhala and it was a Tamil from Jaffna who evaluated his work thus: "More than anyone else, perhaps, he has contributed to the planting of the Moral Re-Armament concept in our dear motherland, at a time when that concept is needed so."

Rohini de Mel, his cousin, whose commitment to Moral Re-Armament began because of Surya and Nelun, said: "In God's continuing strategy they were among the pioneers. Now many more of us must take up and continue the work which they began." A young captain in the Sri Lankan Army caught that spirit when he wrote: "He was a man of firm conviction and dedication... a force to reckon with "" he gave his life for Moral Re-Armament ... certainly a man to emulate."

## VISIT OF BURMESE MONKS TO SRI LANKA - JULY 1961

*by David Young - UK*

On 4 June 1961 Dr. Frank Buchman, the initiator of Moral Re-Armament, celebrated his 83rd - and last birthday - at Mountain House, Switzerland - the beautiful Conference Centre set in the hills above Lake Geneva. Many gathered from all round the world to join him for this occasion at the start of a memorable conference season at Caux. Among the most unusual were 5 senior Buddhist Monks from Myanmar (Burma).

They were led by Sayadaw U Narada, the General Secretary of the Presiding Abbots' Association of Burma. When asked why they had come all the thousands of miles for this occasion, U Narada said "Frank Buchman is a man who comes only once in a thousand years". It was a remarkable statement and there was a history behind it.

Many years earlier, when the Second World War had ended, discussions were being held about the future of Burma between the British Government and Burmese leaders. Like many things after the war, trust was also in short supply. George West, the Bishop of Rangoon, who had left Burma when the Japanese took over the country, was back in the Bishop's House in Rangoon. He was very conscious of the need to create trust between British, like himself and the Burmese, who were impatient to free their country. As he meditated one morning he had the thought to visit the Buddhist monastery, which was immediately adjacent to the Bishop's House. He did this and found himself talking with Sayadaw U Narada. They became friends, even, to the extent of making a doorway in the wall separating their two compounds for easier access. And this led to U Narada meeting Frank Buchman when he visited Rangoon in 1956 and to grasp, and accept the world aims of Moral Re-Armament.

Following the time spent by the Buddhist monks in Caux in June 1961, Frank Buchman urged them to visit some other places before returning

home. He arranged for them to meet Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of Germany and Archbishop Makarios, then President of Cyprus, before reaching Sri Lanka.

They were very keen to meet the Buddhist leaders of Sri Lanka and to visit the many places so intimately connected with the Buddha in Sri Lanka. Mr. D. B. Ellapola was their lay host on arrival and made the arrangements, along with Devar Surya Sena and his wife, for their visits in Colombo, to Kandy to meet the Sinhala monks and to visit the Temple of the Tooth and then to Anuradhapura. They were deeply conscious of the enormous part played by Sri Lanka in the preservation of the Buddhist heritage and principles. Everywhere they went they made reference to this.

At the end of their ten days visit, they went on to India to meet Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, then Vice President of India, and to visit Budha Gaya and other holy places connected with the Buddha, including his birthplace and Sarnath where the famous Buddhist University was established so long ago. And finally back home to report to Prime Minister U Nu and other Burmese leaders about their travels.

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## ONWARD TO A NEW ASIA

Senator A. Ratnayake, President of the Senate, told the closing session of the MRA youth camp, "Onward to a new Asia," at Kandy, "The four revolutionary principles of MRA will go a great way to building up our new democracy."

The test of a government was the intellectual, moral and spiritual level of the nation as well as the political and economic level. The work of Moral Re-Armament in building men physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually contributed to the 'disciplined democracy' needed today, he said.

The camp was opened on 2nd January by the Mayor of Kandy, Mr. E.L. Senanayake M.P., who told the ninety young pupils, teachers and businessmen participating that "the Moral Re-Armament movement, that has no barriers of colour, caste or creed, deserves the whole-hearted support of all peace-loving people."

Other speakers included Mr. P.C. Imbulana, Junior Minister of Agriculture, and Mr. Upali Senanayake, organiser of the national youth paddy weeding scheme.

Representatives from India, Maldives Islands, Japan and England were present in the camp. The six-day camp was the first of a series of camps to be held in various parts of the island in the future, to train youth to have a big aim in life, to make Ceylon a morally upright nation and thus lead the way to remake the world.

During the camp a musical show was produced and plans made to take it to all parts of the country.

University students and schoolboys and girls from all parts of the island announced their programme to take back stolen books and property and put right wrong relationship so as to build up the country.

"I did not care two hoots for Ceylon," said one student. "I wanted to get out to Britain or America." After describing how he had changed, he said, "Now I want to be in Ceylon and do something for my country."

The Mahanayake Thero of the Malwatte Chapter received a party from the camp and gave them his blessing. "We are determined to make Ceylon the Dharmadweepa she once was," said Mohan Bhagwandas one of the student directors of camp. "With our songs, our play and our spirit, we will take this revolution of character to every part of Ceylon."

## **OPINION**

### **LET US PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**

**Vijitha Yapa**

The conference in Panhala, India, held in late October was the embodiment of all the necessary characteristics that build revolutionaries. Discipline and punctuality were the key notes. No one shirked his duties and the motto of the conference seemed to be 'Determine, Dare and Do.' The pace at which these young revolutionaries moved challenged and inspired all the delegates and many have made plans and decisions for the future.

Yet the future is not a road of roses but of stones and cobbles. The bullock cart must now be exchanged for a modern motor car, if progress is to be achieved quickly. Both Government and opposition parties look up to us with hope and confidence. Lax attitudes should be hounded out. Let us embark on a new venture.

The duty incumbent on us is to spread the message of MRA throughout our nation, for the shape of the future is being decided by the actions

we take now. We must act with unsleeping vigilance and must never forget that we are in a vast revolution from which we shall emerge into a new renaissance.

The conference in January was to mould national character. In its noble embodiment it exemplifies human nature in its highest forms, for it exhibits man at his best. The daily newspapers are filled with news of crimes committed by juveniles and many tend to take this for granted and do nothing about it. But the task of MRA is to bring back these misguided young offenders to be good citizens, by a persistent policy of character training. In youth lies the wealth of this country and the future of Lanka rests in their hands.

It is within your power and ours to usher in the birth of a clean nation and to make practical our vision of a new life for the vast multitude of the sons and daughters of Lanka. The privilege of moulding and setting into motion the wheels of Lanka's future history rests on our hands.

Let us forge ahead towards our goal.

"Hatred does not cease by Hatred" - (The Buddha)

Not by hating hatred ceases

In this world of tooth and claw;

Love alone from hate releases -

This is the eternal law.

Though others may not grasp this truth,

Let us our wrath restrain;

The wise who understand, in sooth,

Quarrel never again

(5-6 Dhammapada)

## MRA HIT PARADE

### UP UP WITH PEOPLE

- From the American MRA musical, "Sing Out' 65"

1. It happened just this morning, I was walking, down the street,  
A sweeper and a dhoby, and a policeman I did meet.  
There in every window, and at every single door,  
I recognized people I never noticed before.

#### Chorus

Up up with people, you meet them wherever you go,  
Up up with people, they're the best kind of folks we know  
If more people, were for people, all people everywhere,  
There'd be a lot less people to worry about.  
and a lot more people who care. (Repeat last two lines).

2. People from the Southland, people from the North,  
Like a mighty army - I saw them coming forth,  
'Twas a great reunion, befitting of a king.  
Then I realised people are more important than things. (Chorus)
3. Inside everybody there's some bad and there's some good,  
But don't let anybody start attacking peoplehood,  
Love them as they are - but fight for them to be.  
Great men and great women as the world meant them to be.  
(Chorus)

### Chilaw Amidst a Revolution

A group of MRA trained youth who visited a government school at Rajakadaluwa in Chilaw at the invitation of Mr. Devar Surya Sena have set fire to that area. A large gathering, including members of the Parent Teachers Association listened attentively to the youth speaking about their convictions. They applauded the Sinhalese play, "The Right Way," staged at such short notice that some were given their parts only a few minutes before the meeting. The youth displayed great tact and gave an excellent performance.

Many people were convinced by the sincerity of the youth and spent as much as 15% of their salary on MRA literature. These were distributed free by them to people who could not attend the meeting.

A young girl, the daughter of a farm labourer, strode out and said that she would take this message to the length and breadth of Chilaw and help to modernize Ceylon. Many elders of the villages promised their co-operation to spread this message of change.

### **"Lanka' should be the anthem of Ceylon Youth"**

The Ceylon delegation to the MRA Conference held in Panhala India, met the Ceylon Asst. High Commissioner in Madras and sang the many songs they had learnt. One song in Sinhala, composed by the youth themselves impressed him very much. The song, titled "Lanka," calls on Ceylonese to shed their differences and unite under a common aim to remake their country. He later said. "This song should become the national anthem of the youth of Ceylon. It conveys the

### **MORE THAN A GLIMMER**

**-Rajmohan Gandhi - Chief Editor, "Himmat"**

You feel about the Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake, and the man next to him in power in the Cabinet, J. R. Jayawardene, that they are passionately keen to change and modernise Ceylon. They are proud of the island's Buddhist tradition, and desirous to bring to life the best of the past.

Equally strongly they want industrial and scientific progress and a decent life, in material terms, for their 11 million people.

They are leaders, not followers of parochial and narrow views that are always loudly expressed in every country and presented (of ten with no truth) as "Public Opinion."



They want unity among the religious, language and racial groups in the land, and have rejected the politically tempting and nationally dangerous path of communalism.

Facing the fact that ultimately only work creates wealth, they are preparing plans for increasing discipline and responsibility among all sections of the people, including the youth.

Perceiving the ruin to their country that isolationism would bring they have decided against flinging English into the dustbin.

If they triumph in their effort to modernize Ceylon, many avid Asian cars and eyes will be turned towards them.

Ceylon has wise bold leaders in its priesthood. They are proud of the way Buddhism has flourished here and gone from here to the rest of the world in ancient and modern times. Sinhalese legend has it that the dying Buddha prophesied that the Sinhala race would preserve his doctrine for 5,000 years.

The Presiding Abbot of Ceylon's largest Buddhist sect, the Venerable Mahanayake Thero, received me in his Vihara in Kandy, not far from the Temple of the Tooth where the relic from Gautama's face has been treasured. "We priests can have nothing to do with politics. But when Marxism challenged the basis of our religion we had to make our position clear," he said.

"I am resolved to maintain the unity of Ceylon and have encouraged leaders of Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims to meet one another often and stay united," he added

"Economically, Ceylon has a great distance to cover yet. She imports a costly proportion of the food her people eat and the clothes they wear. The cultivable land, surrounded or crossed by beautiful tea and coconut-growing hills, seems capable of producing all the rice Ceylon needs or will need in the future.

.....In a continent tormented by poverty, wars and authoritarianism, Ceylon offers more than a glimmer of hope.

### "The world is in sore need of this"

"The Vanishing Island' (A MRA play) was performed at Colombo to large and enthusiastic audiences. It was indeed a treat to see in our country such a well - written, well-produced, well-acted play. Its theme is one of which the world is in sore need today."

### The late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, P. M. of Ceylon (1956-59)

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## PREMIERE OF "MEN OF BRAZIL"

The premiere of the Sinhalese version of "Men of Brazil" was held on 30th March 1966 at 6-30 p.m. at the Empire Theatre, Colombo under the patronage of H. E. the Governor-General, Mr. William Gopallawa.

This colour film is the true story of how a radical change was brought in the port of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The income went up by 130 percent and the people concerned decided to film this remarkable story. This film was Brazil's official entry to the Berlin film festival in 1960.

Many Ceylonese contributed to dub this into Sinhala. Planters, businessmen, plantation workers and port workers all gave generously so that this film might be screened throughout the island in the official language of the people.

## "Lanka on the go"

The second MRA Camp to train Ceylonese to build a new honest society will be held from the 16th April 1966 at Dharmaraja College, Kandy.

The goal is to have a youth force, 10,000 strong, who will live by absolute moral standards and spread this ideology to the length and breadth of Lanka so that Ceylon may aptly be called the 'Dharma Dweepa,' the island of righteousness.

Activities will include:-

1. Training sessions in leadership and character
2. Classes in journalism, dramatics, public speaking, home science and other subjects

3. Films, skits, songs and plays to give new aims to our people
4. Physical training and sports daily.

### **Kandy Answers - 'Which Way Sri Lanka'**

**-Mervyn Senanayake-**

A group of young men and women fired with a vision and an answer to the call of Lanka visited Kandy recently. Every one of them had taken the test of living according to the absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love and here they had come to tell others how much this radical change has meant to them in life and the burden of their hearts to see others change so that the pristine glory of the Devanampiyatissa era will once again pulsate in modern Sri Lanka. In this way men and women will learn to live an one Family in Harmony shedding all differences that how are a canker in this Nation.

This group addressed a full assembly of 350 Teacher-Trainees at Polgolla Training College with their inspirational songs and personal stories of how they had made restitution for the past. The Vice Principal, Mrs. Siriwardena, at the end of the 1 hour programme said, "I am forcibly struck with the candour of these young people and their soul-stirring songs. More people should hear them and take a lesson from them of being honest and national-minded. I hope you will come again and again.

Another programme was conducted at the Bogambara Prison where over 200 prisoners warded heard personal stories of how these folk had changed from dishonest living. Many prisoners were touched by the outspoken language of this group and said they would also make definite changes in their life. The Chief Jailor, Mr. Ratnayake said. "This is the best programme I have seen conducted here. It is what we need, for one's personal experience speaks volumes as against all the preachings of religions."

At the open Prison Camp-Pallekella, the only one of its kind in the

world, the 120 prisoners were thrilled by the programme conducted by us and two prisoners spontaneously came to the rostrum when an invitation was extended to the audience to speak and said, "Never again will we be in a prison after having heard the speeches of the from today. Some of us will soon be out of Prison and we shall take this message to our Kith and Kin, to our Homes and our Villages. We owe a debt of gratitude to you all and we will join you all in making Ceylon a Dharma Dhweepa." At the end of their speeches we, the visitors, gave them a standing applause of appreciation. The Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Mr. Abeynayake said "Your addresses went right into the heart of these chaps, you could see it the way they responded. More of this type of meetings would do a world of good. I can offer you transport in future. Do come again.

Yogiraj Sri Swami Satchidananda, President of the Kandy Branch of the Divine Life Society who entertained the Group to Tea, said "Here in this Group you have the future architects of Ceylon."

At Wattegama-Christ Church College where a Meeting was held-the Principal Mr. R.S. Perera, said "Though a heart patient I had an irresistible desire to say a few words after hearing the outspoken testimony of these youth. I am convinced that if all young people go the way of these lads the future of Ceylon lies in safe hands. I am all for this Group visiting all Schools and many getting acquainted with this message.

At Nugawala Central School, its Principal, Mr. C. Ranhotty said "We are thankful for this wonderful opportunity of listening to some home truths. This indeed is a Force to be reckoned with and I wish all young and old take up to it. What is sorely needed is less preaching and more practice and I find this is what you believe and live."

Kandy is ablaze with this spirit of re-creating men. I am convinced that before long these youth with a purpose will torpedo all barriers of hate, avarice, corruption, nepotism, discrimination, economic squalor and

inequalities of society-for they have a vision to build the Nation of Tomorrow. Their answer to 'Which Way Sri Lanka' is - the MRA way.

### FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

-Vijitha Yapa-

On February 4th 1966 we celebrated 18 years of Independence. But are we really free? The answer is clearly no. Social injustice and nature's barriers have prevented real freedom being attained. We import 40% of our rice and our economy depends on the export of tea and rubber. We are thus not free until we are self-sufficient in food.

The Government has hinted at a crash programme to grow more food but as long as farmers are looked down on by Society, success will be a cherished dream of the future. Many of us will have to make decisions, forgetting our future plans and ambitions to sacrifice them for our country. Lanka needs everyone of us working honestly and efficiently to break this false social barrier. Then there may be another Robert Knox in the future who will comment, "Every Ceylonese farmer washed of his mud, is fit to be the ruler of Ceylon!"

Independence is not the freedom of will to run amok but the freedom of rational men and women to build a country of destroy: it is the freedom to build and create. Man was born to be free and not to be a slave from womb to tomb. Materialism is not going to solve the human problems. It is man himself who can cure the hatred and bitterness of this world. The basic thing about man is his eternal dignity and worth.

The MRA trained youth force is out to revolutionise society and make men really free from hunger and want. But achieving this will be an uphill task, with many pits, treacherous paths and other obstacles. Ceylonese will need to ask themselves honestly, "Ask not what your country will do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Let us all put our shoulders to the wheel and show the 'status seekers' that all are needed to build up Ceylon's stagnated economy. The success of Mr Upali Senanayake's schools wedding programme indicates that everybody is needed.

Let's work together and say: "On with the revolution!"

## **TIGERS OF LANKA - from "boys to GUERILLAS"**

*by M. R. Narayan Swamy*

'The fall of Jaffna in December 1995 to the Sri Lankan military was a terrible blow to the LTTE and rudely shattered its carefully cultivated image of invincibility. There is no doubt that even the Tigers would not have dreamt that they would lose control of their fortress and symbol of Tamil pride to, of all the people, a virtual Sinhalese army. It will be no exaggeration that the loss was far worse, in political and psychological terms, compared to 1987 when the IPKF wrested Jaffna from the L.T.T.E.

The L.T.T.E. in 1987 was a guerilla force of about 3000 fighters, was much less feared and faced an army that had an awesome reputation. The L.T.T.E. in 1995 was a class and a world apart; it was running a state within a state in Sri Lanka (for about 5 years), controlled one third of the island's land mass and was master of two-thirds of its winding coast-line, had its own police, civil administrations, jails, visa system, navy, deadly suicide squads and an army that was believed to be at least 10,000 strong and armed with a huge arsenal of modern weapons. On top of it the L.T.T.E had with a skilful combination of military exploits and propaganda, presented itself as a force that could never be defeated, never be vanquished. And in just 50 days of fighting the Sri Lankan army over-ran Jaffna after storming through vast areas of Tiger territory and raised the country's national flag-which portrays a sword wielding Lion in comparison to the LTTE's roaring Tiger - on what remains of the 16th century Dutch built Jaffna Fort, the traditional seat of military supremacy in Jaffna. President Chandrika Kumaratunga, daughter of Sirima Bandaranaike, took office in 1994 on a peace agenda. She had no option but to talk to the L.T.T.E. and address the mass of issues which gave birth to Tamil militancy, at the first place, despite the view that the Tigers could not be trusted. There is no doubt that her presidency led to hopes in the Tamil region that the long drawn war may soon see a negotiated end. Even when the UNP's Presidential



nominee Gamini Dissanayake was assassinated by a LTTE suicide bomber, Kumaratunga kept the talks going. The L.T.T.E. however, feared, and probably rightly so, that the President was cleverly and carefully trying to drive a wedge between itself and the mass of Tamils it claims to represent with her peace offensive. Although Kumaratunga may not have given the LTTE everything it wanted, she gave a distinct impression that she was bending backwards to accommodate Prabhakaran. After all she and her assassinated husband Vijaya Kumaratunga were among the few Sinhala speaking high profile politicians who had the courage to as far back as 1986, visit the offices of Tamil militant groups in Madras and declare that the militants were not terrorists.

Looking back it is clear that the President must have reasoned that while she may succeed in bringing peace, her negotiations would serve her well if the L.T.T.E. decided to go back to fighting. The L.T.T.E. did not keep her waiting long. The L.T.T.E.'s audacious Black-Sea Tigers sank two naval gunboats in the Trincomallee harbour on 19th April 1995.

## **The JVP - a farewell to arms?**

*by Amaradasa Fernando*

Shortly before the last provincial council elections, the hierarchy of the present JVP paid a visit to the American embassy to meet some of its top officials to assure them that they were on the democratic path, having given up violence! Some wondered how this slogan written in the walls of the city, "Down with sanctions against Cuba, Down with American Imperialism"! They were trying to curry favour with the yanks, temporally jettisoning the Cubans. This only exposed the cynicism and hypocrisy of the JVP.

The 1971 insurrection had been crushed by the United Front government. The Criminal Justice Commission, saw the JVP leaders and thousands of its rank file clapped into prison. Some served varying degrees of punishment, from two to seven years. Wijeweera on November 2, 1977 emerged a free man from prison after he and several other leaders were released by president Jayewardene.

To those with short memories I would like to recall what Wijeweera said in his first public appearance at Town Hall on November 7, 1977. He proclaimed that he had dropped the strategy of armed struggle and now his party would take the democratic road. In May 1982 the General Secretary of the JVP, Lionel Bopage in a press statement uttered similar sentiments. He said, "For the information of Sri Lanka I wish to place on record to achieve its political ends that the JVP has not and does not and will never perpetrate crimes and terror tactics." Some naive people, as they are doing today, took Wijeweera at his word. The honeymoon with democracy went on for some time. They became a recognised political party and contested the district council elections in May 1991, where the party gained popularity winning a number of seats.

This new turn was indeed a welcome relief for many people. Wijeweera presented himself for the presidential elections in 1982 and pooled

around 250,000 votes, putting up a much better performance than Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, the veteran LSSPer with around 50,000 and Vasu Deva Nanayakkara of the NLSSPer with around 50,000 and Vasu Deva Nanayakkara of the NLSSP with a mere 17,000 votes.

### **Anti Tamil riots**

In 1983 came the anti Tamil riots triggered off by the killing of 13 Sinhala soldiers on the 13th of July. It is now known that the persons responsible were a UNP minister and his cohorts, supported by several racist Buddhist monks. The LSSP, CP, NLSSP and the JVP were proscribed. Unlike the Left parties who democratically fought back the proscription, the JVP went underground like a duck taking to water. Wijeweera had a preconceived plan for another uprising. Wijeweera used this hibernation to surreptitiously build-up their shattered party for their second round of the armed struggle. There was a split in the JVP and many of the leadership contested. Wijeweera on this issue. The names mentioned earlier opposed Wijeweera and paid with their lives.

This article is not the place to discuss the two other abortive attempted insurgencies. The horrors of these two bloody attempts, some of which I have graphically described, are within living memory of most people, which they would like to forget as a nightmare. I am sure 99% of them would not like to go through such a trauma.

Only those who are in their early teens and who have passed their O/Levels, Advanced levels and who have graduated but are unemployed and see no future prospects would be prepared to go behind the JVP mirage of the promised land. Not knowing what the JVP terror was like, they would be attracted by personal interest or due to the spirit of adventure that a revolution would conjure.

### **Turncoats?**

Are the present leadership turncoats? Have they gone back on the aspirations of their dead leader whom they revere, when they say that this time they are truly taking the democratic road? Two questions arise

from this. (1) They have to disown their terrorist past. would have to do something like what Khrushchev did to Stalin: De-Stalinizw. But that would mean that they have to confine Rohana Wijeweera to the dustbin of history as was Stalin's fate. Statues were pulled down, Stalingrad was called by its former name, Petrograd. (2) If they do not, it is the same old song, but with new singers. But the present leadership of the JVP refuses to do a selfcriticism of its monstrous past. Because of persistent demand from other Left and bourgeois parties, in 1977 the JVP at its third national convention is supposed to have done a self-criticism of its monstrous past. Because of persistent demand from other Left and bourgeois parties, in 1997 the JVP at its third national convention is supposed to have done a self-criticism. It was a closed conference for party men only, where the press was kept out. At the end of it the JVP leadership said that they discussed their past, the conclusions were for the party men only.

If you are against violence and on the democratic road, then why should not one be open about it? They commemorate Wijeweera's death each year. They carry his masthead at their rallies and demonstrations. If they are not prepared to "de-Rohanize," can they say truthfully that they are against violence? Otherwise it would appear that they are only trying to delude the people, as Wijeweera did after his release as mentioned earlier. Now they have proposed a United Front with other parties of the extreme left, principally with Wickrema Bahu of the NLLSP and Vasu Deva Nanayakkara of the LSSP They have suggested the well-known Marxist tactic: "march separately strike together."

For Wijeweera the old Left were the grave diggers of Marxism. In fact he once said that when the JVP came to power, he would have Drs. N. M. Perera and Colvin R. de Silva exhibited in the zoo? What I believe is the JVP is doing is through sheer desperation and self-preservation, arising from a guilty conscience. If there is another crack down by the government they would need allies. The sporadic acts of violence at the various universities orchestrated by the Inter University

students' Federation, and the militancy in the various trade unions that they have infiltrated are only a dress rehearsal to another youth revolt. It is not for the love of the Left parties that the JVP is making overtures to them. This is exactly the LTTE's tactic, when it is being militarily defeated they sue for peace.

The question to be posed to Wickrema bahu and Vasu, is what is the basis for a Untied Front? Is there a short-term transitional and longterm program? At what point of time has the JVP metamorphosed from being a fascist to a democratic party. With such a sordid past? Even Anguli Mala, the murderer, became a disciple of the Buddha, and became an Arhant. The most important and urgent matter facing the country today is the problem of the minorities. What is their attitude to the on-going war? Do they stand first for the crushing of the LTTE militarily and a devolution of power after wards? Do they stand for changing of the constitution? We know that Wickrema Bahu and Vasu have very strong views on these matters and they agree with the government on them. While it would not be possible to negotiate with the LTTE if they are not prepared to laying down arms, so it must be the same with the JVP, they at least must admit their errors and should say "meaculpa", "I (we) have sinned", if they are to be believed. This article is only against the duplicity of the present leadership of the JVP. The youth of this country have a great role to play in its future. But the JVP must be honest. It cannot be trying to prove an ablibi that it was not the JVP that took to the killing fields, that it was the DJVP. They remind me of a Sinhala: saying, also the title of a film now showing: Dawalta Miguel, Rate Daniel"! (Miguel by day, and Daniel by night). A counterpart saying in the English language would be: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

A quotation from Mahatma Ghandi will show I mean. He says "You can go on building parties, but if you start with zero value, and add zeros, you will get only zero value. You must be honest, you will get only zero value. You must be honest, otherwise you will end up with some great disaster". This is what happened in its three abortive

insurrections, which led to the slaughter of thousands of young men and women who trusted the JVP leadership. Let us hope that because of political expediency, Comrades Bahu and Vasu will not be a party to another aborted insurrection. They will march separately, but only to be smashed together!

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