

Comments on Interview with Mr. Leslie Goonewardena,
26 April 1967.

Mr. Goonewardena had been described to me previously as 'surly' in attitude. I found him correct, mildly polite, somewhat stern in manner and restrained in his answers. He obviously viewed his answers in the light of the way in which it would bear on the L.S.S.P. and its political fortunes.

I would rate Mr. Goonewardena as a powerful personality with an intellect of high calibre. He was one of the few I have interviewed who would have no nonsense from me and who was willing to pull me up for putting words in his mouth. I would say he was precise in his thinking, brief and terse in his writing and speaking.

I discovered subsequently from Mrs. Goonewardene that Leslie knows my step-brother (who resides in his home-town of Panadura) very well. Perhaps this made him more forthcoming in his approach than he might otherwise have been.

For all his restraint, a valuable interview; more time would have been welcome.

For the benefit of the uninitiated I should add that Mr. Goonewardena has been one of the leaders and key figures in the Lanka SamaSamaja Party since the 1930's; that he is one of the brains behind the party if not the chief theoretician. From 1945 to 1950 he was in the B.L.P. wing of the L.S.S.P.; B.L.P. equals Bolshevik Leninist Party. After the merger of 1950 he was in the main wing of the L.S.S.P. i.e. the L.S.S.P.(R).

M.W. Roberts

2/6/67

INTERVIEW WITH MR. LESLIE GOONEWARDENE

26th April 1967

- I. If I may ask something from the sociological background view point, was your education in Panadura or in Colombo?
- G. Well, I was in the St. John's Girls' School in Panadura until about the age of eight or nine, then I entered St. Thomas's College, Mount Lavinia, travelled up daily. I was there till I was sixteen.
- I. And ultimately you went to London?
- G. No, after that I was two years in a public school in England, or rather in Wales, North Wales; a couple of years. After that I was in London.
- I. Is it correct to say that the idea of forming a Marxist party here was conceived in London?
- G. Well, it is true that it was a group of people who - students who met in London who were the precursors of the movement that later developed into the Samasamaj Party in in Ceylon.
- I. Mmm. Is it out of place to ask who they were?
- G. Well, yes, there was a group: Dr. N.M. Perera was there, Mr. Philip Goonewardena was there, I was there, Colvin was there. And some others who are today out of politics, whose names I do not wish to mention.
- I. Is it correct to say that some of you joined the - I mean, had associations with the Communist Party there but you were already Trotsky-inclined and, well, some of you were even expelled from the communist groups there?
- G. No.
- I. That is not correct? I was just trying to find out whether you were, even at that stage, definitely Trotskyist ...?
- G. Well, the only person who was aware of the difference and did also make an effort to maintain relations with the Trotskyites was Philip Goonewardena. In fact, he was the first person who had some kind of leaning in that direction, at the start.
- I. So Trotskyism chrystallised, really, in the field in Ceylon?
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- G. In Ceylon.
- I. In later years?
- G. Yes.
- I. I asked the question about your background because, I mean, it is pretty evident that it was a westernised urban background, and I was wondering how far that bore on party politics and thinking in later years? For instance, the question of establishing a rapport, or a base among the peasantry?
- G. Well, yes, I think the first thing is to draw your conclusions, uh? I can supply you with the facts. If you ask me any questions about things that happened I'll be able to answer you.
- I. But, for instance, didn't your Panadura background give you an inkling of what the thinking was in rural areas?
- G. No. No.
- I. But then in, say, in ...
- G. Because Panadura background I had in my school days. In my school days I was certainly not interested in politics. My interest in politics commenced only after I went abroad.
- I. But what about your family connections? Didn't many have rural roots?
- G. On my mother's side perhaps, not on my father's side.
- I. And is it correct to say that even before the official formation of the L.S.S.P. in '35 you were acting as a sort of inner group?
- G. Yes. From 1933, certainly.
- I. And which field did you choose to concentrate on then?
- G. We worked the working-class.
- I. Through the Suriya Mal campaign or youth leagues, or trade unions?
- G. Trade unions. And we ran a paper called the Kamkaruwa [Worker]; weekly paper.
- I. In Sinhalese?
- G. In Sinhalese.
- I. And how much emphasis did you place on the - around the Suriya Mal Movement?
- G. Well, we placed a lot of emphasis - political emphasis, because there was the anti-imperialist character of that
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movement.

- I. Would it be correct to say that you were seeking to use the anti-imperial movement, and the national consciousness of the time to further some Samasamajist aims and to bring in a Marxist orientation?
- G. I do know the national consciousness at that time was very low. And I think our business was rather to create that national or anti-imperialist feeling. That was our effort in the Suriya Mal Movement: to create that feeling.
- I. With what success?
- G. Success was not very great. Success was not great.
- I. And how about the trade union field itself? Is it correct to say that you challenged Goonesinha?
- G. Yes.
- I. Weren't there other avenues within Colombo, other avenues to explore in the trade union field rather than confronting Goonesinha's trade unions themselves?
- G. Well, there are two things; one is that the workers who were conscious of the need for trade union organisation generally tended to go to Goonesinha. And secondly that Goonesinha, Mr. Goonesinha himself, considered the working-class his preserve and resented anybody even trying to organise unorganised workers. And when we organised unorganised workers the employers very often went to Goonesinha in order to get his support against us.
- I. And, at this stage at least, in contrast to the 1920's, wasn't he tending to make deals with the employers and - at the expense sometimes of his unions?
- G. He generally was.
- INTERRUPTION
- G. So!
- I. What success did you have in your struggle with Goonesinha?
- G. Well, we clashed on several occasions and certainly in the first few clashes ourselves we always came off second-best.
- I. What about the Wellawatte Mills?
- G. Well, the Wellawatte Mills of course was earlier. Was before '33, before I came to Ceylon. The strike was in '32. I wasn't here but N.M. - no, N.M. wasn't here either. Colvin and Philip were there at the time. And then of course
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- they got the better of Goonesinha then. But '33 onwards we got the worst of the thing and ... But round about '38 or '39 we found to some extent the tide began to turn.
- I. What hindered you in the '33-'35 period?
- G. That was not '33-'35, '33-'37 period?
- I. Yes.
- G. Well, the fact of the workers themselves: [that] although they were prepared to accept our help, the moment that Goonesinha came on the scene and attacked us they deserted us and went back to Goonesinha.
- I. Is it true that he used the anti-Malayali cry on occasions?
- G. Oh, yes; from 1931 he had been using it. That's from the time of the economic depression.
- I. But in doing so wasn't he cutting off a quontam of his own support because some of the labour was Indian?
- G. Yes, I daresay, but that happens.
- I. I should have thought that organisationally - anyway in time-the Samasamajists were much better off than his one-man party?
- G. Yes, well, the tide was, as I said, beginning to turn even in the trade union field, round about '38 and '39.
- I. Did you succeed in capturing the harbour too, later on?
- G. No, not till after the war. Not till during and after the war.
- I. Why was that?
- G. Well, the workers were still behind Goonesinha. The majority of them were not really organised but still they broadly accepted his leadership and wouldn't listen to anybody else.
- I. Its noticeable that for a short period in '36 Goonesinha and the L.S.S.P. leaders were - appeared on the same platforms at the May Day elect... - May Day rally and ...
- G. Mmm, there was a kind of united front for a short period, that is true. We marched in the same May Day procession but we did not appear on the same platform.
- I. Mmm. United front in what sense?
- G. United front in the sense of mutual cooperation in certain fields. Now, the May Day demonstration, we marched together; but his section marched off to his meeting while our section marched off to ours.
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- I. Mmm. What was the understanding and why was there cooperation of this type?
- G. Well, Goonesinha probably felt that, you see, by cooperating with us he might prevent that clashing in Colombo and they might persuade us to give up working this working-class and go and work only amongst the peasants.
- I. Then would it be correct to say that it was a very uneasy cooperation and didn't last long?
- G. No, it didn't last long at all.
- I. But what advantage had you in cooperating with him?
- G. That he was the acknowledged labour leader. And if the acknowledged labour leader was prepared to cooperate with us as elements who were also interested in labour organisation, well, that tended to set us right among certain sections of the workers.
- I. How much emphasis did you all place on the youth league movement?
- G. In early period we placed quite a bit of emphasis, before the party started. But after the party came into existence our energies were devoted more to the building of the party organisation itself.
- I. Were there youth leagues in the provinces or in the rural areas?
- G. You see, the youth leagues existed really in connection with the Suriya Mal movement. And to a very large extent they - they confined their activities to having Suriya Mal - running the Suriya Mal movement once a year.
- I. What was the composition of the youth leagues in the provinces? What strata ...?
- G. There weren't any youth leagues worth mentioning. The youth leagues were really in towns and small - in Colombo and in the small towns.
- I. And in the small towns?
- G. And the small towns.
- I. What sort of people joined it?
- G. Students.
- I. English speaking?
- G. Generally English speaking. Minority, Sinhalese speaking.
- I. That's very interesting.
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- G. That's at the beginning. Then, as I said, the youth leagues didn't develop, it was the party that developed after that.
- I. If its not out of place, I presume you had a problem with regard to funds? And since you had no outside connections, how did you manage to finance yourself?
- G. Mainly we didn't, that's all.
- I. Mostly private ...
- G. Yes.
- I. ... expenditure? And what about the structural base, how did you conceive the party? I mean, how did you organise it?
- G. Well, the party organised in 1935-36 was just a broad, mass party with nominal, yearly subscriptions. And that was all. It was a very loose kind of formation.
- I. How much emphasis did you place on the annual congress or conference? Was that a policy forming body?
- G. I don't think so because the policy formation was done by a - really a very small number of leaders.
- I. Central committee?
- G. Even smaller than the central committee. A very small number of leaders.
- I. So in this sense the structure was not democratic? I mean, I'm not saying that it should be but as a - in a descriptive way?
- G. It was not democratic, as you say, only in this sense: that people did not make use of their democratic rights. They were not in a position yet to make use of their democratic rights. Its not that their democratic rights were denied them, but they were politically so backward they were not in a position to suggest any alternative to what the leader suggested.
- I. Looking back, would it be correct to say that the organisation was somewhat too loose in the sense that you had all kinds of fellow-travellers whose affiliations were not very strong?
- G. Yes, the organisation was certainly too loose. It was an ineffective organisation. Certainly ineffective for the purposes of any kind of struggle.
- I. But, on the other hand, the organisation proved quite capable in the war years and the way they handled - I mean, the way
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- the secret group functioned seems to have been ...
- G. That was not the party organisation that did that. It was the secret organisation that functioned in the war years. The party organisation just collapsed.
- I. Because of Governmental pressure?
- G. Well, most of them disappeared. I mean, we couldn't find them. But the secret organisation continued. And probably got hold of some of the old elements and numbers of new elements.
- I. And how much emphasis was placed on winning the support of the peasantry, before the war?
- G. It is true that before the war certainly - and even the first few years after the war - we had more support among the rural areas than we did later on - that is true. But that is not due merely to the fact of the amount of emphasis that is placed. It is due to the objective situation where the direct rule of imperialism in Ceylon ... clearly a situation which disappeared after '47-'48 really.
- I. Didn't your emphasis include the agitation against the feudal system and the headman system?
- G. Yes, it did.
- I. And didn't that bring you support?
- G. Yes, it did.
- I. But also isn't it correct to say that the agitation against the headman system was not merely L.S.S.P. but also raised by other elements who were not Left? Examples: possibly even Bandaranaike but R.S.S. Gunawardena and Goonesinha and ...
- G. Goonesinha certainly.
- I. George E. De Silva?
- G. Goonesinha certainly, but he confined his activities to the towns. And there would have been other elements, but nobody who was carrying on an open agitation as we were doing.
- I. So would it be correct to say that the people associated the anti-feudal cry with the L.S.S.P.?
- G. Yes.
- I. Looking back, don't you ...?
- G. That was the only organised party that ... Well, it doesn't matter.
- I. Don't you think that this cry was only effective to a limited
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extent in that it exhausted itself soon, especially after independence?

- G. Well, to some extent it was partially exhausted even before independence because in 1938-39 the headman system was abolished at the extent of getting rid of the ratemahatmayas, the mudaliyars, and the intermediate stratum - the vidane arachchies. They were all abolished before the war. It was only the minor headmen that remained.
- I. And in so far as you attempted to win the allegiance of the peasantry, don't you think that one problem was presented by D.S. Senanayake's agrarian policies and his ability to win peasant support?
- G. Umm. I don't think that there was positive winning of support by D.S. Senanayake. I think it is the lack of consciousness and lethargy that has improved; has continued to - has made the situation continue where the peasants supported the upper-classes in their village and in the political field generally.
- I. Continuing this theme about the peasant, don't you think that you, in a sense, missed the bus on the language issue?
- G. Yes.
- I. Because of your Marxist principles?
- G. Because of our principles, yes. I should think yes.
- I. Whereas Bandaranaike was far more opportunistic and utilised the desires of the ...
- G. Yes, in this sense, Bandaranaike, Mr. Bandaranaike, was not so concerned about questions of principle. He approached things much more pragmatically.
- I. But also, weren't you placed in a dilemma in this situation because one of your fronts was an urban proletariat; urban and to some extent a plantation proletariat. And both on principle and on the basis of this support it was difficult for you to raise any communal cry without alienating these sections?
- G. The fact of the matter is we never had much support from the plantation - Indian plantation workers. We never had.
- I. Why was that?
- G. Well, the - I think partially it was this question of the discrimination against plantation workers which led them
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- into their own communal organisations. To accept their own communal leadership.
- I. So here again you see communalism being more important than Marxism and the urban togetherness - I mean, worker-togetherness?
- G. It has been. If it's not been so, I think we would probably have socialism in Ceylon. The plantation workers followed the communal issue; and still follow communalism.
- I. Don't you think that this was, well, while mainly - largely due to the situation itself, was also furthered by the advice given by Nehru in '39-'40? He formed the C.I.C., didn't he?
- G. Well, he helped the formation of communal organisations.
- I. This somehow doesn't square with his so-called socialism?
- G. Well, I don't know. I suppose he came here and saw Indians who were in difficulties and advised them to get together. I suppose from his point of view there was nothing wrong.
- I. Now, somewhere around '39-'40 didn't you try and get Anthonypillai to form unions among the estate workers?
- G. No, not Anthonypillai; but our party worked amongst the plantation workers in 1939-40 and we led very militant struggles of the plantation workers. Till 1940 when our party was repressed by the Government.
- I. Was that with a view to hindering the war effort or the - to the formation of trade unions among the estates?
- G. Formation of trade unions and the political development of those workers.
- I. And also representing genuine grievances?
- G. Well, don't put words into my mouth because that's not the way I'd express it. The way I'd express it is: certainly we were teaching - helping to develop the consciousness, both trade union and political, of the plantation workers.
- I. With what success in those years?
- G. Well, I think the struggles were very successful in the sense that they rose to a very big height, especially in Uva.
- I. Was that because Jack Kotelawela had a base there?
- G. No.
- I. Why particularly in Uva, and not in other areas?
- G. Well, the struggle started in the Kandy District and it did not develop high except in the Mooloya strike when there was shooting and killing of a worker called Govinda. Then the
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struggle was under leadership of the - of the Congress. Then struggle developed further down towards Nuwara Eliya, Talawakelle and so on. And it was in the latter period that it developed in Uva. And by the time it came to Uva the very militancy of the workers had given leadership to the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. The earlier struggles were not under the leadership of the Party except for Mooloya. They were under the leadership of the Congress. But by the time the struggle spread across the Central Province into Uva, the L.S.S.P. was in leadership.

- I. Then, apropos of your earlier remark, you seem to have lost this support which you gained in forty - 1941?
- G. We were unable to consolidate it because the Party was underground five years.
- I. In fact, I meant to ask that question. Both in the - among the plantations and in Colombo, didn't the fact that you opposed the war effort and had to go underground affect your ...?
- G. (?)
- I. Yes.
- G. In Colombo no, because we had the cadre to continue the work underground among the workers. In the plantations yes, because we had no cadre. We had perhaps a few individuals who'd been thrown up in the struggles themselves. But we had no cadre in the plantations.
- I. I presume the strength of the C.I.C. was that they had Indian Tamil leaders?
- G. Yes, that's about the principle reason and the second is the one we've just mentioned. That we were illegalised in the war years without a cadre in the plantations.
- I. But didn't the Communist Party capture some of your unions here [in Colombo]?
- G. No, I don't think they captured any of our unions but they built new unions in the war, during the war period.
- I. Which you had to contend with afterwards?
- G. What do you mean contend with?
- I. Well, in the harbour ...
- G. Sometimes we competed with them, sometimes we cooperated with them. But I mean, ...
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- I. No, well, what I meant is, competed with them on occasions.
- G. On occasions, yes.
- I. So tactically speaking, do you think it was a mistake to go into opposition in the war years?
- G. No, certainly not. It would have been ...
- I. Did you gain from it?
- G. Oh yes, terrifically.
- I. In what way?
- G. Well, we turned out to be the only anti-imperialist party in Ceylon, and that was proved in action. The only party that's prepared to struggle for the national freedom of the country.
- I. And that gained you support in ...?
- G. Very big support.
- I. ... '45, '46?
- G. After the war. We gained the support during the war which manifested itself after the war.
- I. And don't you think the war years were also useful in that they were a kind of crucible which deepened the Marxism of some of the less-involved members?

INTERRUPTION

- G. Well, even with the advent of the war, in fact shortly - well, with the advent of the war, yes. And even before the repression the party altered its character both organisationally and politically. Politically it advanced to a more clear Marxist programme. Organisationally it developed a secret organisation, within it, which was able to meet with any situation. As well as insisted on membership being confined to those who were also active.
- I. A few questions on the 1930's. Apart from yourself, who were the chief writers in the party?
- G. I don't think I wrote very much myself. The editor of the paper was Mr. B.J. Fernando. Colvin used to write. But there wasn't very much writing done in those days.
- I. Is it correct to say that at that stage you and Philip were the leaders of the party?
- G. I don't think there - no, I don't think so.
- I. I mean, I've been told that. I can't ...
- G. I think that Philip took the preeminent position of the
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- party, being the eldest and most experienced person in politics.
- I. Because I was - I mean, N.M. Perera is now known to be one of the leaders but isn't it correct to say that he didn't really emerge as the - among the frontline leaders till the 1950's?
- G. 1940's.
- I. Mmm. With the strikes?
- G. After the war. But in the pre-war period, in so far as there was one person standing out more than the others, it would have been Philip.
- I. And how much emphasis did you place on study groups in that period?
- G. Well, some effort was made to start study groups. In fact, I remember taking some myself. But there wasn't very much scope for them because the general political level was very low.
- I. How about after the war?
- G. After the war, of course, the situation was quite different.
- I. Hasn't language presented a problem, as to, say, the liaison and the connections between the leaders and the workers?
- G. No, I don't think the liaison between leaders and workers has been affected by the problem of language. But certainly the problem of language did present - the question of language did present problems because literature available in Sinhalese was so limited. Politically limited.
- I. Did you all attempt to translate or originate literature in the ...?
- G. We have done a certain amount of translation.
- I. That's in more recent years?
- G. No, even before the war. The Communist Manifesto was translated and published, I think, in 1940.
- I. A criticism made of the L.S.S.P., sometimes by some Sama Samajists themselves, is that the Central Committee has very few workers representatives in contrast with ...
- G. Workers. We don't have workers' representatives
- I. I mean workers.
- G. Well, the Central Committee have forty-four members today. And of whom certainly, I think, nearly half the people are
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- employed - employed - or unemployed workers.
- I. Yes. No, someone said that the Communist Party had got about eighty to ninety per cent and therefore they are more worker-oriented. But ...
- G. I don't know. I'm not in the position to make any comparison because I don't know the composition ...
- I. But it doesn't necessarily follow.
- G. ... of the Communist Party Central Committee. I can tell you about our party. About '44 I think about half our workers were people who were employed in factories and work places, or who'd been dismissed from them.
- I. What led to the small split in '39, when the Communists were expelled?
- G. It was really a question of our attitude to the Third International. And the majority of the Central Committee decided that the Third International had betrayed the International Movement. And we had a resolution that was passed by a big majority to that effect. The Communists opposed and then we expelled the Communists from the party.
- I. How many were expelled?
- G. From the Central Committee I think there must have been about nine or ten. Altogether I suppose about forty people were expelled.
- I. It is - perhaps of some significance that when the Communists formed a party they called it - initially called it the United Socialist Party?
- G. That's right.
- I. This would seem to indicate that they were not quite convinced about their Communism then?
- G. No, I should rather imagine that they considered it more advantageous ...
- I. A broader front?
- G. ... to call it a socialist party.
- I. And if I may ask - I think this is delicate ground - but what led to the split within the SamaSamajist party in '45?
- G. Well, it was a very confused situation. Numbers of factors were there. But I personally believe that they were principally personal factors.
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- I. Is it correct to say that Philip was not very easy to get on with and wanted to dominate?
- G. Well, that has always been the case; its always been the case. Even in 1950 when we got united again he didn't come into the unification.
- I. Was the personal clash between Doric and Philip instrumental in ...?
- G. That was during the war years.
- I. Over what?
- G. I don't think there was any very specific issue or any question of that nature. Of course, at the time it was held to be that Doric was standing for ... The majority felt that their [Doric's group] position was that they stood for a more Bolshevik-type of organisation, while we still wanted a broader type of organisation with less discipline.¹ Whereas the Philip-section said that they were representing the party²) of the workers and these people were petit-bourgeois intellectuals. But I don't think there was much - very ...
- I. Much ideological ...
- G. Much ideological difference. Have you read this 'History of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party'?
- I. I bought it. Actually I've got my background from that to some extent. What comments would you make on Esmonde Wickremesinghe's role? I mean, he was known to be one of the Marxist leaders in the University but then he has gravitated into the capitalist fold.
- G. Umm.
- I. How would you ...?
- G. Well, he was in the Party even in the war years, but I think his views changed towards the latter portion of the war. But he had the decency not to leave us until after the war. I think he felt it to be not right to leave us when we were in difficulties, so he waited until things were alright and immediately after the war period and the period of illegality was over, he approached us and told us his views had changed. He was leaving the Party.
- I. He was ^amember of the secret group?
- G. Oh yes. A member of the secret organisation.

1. When the split occurred in 1945 Mr. Leslie Goonewardene joined the minority section, including Doric De Sousa, in the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. The use of the word "we" in the above sentence may be of some significance in suggesting that he was not going along with Doric at the start.

- I. And what was Vernon Gunasekera's role?
- G. He was Secretary of the Party before 1940. Before it was illegalised. After it was illegalised, he dropped out of work; dropped out of activity.
- I. And what was his contribution in the pre-war years?
- G. Pamphleteering. He wrote pamphlets and leaflets.
- I. This split in '45: wasn't it partly on the tactical question of joining the Indian group and continuing the anti-imperialist struggle there?
- G. No.
- I. It wasn't on that?
- G. No.
- I. And how about the strikes in the forties? What do you think led to this upsurge?
- G. Which strikes? After the underground period or before we ...?
- I. After the underground period?
- G. Well, after the underground period there was no plantation strikes.
- I. Yes. The Colombo ...
- G. There were strikes in Colombo. Well, the rising cost of living and things like that led to many strikes in the city.
- I. Now, there was a general strike in which all groups cooperated and there was a Central Committee.
- G. There were several strikes. There was a general strike in '46 and '47.
- I. How was the cooperation at that stage between the three groups? Cooperation?
- G. Well, the cooperation was in action. Certainly the masses wanted that cooperation and nobody was against that cooperation, because it strengthened the common struggle.
- I. I mean, many people, that is especially the papers, represented the strikes as political engineering. And as ...
- G. Politically engineered?
- I. Yes, as being politically engineered. I was wondering whether this was a fair criticism because the newspapers of the time tended to be on the employers' side?
- G. Well, That's not a thing only of that time, even now there are people who continue to believe that leftist leaders and trade union leaders are in a position, like the magicians of old, to wave a wand and the masses just obey them. I
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mean, that either shows their ignorance, complete ignorance, of the real situation or it is just mischief-making on their part.

I. But hasn't it been true of the history of the Party that the Marxist groups have tried to win workers' support by showing militancy and therefore this means militantly advocating their grievances and leading strikes?

G. Well, it may - it does mean leading strikes and encouraging strikes, helping strikes, to where the strikes serve the purposes of the workers. But not in helping or encouraging strikes where those strikes are inimical to interests of the workers.

I. I was wondering whether the pitcher had been taken too often to the well; in the sense that sometimes you couldn't control them and wildcat strikes arose and you had perforce to take leadership otherwise you would lose supporters?

G. I suppose there may be several things like that where trade union leaders, our cadre had to do that. After all its a question of the workers themselves, isn't it? Its not a question of what we think the workers should do but it is the democratic right of the workers to strike. What we can do is we can advise them, as to whether a strike in a particular situation, in our view, is advisable or not. But it is they who strike and not the political parties. The political party of course demonstrates their attitude to the struggle depending on whether the aims of that struggle are progressive. If the aims of the struggle are not progressive, you wouldn't support it in any case. But if the aims of the struggle were progressive you would not cease to support that struggle merely because we thought the time and opportunity was not quite suitable. That was for the people who were doing the struggle to decide.

I. So in that sense on some occasions the Party was led by the trade unions?

G. Oh yes, surely. The Party has supported struggles which it has thought were premature.

I. That's very interesting.

G. And we might thereby help the workers to retreat without too many losses, which we would not be otherwise able to do. That applies not only to economic struggles but to political

struggles as well.

- I. Hasn't your trade union power been clipped to some extent by one other aspect of policy which you yourself have supported: namely nationalisation. This automatically brings various groups into the category of public servants and therefore under the - at least, in theory, the restrictions imposed by law on public service trade unions?
- G. No, I don't think so because most workers like to become public servants. Because the terms, the conditions of public servants is generally superior to that of people in the private sectors.
- I. But then doesn't that reduce their militancy and therefore their allegiance to the Party? Or the need for the Party?
- G. I don't know because I should think that the political support for the Lanka Sama Samaj Party is much stronger among the state employees than among the private employees; than in the private sector.
- I. Stronger in the Government sector?
- G. Much stronger.
- I. How effective has been these laws against Government Unions having political affiliations been?
- G. Very ineffective in practice. Mmm. Very ineffective in practice.
- I. I presume its because the Government doesn't want a first-class struggle on its hands?
- G. Well, its difficult to say what exactly the position is. Well, there is also the difficulty of the Government: to prove political connections and affiliations.
- I. How far had the S.L.F.P. moved into the trade union field?
- G. They did quite a lot in the period when they were the Government. But when they ceased to be the Government, their position has deteriorated very rapidly.
- I. Did they move in largely through Ilangaratne, because of his old ...?
- G. No, they moved in through patronage. Because there were many workers who felt that being in the Government - being in a union that was sponsored by the governmental party was an advantage.
- I. How about the language issue and effect on the L.S.S.P.
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- union support, after you changed your policy in '60, '65 and joined the S.L.F.P.? Well, even in '60?
- G. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah?
- I. Hasn't it led to the ...?
- G. Not the language question. But it is true that our support of the S.L.F.P. after - in the period after 1960 has reduced our union support in the plantations. Among the Tamil workers on the plantations. That is true.
- I. Not among the Tamil workers in Colombo?
- G. In Colombo? - no. Not in Colombo.
- I. I was thinking of the clerical ...
- G. I'm talking of the trade union support. Now, don't confuse trade union and political support.
- I. Yes, trade union support?
- G. We have lost no trade union support worth mentioning in Colombo, but certainly in the plantations. Not as a result of language policies but as a result of our attitude towards the S.L.F.P. Government.
- I. But speaking from the point of view of elections, this loss of plantation support can't be crucial because most of them haven't got the vote anyway?
- G. And also the - the - we never had really direct political support from the Indian estate workers; very little.
- I. How about in '47, in some constituencies?
- G. We fared very badly in '47. The Kandyan who fought the ... In that period the estate labourers had votes.
- I. Yes.
- G. We contested most of those seats ...
- I. And C.I.C. ...
- G. ... and we lost our deposits.
- I. No, but where the C.I.C. were not involved and where there were pockets of - you know, small pockets of Indian workers and where you were contesting the U.N.P., did the Indian workers...?
- G. There, they voted for us. There, they voted for us.
- I. How can you be certain if I may ask. I mean, its difficult to judge how people vote.
- G. I don't know. Its not so difficult for the people on the spot. It may be difficult for you and me who live in Colombo.
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- I. Yes, I see.
- G. But in the village everybody knows how the people next door vote. They all know. And they all know, even in one family, which votes for the U.N.P., which votes come to the S.L.F.P. or L.S.S.P. or whatever it may be.
- I. Did the Party ever discuss the question of - I suppose you would call this tactics - but the question of working through the parliamentary democratic institutions, and the alternative of being a more revolutionary type of party? Did that come up as an issue in ...?
- G. It has come up in various ways in our Party and it has been resolved.
- I. In what ...?
- G. In the sense that there is no fundamental contradiction between utilising whatever democratic rights, including the parliamentary institutions there are, to the full and the realisation that the emancipation of the peoples can only come as a result of the revolutionary initiative of the people themselves. That is to say, with a revolution. We see no contradiction.
- I. So take the parliamentary institutions as a step - use that as a step towards ...?
- G. Towards the revolution, yes. But by 'revolution' we don't mean what the Daily News means. It means people, the common people, participating actively in politics and moulding their own destiny. That's what we mean by revolution and we see no contradiction between that revolution or elections or Parliament or no elections or no Parliament.
- I. I see; and you can use the Parliament to undertake radical reform of a revolutionary nature?
- G. Yes, certainly.
- I. But sometimes when reading speeches and - made by some members of the Party - there seems a slight ambivalence, you see. While many emphasis the parliamentary process which is, shall I say, a peaceful way of - which could be a peaceful way of changing society and undertaking radical reform, others speak in such a manner which - as to indicate that they haven't ruled out the possibility of extra-parliamentary methods.
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- G. Mmm. Well, even if you come to power through Parliament it is absurd to imagine that you can introduce socialism without the revolutionary coming-forward of the people. Its illusory to think that you can pass some laws and through a bureaucracy change the social system. You can't. Of course, if you were in power and you had the state power in your hands, it would be much easier to get the people - to help the people to bring about the social transformation. That's all there is to it. In any case it would be the people that would be doing it and not the - and not the governmental machinery.
- I. So on this basis, you're implying that you cannot undertake revolutionary reform without the support of the majority of the people?
- G. No. It is the people who will change society.
- I. But wasn't - at least, looking at the history of the Soviet Union, the Bolshevik group was in the minority at the start. And they seized power and it is ...
- G. You see, I'm not saying that there are no ways of changing society. I'm not saying that a human being can not be born through a caesarian operation. Of course people are born through caesarian operations. Some are born seven months after conception. But what I say is that there is a normal process of birth after nine months, and even in society we are - we are aiming at what is normal. Of course, all sorts of abnormalities are possible. You can change social systems with a military dictatorship. Such things have happened. But we are hoping to do it through the normal revolutionary channels.
- I. Turning to the elections of '36 and '47, and even '52, how far did the caste factor help you in the sense that many of the older element and, in '47, the U.N.P. were largely goigamas? In particular constituencies didn't you get the low-caste vote?
- G. This is there: not a question of goigama but there is a question that our movement - Sama Samaj Party and Sama Samaj movement - from the start has found it naturally easier to gain support among the most exploited and oppressed elements of society. Because it was a bigger appeal for them than
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for those elements of society which enjoyed some kind of privileges. And for that reason, more than among the goigama support, from 1935 onwards our Party has gained a hearing from the so-called depressed classes. More than from the goigama because they have people who were more oppressed. In addition to the economic oppression to which I suppose the goigama mass of peasants is subject, in addition to that, there was a caste oppression also.

- I. In fact, taken alone, is the goigama caste a majority? Aren't other castes together, the so-called 'lower castes', greater in number than the goigama?
- G. No, I don't think that - I think that certainly the so-called depressed castes are.² It may be that all the other castes put together, depressed and non-depressed, might equal the goigama caste. Or come closely to equalling them.
- I. But regarding the support won by the L.S.S.P. candidates, or should I say the Marxist candidates, in various constituencies in the early years in many cases it would seem to have been due more to the family base rather than Marxism?
- G. Well, even that I think would apply only to two constituencies. One is Avissawella.
- I. Philip's?
- G. Yes. And the other is Akuressa.¹
- I. What about Mr. Subasinghe later on?
- G. You were talking of the early years.
- I. '47; '52.
- G. Ah, '47. Quite possibly the fact that his family was known in that area, yes.
- I. If I may ask, your case too? The Panadura area? that area?
- G. Well, I did not win Panadura till 1956. In any case, my family has no influence in the Panadura area. We are not an influential family; far from it.
- I. And could you tell me something about the Yamuna talks in '47?
- G. No.
- I. I mean, weren't there - wasn't there an effort to form a government by - a coalition government, because the U.N.P. didn't have a straight majority?
- G. There was, but I'm not well-informed on those matters because

1. Dr. S.A. Wickremasinghe's constituency.

2. He meant to say that the so-called depressed castes were not greater in number than the goigama.

I was working in India most of the time, and came to Ceylon merely to work for the elections.¹

- I. Looking back, I wonder whether the SamaSamajists made a mistake at about that time in not (a) trying to coalesce with George E. de Silva and (b) to, shall I say, take up the offer presented in '47 of a coalition government?
- G. With Ponna² also?
- I. Was it with Ponna? But with, I think, Sri Nissanka ...
- G. I remember Ponna also.
- I. Oh I see.
- G. I don't know so I'm not in a position to answer that.
- I. And what led to the reunion in 1950, Philip's group apart? What brought the other elements together again?
- G. The other Trotskyists together?
- I. Yes.
- G. Well, I think the tragic experience of the futility of clashing.
- I. Did the Gampaha by-election ...?
- G. The Gampaha election had that effect.
- I. It sobered ...?
- G. It highlighted the fact that this lack of unity was helping nobody.
- I. Have you any idea how Philips union with the Communist Party, '50 to '55, worked out?
- G. Well, it did not work out. It broke up.
- I. It is said that the Communist Party grabbed or wanted some of his supporters? How far is that correct?
- G. I don't know. It may have been so. I don't know. Anyway it didn't work out. It broke down.
- I. And how effective or ineffective was the hartal?
- G. Well, the hartal was effective in the coastal areas; I would say in the traditionally SamaSamajist areas. It was a big success. The people were behind it.
- I. But did it help to strengthen the support of the L.S.S.P.? Bring in new members?
- G. Perhaps not, perhaps not. But it certainly contributed to the downfall of the United National Party.
- I. In '56?
- G. Yes.

1. The Yamuna talks (at Mr. Sri Nissanka's house "Yamuna") took place after the 1947 elections.

2. G.G. Ponnambalam, leader of the Tamil Congress.

- I. Going back in time, somewhere in '51, late November, attempts were made to forge an alliance with the S.L.F.P. What happened to those?
- G. When?
- I. '51; before the '52 elections, that is.
- G. No, there was an effort to have a no-contest agreement with the S.L.F.P. which was only very partially successful. We clashed in about as many places as we did not clash.
- I. Why? On what grounds - I mean, for what reasons was it partially successful.
- G. I suppose both parties, they wanted to fight those seats. Each thought they had a better chance than the other.
- I. Did the L.S.S.P. doubt - have strong doubts about the extent of support Banda was likely to get?
- G. In 1952 really neither party was able to gain much support. So I suppose one could not say that the L.S.S.P. underestimated the strength or potential of Mr. Bandaranaike. Although that was so from '56 or so.
- I. Oh I see, yes. Would you say that you did worse in '52 than in '47?
- G. Yes. Comparatively speaking. Not absolutely. Absolutely we got more votes.
- I. And what led Dahanayake to leave the Party?
- G. He was expelled.
- I. Oh.
- G. For breaking the decision of the Central Committee not to welcome the U.N.P. Prime Minister when he arrived in Galle.
- I. Yes, he met him at Gintota Bridge and ...
- G. Garlanded him. He was expelled for breaking party discipline and disobeying party orders. Not for garlanding the Prime Minister.
- I. Ha-ha-ha. And what led to the '53 split?
- G. '53, a section of our Party broke away in the direction of the Communist Party. Some of them went the whole hog; others stopped at Philip Gunawardena.
- I. On what issue really did ...?
- G. Well, two issues: one is that they wanted to accept the leadership of the Soviet Union. The other is that they were for a popular front.
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- I. And how many dissidents were there?
- G. I think there - about one-third of the Party certainly voted against the positions of leadership and a little less than one-third broke away.
- I. How many Central Committee members?
- G. I can't remember.
- I. Roughly the same proportion perhaps?
- G. Roughly the same proportion.
- I. Did any of them rejoin the Party or ...?
- G. I think some did but not many. Not many.
- I. And what do you think hindered the formation of an united front in the early fifties?
- G. In the early fifties? Before 1952?
- I. No, before '56. I mean, there was '55 united front which collapsed, didn't it?
- G. Well, in 1956 there was this kind of united front with the S.L.F.P. in the elections as a no-contest agreement. Nothing more than that.
- I. No, I was thinking of before that. Why was there no united front with the other Marxist elements? Philip and the C.P.?
- G. Well, there was a united front between Philip and the C.P. which broke down. Then after that Philip had a united front with us which broke down on the question of the distribution of seats. Then came the '56 elections where Philip formed a coalition with Mr. Bandaranaike.
- I. When the L.S.S.P. had a meeting in '55 and advocated parity it was broken up by some thugs. Have you any idea who was behind it?
- G. I don't know about who was behind it but they were U.N.P.-oriented people who broke up the meeting.
- I. It is noticeable that in '55 at the Alutnuwara by-election - a rural area - the U.N.P. won and the L.S.S.P. came second and the S.L.F.P. came third. So the swing to the L.S.S.P. really came between '55 and '56?
- G. Yes.
- I. What do you think led to this ...?
- G. I think there was a Sinhalese nationalist revival, which was headed by the S.L.F.P.
- I. Was the vote in '56 more anti-U.N.P. than pro-S.L.F.P.?
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- G. I think it was also positively pro-S.L.F.P. I suppose in the coastal areas it may have been merely anti-U.N.P. and less pro-S.L.F.P. But as you got more to the hinterland it was more positively pro-S.L.F.P.
- I. No, it is noticeable that post-'56 you had a policy of responsive cooperation with the S.L.F.P. but yet you led some serious strikes in '57 and '58, strikes which effected Government. What brought this on?
- G. Well, there were two types of strike. One type of strike was the economic strike of the workers, that you'd support in any case. It was not a matter of striking And the other, of course, was really a one day political strike against an amendment to this Public Security Act.
- I. Oh yes.
- INTERRUPTION
- G. There was only one political strike and that was against the Public Security Act; the others were economic strikes.
- I. Yes, what led Banda to pass that Act?
- G. I don't know; I couldn't say. Because we didn't see any necessity for it.
- I. And its noticeable that the C.P. didn't join you in that [strike]?
- G. No.
- I. Have you any idea why? Was there ...?
- G. I think that they were more sympathetic to Mr. Bandaranaike's Government than we were and did not want to ...
- I. Embarrass it?
- G. Embarrass it.
- I. And what about the strikes in '61, '62, just before the coup? Because I recall that a good friend of mine in the Varsity, who was a member of the party - your party, said that they wanted to bring the Government down. I was wondering how far that was correct?
- G. But certainly we were not wanting to bring the Government down by strikes.
- I. But weren't you ...?
- G. Those strikes were economic strikes; they were not political strikes.
- I. Isn't a general strike in a sense a political strike?
- G. It has the potentialities of politics; its capable of
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developing into a political struggle but it doesn't necessarily follow that the aim of a general strike itself is political. A general strike can take place on economic issues. Of course, it can't continue without posing the question of power. That's a different question. In any case there was no general strike in '61, or '62. There was a wave of economic strikes.

- I. Yes, but didn't you intend to have a general strike?
- G. One day strike, which is a ...
- I. A token?
- G. A token strike compelling the Government to settle the other strikes.
- I. Going back to '56, I forgot to ask something. How important was this support of the monks to - the bhikkhus - to the S.L.F.P.?
- G. Well, I'll say this: the support of the bhikkhus to the S.L.F.P. was itself a symptom of a change, that is a growth of Sinhalese and Buddhist national consciousness. That it was a symptom.
- I. And would you say it was the rise of the non-privileged classes in the rural sectors?
- G. The economic side of it was that. The economic root of it is that. I would ^{not} say that the only root is economic, while the economic root is important. Certainly the economic root was that: jobs and position.
- I. And the political root?
- G. The political root is this: Buddhism is a religion that had suffered quite a bit of discrimination in the past. And people began to feel that it had to be given its rightful place as the religion of the majority. That's one aspect of it. I suppose there were other aspects too.
- I. Mmm. In fact, a general question arises out of that. From your point of view hasn't the conservatism of the peasantry and their religiosity, Buddhist-wise, been a big obstacle to the ... - to the winning of their allegiance?
- G. No, I don't think so. On the contrary I think the fact that Buddhism itself is a very rational religion and, above all, that it is an unorthodox religion - unlike the Catholic Church for example - has been - has prevented religion from
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being a hindrance to social progress. That is the Buddhist religion. But what has been a hindrance to progress are the vested interests among the - in the organised section of the Buddhist religion. That is among the Nayaka priests who, almost to a man, I would say, are on the side of the capitalists.

- I. Yes, in '56 for instance, there's much ado made about the support the S.L.F.P. got. But didn't the U.N.P. too have a significant section of the priesthood supporting them?
- G. The U.N.P. then, as now, had the Nayaka priests, the vested interests Of course, I think they were more silenced at the time; in face of the coming to consciousness of the people, and of the lower ranks of the Buddhist monks, I suppose they were more silent than today.
- I. But apropos of your coalition with the S.L.F.P. now, hasn't it led to a significant modification of the Marxist line, in that both individually and generally you have had to give up the traditional idea which is expressed in that cliché, 'Religion is the opium of the masses'?
- G. That is a cliché that we have not - not used. That is a cliché that has been used by the capitalist press against us; not now, but from 1935. So this so-called opposition to religion is a bogey that has been created from 1935. By our opponents, not by us.
- I. So then from that date, '35, I mean from your inception, you never followed this line?
- G. No.
- I. But this is ...
- G. We never followed a line, an anti-religious line.
- I. But looking at international Marxism hasn't that been anti-religious?
- G. I don't know what you mean by international Marxism.
- I. Shall I say ...
- G. Yes.
- I. ... as ...
- G. Rosa Luxemburg, no. She has not followed an anti-religious line.
- I. As, say, in Marx itself or Trotsky in ...
- G. Now, say, Trotsky: that's in Russia?
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- I. Yes.
- G. Yes. The Russian - in Russia, the social democratic movement, and that includes the Mensheviks, took an anti-religious line. Because in Russia, Czarist Russia, the church was closely combined together with the state both as an economic and political oppressor of the people. The same in Spain where the Catholic Church was the biggest land-owner. So there also we find the movements, socialist, communist, anarchist, taking an anti-religious attitude. But that does not necessarily take place in countries where the organised religion - religion organised or unorganised - does not play the role of exploiting the peasant.
- I. But isn't the Buddhist - well, for want of another word - organisation also capitalist in that they own a fair number - amount of land?
- G. Very little. Where? Compared to the Catholic Church the Buddhist ...
- I. Hierarchy.
- G. ... church is a pauper.
- I. Just a few odd questions: How many members do you have now? If that's not a secret I mean.
- G. Well, we don't disclose the number of members. In fact, I don't think it essential to a sociological survey. But perhaps it may be a useful thing to a purely political survey, which is not your purpose.
- I. And could you tell me something about the Delimitation Commission of '59. Wasn't that very important politically?
- G. '59?
- I. Around that time.
- G. But in what sense do you mean politically?
- I. I mean, didn't - was it packed and did the formation of constituencies tend to help the Government?
- G. I really don't know whether you can make - you can bring about all that difference by the way you cover a constituency. Although, of course, there is this much to it: the weightage for the Kandyan Provinces has increased.
- I. Still some more? It was already ...
- G. Already increased on account of area. Now it was increased because of these disfranchised Indian voters. That was
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something that as far as the rest of the country is concerned I don't think it will alter much.

- I. Its noticeable that they got rid of multi-membered constituencies but kept Colombo Central as one?
- G. Well, there are other multi-membered constituencies. Or there were. But there are still other multi-membered constituencies. Batticaloa in the Eastern Province there is multi-membered constituency.
- I. And, now, for instance, its noticeable that they put the padua caste into the Dedigama electorate.
- G. Bathgama caste.
- I. Bathgama ...
- G. Yes.
- I. ... caste into the Dedigama electorate. And I wonder whether that was an effort to embarrass the U.N.P.?
- G. I don't know. I can't tell you. But I don't think all these machinations really make any significant difference in the long run.
- I. What about registration? Isn't that crucial?
- G. Yes.
- I. And, you know, there have been allegations that particularly the Government in power uses its power to - in engineering the registration, to their advantage.
- G. I don't think the Government in power does that. It may well be that underlings do it, it may well be.
- I. It is possible?
- G. Yes. It may well be that underlings do it. I know that certainly in my area, quite often, the people registering - the headmen used to register - did not register many people who were voting for me. But, as I say, this is - these are - can effect the fringe only. It isn't anything very much.
- I. This has a bearing on the party organisation at the local level. If the organisation was good, presumably they could prevent this sort of thing?
- G. Well, there is some effort being made now to prevent that kind of thing. In cooperation with the Department for Parliamentary Elections.
- I. Have they been cooperative on this point?
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- G. I don't know. Well, they have said they will be cooperative; we are trying to cooperate with them. How far it will succeed, I do not know. The first time its being tried out is this year.
- I. In fact, how do the party assess each constituency? You all don't have statistical units as such. It seems to be a very rough-and-ready organisation?
- G. Assess in what sense? Working-class, class - class composition?
- I. Yes, class ...
- G. We have no means of working out such matters.
- I. Finally, [taking] a sort of a different tack. About - I'm interested in your view on the Civil Service in the thirties and forties? What would you say were its shortcomings, its assets?
- G. Its not a question merely of the Civil Service, its a question of the whole administering machine. Even today [it] continues predominantly one that is not suitable - suited for the purpose which it is meant to fulfil. Its very suitable for the old colonial days when the main purpose of the administration was to collect taxes and to keep the people down ... But the whole administering machine, not merely the Civil Service, has to be reorganised.
- I. In what direction?
- G. In the direction of bringing it closer to the people. Making it more responsive to the needs of the people and more geared to development.
- I. How can this be done?
- G. It has to be reorganised.
- I. You feel that Civil Servants, and particularly G.A's, have generally been disdainful towards the public?
- G. I feel that the whole Civil Service is useless. People who were recruited to that were recruited for some different purpose. Its nothing to do with what they are called upon to do today.
- I. Conservative?
- G. The concern is to maintain the status quo and to prevent the spending of Government money. Its not suitable and its got to go.
- I. Cheese-paring in attitude?
- G. It was more than that. The purpose is not to spend money.
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- The purpose of Government is not to spend money. So they - they tried to stop spending on money wherever its possible.
- I. Negative attitude?
- G. Well, the purpose of Government according to the traditions they were brought up in, I presume, is one of collecting taxes from the people, and keeping them down.
- I. But wasn't there a certain element of impartiality which is disappearing today because of the political process and the involvement?
- G. But there are other factors. I mean, there are very good things about the Civil Servants. They didn't take bribes, which is an even better quality than the quality of impartiality. But that's of no use. I mean, that's not enough, just not enough.
- I. Did it change after '56?
- G. Attitudes have changed but the machinery has not changed.
- I. But isn't the attitude the crucial thing?
- G. No. The attitude is useless if you've got a Treasury sitting on top of you. Which prevents you from doing anything.
- I. You think there are too many clerks and forms also?
- G. No, I think the whole organisation has to be reorganised because this has not - this present governmental machinery and administration has not been built for the purposes of today.
- I. What about the unified administrative system?
- G. Well, I welcomed that. Administrative service.
- I. Administrative service.
- G. I welcomed that.
- I. It has been an improvement has it?
- G. Yes, definitely.
- I. And what about this corporation system? Hasn't it given, or at least supposed to give, greater flexibility.
- G. What do you mean by 'corporation system'?
- I. The formation of corporations to ...
- G. This is a step forward. I mean, you can't run businesses in Government departments. But that's only one step forward. There are several more steps that have to be taken.
- I. Any in particular you would ...?
- G. Well, what our coalition programme suggested: that we've got gradually to hand over power to the people who work for
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those corporations. And gradually to hand over the management of the corporations to the people who are working in the corporations.

- I. Something like the Mussolini-Italian system?
- G. No. Something more like the Yugoslav system.
- I. Is that practicable?
- G. Surely. Its worked in Yugoslavia. With suitable modifications and gradual introduction, there is no reason why it should not ...
- I. But hasn't the whole social structure to change?
- G. Yes.
- I. First?
- G. Yes. No. It has to change. I don't necessarily say 'first'. Why not do it at the same time?
- I. And, in fact, for instance, this status level, isn't that a hindrance to this kind of organisation you are suggesting? The status concepts.
- G. Yes. All that will have to go, you see. Engineers and management will have to sit together with the workers. Those who are not ready to do that will have to go.
- I. What about the question of managerial skill? Do the workers have the managerial skill?
- G. No.
- I. So, in that case, won't this combination effect performance?
- G. No. What about the existing managers? Nobody is sending them away.
- I. Yes, but presumably this compromise or combination arrangement would bring pressure to bear on the managers and ...?
- G. Surely that's what its meant for?
- I. Yes, but policy decisions might effect their performance. Policy decisions might bear on managerial skills?
- G. Yes. Yes, there might be a certain loss in efficiency, there might be a certain gain in efficiency. We are hoping that the gains will be much bigger than the losses.
- I. Again - I mean, I'm not - I'm just trying to get a balance. I was just wondering whether the fact that it has worked in Yugoslavia does not necessarily mean that the conditions are suitable in Ceylon?
- G. I didn't say they were. I said: what is there in Yugoslavia
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- with the necessary modifications and with that element of gradualness which is also necessary, there is no reason why it should not succeed.
- I. In fact, talking of gradualness, how effective or ineffective has the switch-over to the swabasha been, administratively?
- G. Well, it has not been as effective as it might have been but it has been quite effective on the whole.
- I. No, I was wondering whether the Bandaranaike regime tended to make too many ad hoc and rather vague decisions on this point?
- G. Not only on this point, on every point. And not only the Bandaranaike regime, every regime that has existed, has proceeded without planning. (?) (?) (?) (?) (?) (?).
- I. In fact, wasn't Bandaranaike the man, as a man, rather prone to temporise and to procrastinate?
- G. Yes, that's possibly so.
- I. I mean, now, for instance, '58: it is said that he was provoked to declare emergency by a hint from the L.S.S.P., that unless he took action they would use their youth leagues and other organisations to keep order. Is that correct?
- G. No.
- I. The L.S.S.P. didn't ...?
- G. No.¹

THE END

1. The time provided for the interview was drawing to a close and ~~the last ten minutes~~ the questions and answers in the last ten minutes were on a rapid-fire basis.