

American Institute for Lankan Studies

10, Fonseka Terrace, Colombo 6. Sri Lanka.
Tel. 94 11 2583277 tel. 94 11 4513706
Email: aisls@sltnet.lk
Web: <https://www.aisls.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/SriLankanStudies>
United States Director - Dr. John D. Rogers
Head of AILS Colombo - Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara



Newsletter

June 2021

The Archive of Dissent: The Completion of AILS Collaborative Digitization Project

This collection, which is available on open access through Princeton University Library [https://dpul.princeton.edu/sae_sri_lanka_dissidents] and the South Asia Open Archives [<https://www.crl.edu/programs/samp/saoa>] documents the activity of a generation of Sri Lankan radical activists who, in their different ways, attempted to escape the claims of rival ethno-nationalisms and build alternative political and development projects, drawing on Marxism, Christian socialism, and feminism, among other inspirations. The digital library is the product of a collaboration among the American Institute for Lankan Studies (AILS), the University of Edinburgh, Princeton University Library, and the South Asia Open Archives. It was produced as part of a larger project entitled *A Comparative Anthropology of Conscience, Ethics and Human Rights* directed by Prof Tobias Kelly (University of Edinburgh). The Sri Lankan strand is the work of three researchers, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya (Open University Sri Lanka), Dr. Sidharthan Maunaguru (National University of Singapore), and Prof Jonathan Spencer (University of Edinburgh). The project was generously supported by a European Research Council Horizon 2020 Consolidator Grant (648477 AnCon ERC-2014-CoG), with additional support from the American Institute for Lankan Studies.

A team effort by AILS, with special recognition of Crystal Baines



Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara

For project planning and development solving all competing constraints, thus directing the AILS team to completion



Dr. John Rogers

For the unwavering guidance, support & input right throughout the project to achieve phenomenal results



Crystal Baines

For the incredible feat of steadfastly pursuing the goals of the AILS digitization project & going above and beyond to reach outstanding results



The generosity and the openness of the copyright owners and/or custodians of the materials, with whom AILS maintains memoranda of understanding, was a key element to realizing this digital archive. Many individuals contributed to this effort, but it would not have been possible without the untiring efforts of Crystal Baines (AILS), who was responsible for locating the materials, building relationships based on mutual trust with copyright owners or custodians of the materials, negotiating the digital rights with the owners, supervising the production of the images, and ensuring accuracy of the metadata. [Excerpt:https://dpul.princeton.edu/sae_sri_lanka_dissidents]



DISSIDENTS AND ACTIVISTS IN SRI LANKA, 1960S TO 1990S

Source: <https://www.aisls.org/digitization/dissidents-and-activists/>

This collection documents the activity of a generation of Sri Lankan radical activists who, in their different ways, attempted to escape the claims of rival ethno-nationalisms and build alternative political and development projects, drawing on Marxism, Christian socialism, and feminism, among other inspirations.



Dr. Ellen Ambrosone
South Asian Studies Librarian,
Princeton University Library

A complete description of the digital library and access to its contents is available through the project's home page on Princeton University Library website [https://dpul.princeton.edu/sae_sri_lanka_dissidents]. The contents are also available through the South Asia Open Archives [https://www.crl.edu/programs/samp/saoa]. The Princeton University Library collections are rich and diverse, with more than 7 million printed works, 5 million manuscripts, and 2 million non-print items including archival materials, maps, prints, coins, and incunabula. Extensive digital holdings are represented by primary sources, data, images, electronic databases, e-books and journals, music and audio files, and

video. Princeton's collections grow and develop through careful selections and purchases by 53 Subject Specialists, gifts to the Library and cooperative collection development programs with other research institutions and consortia. Each year, Princeton University Library has the opportunity to add very special items to its holdings of print, digital, non-print and manuscript material either through

acquisition or as gifts to the Library. **This anthropological research project, funded by the European Research Council and hosted by the University of Edinburgh, examines conscience as a culturally and historically embedded ethical category, whose precise meanings are always the product of particular conflicts. It examines how claims to conscience have been made and contested through sun-projects on the comparative analysis of British conscientious objectors to military service, Sri Lankan dissidents and activists, Soviet dissidents, and the history of the international human rights movement.** [https://library.princeton.edu/collections-and-collection-development]

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

The collection consists of three sections. The first is an assorted collection of Left-wing political and civil rights pamphlets and booklets dating from the 1960s to the 1990s. The authors and publishers include former left-wing political parties, trade union movements, and civil rights movements. The second section of the collection includes writings from the Sri Lankan Liberation Theology movement of the late twentieth century, which was inspired by the movement's contemporaries from across Asia and Latin America. It includes the writings and publications of Rev. Paul Caspersz, Rev. Tissa Balasuriya, Rev. Yohan Devananda, and Rev. Michael Rodrigo, along with materials produced by their respective civil and human rights organizations. The third section is a selection of materials from the library of the Women's Education and Research Centre (WERC). It includes WERC's journal *Nivēdhinī*, newsletter *Pravahini*, and other pamphlets, booklets, and flyers related to women's resistance movements and women's rights awareness programs of the late 20th Century.

Left-wing political pamphlets (Dr Nirmal Dewasiri's Collection)

Approx. images: 1000

Genres: Pamphlets, Booklets

Topics in the selection for digitization include, left-wing perspectives on the ethnic conflict, the National Question, trade union activism and workers' struggle, general strikes, Socialist ideology and women in the left movements. The publications are booklets by and on parties and organizations such as Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Communist Party, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Workers' Peasant Institute, Federation of Ceylon Trade Unions, Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) etc.



Dr. Nirmal Dewasiri

Paul Caspersz (Satyodaya Centre for Social Research and Encounter, Kandy)

Approx. images: 1800

Genres: Newspaper articles, Reports

Topics in the selection include, Labour Rights (plantation worker wages, privatization of land and the tea industry, living conditions), Statelessness (disenfranchisement and repatriation of Malayaha Tamil workers), Human Rights (in relation to the plantation community and the civil war), Socialist/Marxist Theology, Liberation Theology, Development and Globalization (Open-Economic policies, privatization of state industries, its impact on the agrarian sector; development and economy in wartime contexts of Sri Lanka).



Fr. Paul Caspersz

Tissa Balasuriya (Centre for Society and Religion, Colombo)

Approx. images: 2500

Genres: Pamphlets, Booklets, Short Journals

Topics in the selection for digitization include Human Rights, Feminism, Women's Rights, Gender and Sexuality, Workers' Rights, documents related to his attempted excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church, Liberation Theology, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Environmental Conservation, "Third World" Ecumenism. The more well-known among the many published books by Balasuriya include, *Planetary Theology*, and *Mary and Human Liberation*. The centre is also a publishing house for Balasuriya's writings as well as the centre's journals and magazines such as *Quest*, *Logos*, *Vimukthi Prakashana*, *Sadharanaya*, and *Social Justice*. The ephemera for Princeton will include a selection from these publications.



Fr. Tissa Balasuriya

Yohan Devananda (Devasarana Development Centre, Kurunegala)

Approx. images: 1000

Genres: Pamphlets, Booklets

Topics in the selection for digitization include pamphlets, articles, and poetry booklets related to the 1971 Youth Uprising, ethnic conflict, inter-religious dialogue and national politics; the Constitution and administrative pamphlets and booklets of the early decades of the Devasarana Development Centre Kurunegala.



Fr. Yohan Devananda

Michael Rodrigo (Family Collections, Oblate Scholasticate Kandy, Suba Seth Gedara Centre for Christian-Buddhist Dialogue and Conscientization, Buttala)

Approx. images: 2000

Genres: Newspaper articles/ clippings, booklets, posters, handwritten diaries

Topics in the selection for digitization include Buddhist-Christian dialogue, social justice, Socio-Economic Rights of the rural agrarian community, sustainable organic farming methods, environmental conservation, indigenization of Catholic/Christian worship. Selections of Poetry and Posters on social justice and awareness in rural citizenship Rights. The collection also includes his two PhD theses from Gregorian University Rome and the Institut Catholique de Paris.



Fr. Michael Rodrigo

Women's Education and Research Centre, Colombo

Approx. images: 1000

Genres: Journals, Newsletter, Pamphlets, Booklets

Topics in the selection of digitization include Women's Rights movements in twentieth century Sri Lanka, women's literature, women's issues related to Law, Economics, Politics, Sexuality, War, Violence included in annual journal *Nivēdhinī* and the newsletter *Pravahini*.



American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies announces a new round in its Community College Curriculum Development Grants competition [more at: <http://www.aisls.org/>]

AISLS seeks proposals for developing instructional materials that include Sri Lanka content, which are suitable for use in introductory classes in American community colleges. Modules may also be used in introductory courses at four-year colleges and universities. AISLS expects to award one or two grants of \$1,000 each. Graduate students and recent PhDs are especially encouraged to apply, but we also welcome proposals from experienced faculty, including those who teach at community colleges. Applications from teams of two persons are encouraged. Should a team win a grant, the members will share the \$1,000 award. AISLS will award grants for the creation of online teaching modules. The modules should provide resources enabling community college instructors to integrate material on a Sri Lanka topic into one or more introductory courses taught widely at US community colleges. These classes include, but are not limited to, the following: World History, Cultural Anthropology, World Religions, Comparative Politics, World Geography, World Literature, and Environmental Studies at US community colleges. Modules must include at least one video or video link, and links to other textual and visual materials, either for in-class presentation or for the instructor's preparation. The project must include content written by the applicant(s) that gives community college teachers sufficient

background and bibliographic information. The module should not be a lesson plan for instruction, but a set of resources that instructors can insert into their lesson plans. They should not envision that their module will be used for more than one week, and they should be aware that most instructors will probably use it for one class session only. In organizing modules, applicants may wish to begin by considering learning objectives for students. Proposals may concern any topic suitable for inclusion in an introductory community college course. Some possible topics;

- **Public health and welfare (e.g., the country's traditionally high "quality of life" rankings given conventional measures of wealth)**
- **Using a short story or novel to discuss social changes in Sri Lanka.**
- **The economic and social impact of contemporary labor migration (e.g., workers in the Middle East)**
- **Changing patterns of family life and gender relations**
- **Women in politics**
- **Religion and society**
- **Urbanization**
- **Agriculture and irrigation**

Read more details at aisls.org. The deadline for proposals is August 2, 2021. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by August 30, 2021. Successful applicants will then have until September 1, 2022 to complete their teaching module (early submission is encouraged). Proposals, and informal enquiries, should be submitted to the AISLS US Director, John Rogers, at us.director.aisls@gmail.com. AISLS can offer informal feedback on enquiries and draft proposals.

STAFF MOMENT!



Celebrating Phusathi Liyanaarachchi's Birthday!

Photo -Left to Right: Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara [AILS], Maleesha & Zarah [Library Patrons], Phusathi Liyanaarachchi [AILS], Ramla Salman-Wahab [AILS] and Mithsandi Seneviratne [AILS]

AISLS Member Institutions

Brandeis University, Center for Global Development and Sustainability <https://heller.brandeis.edu/gds/>
Brown University, Center for Contemporary South Asia <https://watson.brown.edu/southasia/>
Columbia University, Southern Asian Institute <https://www.sai.columbia.edu/>
Cornell University, South Asia Program <https://sap.einaudi.cornell.edu/>
Five Colleges Buddhist Studies Consortium <https://www.fivecolleges.edu/buddhism/>
Johns Hopkins University, Department of Anthropology <https://anthropology.jhu.edu/>
Miami University (Ohio), Asian/Asian American Studies <http://miamioh.edu/cas/academics/programs/aaa/>
New York University, India and South Asia Research <https://www.southasianyu.org/>
Princeton University, Program in South Asian Studies <http://piirs.princeton.edu/sas>
Stanford University, Center for South Asia <https://southasia.stanford.edu/>
University of California-Berkeley, Institute for South Asia Studies <https://southasia.berkeley.edu/>
University of Chicago, Department of South Asia Languages and Civilizations <http://salc.uchicago.edu/>
University of Michigan, Center for South Asian Studies <https://www.i.umich.edu/csas/>
University of Otago, Religious Studies <https://www.otago.ac.nz/religion/about.html>
University of Pennsylvania, South Asia Regional Studies <http://www.southasia.upenn.edu/>
University of Texas-Austin, South Asia Institute <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/southasia/>
University of Virginia, Center for South Asian Studies <http://southasia.as.virginia.edu/>
University of Washington, South Asia Center <https://jsis.washington.edu/southasia/>
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for South Asia <https://southasia.wisc.edu/>
Wake Forest University, Middle East and South Asia Program <http://mesas.wfu.edu/>
Yale University, South Asia Council <https://macmillan.yale.edu/>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

President: Sharika Thiranyagama (Stanford University)
 Vice President: Anne M. Blackburn (Cornell University)
 Secretary: Mythri Jegathesan (Santa Clara University)
 Treasurer: Daniel Bass (Cornell University)
 Past President: Dennis McGilvray (University of Colorado-Boulder)
 Member At-Large: Janice Leoshko (University of Texas-Austin)

Elected Directors

Elizabeth Bittel (SUNY Cortland)
 Vivian Choi (St. Olaf College)
 V. V. Ganeshanathan (University of Minnesota)
 Justin Henry (Georgia College)
 Alexander McKinley (Loyola University Chicago)
 Deborah Winslow (School for Advanced Research)