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TRIBUNE



26TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION



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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER we have a picture of some excellent specimens of the Sri Lanka (Ceylon) elephant. This week's issue of *Tribune* devotes a large number of pages to the difficulties that had nearly prevented the setting up of the Asian Elephant Secretariat in this country. Last week *Tribune* had published a letter which had cited an article by Shelton Liyanage published in the *Sunday Times* (ST) of June 15 and also a letter by S. R. Ratnapala in the *Ceylon Daily News* (CDN) of June 13. A reader has now sent us photostats of two letters (ST of June 29 and CDN of June 27) on the same matter. The first by Ian de Silva on the *World Wildlife Fund* reads: "In his article 'Why Sri Lanka was expelled from the World Wildlife Fund' appearing in the *Sunday Times* of June 15, there is reference to a letter addressed by the Director-General of the WWF to me by name. This has given many readers the incorrect impression that I was responsible for furnishing the information to your correspondent. In actual fact the letter was not seen by me, obviously because I resigned from the office of Hon. Secretary of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society some time ago. However, I have seen photocopies of the relevant correspondence and in addition to the letters quoted in the article there is one letter in particular that calls for special comment. This is a letter dated August 6, 1979 addressed to the Hon. Asst. Secretary of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society to the Curator of the Bombay Natural History Society inviting him to be co-Chairman of the Asian Elephant Secretariat. The letter states, '.....it is the Society's stand that the Secretariat be stationed away from Sri Lanka. We would also appreciate your being co-Chairman of this Secretariat with Dr. Oliver'. Coming as it does from a Society which opposed the setting up of the Secretariat in Sri Lanka, this seems the height of absurdity." The second by Lyn de Alwis, Director, Department of Wild Life Conservation reads: "Reference Mr. S. R. Ratnapala's letter on the above subject in the CDN of 13/6. He has quoted from the WNPS' Annual Report and writes as follows: 'The Society states that its objection is to the secretive manner in which these projects are being promoted. Neither we (the Society) nor the Department of Wildlife Conservation have been consulted.' If the report has indeed been correctly quoted, it is evident that the author of the Report has quite wrongly and unnecessarily involved this Department. The Asian Elephant Secretariat is presently located in the United Kingdom. The WWF authorities decided to shift it to an Asian country, for obvious reasons. Although there was lobbying from other countries, WWF thought that Sri Lanka would be the best place for it. A team from WWF led by Dr. Wayne King came to Sri Lanka last year for discussions with this Department. As WWF's offer would help the cause of conservation of the Sri Lanka elephant, the Department made strong recommendations to the Minister of State based on which the Secretariat has now been approved. There was nothing secretive and we were quite positively consulted by WWF about the Secretariat." These two letters throw great deal of revealing light on some ugly and unsavoury happenings in the world of nature conservation (in the hands of the WNPS) in Sri Lanka.

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CCNH

On The Strike Situation

THE UNP has a symbol and a mascot in the Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) Elephant. We chose this picture on the cover this week in the period of the Emergency and the Censorship to drive home a point about the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Asian Elephant Secretariat which was very nearly thrown out of this land by the machinations of a few in the WNP5. Now that the censorship has been lifted, we thought that the cover picture will be also an appropriate introduction for the Statement issued on July 30, 1980 by the Citizens' Committee for National Harmony (CCNH).

This Committee has the veteran Sir Senerat Gunawardene as President. The following are the other office-bearers: Vice Presidents: Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel, Mr. James Rutnam, Mr. O. L. D. Kretser, Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya, Mr. Hector Abhayawardhana, Mr. A. W. M. Ameer, Fr. Swithin Fernando, Fr. Joe de Mel, Mr. Godfrey Gunatilleke; Joint Secretaries: Ven. H. Ratnasara, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Assistant Secretaries: Mr. Bernadeen Silva, Mr. S. Abeyesekera; Joint Treasurers: Mr. M. Mazzahim Mohideen, Dr. Carlo Fonseka.

The undermentioned signatories issued the following statement with a request for "serious consideration of the issues discussed and the recommendations made in the statement." The signatories were: R. S. S. Gunawardene, V. Manickavasagar, Bishop Leo Nanayakara, O. L. de Kretser, Al Haj. Abdul W. M. Ameer, Fr. Michael Rodrigo, M. Rajendra, Victor Gunawardene, S. Nadesan, A. Wimalathanan, Godfrey Gunatilleke, Al-Haj. S. M. A. Rashid, J.P., Kusala Abhayawardhana, Richard Dias, Fr. Anthony Cyril, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Mr. Milburga Fernando, T.W. Rajaratnam, Sydney Munasinghe, Stanley Senanayake, G. Kurukulasuriya, Lakshman Devasena, Sr. Marie Bernard, S.D.S. Sr. Esther, Sr. Raphaeline, Sr. Jerome, Sr. Margret

Mary, Sam Prem Kumar, Fr. Nobert A. Ockersz, Basil Illangakoon, Rev. Celestine Fernando, D. C. R. Hanwella, Sr. C. Mudalige, Bernadeen Silva, K. Kanthasamy, J. Alphonse Mary, Fr. Vianney Fernando, P. E. Fernando, Suriya Wickremasinghe, Chitra Fernando, Audrey Rubera, Dr. V. Kanesalingam, P. P. Manicam, K. G. Pathiraja, G. Ratne, R. A. M. C. Wanigaratne, Radhika Coomaraswamy, S. P. Kadingamar, M. M. Mohideen, Douglas T. D. de Silva, Sr. Gabriel, Sr. Rachel, D. T. Moldrich, Sr. Marie de Lorette, R. G. Sebastianpillai, Titus de Fonseka.

The Statement stated:

THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL HARMONY was established for the purpose of promoting the resolution of conflicts within our society in a manner which safeguards the basic values and principles of our democratic system and ensures equity and justice to all citizens of our society. It is in this spirit that the Committee addressed itself to the problems of communal unrest and discrimination since its establishment in 1977 and of students in 1979. It is in the same constructive spirit that the Committee now addresses itself to the issues which have arisen from the current situation resulting from the strike and the declaration of the Emergency.

The members of the Citizens' Committee have met to give serious consideration to some of these issues which appear to have fundamental implications for the rights of citizens on the one hand, and stable effective government on the other. In the Government's effort to accelerate development and solve the country's urgent socio-economic problems, it would justifiably place the emphasis on a period of stability and industrial peace.

There would be a strong tendency to condemn and curtail trade union agitation. This has in fact been true of all governments in this country, whether the left or right. The parties in power perceive manifestations of protest and dissent, any agitation which disturbs the smooth exercise of their power, as specifically directed against them. Parties in opposition tend to promote and support such agitation as an essential part of their strategy to present an alternative government to the people.

The true democratic character of a government is demonstrated in the manner in which it handles the crisis and the dilemma arising out of such a situation, and maintains a stable and efficient government while at the same time it preserves and recognises the basic democratic rights of citizens, including the legitimate right of opposition and protest. The present situation which has arisen as a result of the strike and the Government's response to it has to be judged from these criteria.

THE 'CITIZENS' COMMITTEE is aware that any conclusion regarding the rights and wrongs of the strike which has been launched and the Government's response in declaring an Emergency and rendering the strike illegal, calls for further information than is presently available to it. It cannot but however reflect the public impression that the strike, regardless of the specific causes which initially triggered it, has its source in the hardships caused to a large section of the population as a result of the steeply rising cost of living. While many sections who are self-employed or who producers in their own right have enjoyed some compensatory effects of inflation and shared in the benefits from rising prices, the employees with fixed wage and salary incomes have without question been the most severely affected. It is in this context that the strike itself has to be seen, and the argument that a minority is attempting to hold the community to ransom through strike action needs to be placed and judged.

The Government has argued that the strike has come at a critical time when the Government is mobilising the entire economy for a wide-ranging development effort, that that its impact would be seriously disruptive of that effort and that the social cost of a general strike would be extremely high, that the strike itself has been politically motivated, that its timing which coincided with the third anniversary of the Government's assumption of office was deliberately designed to embarrass the Government politically, that the normal procedures of legitimate strike action such as adequate notice and opportunity for negotiation were not followed, and that above all government had already announced its intention of granting a wage increase to give some relief to the wage and salary earning groups. Strike action was therefore charac-

terised as an uncompromising act of confrontation with government to be dealt with in an equally uncompromising manner.

The worker's representatives argue that they have given adequate notice of their demands especially in early March. The picketing and day of protest of June 5th were also concerning the problems of the cost of living. They maintain that their pleas went unheeded by the government. On the contrary their peaceful demonstrations met with violent blows from unidentified sources. The Opposition political parties have disclaimed any effort to overthrow the government by strikes. They suggest that the Government wishes to crush non-submissive trade unions, in order to carry through its economic policies.

THE ANSWERS to these questions would eventually depend on the political and ideological position which is taken. There would be those who would argue that those sections of the population which are the exploited sections are entitled to use any means to further their demands and that their actions cannot be constrained by the rules imposed by the present system which is itself inequitable. Such a position however provides no basis for an appeal to democratic values and disciplines on the part of government. The Citizens' Committee does not take up such a position. It agrees that many responsible citizens would consider that there is substance in the Government's arguments, it recognizes that opposition and protest to be legitimate has to operate within the democratic framework and within the disciplines which are pre-requisites for negotiated and consensual solutions, and finally it affirms that all parties need to subscribe to these disciplines.

This is however the ideal. In actual situations, groups of workers might and often do act impulsively, even irresponsibly. All the rules may not be observed. Opposition parties may invariably enter into trade union agitation. It may also happen that the policies of a government may place heavy and unbearable burdens on one section of the population, specially those who are economically and politically weaker. They may not have adequate means of making their views effectively heard. It may also be that sometimes legislation is enacted so rapidly and unilaterally

that the reactions to them too tend to be similarly one sided.

It is in these real situations that the democratic exercise of power by the Government is in fact put to the test. Therefore, even when the arguments presented by the Government on the present strike are taken into consideration, the fundamental issue which agitates the public mind is whether the measures taken by the Government were unavoidable and whether the response was the most appropriate.

THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE has always gone on the understanding that emergency powers will be assumed by the government only when there is a clearly perceived threat to national security or widespread civil disorder and violence which cannot be controlled through the normal processes for the maintenance of law and order. The present government has repeatedly expressed its keen desire to avoid recourse to emergency rule and has through the provisions of the Constitution clearly defined the limits of such rule.

If in the current situation there was a possibility of complete breakdown of essential services to the community, could not the Government have been more selective in its list of essential services? Need it have suppressed trade union action in almost every sector? Need the full range of emergency powers including press censorship have been invoked? The present course of action chosen by the Government gives rise to grave anxiety among democratically minded citizens. It projects itself as part of a policy directed at suppressing trade union action itself, and outlawing the right to strike and other legitimate means of protest which is a fundamental right of the working population. It tends to regard the strikers as though they were "enemies" and outside the scope of negotiation available to citizens.

Strikes no doubt are a major irritant to government, but if they are to be avoided the government has to pursue not a policy for the suppression of strikes but a policy for a stable period of industrial peace through negotiation, collective bargaining and full participation of the working population. It is only within such a framework of negotiated industrial peace that democratic disciplines could be justifiably enforced. Unilateral sup-

pression of strikes has always proved to be the path to authoritarian rule and seems to be entirely inimical to the principles of democracy and the precepts of the Dharmista society which the present Government has hitherto sought to uphold.

THERE IS IMPLICIT IN THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH to the trade union question another assumption which gives cause for grave concern. This is an assumption sometimes openly articulated, that any manifestation of opposition to a popularly elected Government during its term of office is illegitimate and undemocratic: that the Government has been elected to rule for a given period and that it should be left entirely free to do so. This assumption strikes at the very root of genuine democracy.

In between elections, there has to be a continuing process of interaction between the people and the government—a process which keeps alive the participation of the people and the articulation of the people's demands in response to the changing situation, and opposition if need be to any mistakes of a government in power. This process is particularly important in respect of the just grievances of sections of society which may be in a minority.

The trade union movement has always been an essential part of this democratic process. It is for this reason that we of the Citizens' Committee are deeply disturbed at the drastic measures which have been directed at the workers' associations themselves, such as the freezing of assets the proposal to seize them for disbursement to strikers' families, and the proposal of legislation to deny the right of strike to public servants. These measures if implemented will seriously harm and even destroy worker organisations which have been built through long years of dedicated effort by the members for protecting and promoting their interests.

Similarly, the Government's decision to dismiss strikers, followed by immediate action to recruit new workers, allows for no compromise or compassion. If it is implemented without modification, it is certain to leave not only a lasting sense of bitterness and injustice in the large numbers who suffer

under such a policy, but also a deep feeling of insecurity and apprehension in large sections of the workforce, which continues. In employment, all of which would not be conducive to either development or democratic government.

Even though the Government argues that in the present strike trade union action has been perverted for political ends, it would be short-sighted if it fails to recognise that the root causes of the strike lie in the economic hardships resulting from inflation and the rising cost of living. The Committee is aware that the Government has not been unresponsive to these hardships. Of its own accord it has granted several wage increases and has promised a further increase.

The basic problem however will always relate to the adequacy of the Government's responses. There is no doubt that in the future, the Government would have to continue to cope with recurrent popular demands for compensatory measures during a period in which high rates of inflation are likely to persist. While government will need to adopt appropriate economic policies and readjustment of priorities to control inflation, it would also have to deal with the problem of incomes, wages and prices on a sustained continuing basis if industrial peace is to be maintained.

On the one hand, the working population itself would have to act, recognising that inflation and problems caused by it are not entirely within the control of any national government, that the nation as a whole has to adjust equitably to it and that ill considered trade union action could be counterproductive and even worsen inflationary conditions. On the other hand, government has to create the framework of national policy to promote such awareness in the working population through consultation, negotiation and collective bargaining on a national level, facilitate the continuing adjustment to inflationary conditions in a manner which is equitable to all sectors of society through the full use of democratic participatory process and thus negotiate a period of industrial peace necessary for stable government.

Authoritarian measures in a country which has had a long tradition of trade union organisation is certain to result in the alienation of a

large section of the population whose willing co-operation is vital to the Government's development effort. The present situation and the responses to it need therefore to be seen in this context, and policies have to be directed to heal the divisions and create the conditions for a highly motivated workforce.

WE THEREFORE EARNESTLY APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT AND TO THE WORKERS to put an end to the present regime of confrontation and restore normal civil government and economy activity. For this purpose we earnestly recommend for their consideration the implementation of the following measures:

- (1) To offer an opportunity for Trade Unions concerned to call off the strike and for strikers to return immediately to work without any victimisation.
- (2) In connection with the Government's decision to grant a wage increase, an invitation to the Trade Unions to submit their substantive representations in support of wage demands for the immediate consideration of government.
- (3) Establishment of national machinery to negotiate a period of industrial peace and formulate national income and pricing policies in consultation with the working population in a period of which inflationary pressures are likely to continue unabated.
- (4) To consider and carry out a reordering of priorities in the programmes of development so as to be able to contain domestic inflation within more manageable limits."

THE STATEMENT should be read and studied with care and attention especially by the government and its supporters—if they do not want the developments plans to stagnate in a morass of perpetual tensions, frustrations and confrontations.

Opposition circles too must examine the way the Committee has approached the difficult problems of the day and adopt re-oriented policies and strategies after due re-appraisals to ensure that the trade union movement is not lost in a *cul-de sac* of missed opportunities and lost battles.



After The Emergency

Colombo, August 18,

The Emergency under the Public Security Act has lapsed, the censorship no longer exists, the Competent Authority no longer scrutinises copy, and we are free to write as in normal times within the bounds of the ordinary laws of the land.

In the *Letter From The Editor of the Tribune* of July 26, 1980—the first issue after the censorship was imposed—we had said: “THE QUESTION ON EVERYBODY’S LIPS today is how long the Emergency will last. At a public meeting last week-end the President had assured the country that the Government will lift the Emergency as soon as possible. *Tribune* is vitally interested in this question—how long will the present Emergency last? For, under the Emergency, press censorship has also been imposed.....Press censorship places *Tribune* as a paper of comment in great difficulties. But, as in the past, we shall refrain from comment on matters proscribed until the Emergency has been lifted. We do not believe in the protest of blank spaces. But no sooner the Emergency is lifted, there are a number of matters, which *Tribune* will examine in some detail. Was the sudden strike at the Ratmalana Railway Workshop for the reinstatement of a dozen workers justified without prior negotiations? Was it good strategy to tag on a demand for an all-round salary increase of Rs. 300 a month in a bid to widen the strike? Was it a poor understanding of the situation that led to some trade unions to escalate the strike or were they under the miasma of the ultra-left misconception of ‘spontaneity’—that workers suffering from the backlash of increased prices would rush into strike action for higher wages? Did some of these trade unions also feel that they could bring unity to the trade union (and Left) movement under a militant trade union strike? Furthermore, did the government over-react and use a sledge-hammer to crush a gnat? Should the Government not seriously consider revision of all salaries (even if necessary cutting down salaries paid by the banks) on the basis of a national wage

structure? Should the government not place a ceiling on salaries paid by foreign banks and organisations to top and middle level local employees? Having shown a firm determination to govern, should the government not show a conciliatory and sympathetic understanding with regard to all those who struck work? We do not know how long the Emergency will last, but our guess is that it will be for a much shorter period than many expect. These are some of the questions *Tribune* will take up once the Emergency is lifted, and in the meantime, we will deal with a number of other matters that call for urgent comment.”

AS WE HAD ANTICIPATED the Emergency lasted “for a much shorter period than many expect.” It lasted for just one month. It was not renewed for the second month. One question that immediately arises is whether it was necessary to invoke the provisions of Public Security Act and bring the Emergency Regulations into force at all—if the civil disturbances and the threat to internal security could have been so easily contained in such a short period of time. But this question is tied up and intertwined with the other questions we have raised in our note of July 26 and with some more questions that will have to be examined in the course of any analysis of the current situation in the country.

It would be useful to tabulate the questions we had then posed together with others have since become relevant.

1. Was the sudden strike at the Ratmalana Railway Workshop on or about July 12/14 for the reinstatement of a dozen workers justified without prior negotiation?

Was this lightning strike really for the reinstatement of the workers concerned or was it a prelude for the General Strike scheduled for July 21—in continuation of the June 5th Protest of the JTUAC with the added emotional slogan about the trade unionist Somapala who was trampled to death in a melee during the Protest? Was the Ratmalana strike an attempt to trigger the general strike and escalate it by a series of lightning strikes during the period of a week on various trade union and economic issues? This question is ultimately tied up with the next:

Was the strategy to tag on a demand for an all round salary increase of Rs. 300 a month in a bid to widen the strike ?

Was this Rs. 300 wage demand, only a device to lead this lightning strike and many sympathetic strikes (all lightning) that would be called one after another to lead to the General Strike planned for July 21? The simple question is whether all this was part of a plan to usher in a big general strike in slow stages or was the trade union leadership only tailing behind over-impulsive, over-enthusiastic workers who have many times in the past got away with small gains and concessions by staging such lightning strikes in key sectors?

2. The next question centres around ideological considerations and problems of strategy for trade unions and political parties.

"Was it a poor understanding of the situation that led some trade unions to escalate the strike or were they under the miasma of the ultra-left misconception of 'spontaneity'—that workers suffering from a backlash of increased prices would rush into strike action for higher wages? Did some of these trade unions also feel that they could bring unity to the trade union (and Left) movement?"

These questions can be adequately examined only after the statements, comments and arguments of the trade union leaders (and the political parties to which they are attached) became available now that the censorship has been lifted. What they might have said publicly during the rising tempo of the strike situation (if there was no censorship) would have thrown revealing light, but what they will say in the post-mortem re-appraisals will probably be of even greater significance. An inquiry into this aspect of the strike and its aftermath will open a vast field for analysis, speculation and comment into the state of our trade union movement today. Why was this strike confined only to a few unions, whilst a number of other unions had refused to become involved? There is no doubt that only some of the trade unions led by the Opposition political parties (not all) had responded to the strike call—and this in most cases only partially. Of the Opposition Parties one, did not join it (but was willing to intercede on behalf of the striking

union for a settlement) and the other had played hide and seek with the strike. **The agonising re-appraisals will soon envelop these trade unions and political parties will provide many indicators for the future?**

3. On the side it is necessary to pursue the next question we had raised with penetrating persistence.

"Did the Government over-react and use a sledge-hammer to crush a gnat?"

Mrs. Bandaranaike in a statement in New Delhi, whilst the local crisis was at its height, had stated that the Government had "over-reacted" by imposing stern Emergency measures to cope with the strike. Prime Minister Premadasa had stated in Parliament that Mrs. Bandaranaike was the last person who could talk about "over-reacting" to a crisis. In the view of the fact in the seven-year period (1970-1977) of her last regime, she had six years under a draconian Emergency which she had even refused to debate in Parliament...

The Government's case is that it successfully nipped a conspiracy to overthrow it through violence (and a general strike) by clamping down Emergency measures. The trade unions and Opposition parties have said that all that they were interested in was to obtain relief and redress for workers who had been badly hit by the inflation. Neither the statements of the government nor the Opposition parties (and trade unions) on this question can be taken on their face value and only a searching analysis will help to unravel some of the verities of this matter.

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

Official Exchange Rates of Commercial Banks to their customers for Telegraphic Transfers fixed on Tuesday this week were as follows:—

CURRENCY	PER 100 UNITS	
	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1666.50	Rs. 1669.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 3940.00	Rs. 3946.00
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 927.45	Rs. 929.05
French Franc	Rs. 400.75	Rs. 401.45
Japanese Yen	Rs. 7.4300	Rs. 7.4450
Indian Rupees	Rs. 213.55	Rs. 213.95

4. The last two questions really centre on governmental action to meet the problems that have stemmed from the Emergency.

"Should the government not seriously consider revision of all salaries (even if necessary cutting down salaries paid by the banks) on the basis of a national wage structure? Should the government not place a ceiling on salaries paid by foreign banks and organisations to top and middle level local employees?"

The Government has announced that it proposes to increase wages once again. A mere wage increase will only add to the inflation. Further, some anomalies that have recently been created must be removed. For instance, today a police constable recruited as a Security Guard at a State Bank gets about Rs. 1500 a month plus many fringe benefits—whilst the Inspector General of Police gets only a wee bit over Rs. 2000 a month with far fewer fringe benefits. If this kind of anomaly is allowed to remain at all levels of our society then the government is only asking for more and more trouble. A national wage structure based on the country's present assets, resources and production norms is perhaps priority number one for this government.

5. The question we had finally raised should also receive high priority:

"Having shown a firm determination, should the government not show a conciliatory and sympathetic understanding to all those who struck work?"

The Government has successfully crushed the strike by making it a **lock-out** and by insisting that all those who did not report for work on July 18 had vacated their posts. It is not sympathy and compassion that should make the government take a more conciliatory attitude. To insist on teaching a lesson to those who kept away from work on July 18 by denying them work for all time would throw a section of the community into permanent frustration and bitter and possible opposition. And what is worse is that such action on the part of the Government can drive some these elements into a new political underground.

The Satyagraha of August 8, held during an Emergency, provided an opportunity to ultra-extremist elements to resort to violence and bomb-throwing reminiscent of the insurgency of 1971—this time in an urban setting. The Government has wisely not renewed the Emergency and this will enable all dissatisfied groups (with genuine and legitimate grievances) to let off steam in open and legal platforms. **More than anything else, the government must not create a situation where dissidence can find expression only in underground activity and illegal violence.**

It is now up to the Government to heal the wounds and scars of the recent strike that was turned into a Lockout. The trade unions and Opposition parties have to examine their policies and strategies and revamp them for a new situation. The agitational and opposition-for-opposition strategies of the thirties and forties—to which some parties seem to cling still with persistence—are no longer valid.

Even the TULF seems to have now realised this when it decided by an overwhelming majority (82 against 15 in the General Council) to support the new DDC Bill and thus pave the way for a solution of the Sinhala-Tamil Problem.



NEXT WEEK

- × MORE EARTHWORMS
—Less Pesticides
 - × ELEPHANT SECRETARIAT
—And WNPS
 - × BUDDHIST STUDIES
—International Conference
 - × STUNNING SURPRISE
—In Agriculture.
-

DR. CHARLES H. HELMSATH

The Effects Of The Soviet Invasion On The Southwest Asian Region

Dr. Charles H. Helmsath, a professor at the School of International Service of the American University, Washington, D.C. delivered a lecture on "The Effects of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan on the South-west Asian Region" at the American Centre on the eighth of this month. The Professor is a well-known scholar of International affairs, particularly that of South Asian Region and history of India. In the emotion charged contemporary international scene it may be doubted whether the title "The Soviet Invasion" is quite appropriate to describe the Soviet action or the Tanzanian intervention in Uganda or the Chinese in Vietnam. Whether it was an invasion, incursion or interference it is for the future historian to tell us when more material would be forthcoming.

As a preface to his talk the professor dealt with three matters: the US reaction to "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan"; the over-reaction of the countries of the region, especially India, to US reaction and this was considered to be much more important than the invasion itself; and finally the extension of the Soviet power in the Southwest Asian region. The US reaction was something to be expected—US had lost her nerve and had been following an isolationist policy since she withdrew from Vietnam; the traumatic experience of the Watergate and severe diplomatic rebuff received at the hands of the Iranians and the failure of the attempt to save the hostages. These events certainly affected the US prestige but the Afghanistan issue was an open challenge to American global supremacy. In fact this provided a godsent opportunity to assert her supremacy again. Thus, the professor argued, that US awakened from a deep slumber—her response was not a call to war but a signal to both Russians and Americans that America cannot any longer be complacent and be a mere spectator. She has to activate US public opinion and mobilise the marines in readiness for any eventual operation to thwart the Soviet expansionism. America has to adopt this course

of action as she found that there was no power in the South Asian region capable of handling the situation.

Secondly, he argued that it was the Indians who over-reacted to American reaction and not America to the events. He emphasised that historically it was the Soviet Union that posed a threat to South West region. America entered the region only very recently. What took place was a great geo-political disruption. In the 19th century Russia under the Czars expanded well beyond her territories and in the twentieth century the Soviet Union has reached her traditional boundary. But she never stepped over the Hindu Kush mountain towards the south and this invasion was a disruption of the *status quo* that had been prevailing for a long time. Whatever the motivations that prompted the action the Russians are there to stay.

This has caused immediate problems for both Iran and Pakistan who are the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan. The tribal insurgents have been activated threatening the political and territorial integrity of these areas, while Communists have revived their activities particularly in Iran. Khomeini and Bani Sadr have already attacked the emerging communists. Iran never forgot that Russia is her main enemy; that she had swallowed her territory in the 19th century and invaded her during the two world wars in the 20th century. No government in Iran would like to have the Russians move up to her borders but Russia has already penetrated into the region. The fighting in Afghanistan itself was anti-imperialist and anti-Muslim. The Professor also claimed that Iran is now isolated from both USA and Pakistan and Iran is now in search of a saviour against Russia. There is in Iran today all those provocations which provided an opportunity for Russians to intervene in Afghanistan and in addition she has oil too. In the absence of any regional power to offer resistance to the advancing Soviet menace he hinted that Iran has to look to US for help.

Another significant theme of the lecture is that there will be a speedy rapprochement between Pakistan and India and India and China. This is an inevitable development in the face of Soviet expansionism. Of course

India cannot abrogate the 1971 treaty and abandon her ally but she had relied on an undependable ally. Finally the invasion has led to the escalation of the militarisation of the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia has been built up and US marines are being kept in readiness for attack. US fleet movements have increased in the Indian Ocean and bases are being strengthened in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sudan and Israel. This has inevitably brought in the Soviet fleet to the Indian Ocean and the situation is very frightening.

On the whole the professor's lecture was moderate and not propagandist. Unlike many others in Washington, he has tried to understand the situation in the region. But still there were certain lapses. As a professor of history he should have borne in mind that the Afghan event was not a sudden eruption which took the Americans or the States of the region by surprise. The crisis had been brewing for sometime and to students of international affairs it was obvious that the Soviet Union would intervene at any time in Afghanistan as the power struggle deteriorated and foreign interference threatening the Soviet Union's security (from the point of view of Soviet Union) increased. It is also relevant to observe that western support for Pakistan was certainly a factor in drawing Afghanistan even under old monarchy to greater dependence upon the Soviet Union because of the bitter dispute over Paktoonistan issue. Long before the red flag was unfurled in Kabul, the Soviet Union was a major supplier of military and economic assistance to Afghanistan.

Secondly the Indian Ocean was a hive of super-power rivalry long before the Afghan issue and the "Zone of Peace" proposal was made to defuse such escalation of military movements in the region. In fact, the Iranian hostage issue worsened the situation before the Afghan issue. One cannot also forget the fact that till recently most of the military moves and alliances were made by US and her client states. Diego Garcia, now defunct CENTO and Baghdad pact enveloping Pakistan, Turkey and Iran, who lay beneath the "soft underbelly" of the Soviet Union were directed against Soviet Union. The destabilisation of US power in Iran accounts more than the Afghan issue for the heightened US moves.

Thirdly the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan, and India and China had started long before the Afghan events and were not the by-product or delayed effect of "Soviet invasion" of Afghanistan. Nor was it a result of a desire to form an alliance against Soviet Union. On the other hand India's anxiety to maintain friendly relations with her neighbours was in keeping with her tradition. Unlike China which believes in a perpetual war, class war or other, India does not believe in war. In the case of Pakistan, she never attempted to move her army from the eastern flanks even at the height of the tension to safeguard her western and north-western Frontier area.

However, one redeeming and significant factor in the whole analysis was the emphasis attached to the possible emergence of an Asian alliance system to forestall any destabilisation in this part of the world. Unlike many other intellectuals and State Department officials, the professor expressed a genuine desire for rapprochement and alliance among Russia, China and India. How feasible this would be, especially between China and Russia at this juncture, has not been explained fully. But between China and India, Pakistan and India, the professor claimed talks at high official level may bring fruitful solutions. China now treats the Kashmir issue as a matter of bilateral concern between India and Pakistan and thereby she had retracted from her original stand.

Another significant guise is the recognition awarded to India as a regional power — especially since the formation of Bangladesh. India had become the Security Manager of the area and she pinned hopes on Indian moves to manage it tactfully to defuse the tension in the area. The anxiety to keep American involvement to the minimum in this area too was quite evident in the lecture. Will Carter or his successor get the hint?

A Tribune Correspondent



On Stabilising Karmal

by A Nonaligned Spectator

Kabul, August 5,

BABARAK KARMAL has released, since December 27, 1979, over 15,000 politicians, capitalists and anti-socialists, lumped together in unwholesome hovels called prisons, under the fascist regime of his "socialist" predecessor, Hafizullah Amin. The latter, who is often accused by the Karmal Administration and its Soviet supporters as a CIA agent, had directly or indirectly caused the massacre of thousands of others in the name of establishing a society where "man does not exploit man" and where all humans are equal. Through this slaughter policy he got the whole nation against socialism and also against the neighbour a super-power.

Besides, Karmal pardoned all those who fled country from Amin's oppression. Most of them, now living in camps in Pakistan and some are (doing odd jobs) in Iran, USA and Germany were requested to return to the country on a general amnesty within a period of one month. He extended the amnesty date after he noticed that only a trickle had answered his call. He also tried his best to normalise trade and commerce which were curtailed under Amin on a doctrinaire basis and has been doing everything in his power to normalise life and trade. His persistent efforts to form a broad-based government to include non-party men, technocrats and experienced and enlightened people to administer this rugged and mountainous country, occupied by diverse ethnic and linguistic groups of about 15 million people, must be regarded as a step in the right direction.

THE THREE IMPORTANT NATIONAL CONFERENCES held during his six-month rule, namely, the Agricultural Conference, the Teachers' and Islamic Clergymen's Congress have been unprecedented in Afghan history. In the first, Karmal told the small and medium farmers, who have secured a maximum of 15 acres of arable land under the Land Reform Laws, that all these years they have been deprived of feeding their children adequately because of the machinations of the local and foreign exploiters and mafia groups. Many of

the well-to-do farmers who had produced food grains in the past under the feudal relationship had fled the country with their wealth. Therefore, he accelerated a crash spring sowing program by rushing improved wheat seeds and fertilizers to the rural areas. In the Teachers' Conference, he told the teachers how to bring up the younger generation who would contribute to national social and economic development. In the Conference of Afghan religious scholars and clergymen, he tried to assure the Clergy that the Government's efforts to establish a "society devoid of exploitation of Man by Man" did not run counter to the tenets of Islam and the Prophet himself had admired hard work and dignity of labour and also equality among all men.

But despite all these, the anti-government forces called variously by foreign media and journalists, are on the rampage in many rural areas, specially after dark. They harass the villagers by demanding protection money and levy taxes for their upkeep and continue to kill both factions of the present ruling Party—People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)—the *KHALQ* and *PARCHAM* factions. The *Khalq* faction was the one which took over power after the April 1978 Revolution, overthrowing the feudal rule of *DAOUD*, and *TARAKI* was the first President. He was put to death by Amin on his return from Havana after attending the non-aligned Conference in August 1979. Amin himself was executed in December 1979 after another revolution which brought the *PARCHAM* party leader *BABARAK KARMAL* to power. This was accompanied by the Soviet Government providing its own armed forces to stop a deteriorating security situation in the country.

THE ARRIVAL OF A LIMITED CONTINGENT OF SOVIET ARMED FORCES under a government to government agreement gave rise to world-wide condemnation, specially in the western capitalist countries. The Afghans learnt for the first time through *PUSTHU* and *PERSIAN* broadcasts of BBC and VOA that they had been "invaded" by a foreign power and this gave the much needed support for those feudal and capitalist elements who lost power in April 1979 and who had taken up arms against the left-leaning Government in Kabul.

This being the situation the big question now is how to make Karmal popular with people in rural areas who now religiously listen to the BBC, VOA, Deutch Welle, Radio Peking and Radio Peshawar, which media regularly bombard the air waves with blood-curdling and emotional anti-Karmal propaganda calling on the people that they through a Holy War should throw out this infidel and Soviet puppet.

Unfortunately the Karmal Administration is too amateurish to meet this challenge to his government adequately. The Ministry of Information personnel of Karmal's Government are manned by immature men with no experience in putting over convincingly to the people what the government is doing. The Government's media men are being constantly outwitted by the rebel groups who feed Reuter's, AFP, AP and UPI men in Islamabad, Peshwar and other journalists who operate along the Pakistan border into Afghanistan.

Besides these, there has surfaced in recent weeks, certain difficulties in the formation and continuation of the broad-based administration to which the present leadership of the Party is committed. The reasons appear to be on the one hand that the non-party officials do not apparently enjoy enough power to influence the conduct of state affairs, and on the other, Karmal has faced some resistance from Party Cadres, especially the Khalqis who generally come from a Pushtu-speaking population and not as much educated and far less acquainted with statecraft and administration unlike the Parchamis who are Dari (Persian) speaking, educated, hardworking, and mainly from urban areas of the country.

And the propaganda done by the Karmal administration is the wrong type as it focusses too much attention on the atrocities committed under Amin Rule and far too often repeat communist standard Marxist slogans with which the illiterate masses of the country are not familiar. Are there no native phrases and slogans which can describe the cruelties and oppression of the erstwhile rulers of this country? Due to hostile external propaganda and the wild behaviour of the PDPA cadres under Taraki and Amin administrations, the masses of the country, still tend to associate the left-leaning Babarak ad-

ministration with those who had oppressed them after the April 1978 Revolution.

There are still many people in Afghanistan who recall the atrocities committed in the Soviet Union under Stalin and they believe a Socialist regime kept in power with Soviet military support would be a repressive one, not knowing that under Brezhnev things have changed and the quality of life of the Soviet people has improved tremendously.

AT PRESENT, there exists a great credibility gap between the government of DRA and the people mainly because a large number listen to the broadcasts of the enemy of the government instead of their own government. And the more the government clobbers Amin and his band and repeats *ad nauseam* communist slogans, the less the masses want to hear what government media has to say.

The same is true about overdoing the rhetoric about economic assistance and "true friendship" of the Soviet Union. Being illiterate and fanatical Moslems, the Afghans abhor fraternizing with people of other faiths, let alone with those who are described as non-believers in God. The DRA government when referring to Soviet Union often overdoes this rhetoric and this makes this great country suspect to the ignorant Afghan despite the invaluable and unselfish economic assistance Soviet Union has rendered to Afghanistan for over 60 years.

Afghans, or for that matter any Asian, generally resent repetition of what a donor does because this hurts the pride of the poor and weaker nation. They do not like to hear anything to make them look like beggars. The current rather infantile publicity accompanying the present supply of consumer goods to the poor to the tune of over 100 million roubles can do the Soviets more harm than good. These oversights on the part of those handling government's media are damaging the DRA government. What appeals to an ordinary Russian or Moldavian or Ukrainian does not necessarily apply in the case of an average Afghan.

THEREFORE, what the Soviet Union, as a true friend of Afghanistan can do to enhance Karmal's image and earn him increasing credibility is to take an inventory of all the mistakes committed from Taraki's time to the pre-

sent. Then advise the Karmal administration to rectify the situation by various practical measures devised exclusively with the co-operation of the experienced and enlightened elders and non-party educated men and Soviet advisers, because the former can be easily carried away through over-enthusiasm and the latter still do not know the Afghan psyche as they should with over 60 years of neighbourly relationship.

No doubt the arrival in late December 1979 of the limited Soviet military contingents saved Karmal and his group and also helped in the ushering of the second and benevolent phase of the post-feudal revolution started in April 1978. Under the second phase, people of the country are afforded the opportunity to feel free and pursue their own life and economic activity. With the arrival of Soviet military men, if the right type of information had been put over the Media, the lives of many young Afghan and Soviet soldiers and officers could have been saved. The immature and inexperienced Party men who manage such an important activity of the Government appear to be adopting a frog-in-well attitude to the rumours and gossip going around them.

The Karmal administration and its Soviet supporters ought to realise that whatever is put over Radio Kabul or Radio Moscow is considered by the broad masses of the Afghan people with a certain amount of suspicion. The people are not yet convinced that USA, Britain, China and Pakistan are in a unholy alliance to topple a progressive regime in Afghanistan and throw a smokescreen over Imperialist design on the oil-rich IRAN. For the people to be made to realise this, the Afghan government media must change its propaganda techniques.

To sum up, Socialism is good for an under-developed country like Afghanistan if the "pill" is reasonably sugar-coated and not forced down the throat as Taraki-Amin clique did over 18 months. Secondly, the official Information media should understand that whatever is put over by it should be understood by the broad masses who are essentially illiterate. The language used in such mass communication should be simple, short

and in a phrase express a meaning well understood. The Karmal government will be well advised to get technical expertise in the matter of propaganda from friendly non-aligned countries.

BABARAK KARMAL can easily stabilise his position if he pushes hard his desire for a truly broad-based government. He should without delay form a STATE COUNCIL of Elders, Clergymen, non-partisan Intellectuals and the like to be his independent advisers on matters of concern to him. The Soviet advisers will have plenty of scope to advise on matters of technical development in the economic Ministries and training of the security forces.

But above all, urgent measures are needed to bridge the credibility gap. No amount of abuse and strong language used on neighbours, imperialists and native reactionaries would be of any use if the broad masses of the people of the country do not believe them. Secondly, heaping accusations on erstwhile party men/leaders and feudal kings should stop. Instead, the accomplishments of the present regime within the past six months should be emphasized and fully explained.

Babarak Karmal should act fast. It is up to him to bring stability to his Government before the onset of winter in November 1980. The Soviet Union does not want a Communist State of Afghanistan but it definitely wants a friendly and stable government in Kabul because its national interest dictates this position. If Babarak Karmal does not deliver the goods, there are others who will try to step into the breach. Even when the Soviet military forces withdraw, Soviet influence in Afghanistan has come to stay. And this is what many in the outside world fail to realise.



Stormy Meeting

by Loris

This is the second part of a detailed (tape-recorded) report of the proceedings of the last Annual General Meeting of the Wild Life and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka. This meeting has been referred to in several reports in the local daily press.

We welcome comments and observations from other readers especially those who may have a contrary point of view—Editor

T.H. (Thilo Hoffman) Now we are already more than half an hour late, and as we have 40 names for the six places on the Committee, it will take some length of time for the scrutiny and the counting of the votes, I wonder if the meeting would not like us to take item 4 of the agenda first, so that they can vote, that those members who have something else will be forced to stay here for an unnecessary long time.

Member—Is it your.....that the people have only come here to vote—and go away?
T.H. Some may have, Mr. Silva, some may have.....

Member: If the President wanted he could have well started the meeting at 6 o'clock. There was no necessity to delay it till 6.30.

T.H. There was a necessity.....members were still standing out and.....

Member: Naturally, when you have so many security people, and then they have to count other people.....

Member: In view of the opposition may we please stick to the agenda.....in view of the opposition might we stick to the agenda..
.....go according to the agenda.

T.H.: Right, we will stick to the agenda....
....in these matters.....

Member: Oh, yes.....ha ha ha..... oh, yes.....

T.H.: In that case we now come to item 3....
...adoption of the Annual Report. These have been in your hands for the requisite period of time.....and I have nothing much to say.....will anyone with any comments to make.....?

Member: Yes, I think it is right that before we adopt these minutes, that either the printing errors, or the errors in the minutes, be adjusted.....the report be adjusted. In the financial accounts of the Secretary's report I find that there is a lot of errors regarding the figures.....do not tally with the Hony. Auditor's report. Just to cite some, I think I'll start by saying.....

Members: Can't hear! can't hear!

Member:.....there is income and expenditure.....it says 27,500/- but the auditor's report says 27,530.....like that one, there is on the same page, for 1979.....er.....1978 is correct.....so I think that should be agreed before.....and further, there is a big drop—sorry, but that is something else.....then coming on to income.....87,241, that is by membership fees of Rs. 25.....It should read, I think, 88,376 as in the auditor's report. Further, it says.....administration.....86,037, but I would like to know how these figures were arrived at.....I think there is an error.....going on, it says that Loris and W.....which is approximately 65% of the expenses of administration.....that is a thing I think there is.....

T.H.: Our auditor, Mr. Noel de Costa, will answer these questions straight away..... thank you.

N. de C: (Noel de Costa) I wonder if Mr. Kotegama would like to come along back here and go over the things (inaudible discussion between N de C and member).

Member: I do not, sort of, go against it, but there is a lot of conflict.....before we go ahead and say that this is a correct we must get things sort of ironed out so that we are passing is exactly what we want to understand as a member.....

N. de C: What are you actually saying, are you accepting the accounts, or are you.....?

Member: I accept the audited accounts.....

Member: May we have an explanation of the groupings, please.....

T.H.: I think.....I think there is a misunderstandingwe have merely....
...the audited accounts which I believe are totally correct.....we have here a statement explaining to the membership more or less in round figures.....by the Hony,

auditor and vice-president.....a statement of the financial affairs of the society....
.....this is what we have done in the body of the report. It has not quoted exact figures, it quoted approximate figure merely to show and explain the balance sheet in words rather than in figures.....that's all.

Dr. K.: (Dr. H. N. S. Karunatileke) Mr. President, I don't think all the figures have been rounded.....There is no uniformity. You have come to the fifth digit which have not been rounded, some have been rounded in the fifth digit, so I don't think, Mr. President, that your statement there are inaccuracies in the figures, and the main thing is to make the figures in the annual report consistent with the figures in the audited Statements of accounts and if you are rounding the figures you should have rounded every figure that is used, or you should have used the term approximate or amounting to.....

N. de C.: You cannot come to that conclusion without actually seeing the full audited report.....and you have to see the and check up the figures.....

Dr. K.: I am not challenging, Mr. Auditor, I am not challenging the audited statement which is correct. But I am looking at the figures in your annual report which do not correctly indicate the corresponding figure in the audited statement.....will you tell us.....

N. de C.: But have you seen the audited statement?

Dr. K.: I am comparing it. There are inaccuracies, and I think that the gentleman pointed out earlier were perfectly correct.

N. de C.: But you are quite satisfied with the.....?

Dr. K.: But I am not.....with the statement made by the President who said that all the figures had been rounded.....they have not been rounded.

Mr. I. M. Silva: I won't take up much time of the members, I just want to refer to one or two items.....I would first like to refer to page 5, losses sustained by all the bungalows. All these bungalows have lost money during the past year, and the amount, if you look at the audited statement of accounts, is some 5000 odd rupees.....last year it was 3536. I have all the reports from 1974 and every year we have lost money on the bungalows,

so I don't understand the statement here that it may be necessary to raise the fees. Now, looking at the previous page, we find that our membership fees brought in 87,250 rupees and the cost of administration amounted to 86,037, so we are using up practically all the money we are getting as membership fees.....now, this cost of administration includes the loss of 5,000 on the bungalows, and this loss has been going on from 1974..... 1975 onwards. Now, sometime ago, I looked into the.....of the bungalows.....and I found that of over 3,000 members, hardly a hundred, much less than a hundred members occupy the bungalows in the course of any year. And as you will see from the report itself, cost of transport has gone up and this has.....in the figures.....just a handful of people who go to the bungalows, and my own view is that the same people go over and over again—most of them.

Now, if you think that you need about 10 gallons of petrol to get there and get back.....to get to any of our bungalows..... it means that you are going to spend three or four hundred rupees on transport alone merely to get there and get back. And who are the people who go to these bungalows?

All the most affluent members of the society.....so if we are paying these losses from the general funds, it means that we poor chaps who can't afford to go to the bungalows are subsidising the affluent members who are going to the bungalows, so the subsidies are going in the wrong direction.....and.....the subsidies are going in the wrong direction and that is why I say I can't understand why the committee says it may be necessary to raise the occupation fees. I would say it is necessary to do so immediately. Why should we poor chaps subsidise those ladies and gentlemen who want to go to the bungalow from time to time? I would make the suggestion to the Committee that the bungalow occupation fees be raised immediately. Then on page 12, under Vasingamuwa..... there is a reference to a memorandum covering the whole island that was submitted to the duly-appointed committee on the formulation of national policy on wildlife conservation. I think this is a memorandum that most of us would like to read, and I would suggest that this be included in the next issue

of Loris. Then there's some point more..... under sewage disposal, there is some reference to Sri Lanka not having a legislature..... I can't remember..... I don't think within living memory of Sri Lanka being without a Legislature. There is something wrong with that paragraph..... It will have to be corrected. That is all I want to say, thank you very much.

T.H. Thank you very much, Mr. Silva, for your very apt remarks on the report..... in fact, on the last occasion the committee did already decide to increase the fees for the bungalows, and if it is the wish of the members that we should do away with these, I for one am not against it. In fact, I have never used any one of the society bungalows myself, but we felt that it was a facility which many people did enjoy, and it was cheaper than going to the parks. We felt that the less-affluent would be rather favoured by the society providing something which was more within the reach of the pockets of the less affluent than, for instance, the Wild Life Department. Well, that may be as it is, nothing is absolutely sacrosanct and if the membership in general feel that we do not need bungalows, that is fair enough with me—or us, I'm sure..... What was the next point.... Vasgamuwa..... well, if the editor wants to publish that memorandum, well, I suppose.....

Members: The members want it, not the editor.....

T.H.: Well, some members..... we'll consider it. What was the last thing?..... Mr. Silva, could you once again tell me what you objected to? I am told by Ranjan who drafted and wrote that part of the report, that he tried to make out that because we had no laws about sewage, certain people tried to..... promote foreign investment here, namely hotels, or others, by inviting them here and saying, 'Here, you are not bothered by legislation of that type.....'

Mr. Silva: Laws are one thing, but having a legislature is something quite different.....

Voice: Printing errors.....

T.H.: Of course, printing errors always happen.....

Dr. K: Mr. Chairman, this is not a printing error, because it recurs. May I read the sent-

ence out? How could a printing error occur twice? it is bad english.....

T.H.: It is bad english..... are there any more comments?

R. S.: (Ranil Senanayake) Mr. President, members, my first question involves international contacts. Now I have been very active in the international sphere of animal conservation and I notice that the panda insignia and the... member of IUCN has been deleted from our letterheads. Mr. President, could we have some explanation as to why this is so? And following that I would like to ask a question on the following paragraph on the Elephant Secretariat, but I will defer that.....

T.H.: Ask all your questions and I'll answer them.

R.S.: (voice was distorted as he was too close the microphone) One,

T.H. Mr. Ranil Senanayake has noticed that we no longer use the panda symbol on the WWF and he also thinks that we are no longer members of the IUCN. His second point is not correct..... our society is a full paying member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. As for the panda symbol, or sygnet or..... logo logo..... some five years ago I approached the then Director-General of the WWF and suggested that we should have a special relationship with that fund-raising world organisation. I suggested..... as I felt that..... something that did not exist. He then.... the Director General considered and thought it a useful concept in view of the fact that we were collaborating closely..... whereby collaboration meant that we here in Sri Lanka provided the World Wildlife Fund with a lot of information. In return, we got printed matter. The Director-General..... about a year later..... after I had reminded him several times about this matter, he wrote to me and said he was thinking that the Committee would approve the idea..... Pending this, he allowed us to use the panda logo and the World Wild Life Fund. When we next had to print some stationery, we did put the panda logo at the bottom of our stationery..... and..... as well..... and we did that for four years. During that four years nothing happened.... the World Wildlife Fund did not confer

nor, what was on their conditions at the beginning, nor did they specify the nature of this relationship. In fact, it did not exist.... there was no such.....relationship. So, in nineteen hundred and sixty eight, when our stock of paper.....we had to reprint new stationery, we dropped the logo from our paper because it didn't mean anything nor did we apparently derive the slightest benefit from it. We had hoped that we could extract some.....some people who might drop in here and spend a little money or give some donation to us.....well, that expectation, however modest it was, did not realise. So we didn't see any purpose in continuing with this conditional, and with this.....er.....er very temporary meaningless in any practical sense, state.....and we left it at that. That, from our point of view, is the answer to that question, thank you, R.S.: There is another question I would like to.....thank you for your explanation. Now, members, I would like to table a letter here from the World Wildlife Fund international dated 21.11.1979 addressed to T. W. Hoffmann, President of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society.....which states..... (reads out portion of letter.....voice distorted).

(This letter is reproduced in full elsewhere in this issue)

T.H.: What you have now read merely confirms what I have said.....because of the provisional arrangement it was not renewed..first we and then they, probably because..I cannot speculate on anything further, thank you.

Member: Might we know why the President did not disclose this letter in his explanation given earlier?

T.H.: Why should I?

Member: Why should you not disclose the contents of this letter? It is very relevant to this matter.

T.H.....letters which we would have to disclose, and this is certainly not the place to go into this correspondence which would have taken over a period of possible 2 to 5 years. We cannot do that.....I have given my explanation and the subject, as far as I am concerned, is closed.

READ AT THE MEETING

This is the letter read out by Mr. Ranil Senanayake at the Annual General Meeting of the WNPS. It was dated 21.11.79. It was sent to T. W. Hoffmann, President WNPS, Sri Lanka by Charles de Haes, Director-General of the World Wildlife Fund.

Dear Mr. Hoffmann,

At its 22nd meeting in October 1975, the WWF Board of Trustees granted associate status to the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Ceylon "subject to EXCO's establishing a clear definition of the rights and obligations of such associate status including time limits thereon and periodic review thereof."

As you know, and you indicated in your letter to me of 12 December 1978 the WWF Executive Council did not take subsequent action to confirm this conditional status. You are, however, using the panda logo and the words "In association with the World Wildlife Fund."

We are recently reviewed the status of organisations which are or wish to be associated with WWF. This review has included consideration of correspondence from the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka (Ceylon), signed by you, involving IUCN and WWF projects. Particular note has been taken of your letter of 11 June 1979 to the Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka which is clearly detrimental to WWF. In view of this review, the WWF Executive Board, meeting in Geneva on the 8th and 9th of this month, directed me to advise you that the provisional authorisation of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) is not to be confirmed or renewed and that World Wildlife Fund requires the Society to take steps to remove any reference to an association with World Wildlife Fund, including any use of the panda logo, as from 1 January 1980.

I am instructed to advise the Government of Sri Lanka, IUCN and all World Wildlife Fund National Organisations of this decision and am doing so by copy of this letter.

Member: Not so far as we are concerned...
...In the context of this letter being tabled,
the Chairman's explanation is incorrect.

R.S......the paragraph before says 'Particular note has been taken of your letter of 11th June 1979 to the Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka.....which is clearly detrimental to the World Wildlife Fund....

T.H.: You may certainly table that letter....
...you may comment on it.....there's nothing at all wrong with it. In that letter I wrote very simply that the World Wildlife Fund and IUCN were,.....organisations of the worst kind in which neither we nor our country had a.....that is true.....of my experience with these bodies extends over a much longer period than anybody else'sand as I said before, I have now given all my explanations, and this is not the subject for discussion here.....you could have come to our meetings, you could have brought it up in committee, we would have given you the files, you could have gone through the correspondence.....there are always two sides to all things, you have one side, we have the other side, and this is not the forum for this sort of thing.....

Prof. C: ((Prof. Hilary Cruz) I would like to say a few words.....to cool down tempers.....

T.H.: Nobody is hot here.....I'm feeling pleasant here, for a change.....

(To Be Continued)

+ + +

PESTICIDES

New Magic Bullets—4

By Prof. A. C. J. Weerakoon

*Professor, Dept. of Biological Science,
Sri Jayawardenapura University and General
President, Sri Lanka Association for the
Advancement of Science.*

WILL DISTANCE PROTECT? Both Sweden and Japan are a long way away. But does mere distance in itself necessarily confer any safety from pesticides? Apparently not. In 1966 and 1967, in the remote Shetland Island where pesticides had then not yet been used, it was found that rain water contained 229 ppt

(parts per trillion) of various chlorinated hydro carbons like DDT, Dieldrin, BHC. Over the whole of Britain the average was 170 ppt. At that rate one inch of rain would dump on the British Isles one ton of these pesticides and their residues. Where was it all coming from? North America, carried across the Atlantic Ocean in the prevailing South westerly winds. On the remote Antarctic Continent measurements have shown that by 1969 more than 2,400 tons of DDT and its residues was contained in the snow and ice covering that continent. DDT used in anti-locust campaigns in Morocco in North Africa crossed the Atlantic in the Trade winds, was washed by rain into the seas around the West Indies, were after biological magnification in marine organisms, it soon reached toxic levels in that already rare bird, the Bermuda Petrel, upsetting its breeding. Apparently one cannot confine these pesticides to the place in which they are being used, any more than one can confine them to the target species.

THE ALTERNATIVE: I have given you just a very few examples of the many cases where nature has tried to teach us. But have we learnt the lessons she has taught? In a few instances, a very few, yes. One such instance, I am happy to say is in Sri Lanka. A caterpillar, that of the Tea Tortrix Moth, and a beetle, the shot-hole borer, were the two major pests of tea in our plantations. In 1936 a wasp which parasitises the caterpillar was introduced from Indonesia. Within 2 years the Tortrix caterpillar was reduced to the status of a very minor pest of little or no economic importance. The shot-hole borer, however, continued to be a serious problem and in 1961 a major campaign to control it with Dieldrin sprays was launched. The chief effect this treatment had was to cause frequent and severe outbreaks of the Tea Tortrix and other caterpillars generally within 2 months of the Dieldrin treatment. Whereupon DDT sprays were used to control these caterpillar outbreaks—and this often resulted in outbreaks of various spider-mites, mainly the red, and the scarlet. And so it went on. The use of Dieldrin was finally abandoned in 1966 and gradually a programme for the control of the Borer based on a thorough understanding of its biology and ecology and of those of other pests in the tea plantations, based on an understand-

ing of the cultivation practices in use, and so on, was worked out and introduced, a programme in which pesticides application was minimal and subordinate to other methods of control. Thus: All tea fields were classified into three categories: (a) high-yielding and on good land; (b) medium yielding and on good land; and (c) low yielding and on poor land. No action was to be taken against the Borer in fields of category (c) since it had been found that expenditure on protection brought no commensurate gain in harvest. For fields in category (b), action recommended was replanting at the earliest opportunity with pest-resistant clones of tea, what might be termed a physiological or genetical method of control. It was only fields of category (a) that pesticide (Heptachlor) would be used, and that too only in those portions of the field where a pre-prune survey for Borer attack had shown that infestation of the primary branches of the tea bushes had reached a predetermined economic-injury level set at an infestation of 40% of the branches sampled.

IN OTHER WORDS, spraying was not to be resorted to at the mere presence of the Borer nor was blanket spraying of the whole field to be done. Furthermore, this procedure, and therefore any insecticide spraying was to take place only in connection with a "hard" prune, which came once in 2 or 3 pruning cycles, that is once in 6 to 9 years. Finally, when spraying has to be done it is done at the beginning of the wet weather so as to avoid those periods during which it had been found that the reproductive potential of seasonal and possible pests is high and thus avoid the creation of a new "upset" pests. This programme of pest management, which depends much more on cultural and bio-environmental practice than on direct killing with pesticide, has proved very successful.

Unfortunately this approach is still far too rare; we still tend to depend entirely or almost entirely on the use of pesticides. In malaria control for example where the evolution of resistance to DDT had resulted in an explosive comeback of the disease, we are now just as enthusiastically using the less persistent but much more toxic pesticides Malathion and using it in the very same way, as a residual spray on the walls of houses. On the radio just a few months ago we in

Sri Lanka were jubilantly told that the 262,000 cases of malaria for 1977 had dropped to just 69,000 by the end of 1978. The very authoritative Sri Lankan spokesman went on to say "The main weapon and one which has been most effective is indoor residual spraying with Malathion and we cannot get away from that." As I heard that I was reminded of an even greater authority, the then Director-General of the WHO who, about a decade ago, is reported to have said about DDT: "The concept of malaria eradication rests completely on its continued use. Limitations on its use will give rise to grave problems for the developing countries." Well, we now know what that complete reliance on DDT led to. It is not difficult to predict what the result of our present reliance on Malathion will be. It is worth noting here that we paid in 1978, about Rs. 120 million a year for Malathion, 4 times as much as for DDT. When mosquitoes have become resistant to Malathion how much shall we have to pay for the next pesticide that is manufactured by the industry and recommended to us by the international experts?

CONCLUSION: In the light of all the evidence available of which I have presented here just a very few examples, in view of all this evidence of real and grave danger to all life on earth, why do we continue to place so much trust in these poisons? Why do we continue to use them in this reckless and indiscriminate way?

Have we scientists and physicians ceased to be capable of independent and critical thinking? Or do the constant barrage of advice and instructions from the WHO, the FAO and a host of similar international and foreign national Agencies, and the now almost continuous round of seminars and workshops and conferences arrayed for by them, leave us little confidence in our own conclusion? Even, perhaps, little time for thought?

Or is "No" the correct answer to the cynical question "Is there intelligent life on earth" that is sometimes asked? Or is it that though there is intelligence enough, intelligence alone is not enough to withstand the barrage of advice, the rounds of seminars, the incessant propaganda, advertisement and other inducements by those with interests in the

prosperity of the pesticides industry? What else is needed? How can we protect ourselves from those who would place fetters on our minds?

Most discoveries and inventions, probably all of them, have potentials for both good and harm. Over and over again crucial decisions have to be taken about these discoveries and inventions as to how much risk is permissible, how much harm is permissible, in a given set of circumstances, decisions as to the point at which good balance ill and is cancelled out by it. And it is only an *informed* citizenry, a citizenry that clearly knows the facts pro and con, which can and should use these facts to decide the balance point between good and harm. This is not a decision that should be left to scientists and to government officials alone, however conscientious they may be, nor to international civil servants and international experts. And it is a duty of a nation's scientists in various disciplines each to explain the findings of his science to citizens and thus to help to produce the *informed* citizenry. This is where Environmental Societies and nature conservation societies of various sorts could play a crucially important role, their main role. Each could get interested scientists together and provide them with a forum for teaching themselves (for no scientist knows everything of science) for teaching themselves and for teaching others. It could provide an organisation which will bring concerned and dedicated citizens together to learn from the scientists, and then we take the facts and the explanations to a widening circle of other citizens. It would thus produce the body of informed citizens and give that body the stimulus necessary for it to take decisions and then to agitate and get those decisions accepted by governments—decisions about whether we should instal a nuclear reactor for power production or not, about whether we should attempt the eradication of malaria from Sri Lanka by spreading over the country more than 7 million pounds of a deadly poison, Malathion, each year for years or whether we should try some other method of protecting man from malaria, less costly in foreign exchange, less dangerous to man and less likely to fail against the mosquito and many similar decisions. The production of an "informed citizenry"—therein lies our

shield against all those who seek to fetter our minds.

Concluded.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

August 7-13

DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE
WORLD COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Time; SO—Sunday Observer; DM—D'namina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLDP—Sri Lanka-dipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—D'napathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; DK—D'nakara; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7: Government has decided to permit private sector firms to operate agency postal services; already five leading private sector firms had offered to set up such services, Minister of State and Cabinet Spokesman, Anandatissa de Alwis said yesterday. Government yesterday approved the establishment of two Cancer Units at the Galle Hospital and Jaffna Hospital where patients could get Cobalt Therapy; Cancer has shown a steady rise in the past few years. Cabinet yesterday approved a ten-point code of ethics for Sri Lanka Journalists, presented by State Minister, Anandatissa de Alwis—CDN. As many as 73,250 persons will be provided with employment in the construction industry shortly as a result of a proposal by the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, approved by the Cabinet yesterday. The Cabinet discussed the strike situation in general yesterday and noted that it was now over, Cabinet spokesman and Minister of State, Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis said. Tight security measures have been worked out for vital government institutions; this follows the government's receiving information that mischief-makers and saboteurs were organising a disruption of work at government institutions and installations—CDM.

Armed Services and the Police will launch joint operations tomorrow in the Metropolitan area, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Jaffna in a bid to ensure law and order. Profits from the sale of gems at the forthcoming gem auctions are to be exempted from income tax, Cabinet decided yesterday—*SU*. The School Principals' Association of the Northern Province has appealed to the Education Department to remedy the situation now prevailing there; about 158 schools did not have Principals and deputies were carrying out their duties—*DP*. The Leader of the JVP Mr. Rohana Wijeweera has issued instructions to party supporters not to join the strike though publicly he expressed his support for the strike; this has been revealed by the Chairman and the Secretary of the Lanka Guru Sangamaya, a trade union of the JVP—*DK*.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8: Government servants who vacated their posts from July 18 will be paid their salaries up to and including July 17, the last day on which they worked; government is also considering what further financial relief should be given to help families of those officers, an Information Department press release said yesterday; these decisions were announced following a large number of appeals to President J. R. Jayewardene made by families and dependants of public officers who quit their posts; the government has reiterated, however, that no strikers would be taken back and that all vacancies need not be filled if a service is adequately being run with fewer employees. The 121 industries approved by the Greater Colombo Economic Commission up to July 3 would provide direct employment opportunities to a little over 50,000 people and indirect employment to about a lakh more, a GCEC spokesman said yesterday—*CDN*. Recruits to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service who are found unsuitable on the basis of a series of tests including facility in the English language will be discontinued from service at the end of the first year. The Open University has decided to have a degree course in law for those seeking employment as legal advisers in the mercantile sector—*CDM*. World Bank Vice President David Hopper is due to visit Sri Lanka on August 17—*SU*. The Police and the military today threw a huge security blanket countrywide as an opposition backed satya-

graha campaign was due to begin protesting at governmental measures imposed in the wake of the general strike. Police and military reinforcements were sent into the Fort area today as a group of demonstrators went on the rampage smashing cars and ship windows; clubs, bricks and other missiles were used in the attack during which considerable damage was caused very quickly; the demonstrators were subsequently dispersed leaving a trail of broken glass in their wake—*CO*. The Ministry of Education is taking steps to provide biscuits and milk to 1,250,000 primary school students from next year; this would cost the government Rs. 17 million—*DV*. The Committee for National Unity in a special message has said that the strike was performed primarily because of economic difficulties and the government must consider this reality and come to an understanding with the trade unions concerned by holding discussions—*ATH*. Deputy leader of the SLFP Mr. Maithripala Senanayake said in Parliament that the SLFP would take back all the strikers who have been sacked and pay compensation—*DK*.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9: President J. R. Jayewardene yesterday told representatives of 40 non-striking trade unions that steps had already been taken to give financial relief to the families and dependents of those who had vacated their posts a communique issued by the Presidential Secretariat said. Yesterday's satyagraha called by certain Opposition-led trade unions broke out into violence when a mob of about 300 went on the rampage causing heavy damage both to public and private property and throwing office workers into a panic and causing inconvenience; the mob also threatened some Members of Parliament who were arriving about this time for a meeting of the House; the MP for Mirigama, Mr. Mahendra Wijeratne was seriously injured when a gang of over 50 smashed up his jeep and attacked him; he was admitted to hospital for treatment with serious head injuries—*CDN*. The police yesterday took into custody Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, the leader of the LSSP, Mr. Athauda Seneviratne former LSSP MP for Ruwanwella, Mr. G. I. D. Dharmasekera former ULF candidate for Beruwala, Mr. Gammanpilla SLFP Trade Unionist, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara the leader of the NLSSP and Chandrasiri Karunatatne.....Dr. Colvin R.

de Silva, LSSP leader who was taken into custody yesterday was released on personal bail by the police—CDM. Doctors yesterday performed an emergency operation on Mirigama MP Mahendra Wijeratne for what doctors described as a "depressed fracture". Sporadic instances of violence erupted in the city yesterday as unruly mobs unleashed terror and left behind a trail of destruction of both public and private property; worst hit were government offices, private vehicles and the Airlanka office at Sir Baron Jayetilleke Mawatha in the Fort; public buses transporting workers were a main target; in the city alone a total of 57 buses, about hundred cars and some twenty buildings were damaged and several passengers who received injuries were rushed to the Accident Service. The Police and armed forces have been ordered by the Defence Ministry to open fire on or take into custody any person causing damage to public or private property—SU.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10: Intensive security arrangements enforced to meet the opposition-backed satyagraha threat last Friday will continue this week with the armed services and the police on full alert to tackle any breakdown of law and order; "we are maintaining maximum vigilance" an authoritative security spokesman said yesterday; the authorities believe that some effort may be made to create a situation on hartal commemoration day which falls next Tuesday. Prime Minister R. Premadasa yesterday strongly condemned Friday's mob violence in Colombo Fort and asserted that the President and the government would make any sacrifice in the interest of the people and said that the forces behind Friday's incidents were badly mistaken if they believed the country's problems could be solved by shedding blood—SO. With the setting up of District Development Councils, all transfers in the public service will be frozen pending the identification of transferable services that could be converted into district services. Within the next 3 months 17,000 families will be settled in the Mahaweli areas, according to the settlement plan of the Mahaweli Development Ministry—ST. The government yesterday detailed a Police team to conduct a full probe into Friday's mob violence which was unleashed under the guise of a Satyagraha campaign—WK. A survey

has revealed that there is a radical change taking place in the social environment of villages by millions of rupees being saved by those working in Arab countries. A special investigation conducted by the customs has revealed that gold and silver worth over Rs. 2 to 3 million is smuggled abroad every day from Sri Lanka—SLDP.

MONDAY, AUGUST 11: The decision of the British government to impose increased fees on overseas students will be one of the major items for discussion at the Ministerial meeting of the Eighth Commonwealth Education Conference which will be inaugurated by President J. R. Jayewardene at the BMICH at 10 a.m. today; the three-day conference will be attended by more than 250 delegates including some 30 Education Ministers and senior officials from about 34 Commonwealth countries. Relations between the Maldives and Sri Lanka are better today than ever before, Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom who is in Colombo on a private visit said—CDN. Top trade union officials wanted by the police for questioning are reported to be missing since last Friday's incidents of violence in the city; police said these officials were seen in the city on Friday morning; however, after the incidents of violence they had apparently gone into hiding—CDM. All of the 62 buses damaged by mob violence last Friday will be back on the roads and the service will not be interrupted, Transport Minister M. H. Mohamed assured yesterday. Police intelligence services are trying to ascertain whether certain ultra-militant leftist elements were behind the mob violence in the Fort on Friday morning; while some of the major opposition parties have dissociated themselves from the violence that left a trail of destruction to public and private property, police believe that certain extremist elements who profess anarchist policy objectives could have infiltrated into the rank and file of the strikers who allegedly went on the rampage during their ostensible satyagraha campaign. Sri Lanka Freedom Party Leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in an interview with *Sun* yesterday, said that the SLFP was totally committed to parliamentary democracy and had consistently opposed any form of violence to overthrow governments—SU. Minister of Trade & Shipping Mr. Lalith Atulathmudali speaking

at Mankulam where he opened the new market building stated that District Development Councils were not only meant for developing the country but they would also unite the people who wish to break away and the policy of this government was to see that the people of the country live unitedly as one nation—DP. Millions of rupees have been spent by various public institutions for the anniversary celebrations of the Village Re-awakening project—DK.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12: The Court of Appeal yesterday refused the writ application of Opposition Leader A. Amirthalingam over the vacant Pothuvil seat in Parliament, following the death of the sitting member Mr. Canagaratnam. Anil Moonesinghe, a former Minister in the United Front Government and LSSP trade unionist yesterday surrendered to the Police; he was later detained for questioning on last Friday's incidents of violence in the city; Police said yesterday Mr. Alavi Moulana, General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation who surrendered on Saturday was now being held in detention along with Mr. Vasudeva Nanyakara, Leader of the New LSSP and several others—CDN. The Attorney General's Department will shortly file indictments against several trade union leaders in connection with the mob violence that swept through the Fort last Friday—SU. An intensive security plan went into force this morning with the authorities taking no chances of a possible repetition of Friday's violence in the Colombo Fort area as the hartal commemoration day dawned today—CO. Because of the ban on meetings under the Emergency Regulations the 23rd Hartal day celebrations and the celebrations of the death anniversary of the late Dr. N. M. Perera were not held today—JD. The BMC has imported cement from a company at Rs. 85 per metric ton when there was a tender for less; the country would lose millions of dollars on this deal. Government Members of Parliament have requested the government for more protection when they are visiting their electorates. DK.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13: President J. R. Jayewardene, Prime Minister R. Premadasa and UNESCO Director General Amadou Mahtar M'Bow will inaugurate the hundred million rupee International campaign for the

restoration of the monuments in the cultural triangle at 2.40 p.m. on August 25 at the historic "Magulmaduwa"—the audience hall of the Kings of Kandy. A Canadian national Mr. Charles Tissoreau White (71), a retired judge living here, was found brutally killed in his bedroom at his home in Castle Street, Borella, early yesterday morning, Police said—CDN. The President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, has directed that all Ministries, Department and Corporations must send weekly, to the Ministry of Plan Implementation, the names of persons they had employed from the Job Bank. The Government of Iraq has made available to the Government of Sri Lanka a loan of about Rs. 88 million (1,633,276 Iraq dinars)—CDM. Financial constraints may compel the Greater Colombo Economic Commission to relinquish the administration of local authorities in its extensive 200-square mile area and hand them back to the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Construction—SU. Hartal commemoration day which was yesterday passed without any incidents—VK. It has been decided to submit a Memorandum to the Tamil United Liberation Front requesting that the District Development Councils not be accepted and stating that the Tamil areas will not be benefited by the proposed Development Councils; this memorandum has been signed by former Federal Party high-ups and a few from the Youth Front—EN.

FILM FOCUS

Sinhala Films Excel

I am beginning to wonder whether 1980 will end up as a vintage year for quality Sinhalese films. Even, with so many films clogging up the queue, there has been a series of quick releases recently vying with each other for recognition, so much so that next year, the Presidential jury may have to use a fine comb to microscopically sift them for the "Bronze Lion" awards. I have in mind for the moment, "Siriho Aiya", "Dandu Monara", "Pariththyaga" and "Ganga Addara" as I write these lines and I wonder how many such will hit our screens before this year runs out.

TRIBUNE, August, 23, 1980

While I am on this subject, it is a bouquet I have for these films in the fields of realism which they excel in, adding praiseworthy dimensions to the stories they have had in hand. In neighbouring India however, both Hindi and Tamil films are wallowing in escapist themes, and the relevant stories are far removed from day to day life situations, but mesmerised with hypnotic colour, and yet drawing large crowds like flies on an iced cake. I provoked a friend of mine who picks his films carefully to comment on the so-called "battle" between "realism" and "escapism" in celluloid and pat came his reply, "Is life not painful enough around us, that we should also pay hard cash and step into a cinema to experience its vicissitudes visually all over again." He meant of course that escapist fare would always hold the edge, for a saturation of realism could erode one's natural craving for a change and relaxation. I think he held a point, but for me and many others, it is the view that the "artistic" in films cannot surface without projecting meaningfully the real situations, with the pains and pleasures that go with it, even if it has to "petal" out its message from a marshy background, shorn of the opulence of colour photography.. To this extent it has to be admitted that Sinhala cinema is treading the right path today, even at the expense of a box office that may go haywire in this cinematic pilgrimage for perfection.

GANGA ADDARA (Sinhalese): As I sat through this cinematic "poem" in celluloid, which seldom lost its rhyme, I could not escape the feeling, that the march of Sinhala Cinema on the road to "realism", is well and truly on its way to perfection, buttressed with colour photography what was a long felt need to the local film scenario in general. All those behind the camera in the making of this excellent film—Director Sumithra Pieris, script writer Tissa Abeyasekera and Camera-man Donald Karunaratna have strained every nerve to combine well with those facing the lens, to project a story that should go very well with the masses. With a costume-wise and colonial flavoured story set in 1925, it opens with the fluttering of a Union Jack which frowns with the wind on a period when the elitist Walawa Hamaduruwas were virtually hand in glove with the Britishers and

in a conquering mood, with the wealth at their disposal.

The Atapattu household was one such, as it brushed aside brusquely their daughter's love, matured over the years for an indigent cousin, in preference for one from the Kandyan Kobbekaduwa clan, who was back in the country having sowed his wild oats abroad. The outcome of this parental impetuosity, drives their daughter (Vasanti Chaturani) to the mental asylum, away from her childhood lover (Sanath Gunatilleka) to the tender psychiatric care of a Dr. Pathirana, full of the Freudian formula (Vijay Kumaratunga), who retrieves her sanity, but only temporarily. The daughter Nirmali (Vasanti Chaturani) loses her balance eventually to drown herself in a river of no return—a river with the glistening flow of which drew the young romance to silt tragically on its banks. The smooth surge of the moving waters, so colourfully taken in by the camera, remained symbolic of this heart-warming love story, till its ultimate derouement. Acting honours were shared equally by Tony Ranasinghe, who unrelaxingly retained the poise and the periodic pose of the affluents Juwanis Atapattu, while Chaturani filled a more demanding role to the full by her sweet Innocense, in the face of a longing that was bruised and battered by her ambitious parents. Handsome Sanath Goonetilleke, a greenhorn in films is one to watch from now on. For Director Sunethra it has been a triumphant leap from her previous effort "Gehanu Lamai" and in the near future perhaps, she may give her famous husband, Lester James Pieris, a close run for honours in film making. And for you parents, this fine cinematic story would help you to understand your children better and confine the gaps that may have come down the "Ganga" from colonial 1925 to a freer 1980. How I wish, the excellence of this film, with the artistry of Kandyan dancing thrown in for good measure is tested abroad it should prove very rewarding for its makers.

NEEYA (Tamil): For "escapist" fans, here is a film in colour, that carries loads of it, and is going quite well with the picture-goers. Director Dural has dipped deep in mythology to ferret out a story of a pair of love lorn snakes that take human form with the waxing of the moon to coil and cuddle seductively

for a sensual fulfilment, that remains unrequited. One of a band of youngsters on holiday (Kamalahasan, Sri Kanth, Ravichandran, Jai Ganesh and Vijayakumar) interrupt this erotic dance of love and guns down the male of the species, to earn for the friends the wounded vengeance of the other and get "venomed" off one by one, to an electrifying climax. Sri Priya as the serpent on the vengeance trail uses her curves to good purpose in the deadly game of "dominoes" to exotic music and drumming feet, till the plot reaches a "crescendo" with every fatal sting. I am inclined to believe that this story draws its cue from the English film "Black Widow" which ran successfully a few years ago. "Neeya" keeps one taut and tense, while it runs its fully slipper course. Reputed stars, Muthuraman and Manjula appear as guest stars to add to the temporary tempo. If you have a phobia for snakes however, seek your evenings entertainment elsewhere—you will sleep better!

JAMES N. BENEDICT



NGUVU—8

Dairy—Max, Co-ops & Other Mundane Matters

by Bwana Rafiki

Dairy-Max, my new cattle-feed was given me by the Co-operative on condition that I placed a regular order for it. I ordered five hundredweights of it a week, and it was six days ago that I took delivery of the first lot. Yesterday, when I called over for the second lot, I found that the Co-operative had made no arrangements for a regular supply, and they spoke now in terms of a monthly order. I placed an order for twenty-four hundredweights a month as a month is rather more than four weeks. I wonder if my order will have any effect. While bringing the Dairy-Max home, I learnt from my carter something about the set-up of a Co-operative. I heard that the Co-operative is virtually in the hands of one man, who is a powerful man around here. I had already thought that as the Dairy-Max sells here at Rs. 45/- a hundredweight,

those who lose my custom for the feed they sell might try to interfere.

Paying more attention to spending more time in active participation in sport, as I have done these last two weeks, has made me more active in the business side of my life, for I have done more in a few days than I have done in months and years. The Ministry of Home Affairs, the Labour Office and the Milk Board have been recipients of, at the receiving and of, my activities in matters that have to do with my work. Important matters. I have also been more active at my place of work, doing things that I could have done profitably myself long ago instead of leaving it to others always. Of course the sporting activities take up much time and perhaps because of this other work has been delayed, but I have at least become aware of the work, of what work has to be done, and some of it is urgent. Much work and no play, goes the old saying, makes Jack a dull boy. I would say you do not play in order to work but that you work in order to play.

This requires a further clarification. I used often to wonder when I was living alone in a house furnished by me and for me by friends during the period that I have said I still regard as the happiest years of my working life, despite the shift work round the clock, my address by the way, being appropriately called Concrete Square, I often used to wonder what was the point of it all. Yesterday I bought a hundredweight of coconut poonac for Rs. 165/- and ordered two more cwts. of it, and six bags of salt for manuring, the bill for the sale being just about Rs. 200/-, all loaded on our single bullock cart, and later went by bus to Colombo. I indulged in my usual sport for an event that takes place in another ten days. I had most excellent dinner at my sister's. I must say that life seemed far from pointless but the sort of troubles that beset me seemed like chasm which I would have with me all my life. In England, doubt in spite of my reading. In Ceylon, trouble in spite of my fortune. More yet much later.

At a government place was I when the staff walked out at 3 p.m. A strike by the employees of this institution would have affected us badly. My father prayed that all

would be all right, and come today it seemed that his prayers had been answered. I have not known such a good bus service for years on my regular C.T.B. routes both within Colombo and outstation as on this first day of the so-called General Strike. And Colombo has never looked more peaceful. As for labour unrest there is a cancer in society and it has been there for years, more than the years I have been born. When people speak of improvement they really mean, although they do not know it, enlarging the cancerous parts. I do not know what this age, which is about a hundred and seventy five years old, should be called. The best word I can think of, of a sudden, is the Accumulative Society or Age.

People speak of the quietness of the countryside and I am always a little surprised. A government servant who has to do with dairy cattle asked how did I cope with thieving and he was referring to coconuts. In England I worked in a farm situated between the sea and the railway line but out of sight of both where the whole family, there were no servants, used to leave the two hundred acre farm, which incidentally belonged to a man who was working in Ceylon, and the house to go miles and miles to an agricultural show week-end after week-end during the summer, or to a dance at the village hall some miles away at night many times in the winter. There were cattle out in the fields and cattle in stalls, poultry and pigs, milk churns and milking machines and barns that were not locked at a time when money went much further in Ceylon than in England as regards one's wants.

An octogenarian by some years, when I told him I was devoting more time once more to an occupation I had indulged in quite intensively for a large slice of my life, spot, an aquatic one, he was really delighted, and it gave me much encouragement, for in my own sport you have to wield an oar, not an activity many doctors would advise for a person who is not quite a chicken as regards his age. I have always said that there is no one who has not his part to play in the collective effort of living, however old or decrepit he might be, and my octogenarian was far from that. Even people in bed have a vital part to play, sometimes just by their living presence alone, if that is all they are capable of. That accumulative age I referred to a few

paragraphs earlier is an age accumulative in expensive rubbish, acquisitive to a degree.

X X X

FOR THE RECORD

World Asian Elephants Experts To Meet In Colombo

The Ministries of State and Foreign Affairs have recently approved a meeting of the (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Survival Service Commission's Asian Elephant Specialist Group, to be held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute on 20th and 21st August 1980.

The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) is a network of governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), scientists and other conservation experts, joined together to promote the protection and sustainable use of living resources. Founded in 1948, IUCN has more than 450 member governments (including Sri Lanka) and NGOs in over 100 countries. IUCN shares a joint world headquarters with the World Wild Life Fund (WWF), the wellknown international conservation foundation based in Switzerland. IUCN and WWF are joint sponsors of the Asian Elephant Secretariat, which is to be established in Sri Lanka shortly.

WWF ensures that its conservation programme has a sound scientific basis by close collaboration with IUCN. IUCN provides this basis with the advice of several Commissions, the largest and oldest of which is the Survival Service Commission (SSC), which is chaired by Sir Peter Scott and concerns itself with species conservation. Within the SSC, programme advice is developed by Specialist Groups whose membership consists of prominent scientists and other knowledgeable experts in various countries, who are chosen for their professional qualifications and not as representatives of Governments.

The Asian Elephant Specialist Group is one such important body. According to its Deputy Chairman, Dr. Robert Olivier, who is organising the forthcoming meeting of this

Group in Colombo, some twenty foreign Asian Elephant experts (mostly from neighbouring countries), are expected to attend. Amongst them are Mr. Phairote Suwannakorn (Director, Wild Life Conservation Division, Royal Forest Department, Thailand), Mrs. Anne Wright (Member, Indian Board for Wild Life; and Trustee, World Wild Life Fund—India) and Mr. Louis Ratnam (Chief Research Officer, Department of Wild Life Conservation and National Parks, West Malaysia). Sri Lanka is represented on the Group by Mr. Lyn de Alwis (Director, Department of Wild Life Conservation and Director Zoological Gardens). In addition, over 30 other Sri Lankans drawn from Government, the Universities, and local NGOs, will be participating.

The main agenda items are to review IUCN/WWF's draft "Action Plan" for the Asian Elephant throughout its range, and subsequently to recommend to WWF what projects should be implemented where on a priority basis from available funds. To provide appropriate context to these endeavours however, the meeting will also receive up-to-date reports from the various countries represented, and will discuss topics relevant to Asian Elephant conservation, such as the Ivory Trade, and Schemes for compensating crop losses due to elephants.

In their sessions the Group will pay particular attention to the specific problems regarding the conservation and management of the Sri Lankan elephant. The choice of Sri Lanka as the venue for this meeting (and as the location for the regional Asian Elephant Secretariat), reflects not only the concern of organisations such as the IUCN and WWF over the uncertain future of our elephants, but also their confidence in the determination and capability of the Government to conserve these magnificent animals as a valued part of our national heritage.

Mr. T. C. Daniel, Curator of the Bombay Natural History Society, will preside as Chairman of the Group. After their meetings delegates are being offered the chance to visit the Kandy Perahera, and to see wild elephants in our National Parks.

—Issued by the Ministry of State.
12 August 1980.

SOVIET VIEW

Nuclear Holocaust

by Vladimir Ostrovsky

THIRTY - FIVE YEARS AGO, the sinister atomic mushrooms blanketed the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, taking a heavy toll of more than half a million human lives. The two 20-kiloton atom bombs used by the USA, one against Hiroshima and the other against Nagasaki, in August 1945, still have their after-effects in Japan. The 400,000 *hibakushas*, people suffering from the radiation sickness, and their offspring curse the days when their homeland became the target of nuclear strikes. It is for more than one decade now that the toll of the bell of Hiroshima has been heard in the world for the victims of the atomic bombing. It resounds in our hearts, making us insistently demand an end to the nuclear arms race and a changeover to real disarmament. Every new contribution by the USA and NATO to the nuclear arms build-up does not strengthen the security of these countries and the world as a whole, but renders detente and peace itself more fragile, because it increases the danger of a nuclear conflict.

It has been calculated that by 1980 plutonium production in the world had been big enough for manufacturing a thousand nuclear bombs a year. The United States has 35,000 nuclear charges, of which 8,000 are deployed on the European continent. Among these, there is a considerable number of multi-megaton bombs. The US naval forces in the Atlantic carries 1,000 nuclear devices that can any time be delivered to the European shores. In the Mediterranean, the US 6th Fleet is also equipped with nuclear means. Among the US forward-based nuclear forces, there are Pershing-1 missiles deployed on the territory of Federal Germany. The charge of one such missile has the yield of 400 kilotons, which is 20 times as much as the yield of the bomb used against Hiroshima.

THESE FORCES ALONE are capable of annihilating, many times over, every living being in Europe, even without resorting to the use of US strategic arms. The Western information media conceal from European public opinion that the NATO Command has five

nuclear-powered missile-carrying submarines attached to it, which are capable of delivering 600-800 nuclear warheads to targets. These missile-carrying craft create an additional threat off the European shores.

However, judging by the decision of the NATO Council session held in December 1979 on the deployment of several hundred new US medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe, NATO "strategists" believe that the nuclear weapons, with the unprecedented aggregate multi-megaton yield amassed on the European continent, are not sufficient. To suit the US military-industrial complex and the Carter administration, NATO countries have embarked on the road of escalating the nuclear arms race. It is clear now even to the uninitiated that the "complete" deployment of hundreds of American nuclear-missile launching-pads in Britain, Federal Germany and Italy pursues an aim far removed from the strengthening of peace—to upset approximate nuclear parity with the Soviet Union, to gain an advantage both in the number of delivery means and in the number of nuclear charges they can deliver.

On the eve of the NATO's decision last December, *The Washington Post* warned the West that the proposal had been ill conceived, that it meant an end to any new agreements on arms control and would considerably increase the possibility of an accidental outbreak of nuclear war. The view is quite correct. As the errors made by computers of the US NORAD system early last June showed, the American warning system is "much too suspicious", which, in a final analysis, increased the chances of an outbreak of nuclear war, even providing neitherside wants to touch it off.

IN EUROPE, an error in the US tracking and warning system might cost Europeans their lives, since the flying time of Pershing-2 missiles to targets on Soviet territory is four minutes, and the time between an order for launching a missile and its actual launching is even less—one and a half minutes. It is hardly possible to correct mistake within the matter of these moments. Isn't this by chance that one French newspaper remarked that the USA's NATO allies had found themselves impaled on their own decision?

The danger of a global nuclear holocaust increases also because the US military doctrine envisages that the USA might be the first to use nuclear weapons, irrespective of the character of warfare, in a war with US participation. Harold Brown, the US Defence Secretary, no longer conceals that US and NATO strategy allows for the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons by NATO countries, if the need arises.

If the need arises? But who will decide this question? When will this be found necessary and under what circumstances? What scales will Washington use for deciding the destiny of mankind, its present and future? These questions are perfectly legitimate, and Washington will hardly be able to supply an intelligible answer. For the Pentagon does not conceal that it might be the first to use tactical nuclear weapons in the Persian Gulf area. Yet, it is common knowledge that no one in the region threatens the USA with similar weapons. This means that the vital issue of our time will be decided in Washington on the sole basis of its purely "American interests" in any region of the world, as the US President re-affirmed early this year.

—APN

MUSKIE STATEMENT

Overview Of US Foreign Policy

Washington, July 31,

Edmund Muskie, who became Secretary of State in April, gave the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives July 30, his first 'overview' of U.S. Foreign Policy. Muskie concentrated heavily on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the holding of 52 American hostages in Iran and the negotiations for peace in the Middle East. Following is the text of Muskie's prepared statement:

I find myself coming before you with the chronic complaint of a Secretary of State, a great deal of territory to cover in a very short time. In fact, that has been the story of my life over the past two and a half months. To-

day I want to bring you up to date on my activities—particularly my recent discussions abroad. Before I return to those travels, however, let me say a few words about three matters which shaped those discussions: the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; the holding of American hostages in Iran; and the negotiating process in the Middle East.

FIRST, AFGHANISTAN. I need not dwell on the history. The President and others have made our view clear: the Soviet invasion is not only an assault on the people of Afghanistan; it also assaults fundamental principles of international order and decency. It raises serious potential threats to world peace and to vital western interests in the Persian Gulf area. For all these reasons, the United States has reacted firmly. We imposed restrictions on grain, high technology and phosphate exports to the Soviet Union. We boycotted the Moscow Olympics and helped persuade 59 other countries to do likewise. We have encouraged and joined the widespread condemnation of the Soviet invasion by the international community. We have called for a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and for a political solution to the crisis. What should be the elements of such a political settlement? In our view, four are essential: a prompt and complete withdrawal of all Soviet forces, non-intervention in Afghan internal affairs by any outside state government acceptable to the Afghan people and finally, an independent and non-aligned Afghanistan.

We are prepared to explore transitional arrangements aimed at restoring peace to Afghanistan. Such arrangements could be implemented along with the prompt withdrawal of Soviet troops. But we see no indications that the Soviet Union is interested in anything other than imposing its military grip upon that country. Our judgement is that the "withdrawal" announced last month is only a partial redeployment of troops—mostly of units not suitable to this kind of war. The Soviet announcement has not been followed by any steps which indicate that the Soviets are prepared to discuss a political solution. Indeed, if anything, fighting appears to have intensified in recent days. The resistance of the Afghan people continues to grow. So we believe it is essential to keep up the pressure

..to maintain the sanctions..to impose continuing costs upon the Soviet Union for its aggression. We will continue to urge other nations to stand firm. And we will continue to draw attention and seek support for the plight of more than one million Afghan refugees now homeless in Pakistan and Iran.

IN IRAN, the continued holding of American hostages, and continuing revolutionary chaos, contribute further to instability in the region and prolong the crisis between our two countries. Iran's leadership is diverted by this manufactured crisis from dealing with the real threats to its independence and security. At this point, we simply cannot say what, if any, effect the recent death of the Shah might have on the situation. Key Iranian leaders, however, say that this will have no impact on their decision to release the hostages. We continue, to press, through every avenue opens to us, for an early release of the hostages. And we continue to impose economic sanctions designed to impress upon Iran's leaders the costs of the crisis to their own interests. Most of Iran's major trading partners have broadly supported a policy of isolating Iran. At the same time, we have made it clear that once our hostages are free, we and the world stand ready to deal with Iran on a basis of mutual respect. It is the holding of hostages that keeps Iran from enjoying better relations in the world.

The new Iranian parliament is organizing. We can have some hope that if the internal power struggle within Iran can be resolved somewhat, the outlook for release of the hostages will improve. Now and in the weeks ahead. We will use every diplomatic source to urge Iranian leaders to end the crisis. I wish I could report that the recent release of Richard Queen has hopeful implications for the other fifty-two hostages. In fact, however, we simply can't speculate. We are encouraged that the Iranian authorities looked with compassion on the plight of one hostage; we hope that they will see the fundamental human dimension of the entire situation and move quickly to release the remaining fifty-two. Iranian leaders have said they have no quarrel with the people of America. But they must realize that as long as the hostages are held, it is the people of America who demand their release. It is possible like Richard

Queen and his family who have suffered... and who will rejoice when the crisis has ended.

A THIRD AREA of continuing concern, Mr. Chairman, is the Middle East. The Camp David accords of 1978 represent an historic step toward peace. The treaty between Egypt and Israel continues to bear fruit; it has diminished the danger of war in the Middle East. As we expected, the negotiations concerning autonomy for the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza have proved difficult and complex. But there are hopeful signs. Our negotiating team has been in the region engaged with the Israelis and the Egyptians in intensive discussions of legal, economic and security issues as well as the broad outlines of an agreement. In these talks, both sides have demonstrated a new seriousness, of purpose and a willingness to consider fresh approaches to the difficult issues that remain

If the talks continue in this positive way, we expect that the heads of delegation will meet again with Ambassador Linowitz towards the middle of August. We will continue to do all in our power in the months ahead to bring about an agreement on autonomy for the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza: an agreement which must take full account of Israel's security concerns, and which must also lead to a significant and genuine change in the situation of the Palestinians. In seeking to advance real negotiating opportunities, we will be firm in our stand against one-sided resolutions on the Middle East at the United Nations, such as the one just put forward at the Special Session of the General Assembly. That resolution was totally unbalanced. It did not acknowledge resolution 242 as the basis for a peace settlement. It did not recognize Israel's right to exist. We voted against it and were pleased that substantial number of other members felt they could not support the resolution. Such efforts will not bring us any closer to peace.

Another principle clearly applies to our negotiating effort. It is this: while negotiations are being pursued, all of the parties must avoid unilateral actions designed to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations or that would have the effect of worsening the atmosphere for successful negotiations. No negotiations can succeed if one of the parties

at the table attempts simultaneously to gain unilateral advantage on the ground. If the parties should fail, or if the Camp David process should be derailed by misguided interventions, the consequences could be serious indeed. For the interests of the entire world are deeply engaged in the Middle East. Continuing conflict in the region threatens those interests, threatens the future of our friends in the region; threatens intervention by outside powers—and threatens the peace of the world..... —USICA

● ● ●
NUWARA ELIYA

In This Thy Swan Song?

by Lincoln Perera

Few haven't heard of Nuwara Eliya. Many thousands make their way up April each year. Still again in August. From the day of the British Raj. To get away from the bustle of life. The heat of the cities. To savor its therapeutic air. Indeed, it is a nice place. When there is less folk about. Particularly, the boisterous.

Many things are organised to keep their interests alive. Shops, Traders, Hotels and Guest Houses look forward to a successful Season with lots and lots of visitors coming up and stay for as long as possible. It brings in a lot of money making Nuwara Eliya richer.

April this year something different happened. Very few came up. Those that did, left very early. Normally, the Season goes on for about three weeks but this year it folded up very soon. After a couple of days, it appeared that things were different. Something was wrong. Hotel and Guest room, were going abegging. When, at other times, you just could not get any during this time. Traders and Market folk who had stocked in anticipation of the rush were holding wares they could not sell. It puzzled many. The climate was typical of April. The normal arrangements had been got ready for their recreation and fun. So, what was it that was different?

People got talking. People have less money to spend therefore we have had less visitors said some. Hotel and Guest room charges were

jacked too high making people keep away said a few. They could get across to Singapore, Bangkok or India at not much further cost, said some others. Whilst still some others say, there are so many Beach resorts in the country where they can have a good time.

So you see, something was different up here this April and we don't know why. Is this going to be something permanent? We don't know. Perhaps, somebody can tell us. Anyway, it had its compensations. The town was less crowded and less noisy. We were able to get our Beef, Fish and Eggs including vegetables at reasonable prices. Chicken was available though few can afford it in these days But.....?

So.....this is something we must look into. Is it losing its attractions with so many beauties being born in the country? Are folks looking for variety with so many bosoms welcoming their custom? All over the City, Towns, Beaches, amongst the Ruins of our ancient Cities or is it to be found abroad?

Be it as it may, till the reasons are found, my thoughts find expression in a Parody. With Apologies to her devoted subjects, may this do some Justice to this Queen of Resorts, Nuwara Eliya.

Aren't these an Imperial lady?
 Hugging, a slope of Pidurutalagala,
 The tallest of this land,
 A Tiara atop rising hills.
 Cant'st thee recall the baying of Hounds?
 The cry of the anguished Sambur?
 The thud of Horses hooves?
 The Hunter go passing by.

Did'st not Royalty and Plebian pay
 thee Homage?

Enjoyed thy beauty,
 Drew strength from thy wholesome air,
 Sung and Danced on thy Jewelled Greens.
 Did'st they hold hands and walk
 amongst thy trees

Watch in silence as the Trout leap high?
 Gazed at thy Crystalled streams?
 Through Crag and Gully expending Foam,

Loafed Natures mantle of Green,
 Picknicked you rolling Hills.

Is thy Beauty fading?
 Nay., it Cant'st be so.....

Let her problems be looked into and redress found. This glorious Health Resort of the many but a Punishment Station for a few.

(+)

LETTER

Failings Of The Food Dept.

Sir,

Our watchful and fearless President, His Excellency, J. R. Jayewardene, has done his initial duty in promptly appointing a Special Committee to investigate into the often adversely commented colossal losses suffered by the faults and failings of those in charge of our Food Department.

While, we join you, other publishers and fellow citizens of Sri Lanka in bemoaning the sad, sudden and untimely loss of the late Mr. Mahes Kanagaratnam, the Chairman appointed by H's Excellency to head the Special Committee for this searching and fearless report, we would like to know why the Tribune, which always stands for an honest and corruptless administration, has not commented on the findings of the Special Committee, the Report of which appears to have been supported by another Report by the Auditor General.

The conclusions of the Report of the Special Committee appear to be a scandalous one reflecting a regrettable discredit on the administration of the Food Department, which has in more than one case done things without Cabinet approval.

Who will bear the losses suffered by the country?

J. K. de Alwis.

827, Jawatta Road,
 Colombo.
 July 31, 1980

● We fully endorse what the writer says, and we would very much like to examine, analyse and comment on the Report of the Special Committee but the report has not yet been officially released. We await the release.

—Editor

—X—

—X—

Confidentially

Exotic Fauna Smuggled

IS IT NOT AN ENCOURAGING SIGN that there is a growing awareness throughout the world that there should be some check on the black market in the big cities of the rich industrialised countries where smugglers were continuously seeking to "diversify" their trade? That nothing was outside this trade that existed only to pander to the eccentric tastes of millionaires and billionaires? That the latest "fashion", according to press reports, among the American upper class appears to be the acquisition of exotic animals and reptiles from the remotest corners of the world? That the smugglers, who are partly responsible for "developing" this fashion, have endeavoured to meet the sordid tastes of these ultra-rich clientele? That according to the *Newsweek* even the Mafia in the USA (Costa Nostra) have entered this business in a big way? That, for instance, in Australia they captured (bought) a certain species of parrots specially wanted by the families of the western tycoons? That these birds were "protected" specimens that did not bother the Mafia operators? That the price paid for such a bird in Australia never exceeded 1.25 dollars, while its cost on the American illicit market went up to 3,500 dollars? That not only parrots but also koala bears and even kangaroos were targets for the hunters with chains and traps? That the police in the Australian city of Darwin arrested at the airport a person trying to illegally take five pythons out of the country? That as a result of the American Mafia's support, exotic animals smuggling has risen rapidly in the last four years? That in 1979 alone, Australia's losses following this new kind of smuggling stood at 30 million dollars? That smuggling is done either by planes which take off from clandestine runways in wild, hardly accessible areas, or on planes flying international routes? That many of the animals die either before being "delivered" to the new destination, or during transport? That in the later case, the profits of those concerned do not suffer very much,

but there is a sharp drop in the number of the rare fauna? That as a matter of fact, the example of the rapid decrease in the number of elephants in Africa is telling enough?

IS IT NOT A FACT that many governments have become concerned that such ecological robberies will soon endanger the balance of nature in their countries? That they have adopted stern measures to prevent these deprivations? That in the Australian state of Queensland, for example, a special unit has been formed to check this kind of smuggling? That in the tropical forests in the Cape York peninsula that the greatest capture of "live merchandise" in Australia was done worth 2.5 million dollars? That the prospect of the fabulous profits that can be made in the market of the big western cities encourages this trade? That for the apparently innocent exotic pleasures of a few dozens, millions of dollars are being spent annually, while in the world 25 million people die of starvation every year? That the Sri Lanka government has woken up to this trade only very recently? That only in very recent times was action taken against the smuggling out of live-fauna as well as the skins of protected rare animals and reptiles like the leopard and crocodile? That the tusks of elephants were also spirited away from the island? That even with all the publicity in the media about the national calamity that stemmed from the wholesale slaughter or capture of protected specimens of Sri Lanka fauna, smuggling is still rampant? That with the customs procedures simplified to the point where no checking is being done because of the tourist flow, smuggling of such items like gems, narcotics exotic fauna, protected skins, antiques and the like has increased? That the attempt to smuggle the big White Cobra stolen from our Zoo is still fresh in people's memory? That the snake was not smuggled out owing to accidental discovery at the airport Customs (or was it because of a tip from the local collaborator who was not paid his due share?) That it is admitted that only a very small part of this kind of smuggling has been detected? That there is no doubt that government must take special emergency steps to check this drain of nature's bounty from the Island?

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