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Letter From The Editor

THERE HAS BEEN AN AVALANCHE of bizzare and un predictable events not only in the world but in Sri Lanka as well. The war between Iraq and Iran continues. Billions of dollars worth of petroleum products have gone up in flames at a time when development in the Third World has begun to falter because poor countries are unable to pay not only for oil but also for capital goods. Billions are being spent on armaments when starvation is rampant on a global scale. Nature too seems to be in an angry mood. In Algeria an earthquake has wiped out over 50,000 people and raised a mountain over them. Floods have devatated Northern India, Thailand and Indo China whilst lands to the South have experienced unprecedented drought. But more than nature man appears to have gone berserk. Volumes would be needed to refer to the insane and short sighted actions of man in practically every country in the world today. In this country too human action (at all levels) appears to be a contradictory jumble of irrationality. To examine the motivation of such perplexing conduct one has to transgress into the realm of metaphysics. For the moment it would be enough only to recount some of the perplexing events that have taken place. Several major fires have broken out in Colombo recently—CWE, CEYNOR, Grindlays Bank to mention only a few—but the Fire Brigade was not able to cope with the fires. The Mayor has explained that the lack of modern equipment was the main cause for the bad showing, but he failed to mention that trained fire fighters have been *locked out* (in order to "teach strikers a lesson") and that the casual replacements cannot be blamed for not knowing the locations of hydrants or how to use the hose. To go from fire to electricity, the big boys in the CEB are obviously so pre-occupied with the French and other connections that they did not have the time to see that meter-readers did their jobs. A major scandal erupted thanks to the willingness of the Controller of Prices to tread where angels would fear to venture. But why blame only meter-readers and interdict them? Why not interdict those who commute between Paris, London, Tokyo and other capitals to collect the rake-off and pay-off on the purchase of bad equipment at inflated prices? In Sri Lanka, however, there is always a faint silver lining to keep hopes buoyant. Minister Festus Perera and his Secretary Anura Weeraratne have started a clean up job in the Fisheries Corporation and they have begun at the top. This should be have been done a long time ago, but better late than never. Similar action is long overdue in many other departments and corporations, especially those whose activities have a direct bearing on the cost of living, like the Marketing Department whose purchasing depots in Colombo and the outstation are among the biggest breeding grounds of corruption—and therefore inflation.

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Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike—2

Colombo, October 12,

Though Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike has filed a writ of certiorari on the Presidential Commission which has recommended that she be deprived of civic rights, it is difficult to evaluate the Commission's findings in the absence of a legal defence. Mrs. Bandaranaike made an impassioned statement that the Commission had no right or jurisdiction to question her and refused to participate in the proceedings. She did not place any evidence or make any attempts to counter the charges many of which appear to have more than *prima facie* validity. The whole issue has therefore to be judged on a total political basis—as a matter of strategy, expediency and manipulation by the UNP on the one hand and the SLFP on the other.

As the writ petition is, at the time of writing these notes, pending before the Supreme Court—notice having been issued on the three Commissioners—and we are precluded from examining, analysing or commenting on the legal implication involved in Mrs. Bandaranaike's case. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike had put up a spirited defence before the Commission in addition to taking all the legal and jurisdictional objections Mrs. Bandaranaike had raised. In their petitions, Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike have sought writs of certiorari to quash the findings and recommendations of the Special Presidential Commission. Both applications state that the resolution to be moved in Parliament on October 16, depriving them of their civic rights following the recommendation of the Commission, would constitute a grave violation of their legal and constitutional rights and freedom and will cause them irreparable harm and injury and (in the case of Mrs. Bandaranaike) to the SLFP of which she is the leader: that the findings against them were null and void and the recommendations based on such findings were equally null and void by reason of the fact that the said findings and the aforesaid recommendations as to the imposition of civic disabilities have been made by the Commission under circumstances and in proceedings in which justice was not

seem to be done, and according to a procedure which violated the fundamental rules of national justice.

It would be useful to our readers, especially those abroad to have a summary of the allegations or charges and the findings. Such a summary was made available to the press by the government on the day the Report was released on September 25/26. We will publish this summary in the next issue.

Political comments or interpretative analyses in the daily press have been as scarce as the monsoon rains in recent years. In the daily papers the first comment was *Migara's* in the Week-end of September 28. The ANCL Research Unit had a centre-page piece on October 3. No other English daily has published an analysis of any kind on the matter. In any other country, comments and interpretative analyses would have filled the leading columns of the papers every day.

Migara had set the ball rolling with a scintillating piece entitled UNP DECLARES WAR ON THE SLFP: "The cold war is over. On Wednesday, the ruling United National Party Government's Cabinet of Ministers took one of the most serious and far-reaching political decisions in contemporary history by deciding to strip former Prime Minister, present MP for Attanagalla and present President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, 64 year old Mrs. Sirimavo Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike, of her civic rights thus disqualifying her from contesting either a Parliamentary or Presidential election for the next seven years. And that too, just two days prior to the 21st death anniversary of her late husband, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, former Prime Minister of Ceylon and founder of the SLFP."

After setting out some of the background tittle-tattle, *Migara* went on: ".....So the battle of nerves was reaching a climax and then on Tuesday, September 23, 1980 a gazette notification by order of His Excellency the President was made publishing the Special Presidential Commission's recommendations. The next morning, Wednesday September 24, 1980 the Cabinet of Ministers, met in the morning as usual at the Presidential Secretariat in the Fort. It was certainly a rather 'depleted' Cabinet. Five Ministers—A. C. S. Hameed, Ronnie de Mel, Nissanka Wijayarathne, Lalith Athulathmudali, M. H.

Mohamed were absent and were represented by their deputies because they (the Ministers) are overseas. President Jayewardene is learnt to have told his Ministers and acting Ministers that morning that copies of the findings and recommendations of the Special Presidential Commission against Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike were being made available to the Ministers then.....".

Migara then described the reactions and discussions in the Cabinet. There is no doubt that what he has described is a useful record of what took place: "Many of the Ministers themselves were seemingly unaware of the previous night's gazette notification. The President therefore himself came 'armed' with the gazette, the report of the Commissioners and some files, and then explained to his Ministers that his Government wished to implement those recommendations. As a result of the Ministers having discussed during the past three weeks in particular the options open for the Government to take in anticipation of the Special Presidential Commission recommending civic disabilities for both Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mr Felix Dias Bandaranaike, a discussion ensued among themselves. The Cabinet was reportedly divided on the issue of whether to make Mrs. Bandaranaike subject to civic disability. There was no discussion as such with regard to Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike. At least four Ministers were learnt to have shown a rather soft line, if not sympathetic approach toward the issue. They were State Minister Anandatissa de Alwis, Mahaweli Minister Gamini Dissanayake Rural Development Minister Mrs. Wimala-Kananagara and Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman.

"While the three UNP Ministers particularly expressed concern about the realities and role of Mrs. Bandaranaike in the political arena of the country, Minister S. Thondaman of the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) had his own argument. His contention was that the CWC fought and won through this very Government the rights of citizenship and equal status for the Indian immigrants in the plantations, and was against depriving anyone who is a citizen of Sri Lanka or his or her civic rights.' At least two Ministers were said to have been extremely insistent that the Government goes ahead with the implementation of the recommendations. They

were Prime Minister R. Premadasa and Agricultural Development and Research Minister E. L. Senanayake.

"After some time spent by the Ministers on what to do, it is reported that President Jayewardene finally summed it up by saying that the credibility of the Government was at stake. That the people are going to complain that this government appointed a Commission of Inquiry and allowed the really powerful, like Mrs. Bandaranaike, be exempted from punishment while people like former Justice Secretary Nihal Jayawickrema were punished. Shortly after the Cabinet meeting a few Ministers got together with the President and are learnt to have further discussed the matter much more informally. It was quite evident that there had been some division in the Cabinet on this particular issue from the reactions of the Cabinet Spokesman and State Minister Anandatissa de Alwis—a 'dove' in this matter who shortly after the Ministerial meeting told newsmen both local and foreign that the Government has decided to go ahead with the implementation of the Special Presidential Commission recommendations against Mrs. Bandaranaike. The next day he left on his first overseas trip since July 1977—to the Philippines for a tourism conference...."

Migara also revealed the details of how the matter was taken up in the Working Committee of the UNP: "Meanwhile the UNP hierarchy was totally busy. While some were adjusting their timetables to motor to Mawanella, for the funeral of Mr. C. M. Belligamma, the Working Committee of the Party met the same evening at the Party headquarters 'Sirikotha' under the aegis of the Party Chairman, N. G. P. Panditharatne. There was no going back now. The Working Committee too decided to 'support' the Cabinet decision. Opposition quarters asked how many working committee members really knew what the recommendations were. Party high-ups were keen that the following day's Government party group went off smoothly as well. The following day on Thursday, September 25, 1980, the Government group of MPs met, as usual, in the morning at the Presidential Secretariat with President Jayewardene in the chair. Two speeches were made. One by President Jayewardene and the other by

Prime Minister Premadasa. Making Mrs. Bandaranaike subject to civic disability was the main topic for discussion.

"President Jayewardene appeared to have taken cognisance of what some of his Ministers had said at the Cabinet meeting the previous day. He told Government MPs that some party members felt sorry for Mrs. Bandaranaike. He too felt sorry, but he had to do a job work entrusted to him. The Prime Minister too almost echoed the President's views. Then the President asked 'any question?'. There were none. The same afternoon Prime Minister Premadasa tabled the report of the Commission in part on behalf of the Government and agreed to a debate on it on October 16 upon his return from an official visit to the United Nations, the US and a visit to Japan. The Prime Minister left the island the same night. So within a matter of a little over 36 hours, the findings and recommendations of the Presidential Commission were gazetted, were discussed by the Cabinet of Ministers and was approved by the Government party group and were tabled in Parliament."

Then Migara went on to trace the reactions in the SLFP and in Mrs. Bandaranaike camp: "Parliament will not meet again till October 16. The conventional sitting in the first Tuesday after the first Sunday of each month will not take place in October mainly due to the absence of Prime Minister R. Premadasa from the Island. The opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party appears to be still shaken by what they feel is a sudden and unexpected decision from the UNP leadership. The swiftness with which they moved also seems to have excited the SLFP. When the Cabinet decision was made known to Mrs. Bandaranaike she was undoubtedly taken aback. Speaking to a *Sun* newsman, she said that the Government was permitted to make a martyr of her. Several of her loyalists gathered outside her Rosmead Place residence and both legal and political discussions began there that evening. Police patrols were also intensified in that area.

"That night itself, it is now learnt, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, telephoned Mrs. Bandaranaike to ascertain how things were and in fact comfort her by relating her own experience during the

Janata rule in her country. We will come to this later. The next day on Thursday, both Mrs. Bandaranaike and her son Anura drove to Parliament with several car loads of "supporters" following, shouting slogans. Again police security was intensified. Both of them were also accessible to journalists. Mrs. Bandaranaike said that 'all out war has been declared on our party by the UNP leadership. We shall also accept the challenge and retaliate in an appropriate manner.' That night the party's handpicked politbureau met to discuss the Government's challenge. The three hour meeting was a stormy session. First, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike in an almost angry anti-government verbal attack said that whatever opposition to the Government might be, he wanted the SLFP to sponsor both Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike's cases together as a party cause. Speaking somewhat as a counsel for Felix Dias Bandaranaike he asked that Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike be permitted to address the All Island Central Committee on Saturday (yesterday).

"However, this plea was met with a loaded protest from none other than Mrs. Bandaranaike's very close lieutenant former Speaker, Stanley Tillekeratne. Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne said that they should not mix up the two. Mrs. Bandaranaike's case is distinct and separate to Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike's case, he argued, and pointed out that the latter had even been found guilty of corruption whereas there was no such charge on Mrs. Bandaranaike. In other words, he was saying that he felt the SLFP should not sponsor the cause of Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike. One of those who supported Stanley Tillekeratne was former Agriculture and Lands Minister Hector Kobbekaduwa, also a close relative of Mrs. Bandaranaike. Mr. Kobbekaduwa is a personality who has some affection among the SLFP rank and file as well as its leadership. Anura Bandaranaike is then learnt to have dropped his plea and the politbureau decided that they will go to the country only on Mrs. Bandaranaike's cases. According to SLFP insiders, another reason for this is that the standing of Mrs. Bandaranaike in the country is quite contrary to that of Felix Dias Bandaranaike. They are confident that they could rouse the sympathy of the ordinary people of this country as an 'emotional issue.'

"Some UNP sources did concede that here lies some element of danger. After all, Mrs. Bandaranaike has the capacity to win over or at least make some political ground on an emotional wave which the people of Sri Lanka are quite in the habit of riding on. The Politbureau also decided that a series of meetings be held around the country till October 16 to explain to the people what the Government intends to do with the political future of Mrs. Bandaranaike. Today they meet in Kandy, on October 2 at Maharagama, October 3 at Kesbewa, October 4 at Kolonnawa, etc. Meanwhile, they may also seek a dialogue with the main Parliamentary Opposition party, the TULF, which has already indicated that they will not support the Government's move to deprive Mrs. Bandaranaike of her civic rights. The Politbureau decided at yesterday's central committee meeting that Stanley Tillekeratne should explain to them the legal aspects of the findings and recommendations of the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry while former Minister of Internal Trade T. B. Illangaratne explains the political outcome of it.

"Next Tuesday Anura Bandaranaike leaves for India to meet Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Shrimati Gandhi's call to Mrs. Bandaranaike has also caused a ripple among Government members. Should she have done this? A Government MP has already raised the matter in Parliament and acting Foreign Affairs Minister Tyrone Fernando has told President Jayewardene about it. Is this tantamount to interference? Anura Bandaranaike is quite clear when he says that the SLFP will draw inspiration from Mrs. Gandhi. What does his hurried visit to meet her mean? As one political observer noted, if we are to criticise the local Communist Party for getting instructions from the Kremlin itself in Soviet Russia, is not the SLFP equally culpable of flirting with our sovereignty by asking, almost directly, Mrs. Gandhi who is now Prime Minister of India, to intervene in any manner. So far Mrs. Gandhi has only expressed concern and gone no further. The SLFP is proud of saying that President Jayewardene, when in New Delhi earlier this month, received only a lukewarm reception. They also claim a victory when Mrs. Gandhi's special envoy Eric Gonsalves of the Foreign Ministry came to Sri Lanka, he made an un-

scheduled visit to Horagolla to meet Mrs. Bandaranaike. Therefore, it is quite obvious that the SLFP is very keen in prodding Mrs. Gandhi to taking what appears an anti-UNP Government position.

"Some quarters in the Government had anxiously hoped for a long time that Mrs Bandaranaike be removed from the political arena of the country. That was probably the reason for a re-organisation of the party (UNP) in the Attanagalle electorate itself, the holding of a big meeting last month; the construction of houses in the Horagolla estate the opening of a Magistrate's court and the like. What action the SLFP will take after Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights are stripped is left to be seen. They (the SLFP) are already an extinct volcano in Parliament. Will they resort to more and more extra-parliamentary politics as a result despite publicly committing themselves to the parliamentary process. As for Mrs. Bandaranaike, the government appears to have taken a serious political decision and the SLFP will have to alter its direction accordingly."

Finally Migara ventured to offer some interpretative observations which betray an interesting tilt in his argumentation: "Some legal luminaries in the UNP echelons go to the extent of arguing that being deprived of civic rights, bars a person from canvassing for candidates and in short, from doing politics at all. Several dispassionate persons looking at this Wednesday's Cabinet decision devoid of partisan politics observe that apart from disqualifying Mrs. Bandaranaike, President Jayewardene appears to be quite adamant on cleansing political life in this country. To do this one must begin with the top. There is no difference today to the years gone by when petty hospital watchers or port workers are nabbed for accepting a five rupee bribe, fined if not jailed, under the law and ultimately had insult added to injury with their names broadcast over the airwaves and published in the newspapers. What about the sharks? Those who through their money and devious ways buy politicians of all shades whoever they be and however high an office they hold have had members of Parliament as their employees. What about them?"

"Select Committees are appointed to go into massive smuggling networks and nothing

is heard thereafter. Tender procedures are flouted at their whim and pleasure. Millions are swindled. Who is the big name who has fallen into trouble and had his name publicised as a crook. Thirty seven years ago on May 25, 1943, the late S. W. R. D. Bandarnaike whose 21st death anniversary was commemorated two days ago said in the State Council: 'There is one thing I would like to point out. It leaves a bitter taste in the mouth in that where a man is important, everything would be done to save his skin, while the humble and those who are less important, are to be thrown to the wolves. If a man is sufficiently influential we all combine to hush up things and make matters easy for him'. He said so while asking some fellow members of the then State Council to resign after some Commissioners had found them guilty of bribery. This speech was quoted a few years ago by President Jayewardene himself.

"It was on that day in 1943 that President Jayewardene voted for the first time in Parliament. He too voted that the members found guilty should resign. Mrs. Bandaranaike's contention on this occasion is that unlike bribery, 'misuse or abuse of power' on which she has been found guilty is not defined in the law. So what is the yardstick or the criteria for such offences, she asked. The people of Sri Lanka are not overtly concerned of the misdoings of several years ago. They see in everyday life some of the worst scandals and rackets taking place around them. Nothing happens about it. Everything seems to be done to hush up things done by influential people. When the Press—the watchdog of democracy—attempts to reveal these scandals those in power take the easy way out. Some governments took over newspapers. Some were sealed, Oppressive press laws were pushed through into the statute book and remain there forever. Contradictions are sent and everything is swept under the carpet....."

Migara concluded with a superb piece of comment: "The Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry so far has heard inquiries regarding only three personalities of the previous government—what of the untold misdeeds of the past that never came to light because of a 'kept press' or even if they did were hushed up thereafter. President Jaye

wardene himself has said, 'it is because of an independent press—if I may say so independent of the government, that public men are careful, however highly placed they are.' He has said, 'I think all will agree that the best corrective for incidents like this is the expression of public opinion, and that as I said, needs publicity so that public opinion may be moulded and the public mind may be directed to look upon the purity of public life as an essential to democratic function.'

"This newspaper runs the risk of a libel action and other laws to name the government VIP who has five official vehicles; averages a petrol bill of Rs. 10,000 a month; spent Rs. 53,000 from January to June this year; bought a colour TV set; a music-centre, spools for his tape recorder; imported furniture from Singapore—all with public money. Is this not 'abuse of power' or 'misuse' of power? His private secretary has repaired his official car recently and the repair bill is higher than the value of the car.

"Must this Government or any future Government wait for some Commission of Inquiry to go into these several years later? Whilst introducing the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry Law in Parliament President Jayewardene said, 'if we run wild bring us under this law. We are placing this law permanently on the statute book for all governments, for all leaders who are drunk with power, to be careful in the exercise of power. If we commit any faults I want this Commission to deal with us', he said. It is indeed laudable that this government has now extended the warrant of the Special Presidential Commission and they will also inquire into the first three years of the government. Who will be the people who will prosecute. What will their political leanings be? The way things are hushed up through the various Committees appointed by the Government experience shows that there is no better way than to allow the normal laws to operate, the courts to adjudicate to even punish and if the punishments are weak then let the legislation strengthen them. Let the press fearlessly publish. Let the Bribery Commissioner's Department be an independent autonomous one like the Elections Department so that it will not be a political arm of the government in power as it was. These

surely will be the most effective catalyst in purifying public life in our country."

This final piece of advice to the Government is echoed in many places.

A story, probably apocryphal, has reached *Tribune*, comes from the Vanni. A reader has sent this on to us. A longtime SLFP rank and filer was asked about this decision to disenfranchise Mrs. Bandaranaike. This man who had been appointed to a "rural" job (let us say that of a Grama Sevaka) by the SLFP had been thrown out by the UNP—no doubt because he was an election activist. He had told the *Tribune* reader, "it is no doubt true that I lost my job and look forward to the return of the SLFP to get my job back.but I haven't done badly since the UNP government came to power. I've never seen so much (rural) development work as now. . . .and even I have benefited in many ways. I've even got remunerative contracts.People will be disturbed if Mrs. Bandaranaike is disenfranchised, but if the UNP will

do the same to two or three of the Ministers of this Cabinet after investigation, then people will be satisfied. It's discrimination that people don't like."

Migara has pinpointed the story of the VIP with five official cars. The pages of *Tribune* for the last three years have been full of stories that call for investigation. If the Government will bring charges on a few of those suspected or accused of malpractices and abuse of power since July 1977 and take appropriate action after investigation, then the sting will be taken out of the action against Mrs. Bandaranaike.

But there is one snag. Not many will want to bring charges or give evidence against VIPs of a Party which is in power. It is one thing to accuse those who have fallen from power or grace, but it is certainly a different matter to go against powerful figures in a powerful ruling party with an elephantine majority in Parliament.

(To be continued)

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

Formation of a Joint Venture for Off-shore and Deep sea fishing.

The Ministry of Fisheries wishes to promote the establishment of a joint-venture between Ceylon Fisheries Corporation and local or foreign parties to undertake off-shore and deep-shore fishing. A special advantage to the partner would be that the capital intensive items required the proposed operation such as tuna boats, trawlers and shore installation are already available with the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation. The entire catch of white fish from the project will be for the local market while tuna will be for export. If necessary the joint-venture would engage the services of foreign personnel required for its operations. Initial studies indicate that a project of the nature proposed would be viable.

The Government now provides a wide package of attractive incentives such as a tax holiday, accelerated depreciation, investment relief, etc. for off-shore and deep-sea fishing.

The Ministry will be pleased to hear from parties interested in a venture of the nature proposed on or before 30th of October. Any clarifications or information could be obtained from the Manager Maritime Division of the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation, Rockhouse Lane, Colombo 15.

ANURA WEERARATNE.
Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries,

Issue Of Sail Cloth

Under 75% Subsidy Scheme For Fishermen

The Ministry of Fisheries has introduced
a new Subsidy Scheme to issue under
75% Subsidy, sail cloth to
fishermen for use in large and small fishing craft.

- ☐ For small fishing craft from 12 feet upto 17 feet in length—15 yards of sail cloth.
- ☐ For small fishing craft 17 feet and above upto 23 feet in length—20 yards of sail cloth.
- ☐ For large fishing craft 23 feet and above upto 32 feet in length—40 yards of sail cloth.

Persons interested in obtaining Sail Cloth under the above scheme should inquire from

MR. B. A. NANAYAKKARA
Director (Regulation and Extension)
Ministry of Fisheries,
Colombo 3.

MR. ANURA WEERARATNE
Secretary,
Ministry of Fisheries,

Telephone 24667.

Water For The North

IS IT NOT OFTEN that we have a picture of a Minister on the Cover. We have only had a handful of them during the twenty five years since our inception. We have had various kinds of covers in the past, but Ministers and VIPs have been few and far between. Since 1974/75 we have had a standard Cover mainly depicting sights and scenes from Sri Lanka, and on less than half a dozen occasions we have had a ministerial photograph.

But this week we have chosen a picture of Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Lands, Land Development and Mahaveli Development, with the President Mr. J. R. Jayewardene at a Mahaveli ceremony—at the Victoria Dam site—to place on record some of the statements he has made in the course of his visit to the Jaffna District in the week-end October 2-4. Jaffna is the brain box and heart throb of the Ceylon Tamils, and though its domestic economy is based on agriculture, its main source of income has been, and continues to be, remittances from abroad. Way back in the thirties a knowledgeable observer had described Jaffna's economy as a "money order economy". It still remains the same, although bank drafts, bank transfers and black market remittances have taken the place of money orders.

For about fifty years, ever since Donoughmore and the abortive boycott, Jaffna and the Tamil areas have been mainly outside the mainstream of development—political, economic and even cultural. It would be pointless to go into the reasons for this, or to examine as to who was really responsible for the sad state of affairs. In the fifty years a great gulf of misunderstanding and disagreements had grown between the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

President Jayewardene has made a sincere and honest effort to bridge this gap. All previous attempts had proved to be failures. Even the Left and progressive groups had failed to achieve Sinhala-Tamil unity on proletarian and Marxist formulae. They now decry the Jayewardene effort as an attempt to bring bourgeois forces together to make capitalist unity. But ordinary people want

communal amity, be in capitalist or proletarian. And even if it is a capitalist ethos that draws the Tamils into the mainstream of development, it is better than a state of permanent tension and hostility, interspersed with violence, riots, looting and robbery.

So far no progressive-cum socialist oriented government has been able to concretely suggest that Mahaveli water would be made available in the Tamil North within a foreseeable period (depending of finances) or that an integrated plan would be launched to develop the economy of Jaffna. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake on behalf of this Government has made a solemn pledge that it will be done.

This is an important step because, above all else, avenues will be opened for greater self-employment, and also co-operative and corporate enterprise. This will help to diversify productive activity in a district which has over a century specialised in providing clerks, technicians and professionals, first for imperialist masters and now for anyone willing to buy their services. Agriculture has been traditionally pursued on *purana* lands: but industry never got off the ground—everybody was only concerned about ensuring safe white collar jobs in the government service. With more water and modern integrated development, agriculture can be expanded and improved and industry can really get started. It is in this context that Mr. Gamini Dissanayake's odyssey to the North must be examined

On October 3, the *Sun* reported: "The waters of the Mahaveliganga will be diverted to the Iranamadu reservoir, the people of Jaffna were told, by Lands, Land Development and Mahaveli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake yesterday. The Minister who is on a five-day tour of Jaffna, yesterday, arrived at Kilnochchi, by helicopter, where he was given a warm welcome by the people. Present were District Minister U. B. Wijekoon, Government Agent Jaffna, Yogendra Doraisamy and several others."

The *Sun* again reported on October 6: "Lands, Land Development and Mahaveli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake announced in Jaffna yesterday that he would visit Washington by December this year to

negotiate further World Bank aid to Sri Lanka. Speaking at the conference held at the Jaffna Kachcheri yesterday, Mr. Dissanayake assured that every possible step would be taken to develop the Jaffna District. Opposition Leader, A. Amirthalingam who was also present said that he and his party would render every assistance to the Government for the development of the north."

The TULF according to the *Ceylon Daily News* (October 6) was willing to extend support for development: "The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) will give all its support to the government's development programs, A. Amirthalingam Leader of the Opposition and General Secretary of the TULF said at the District Agricultural Committee meeting held at the Jaffna Kachcheri, yesterday. Mr. Amirthalingam said the TULF had always supported the development programmes. 'Our people are always friendly with the Ministers and others who realise the need to give due place to the various sections of the community' he said. The TULF leader said he made it a point to be there as he did not want it to be said that they boycotted the Minister's visit. Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development, Gamini Dissanayake said that the Jaffna farmer was one of the most productive units in Sri Lanka. All that he needed was to be given a push and guidance. The Jaffna farmer was the most technocratically competent farmer in Asia. The pressing problem he faced today was one of marketing his produce, and the impact on his economy as a result of imported goods. The government would work out a solution to that problem in consultation with the elected representatives of the people.....". The *Ceylon Daily Mirror*, 6/10/80, reported: ".....The Minister said that Rs. 500 million would be obtained from the World Bank to develop the Jaffna district. The Leader of the Opposition Mr. A. Amirthalingam had pledged his support to the government in the present development effort, Mr. Dissanayake said."

On the next day, 7th October the *Ceylon Daily News* reported: "Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake who toured various parts of the Jaffna District last week, told a news conference on Sunday at the Jaffna Kachcheri that the prime need of the Jaffna district was

water and land. The Minister said action would be taken to provide those needs. Mr. Dissanayake also said that he was touched by the industry and diligence of the Jaffna agriculturist, 'all what he needs is water and land. The government intends providing him with both', he said. 'The Jaffna farmer is the biggest production unit of Sri Lanka. If he is provided with water and land he will look after the rest', the Minister said. 'Give us water and give us land' was the request made to the Minister from Kilinochchi to Atchuveli and Mulangavil. At Kilinochchi the appeal for water and land came from Rev. Fr. S. Thambimuttu, President, Kilinochchi Farmers' Association. He put it very effectively when he said. 'Give us water and land—we will give our blood and sweat in return'. He also assured the Minister that they would not ask for jobs....."

"Give us water and land was the request made at every reception. The parched Mother Earth waiting eagerly for the monsoon rain drops, acres and acres of ploughed and manured land awaiting the arrival of the monsoonal rains, touched the heart of the Minister considerably. He returned to Colombo determined to provide water. For that purpose he gave a series of field orders. He told the officials to renovate all the minor and major tanks in the Jaffna district. He gave his approval to the Jaffna Lagoon scheme which would help irrigation and augment the ground water. He instructed the Water Resources Board under Dr. Leslie Herath to provide tube wells at Mulangavil in the Kilinochchi district to exploit the ground water in that area. He promised that Mahaweli water would be brought to the North.

"He was prepared to give land too. He sanctioned the grant of an additional 200 acres at Mulangavil to expand the youth settlement scheme. He ordered that the regularisation of encroached land be expedited. If such encroached lands were needed for roads, canals, reforestation and other public needs, he told the officials to provide alternative lands. Land grants too had to be speeded up, he said. Land and water are the things you require. We will give them. Sweat more and produce more. That is the repayment and gratitude we anticipate, was the departing message of the Minister."

On 9th October 1980, the *Ceylon Daily Mirror* reported: "The Water Resources Board which comes under the Ministry of Lands and Land Development has drawn up a scheme to provide tube wells at cost to the people of the Jaffna peninsula, according to Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development. These wells will be made available to the farmers and other residents of Jaffna from early next year. Most the tube wells dug by private contractors for farmers charging exorbitant prices, are found to be useless as they have reached the layers of sea water instead of tapping only the fresh water.....".

The *Ceylon Daily News* on 11th October had a hope-raising piece entitled WORLD BANK AID SOUGHT TO DEVELOP JAFFNA: "The Jaffna District Integrated Development Project would be implemented from next year Jaffna's District Minister, U. B. Wijekoon, has said. President J. R. Jayewardene, had already sanctioned the project. Monetary arrangements would be made with the World Bank when the Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development Minister, Gamini Dissanayake, visits New York in December. 'I have already mentioned this to the World Bank the Deputy Chairman, David Hopper,' Mr. Dissanayake said.

"Jaffna's integrated Development Project will be comparable to that of the Kurunegala Integrated Development Project. For the Jaffna's Project, the Government intends obtaining Rs. 400 million. This would give about Rs. 38 million per electorate. This sum would be apart from the money allocated under the decentralised budget. Mr. Wijekoon said Jaffna's economic development had been neglected for a number of years. This had resulted in an accumulated sense of grievance among the people of Jaffna. The money allocated to the Jaffna District, under the decentralised budget, too, was not spent. In 1978 only Rs. 8.7 million was spent out of the Rs. 22 million allocated for that district. Since the creation of the District Ministry, last year every cent voted for the Jaffna District was spent.

"Under the Jaffna Integrated Development Project such urgent development projects like the Mahadeva Causeway and the Jaffna Lagoon scheme would be undertaken. A massive tree planting campaign that would

convert dry Jaffna into a lush green belt will also be undertaken, Development of the Kankesanthurai Harbour will also be completed. 'When the three-year Integrated Development Project is completed in 1983 Jaffna will no longer be able to complain of neglect' Mr. Wijekoon said.....".

There is no doubt that what Mr. Gamini Dissanayake told the Tamils of Jaffna has created a very favourable impression in the North. But the Tamil man will wait for deeds—promises alone will not convince him. The Tamil farmer, like farmers all over the island, are suspicious of these promises. Minister Lalith Athulathmudali promised fair prices for onions, chillies, potatoes, cowpea and other products which had been imported after July 1977 to appease the urban consumer lobby at the expense of the rural agricultural producer.

The National Prices Commission fixed floor prices (valid for the cost of production in the first half of 1979) long before the inflationary spiral in production costs jumped from 20% to 50%. But what has made matters worse is that even the proposed minimum floor prices have not been available to producers. Take onions—the National Price Commission is believed to have "fixed" a Rs. 2.75 a lb. as the price government should pay to keep onion-growers in production on the basis of costs of production and other considerations. But in July 1980 and earlier onion-growers could not more than 70 cts to Rs. 1.40 (that very occasionally) a lb. This was because of the vast quantities of onions imported and released by the CWE at the height of local harvest season.

The story is no different so far as chillies, potatoes, gingelly, maize and other subsidiary foodstuffs are concerned—and understandably production has been dropping every month. The one and glorious exception was the celebrated purchase of cowpea at Rs. 2.75 a lb, during the Anamaduwa by-election from the farmers in the area. Farmers in other areas did not get the benefit of this price because they were told by the purchasing officers that government was not buying in their areas—and also Marketing Department, and other buying agencies buy only from favoured private traders who "force" the producers to sell at cutthroat rock bottom price to then.

Farmers had evidently raised this matter with Mr. Gamini Dissanayake and according to press reports he has promised to discuss this matter with the Minister of Trade and Shipping and also in the Cabinet. Minister Lalith Athulathmudali should also have a fresh look at these matters. He should also consider whether the consumers should be subsidised by imports (on borrowed money). In the national interest, it is the producer who must be subsidised with incentives and high prices in order to make him grow more food—and the more he grows the cheaper will each unit become.

It is also a happy augury that the TULF has begun to take a positive and concrete attitude to development. The concept of Eelam will get a new dimension if the development is real and meaningful. It is not impossible to conceive of an Eelam without separation—an Eelam in unity in the midst of diversity, or a happy multiplicity and plurality in a Sri Lanka in one undivided piece.

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REPORTAGE

Poverty In Sri Lanka

by Beverley Roberts

MY VISIT TO SRI LANKA in August this year revealed a grim scene of poverty. Except for a coterie of two percent made up of gemmerchants, tourist moguls and businessmen, the rest of the population were fighting a losing battle against galloping prices. In the month I spent in the country, I spoke to and interviewed three hundred people from most levels of society—professional men and women, clerks, farmers, fishermen, waiters, factory-workers, taxi drivers and road-menders. They all had a common problem: Struggling to survive in the face of spiralling inflation. Twenty-five to thirty per cent is the official rate of inflation, but the economists I spoke to claimed that the real figure is somewhere between forty-five and fifty percent. It is predicted that inflation will reach the staggering figure of 100% by June 1981.

Albert, a hotel waiter, told me that his average earnings for a day was 40 rupees. Yet, it cost him 60 rupees a day to keep himself, his wife and four children at the lowest

possible standard of living. His wife did not go out to work, but supplemented the family income by taking in sewing and weaving mats. Albert had a cow, two goats and half-dozen hens whose produce he sold. I asked him whether any portion of his produce was consumed by his family. He laughed. "I can't afford to!" He said. "We have to sell everything!" Wilson, another waiter, had a similar story to tell. Road laborers earning 10 rupees a day have to spend between 30 to 40 rupees for very basic living. An unreal situation. An army officer had a perpetual debt, in order to cope with the escalating prices; and a private secretary I met said, "I'll soon be down to one meal a day!" Poverty in Sri Lanka is not confined to the lower middle class. It has attacked the middle class as well. Even people in the professions have been struck by it. The only individuals unaffected by the "plaque" are those with business connections. Thus, a lawyer from a business background will be among the rich, while one without that privilege will be counted with the poor.

A PROMINENT FACT which emerged my interviews was that most people could only afford to live for three weeks in the month on what they earned. For the fourth week, they had to borrow; sometimes at interest rates as high as thirty percent.

My observations seemed to tally with what I read. Here is an example. An investigation carried out by the Weekend Insight Team and published in that paper on the 6th. of April this year stated: "Nearly half of Sri Lanka's population, officially designated as "poor" and qualified for food stamps, now face the spectre of acute poverty under the current onslaught of prices." The report went on to say that about 7.5 million of the island's population earned less than 300 rupees a month per family group, thus qualifying for relief in the form of food stamps. Another fact that emerged from that report was even more shocking. "More than 1.8 million of the off-spring of this mass of poor are found to be "chronically under-nourished" and even stunted in their growth of body and mind, as described in Government surveys".

An article by Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe entitled, "The Bishop quotes the Buddha", suggests that the small minority of wealthy are getting wealthier and the mass

of poor getting poorer. I quote: "The preliminary consumer finance survey by the Central Bank indicates in its report the following statistics. The share of the total income of the poorest 10 percent of the population fell from 1.8 percent in 1973 to 1.5 percent in 1978; of the poorest 40 percent of the population fell from 15.1 percent in 1973 to 12.3 percent in 1978; and the share of the richest 10 percent rose from 30 percent in 1973 to 39 percent in 1978. It is not likely that the statistics for 1979 will reveal any reversal of this trend".

The prices of food and other consumer items shocked me. Considering the income levels of the majority of Sri Lankans, the prices were appalling. I do not think I need to list some of the prices in this article, as your Sri Lankan readers are more than aware of them. Unreal rents and real estate values have increased the burden of the majority of the population. Even a room in Colombo costs up to 100 rupees a day; beyond the wildest dreams of the average Sri Lankan. House rents are crippling, to say the least. Ten-thousand! Fifteen-thousand, a month! Who can afford them, other than the 'gem-set' and the foreigners?

Something will have to be done to alleviate the hardship. And soon, at that. Or else the consequences could be dire for a lovely people in a beautiful island.

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LETTERS

Child Musician Of The Year Contest 1980

Sir,

We wish to bring the following grave objections to the manner in which the recent competition to select the 'Child Musician of the Year' was organised by the Association of Teachers of Western Music, Speech and Dramatic Art.

Firstly, it is not possible to have any fair judgement between performers of two different instruments playing entirely different works. Would it not be absurd to judge between a pianist and a wind instrumentalist? In this competition of 1980 two violinists

and four pianists were competing with each other for the coveted 'Child Musician of the Year' Yamaha Trophy. Even a layman can realise that it is not possible to compare oranges with peanuts. The Association in organizing such a competition has characteristically displayed its maturity or otherwise and scored another first in the world where even the experienced west would shy away from such experimentation in their own music. Secondly, it is evident that some weightage was given in the judgement to the youngest performer in each group. Otherwise how would a little player of eight or nine year old, who was unable to use the pedals be judged the winner in the junior group of pianists? Is it only a coincidence that in the senior group as well, the youngest performer was selected as the winner? Thirdly, was it correct to allow a candidate to appear before the judges twice in the same competition? In the 1980 competition candidates were allowed to play both the violin and the piano for the same prize. We have, no doubt, that weightage must have been given either consciously or otherwise to this double performance, especially when one considers that there was hardly any competition amongst the violinists in the under sixteen year section, in which only two contestants competed in the finals. By contrast there was a close and keen competition between the finalists in the Under sixteen section.

Lastly, the identity of the performers in any competition should not be known to the judges so that any prejudices regarding teachers or their pupils can be totally eliminated. For instance, when auditions are held by the SLBC for the selection of performers the judges do not see the candidates and their performance is recorded according to their index numbers.

Criticism has already been made of the manner in which the Association has previously conducted competitions. It is observed that the *Tribune* of 20th September 1980 in its article titled 'Musical Discord' had feared a repetition of these irregularities and had in effect warned the Association in time. The point in question is whether the Association has consciously corrected its position despite the timely warning which stated, ".....last year's 'Child Musician of the Year' was selected by a panel of three music teachers of the Asso-

ciation, who are having private pupils and some of the candidates themselves were either students or children of the other members of the Association who may be good friends of the members of the panel."

It was announced at the contest that the SLBC was recording the entire contest. If this tape is played over the air with due notice, the public will then be able to judge the real winners of the 'Child Musician of the Year' Contest 1980 held at the St. Bridgets College Hall on the 28th of September.

We believe that a 'Child Musician of the Year' contest is indeed a healthy and necessary exercise. However, these high objectives concerning musical talent can easily collapse under one's own feet if similar ideals are not sustained in the selection of the best candidate. Therefore, in fairness to young and blossoming musicians it is vital to harness responsible patronage to ensure unquestionable fairplay and justice. Hence, our earnest request is that either the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Cultural Affairs be persuaded to handle and conduct such annual and national competitions.

A Member of the Audience.

Colombo.
4.10.80

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Stateless

Sir,

Having read F. E. de Silva's article on "Citizenship for the Stateless" with great interest and appreciation I would like to make a few comments to elaborate on the matter. I am a foreign volunteer who has observed Sri Lanka's progress/regress for 4 years and who is working 1 1/2 years with the so called "Indian Tamils" in a plantation area of the upcountry.

Though I agree in full with Mr. de Silva's interpretations and to his plea to grant citizenship to all stateless people who have mostly been brought by the British from India to work the plantations and who have contributed so much to the economy of this country (Rs. 7,600,000,000 in 1978), there is another hardship encountered by these people apart from

being stateless. The granting of citizenship to the stateless Indian Tamils will not solve the problems and grievances of this community entirely.

Since the last communal disturbances there is a trend, that most of the Tamils of Indian origin opt to go to India, a country alien to most of them and although they have little or no idea of what they have to expect in this "new country" they are willing to go as they feel very insecure and indisposed not to say discriminated in Sri Lanka. I personally know about many cases where people who have obtained Sri Lanka citizenship prior to the 1977 clashes in which the Indian Tamils in the low and mid country areas of the Island have been affected, now want to leave the country for good and do so in search of a better future for them and their children, despite a worse economic condition they might have to face in India. Therefore, they obtain travel passports to enter India and thereafter migrate to the country from which the forefathers had come.

How can one expect people to refer to Sri Lanka as their country if they had to flee their areas as their lines had been looted and burned and their little property been taken? Justly they ask: When is this going to happen again? Even people who have not been affected directly by such riots will ask the same question. Therefore, granting of citizenships to the stateless is not going to solve their plight and remove their grievances. If the Government really considers reviewing the "Indo-Ceylon Pacts" of 1964 and 1974 (what is very unlikely to me) they have to reflect upon the question: how can those new citizens be given the full rights and the assurance of having a future in the country in which they are living for decades or generations?

A.M.O.K.

Colombo.
18.9.80



District Development Council—2

G. G. Ponnambalam Jnr.

We publish in three parts the talk at the Centre for Society & Religion at the weekly Seminar Series on DEFENDENT CAPITALISM & DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM on 03.09.1980 on *The Development Councils Act* by G. G. Ponnambalam Jr. General Secretary, All Ceylon Tamil Congress. (ACTC)

Do the Councils have an option to reject the annual development plan if it does not meet with their requirement? Section 40 seems to say that, everything said and done, come what may the Councils must finally approve the plan. Does this provision ensure, therefore the independence of the Council?

That the Development Councils are only a further extension of the Presidential Executive is borne out by part 12 of the Act which has a specific Chapter on 'General Control'. This emphasizes further that the Councils and the Committee are subject to the President and the Minister of Local Government and to governmental policies. If the Committee disagrees with the District Minister regarding the implementation of governmental policy, the Committee is promptly 'reported' by the District Minister to the President, who has the power to dissolve the Committee if he feels that their differences are irreconcilable (Section 59(1) and (2)). The President can, without dissolving the entire Committee, dismiss any member of the Committee for incompetence or mismanagement of the duties entrusted to him (Section 60(1)). *The President, in answering the delegation of bhikkus and laymen, has said that the Councils have no power to do anything without his consent, which he will exercise through the District Minister and the Committee. He goes on to say that he can dismiss or change the entire Council, the District Minister or the Committee if these institutions do not obey the government.*

THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, in turn, is empowered to dissolve the Council, and to remove the Chairman or any 'elected

member' for certain specified reasons mentioned in Section 61(1). This shows that under no circumstances will the members of Parliament be removed by the Minister even if the Minister is satisfied that the Member of Parliament is guilty of those matters stated in Section 61(1)(a) to (e).

Why this preferential treatment of the Members of Parliament? No doubt the Minister of Local Government must cause an inquiry to be held by a retired judicial Officer before he dissolves the Council for the matters stated in Section 61(1). But before the report is handed to him, the Minister has the power to suspend the Council, its Chairman, or Members (Section 61(3)). This means that 'elected members' are at the mercy of the Minister of Local Government, as is further borne out by Section 61(4) which states that if the Chairman is removed from Office, he also ceases to be a member of that Council.

This shows that even if a Council has persons who are of a different political complexion to the Government in power, they are still completely at the mercy of the Minister of Local Government, who can hold the sword of Damocles over their heads. Section 61(5) says that where a Council ceases to function, the District Minister shall discharge the functions of the Council and that the Minister only may at any time direct that an election be held to choose the elected members of the Council. The new Council, therefore, will include all the 'ex officio members' (the Members of Parliament), which goes to show that the main purpose of this legislation seems to be an endeavour to perpetuate the present parliamentary hegemony. Indeed, it seems as though this Act is a Charter for the Members of Parliament!

That the Councils have to dance to the tune of the Minister of Local Government is again shown by the fact that the Minister can call for proceedings of the Council or its Committees, call for figures regarding the administration and the accounts, and woe be unto any Council that carries in giving this information (Section 62 and 63). The Minister can cause an inquiry to be held if he feels that the Council is shirking in its duties (Section 64) and can give a directive to such Councils, on receipt of the report, to perform, its duties within a specified time (Section 65),

and if the Council still does not carry out his directives, the Minister will direct the District Minister, or some other person of his choice to carry out that duty (Section 66), which means that even if it is the idea of the Council to obstruct, that purpose is negated. This further proves that the Council is an impotent and ineffective body.

NO BYE - LAW MADE BY THE COUNCIL has the force of the Law unless confirmed by Parliament, (Section 68) and only the Minister of Local Government has power to make regulations, which in turn have to be approved by Parliament (Section 69).

In respect of Bye-Laws, it would seem that the Councils have less effect than Municipal, Urban, Town or Village Councils, because the bye-laws made by the latter have to be approved by the Minister of Local Government whereas the bye-laws made by the Development Councils have to be confirmed by Parliament before they become effective.

The head of the Council is its Chairman, an 'elected member', and the District Minister is under him. But when it comes to the Executive Committee, the all important and implementing body, the head is the District Minister, a direct representative of the Government and an appointee of the President, and the Chairman is under him (Section 30(2) and 3). The reasoning here is beyond comprehension. It would seem that the District Minister is all important in the Executive Committee (Section 30(1)). The President's concurrence is needed to determine the nature and functions that are to be assigned to each Member of the Committee and its the District Minister who formally assigns these functions (Sections 30(2) and 34(e)), which shows that the power of the Members of the Committee who are all ultimately elected by the people at the General or District Councils Election, depend solely on the pleasure of the Government in that the President and the District Minister have a great say.

This Act, therefore, does not detract from the constitutional provision that the executive power of the people shall be exercised by the President. We see that the District Minister is a direct appointee of the President. The District Secretary is also an appointee

of the President. The District service is directly under the supervision of the District Secretary. As such, one could expect the President to wield some influence over the officials also. The assertion, therefore, that the Council will be independent and autonomous is a myth. For, we see in the Act many provisions where the President, the Minister of Local Government, the 'Appropriate Minister', and to a lesser extent, the Minister of Finance, having direct control over the Councils.

THESE PROVISIONS also do not permit of decentralisation of administration, because it is clear that the Councils are completely controlled by Parliament and the Cabinet. Decentralisation means greater opportunities for the people in the various districts to actively participate in the fashioning of a better life for themselves and prosperity both economic and social.

Are the Development Councils local bodies?

Generally, Local Authorities are entrusted with functions for the protection and promotion of the comforts, convenience and welfare of the people. They are mainly concerned with public utility services and provisions of civic amenities. They can also enter into an agreement with any other Local Authority for the joint execution of any work or administration of any public service. The Presidential Commission on Development Councils seems to think that these Councils cannot be viewed as local bodies, as they are only concerned with the promotion of the execution of individual items of work.

Development Councils are supposed to take the place of Town and Village Councils. There were over 630 such Councils. These Councils elected many thousands of members. These members were humble rural people who hitherto had played a constructive role in the administration of their own areas. Today, at the most, we will have less than a 160 such 'elected members' over the entire island. Thus, far from making the people partners of the Government in the development process and achieving a closer link between the people and the administrative machinery, these Councils would place them at a greater distance from government, administration and development than before. People in the rural areas are going

to have a sense of grievance and to be more frustrated today because they will not be able to play even the part they have played till now in the administration of their areas, through the smaller Town and Village Councils, and their opportunities for participating in the administrative structure will be more limited now by the Development Councils.

In fact the small Councils did not have the vast constraints by which the Development Councils are curbed in their activities by this Act. How then can one say that these Councils will extend the concept of participatory democracy? If the Development Councils do not have the powers of even the smaller councils, as has been said by the President, how are the Development Councils an improvement on the smaller councils? The people in the village would be deprived of the opportunity they so far enjoyed through these smaller councils to focus local opinion that affected the well being of the village community and to bring it to bear on the responsible higher authorities, and represent the wishes of the inhabitants on any matter affecting them. They also would not have an opportunity to comment or a right to be consulted on any proposed development of significance.

(To Be Concluded)



SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY-2

Andrei Gromyko

Continued From Last Issue

When comparing the list of our initiatives made in the past year alone with the record of the NATO bloc one sees instantly the contrast between the two main lines in world politics, and facts speak for themselves: whose course accords with the aspirations of the peoples and whose contradicts them. Andrei Gromyko stressed that proceeding from the interests of improving the international political climate the Soviet Union proposes to include in the agenda of the present session of the United Nations general assembly as an important and urgent question "concerning some urgent measures to lessen the military danger", and submits for discussion by it the draft of

a resolution to this effect. This refers to the adoption of steps for the coming years.

First. It would be an important step if states that are members of the military alliances should keep from enlarging the existing military political groupings by the adoption of new members and if countries that are not members of such groupings should keep from joining them. All states without exception should avoid any actions leading to the formation of new military alliances or to the imparting of military functions to regional organisations that do not have such functions. The statements that were made many times by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries concerning their readiness to disband the Warsaw treaty organisation if the NATO bloc is liquidated at the same time and concerning the liquidation of the military organisations of both groupings as an initial step, starting with the mutual reduction of the military activity, remain fully valid.

Second. It is necessary that all states, above all permanent members of the Security Council, and countries connected with them by military agreements should pledge themselves not to increase from certain deadline, for instance, since January 1 of next year, their armed forces and conventional armaments as a first step to their subsequent reduction.

Third. Proceeding from the view that the strengthening of guarantees of security of non-nuclear states would be protected in the best way by the appropriate convention with the participation of all nuclear and non-nuclear countries, the Soviet Union is prepared, given the same approach of other nuclear powers, to discuss also other possible versions of the solution of this problem. We urge all nuclear countries to make similar pledges about non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states that have no such weapons in their territories. Such statements, if they suit this purpose, could be backed by an authoritative decision of the security council. The Soviet Union declares again that it will never use nuclear weapons against countries that are keeping from production and acquisition of such weapons and do not have such weapons in their territories.

Fourth. We believe that if our partners in the talks, the United States and Britain,

show the required readiness it is quite possible to bring shortly to successful conclusion the working out of an international treaty on general and complete ban of nuclear weapon tests. In the interests of achieving this, the Soviet Union suggests that all nuclear powers should declare their decision to keep from any nuclear explosions for one year, beginning with a date agreed upon by them. This means a year-long moratorium, while the talks about achieving a more radical solution should be continued. The unduly delayed implementation of all these measures would blunt a number of acute angles in international relations. It could help lessen the burden of military spending of states, consolidate the nuclear non-proliferation regime, create favourable conditions for the advance in curbing the arms race.

IN THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS, Gromyko stated that the Soviet Union sees a definite duty of United Nations member states in stepping up the efforts on all the main directions of the struggle for peace. The Soviet Union, as before, will be conducting and deepening the dialogue; will be cooperating with all states that are showing political will for this. At the current session we deem it necessary to point to the United Nations decisions that have not yet been implemented, to the proposals that were advanced by the USSR and other countries, and also to set out our considerations about increasing the effectivity of work at specific sections of this historic struggle. With this aim the USSR submits to the session the memorandum "for peace and disarmament and guarantees of international security." There is hardly any need to prove to anyone that the unrestrained nuclear arms race constitutes the biggest threat to peace on earth. Yet it is necessary to talk about this again and again for it is intolerable that people should live under the burden of the constant fear of nuclear disaster.

The conclusion by States of an agreement on keeping from the use of force in international relations would be of great significance for the cause of peace and relaxation of tensions, Andrei Gromyko said. The Soviet Union proclaimed many times from this rostrum the importance of such an agreement and of the decision "on non-use of force in international relations and banning nuclear weapons for all times", the

decision that the United Nations General assembly adopted in 1972. The United Nations duty to declare in favour of a rapid completion of the work in this direction becomes ever more insistent in the present-day situation.

The ending of further growth of strategic potentials of states, the subsequent quantitative reduction and qualitative limitation of strategic nuclear weapons systems has the decisive significance for the lessening of the danger of nuclear war. And who would deny the significance that the coming into effect of the Soviet-American strategic offensive arms limitation treaty SALT-2 would have? The Soviet Union is prepared to ratify the SALT-2 treaty and to observe strictly all its provisions after this. The Soviet Union also intends to participate in the talks on further limitation and reduction of strategic armaments with strict observance of the principle of equality and equal security.

It would be timely to note that already now, even though the treaty has not yet come into effect, the U.S. side is seeking to undermine it by a plan whose implementation would place a large number of strategic nuclear missile means outside control. There is nothing to guarantee the world against the emergence of new types and systems of mass destruction weapons in near future, the speaker said. This is particularly dangerous now since the forces which base their calculations on obtaining military superiority have intensified their activities. The USSR declares for additional measures to ensure the conclusion of an international agreement banning the creation of new types and systems of mass destruction weapons and of special agreements on separate types of these weapons as need be. It is necessary to be on guard and not to lesson the struggle against neutron weapons this barbarous means of destruction of humans. The stand of the Soviet Union which already declared that it will not embark on the production of neutron weapons unless this is done by the United States remains valid now, also concerning the possibility of appearance of such weapons in any other state.

Being convinced supporters of the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence, we sought and are seeking that no path in our relations with states of a different social system, including the United States, should be closed, the head of the Soviet delegation said.

We expect that these states will act in the same way. This is how the overwhelming majority of them are building their relations with us. The line at maintaining and consolidation of security in Europe, at lowering the level of military confrontation in the continent was shown convincingly by the May conference of the political consultative committee of the Warsaw Treaty member-states. This was manifested at the recent talks of Leonid Brezhnev with French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and FRG Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. The conference on military detente and disarmament in Europe is a matter of foremost importance. We express the hope that all states concerned will be promoting the implementation of this idea.

The lessening of tension in the Indian Ocean area assumes the growing significance, the speaker said. The Soviet Union invariably supports the initiative of littoral states to turn the Indian Ocean into peace zone. The Warsaw Treaty countries declare in favour of discussing in the United Nations framework the question of limitation and lessening the level of military presence and military activity, be it in the Atlantic, Indian or Pacific Oceans, in the Mediterranean or the Persian Gulf. Agreements concerning this would promote the interests of peace and stabilization of the international situation.

The Soviet Union proceeds from the view, Gromyko stressed, that it is necessary to prepare thoroughly for a special session of the United Nations general assembly on disarmament that will be held in 1982. Following this it is necessary to convene a world conference on disarmament so as on the basis of profound consideration of the questions of disarmament to adopt not merely recommendations but decisions which the states should be fulfilling. The United Nations declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and people that was adopted on the Soviet Union's initiative 20 years ago should be implemented in full volume, without omissions.

In conclusion, Andrei Gromyko said: "The efforts of states should be channelled not at the preparation of war but at ridding mankind of war and its calamities. If the general assembly declared for this, it would fill a vivid

page in contemporary history. Not one country, not one government, if they express the aspirations and will of their peoples, can keep apart from the struggle for disarmament, for the relaxation of tensions, for peace.

This is precisely how the Soviet Union is acting. "In future, too, we shall spare no efforts to preserve detente, to preserve the good things that were acquired in the seventies, to achieve a turn to disarmament, to support the rights of peoples to free and independent development, to safeguard and consolidate peace", Leonid Brezhnev stresses.
—Tass/APN

Concluded

A NEW HIROSHIMA ?

Directive No. 59

by Sigenobu Otsuki
Tokyo, September 25,

Not long ago US President Carter signed Directive No. 59 which has introduced substantial changes into Washington's nuclear strategy. The directive provides for a transition from the "policy of deterring a first Soviet nuclear strike" to preparations for a "limited nuclear war." Attempts have been made throughout many years to persuade people in the United States and other Western countries that the US nuclear strategy defends them against the "Soviet threat" and that American nuclear forces are deployed in foreign countries to "ensure peace and the security of nations" residing in those countries. Now too the bourgeois propaganda men are claiming that the new strategy was supposedly adopted to effectively match "Soviet arms build-up".

Hitler used to say: "Repeat a lie a hundred times and it'll become the truth." Symptomatically, even those American scientists, engineers and military men who worked on the US nuclear strategy and repeated lies for many years, have now felt remorse and started speaking about the dangers inherent in this strategy. Former chief designer of the Trident-missile, Robert Aldridge, maintains that despite contrary proclamations, the real task of the American nuclear force is not retaliating a "possible Soviet attack", but rather dealing a first strike at the Soviet Union.

The new nuclear strategy is based on the concept of a "limited nuclear war." But what is extent of the proposed "limitations?" It is commonly known that the American strategists are most of all concerned over a possibility of a retaliatory nuclear blow at the US. In this context it is clear that the "strategy of a limited nuclear war" was adopted with a view to dealing a first strike at the USSR from the territories of West European or Asian states, where the American "forward based" weapons are deployed, and thereby "limiting" the retaliatory blow to the territories of these countries.

First reports on the adoption of a new strategy in the USA came on the 5th of August. On that day Hiroshima played host to the world congress for banning atomic and hydrogen weapons, which demanded that the Hiroshima tragedy be never repeated. President Carter affixed his signature to Directive No. 59—a course to new Hiroshima, as if challenging the world peaceloving public.

Japan's peaceloving forces have pledged themselves at the congress to continue their campaign for peace and against atomic madness. Now they are rallying the Japanese working people for resolute actions against the US nuclear policy, against the deployment of American weapons in Japan and against Japan acquiring nuclear arms herself. —APN

—X—

—X—

THE U.S. POSITION

On The Iraq—Iran War

Washington, October 2,

The United States' position on the current fighting between Iran and Iraq is one of total neutrality. This has been repeatedly emphasised by spokesmen at the highest levels, including the White House and Secretary of State Muskie. Rumours that Washington is "tilting" one way or the other are completely without foundation. The United States has been in contact with both sides. Secretary Muskie met September 30 with Iraqi Foreign Minister Saadun Hamadi at the United Nations, and Iran has been invited to a similar meeting. Muskie has also been in contact with Teheran

IRAQ — IRAN WAR

Excerpts of Dr. Fidel Castro's speech on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Committees of Defence of the Cuban Revolution.

Havana,

On the first of May in this same Revolution Square, we expressed our concern on the dangers of the situation in the Middle East, between Iran and Iraq. We requested them to avoid a war because it would be a war between two peoples that are engaged in their revolutionary process; two Islamic peoples, two peoples belonging to the Third World located in one of the most sensitive areas of the earth, where it is said that 60% of the transportation of fuel supplies to the West takes place.

It is also a war between two big oil producing countries. It is a war that divides the forces that confronts imperialism. A war that divides the forces of the Non-aligned countries and of the so-called Third World. It is a war that weakens both countries provoking considerable mutual destruction. This war could have catastrophic consequences for the underdeveloped countries that do not produce oil. The astronomic sum of 30 dollars a barrel which they already have to pay for oil is practically inaccessible to many countries.

If a quick political solution to this war is not found the economic consequences to many countries of the world would be disastrous. For this and in accordance with principles, Cuba, as Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement is making efforts, counting our relations with both countries, to find a political and a just solution to this conflagration. It is known that when national feelings and emotions heat up it is much more difficult to find peace than to make war. Along with other progressive forces and international institutions we will do our best to this end. And we will not be discouraged before any difficulties we would face in order to reach this noble and humanitarian objective.

—APN

by letter, stating the American position and stressing American neutrality.

Neutrality, However, does not imply disinterest. The United States is deeply concerned that the conflict should come to a peaceful end as soon as possible, and that the warring parties should try to work out a negotiated settlement.

There are several reasons for this concern. One is the human suffering caused by the war. Another is the economic damage resulting from the destruction of installations, the loss of revenue from oil production, and the drop in international oil supply levels. Another is the danger that the shipping route in and out of the Persian Gulf—the Straits of Hormuz—might be blocked, cutting off oil and other supplies on which many nations depend. For this reason, Iranian indications October 1 that the Straits would remain open were welcomed in Washington. And, finally the United States—along with other countries—has had to consider the possibility that the conflict between the two nations might somehow widen.

Because of these considerations, the United States voted September 28 for the United Nations Security Council resolution calling on Iran and Iraq to end their fighting and accept mediation. Also, this was why Washington decided this week to respond to Saudi Arabia's request for assistance in securing itself against unexpected attack. That assistance took the form of four aircraft designed to act as aerial listening posts, to detect any possible attack. The deployment of these aircraft is both temporary and defensive, and in no way indicates any departure from American neutrality in the Iran-Iraq conflict. The United States has for some time made clear its vital interest in the security and stability of Saudi Arabia, which in turn contributes to the security of the whole region. It should be stressed, however, that the purpose of the planes is only to gather and relay information to the Saudi Arabian Air Defence System, and that in the event of hostilities they would not take part in the fighting.

A final point in the United States' position is its firm conviction that all other nations, large and small, should refrain from any involvement in the Iran-Iraq war. There have as yet been no signs of such involvement. And that—together with the unanimous vote in

the Security Council—would seem to indicate that the United States is not alone in stressing the importance of neutrality, and its value in contributing to an eventual settlement of the conflict.

—VOA

x x x

NGUYU—15

A Judgement

by Bwana Rafiki

A lorry turned up to remove the coconuts which had been husked two weeks. The mill where the nuts were being taken had been out of action through a breakdown which had caused the delay. The lorry removed ten thousand coconuts at a time, and two trips were enough for all the nuts on my estate and they made up a full load with coconuts of my father's. On my division two teak trees were being felled for two village churches. Walking around my father's estate my factor and I decided where we are going to harrow next. We are gathering fallen coconuts twice a week now in case they are stolen.

A new check roll, sets of E.P.F. 'C' forms in two sizes, a different size for each estate, carbon paper the size of a large 'C' form and monthly reports and a spring clip to hold the sheafs of paper with the carbon was what I bought and took to the estate together with the monthly report forms. There, and I found that all the husked coconuts on the other estate had also been removed in two more lorry loads. When I had tottered up for each estate the coconuts consumed, the rejections, and the nuts sold, I found that on my father's estate there was an excess of a hundred and fifty coconuts. How come? There could be a number of explanations, none to the credit of those running the estate, but the superintendent of my father's estate is no longer with us.

Well, I nearly went to bed without writing this so engrossed was I in some legal work or observations on a judgement that I received involving me in a sum of money amounting to five figures. I discovered it was 1 a.m. and decided that I had done enough and had actually turned off the light before kneeling down briefly as I usually do, when I remembered

something else and thought I had better do it and it was then that I remembered *Nguvu*. Earlier as I had been very late coming to Colombo but persevered in the purpose for which I had come and once again it paid dividends for when I met the other absconder tonight who had failed to turn up at all, he acquiesced graciously in our entry in a race.

My first task in the morning was to get a translation of the judgement that had gone against me. It was given in half a day and rough it was. However, the translator had warned me there would be grammatical mistakes, to use his own words. Then I went visiting and I made friends with someone who came from a country I once lived in thirty-five years ago. He said if I ever returned to his country I would be sure of a home with his people. There were more visits, old friends this time, the not-so-old and the very old. I was asked my age by one and I discovered he was two years older than I. I told him we had won a championship race in a span of twenty years, he in 1943 and I in 1963.

What a day. Catching buses at the usual time, I arrived at the estate an hour before my wont to be greeted with the news that the local government authorities had refused to issue a permit for a large number of bamboos that I had sold and which had already been cut. What I regarded as more serious, because more urgent, was the fact that a hundred and fifty of them lying strewn about the estate with two and a half hours of daylight left and an hour of the normal working day. In that hour I got the watcher to count in my presence all the bamboos that had been cut. The number was correct, and I saked the man who had bought them to make strenuous efforts to bring the bamboos in to where we stack them near the watcher's but or home.

The sawyers of the *lunumidella* tree arrived in the morning to measure the planks they had sawn to find the cubit feet to know how much they had yet to be paid. Over two hundred pieces. Over a thousand cubit feet the lot was over Rs. 2,000 and with Rs. 900 paid in advances over Rs. 1,100 was the sum. The head *baas* when he saw the tree after it had been felled had predicted the cost correctly. There were other matters including an illness to delay me setting out for the capital town of our district on the matter of

the bamboos. With difficulty I tracked the Government Agent down. It was worth it.

POEM

SATI +

A pictorial representation in the Moghul style.

This then is the picture—a touch of cerulean
Along the upper margin indicates the pond
In which they plunged her, dressed in rich attire
And golden ornaments. Her planquin
Stands empty, upper left,

draped in white flowers.

Brahmins and relatives,

an eager crowd of friends

Form a bright circle—ochre, scarlet, green
Stroked deftly. They lift their hands
Admiringly towards her—yet some are seen
To carry torches, some clay pots of ghee,
And ranged in double line about the field
Black-bearded Brahmins brandish

sword and shield.

And now the purohita Brahmin bearing holy fire
Raises his hand in signal—the pyre
Is lit (dead centre), contents of the pots
Are emptied on dry wood, and saffron flames
Flare upward. A rosy glow
Spreads out across the burning field
Enveloping the corpse—an aged man
(In neutral pigments). His fair-skinned wife
With flowing raven hair and

slanting Moghul eyes

Still in the very prime of life
Is dragged towards the pyre, is lifted high,
Then cast upon his body. Her fierce cry
Is drowned by acclamations—

they smother her screams—

(The fire blazes fiercely now in tints

of blue and red)

Her smooth skin puckers,

flames flow from her head,

And when she struggles wildly to be free
The Brahmins raise their swords, confining her
To burn. And burn. And burn.

Until she is quite dead.

The caption to the picture elucidates
That while the widow preserved

calm and a serene

Demeanour while the long procession wound
Its way unto the burning green

When she beheld that dreadful scene
 Was made to leave her palanquin,
 Her looks were fixed upon the pile
 In terror. All that while
 They tore the jewels from her ears and neck,
 And pulling, dragging, prodding from the back
 They made her walk three times

around the pyre
 Before committing her unto the fire.

Much later

The ashes were sifted, and remnants of bone
 Placed in slim copper urns—some to be thrown
 Into the waters of Ganges—sacred river,
 Purifier, and giver

Of life—and some to be ground
 Into powder mixed with new rice boiled in ghee
 And eaten by twelve Brahmins
 Ceremoniously.

Anne Ranasinghe

+ Widow Burning



GRAMA SASTRA—25

—Scribblings On Uva Villages

Cinema Smoke

by Gamiya

“THE BURNT OUT ENDS OF SMOKY DAYS”
 so wrote T. S. Eliot in a metaphor pregnant
 with meaning and filled with smoke.

One day I heard of a debacle at the OCIC
 annual festival of two years ago. There was
 loud talk of there being 54 cinemas in Colombo,
 so easily safeguarded with the celluloid reels,
 formidable with what passes for urban com-
 munications media. A speaker said: “While
 you people wrangle about 54 cinemas in
 Colombo, there is only one cinema hall all
 the way from Sirigala in Monaragala to Amparai,
 a distance of over 50 miles”. But let that pass.

Singaporean cinemas (and now we are
 down Singapore way, if you know the hang
 of what I’m saying!) fine 500 dollars for a
 single smoke in a cinema and that’s a fine that
 really hits. The rich and affluent who throng
 city Cinemas in Sri Lanka and all cinemas in
 S’pore have supposedly good lungs and top
 tissues in good order. And besides, they
 have the money and the professions and the

jobs, and so, fines can be imposed on the
 smaller fry who smoke and spoil the breather-
 gills of the mighty. Even their air-conditioning
 can get spoilt.

But, of course, rural buses, rural cinemas
 of Wellawaya and Monaragala are crowded
 with the masses of people, the rural riff-raff,
 don’t you know, men and women who have
 no lungs, much less power, and who are really
 not needed around till 1983. That’s Democracy,
 for you, by Jove. So what if their lungs get
 damaged, they are not really people, you
 know. What is this human dignity and Human
 rights and all that piffle. Sirigala “tagaram”
 cinema is a standing insult to the human mind
 and to the spirit of sharing amenities and
 facilities in Sri Lanka. “Throw culture to the
 dogs, I’ll none of it” or “throw history to
 the dogs, to h.....with it”, could well
 be the upstart slogans of petty top people
 who are making hay while the proverbial
 sun shines. “Garagannawa thamai vade”....
they are out to rake in the money, and
 this goes for the TP (Top people whose brains
 are down) and who sit on their laurels and
 wear them in the wrong place. Put up a
 fee tagarams, call it a cinema hall and the
 poorest of the poor will come in and pay
 sums they cannot afford, and get lung-trouble
 in the process. The place smells in the day time
 and is worse at night.

Will the OCIC have the guts to see that
 there is wholesome, clean cinema for our
 people, rural and urban and estate folk, or
 will they go on tinkering around with mere
 contents of the film? Can they not get in-
 terested in where these things are shown?
 After all, the Manifesto said that the consumer
 will be protected, so where?

Air conditioners are hard earned fruit
 of an MNC operating in SL. City cinemas
 need them. Cigarettes are also of an MNC
 or of many such MNC’s. Why not just show
 half a picture (even last reel first, in english
 films) and charge full fare (no one really knows!
 and we are far from Fort). Time is running
 out for the crooks. This, I know.



No Short Cut To Self-Sufficiency

by Derryck Schokman

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE organised a Rice Symposium at the BMICH on the 25th and 26th September to highlight the impact of rice research and its application to the food front. At this Symposium it was demonstrated that the "Holy Trinity" of rice research—namely high yielding varieties, fertilizers and pesticides—had played a significant role in boosting rice production over the last two decades following the release of the H-hybrids in 1958 and the Bg-Hybrids ten years later.

Improved varieties are expected to play an even more important role in the years ahead with the development and release of even more superior strains tailored for the varying environmental conditions. The high potential of these new varieties with their inbred resistance to serious pests and diseases, taken together with the generous fertilizer subsidies offered by Govt. today were considered bright flares on the hitherto dark road to self-sufficiency.

In fact, the enthusiasm of the scientists at the end of the first day's proceedings was so heady that one got the impression that the stage had been set for the curtain to rise on another Parakramabahu era with the prospect of satisfying our domestic requirements and even exporting rice within the next five years.

On the second day of the Symposium, however, the buoyant optimism of the scientists was given a jolt when it was disclosed that recent developments in the international theatre had already begun to bedevil our farmers who are the principal performers in this drama. It was pointed out by extension experts and economists that consequent on the current fuel crisis and the competing demands for mechanical and manpower in the construction sector, both tractor and labour charges had almost doubled in the agricultural sector. These es-

calating cost trends were expected to continue.

A MORE SERIOUS WARNING was sounded by the Secretary, Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research, who reminded the delegates that Government was already shouldering a burden of over 800 million rupees on account of fertilizer subsidies—almost half of this in respect of rice fertilisers. Since fertilizers prices were expected to go up by 40 percent the subsidy was expected to increase to more than Rs. 1,300,000 in 1981.

This is a serious issue. Will Government continue to bear the strain of this galloping subsidy? And even if it does, will farmers be prepared to 40 percent more for their fertilizers?

That farmers are convinced of the benefits of fertilizer is not denied. It could be argued therefore that they would be willing to pay the higher price provided there are no other demands on their limited purses. Unfortunately, there is no such guarantee in the face of the escalating costs of the other components in the production process.

In this context it is a moot point whether our farmers will continue to use as much fertilizer as before. And since fertilizer is the catalyst to boosting rice production there is an understandable trepidation on the part of the authorities that their plans for a booming rice industry might be thwarted.

There is an urgent need therefore to find ways and means of reducing the cost of production to the producer by providing him with less expensive low energy sources of farm power (eg. Zero tillage) and improved varieties of rice that are less demanding in their fertilizer requirements than those currently in circulation.

HOWEVER, THE EVOLUTION AND INTRODUCTION of such measures to the farmer—even if they are already in the experimental stages—are necessarily time consuming processes. It is necessary therefore to look for other means of boosting production in the short term.

One way to do this would be to increase the cropping intensity by the introduction of new cropping systems and water management techniques. Tremendous improvements

In overall production and in the quality of rural life can be achieved if farmers are given the opportunity to take an extra crop of rice in the Yala season instead of allowing their fields to live fallow.

That this is possible under the existing resources has already been demonstrated in an experiment conducted over the last four years in the Walagambahu Village. This technology has since been extended to sixty other small tanks in the Kurunegala and Anuradhapura Districts. It is hoped that the acceptance of this new technology, backed by the new Water Laws now being discussed in Parliament, and supported by the release of new ultra shortaged varieties of 75 days duration will spearhead a resurgence in rice production during the Yala season in the dry and intermediate zones.

x x x

FILM FOCUS

Crime Prevention

The other day, when dusk had just settled with sunset down the street where I live, a scene was enacted, and perhaps being re-enacted in many other highways, which could have jumped right out of a film sequence. A middle-aged couple were taking a stroll, and at a respectable distance behind, a motor cyclist and a pillion rider were closing in on them with stealth and strategy and in a matter of seconds, the "Thali" around the lady's neck was plucked off, and the cyclist gathering speed with his partner in crime, sped away, the richer with 'gold' money. The lights were dim and lookers there were a handful, but the whole incident occurred in the twinkling of an eye, that none, even the husband could move fast enough to prevent it.

The point I am driving home to *Tribune* readers is that part of the sophisticated new look, that our criminals are acquiring, and their methods are being gleaned off certain films that are freely flowing in. It would, however, be difficult for the censors to stick a pin and strictly divide the line that would permit the screening of such films, as the ingenuity of a crime, could be only an isolated sequence and may be the essential link in an otherwise good story.

My logical observation is that if the criminal is sharp enough to pick his plays and plots from a film, by the same process, why do not our law enforcers also get the positive line of crime prevention from the same media, which is today admitted by all as a very powerful one, where the "visual" is constantly in resonance with the "mental". Reminiscing further, I can recall the times in the early fifties when the late Messrs G. A. K. Rockwood and C. C. Dissanayake were Superintendents in charge of the Colombo Division Police, when the city cops were given exclusive opportunities of viewing together, selected English Films where Police intelligence and crime prevention methods were pinpointed.

It is a pity that this practice is no longer in existence, for there is so much to learn about advanced Police technology abroad, and keeping to the scent of a criminal—instead of leaving this exercise to Police dogs only—and grabbing him in good time. As examples, I would hold out films like the *Day of the Jackal* where co-ordination by the super sleuths of two countries, Britain and France averted an assassination, ripping wide open a plot in the nick of time and *French Connections I and II* where a cop kept unflinchingly on the trail of international narcotics pedlars and brought them to book. Now that Sri Lanka is in the news of international coups hatched here, as in the Maldivies and also as an outpost in the trafficking of drugs, I think our vigilant DIG Police Crimes and operations, R. Suntharalingam, should be in touch with the Sri Lanka Film Corporation, so that our policemen would pick up in one sitting together at a cinema, advanced techniques, that could sniff and ferret out clues of highly organised crime. The I.G. Police would also request other Police Divisions to follow suit and view such constructive and educational films of a crime prevention, in batches at provincial cinemas.

AIRPORT 1975 (English): The story of this Universal Production in Panavision and colour has been inspired by the novel *Airport* by Arthur Hailey which was filmed and exhibited to crowded houses at the Liberty Cinema some time ago. The first course on the menu was the same as before in this film, with a hustling and tension ridden air terminal where a Boeing 747 takes off on a routine passenger run, with a colourfully assorted

"clique" of egoistic travellers, held together by their pet peevs and piques. Heading for Los Angeles under blue skies, the plane soon strikes foul weather and is diverted to Salt Lake City. Almost simultaneously, a single seater on a domestic flight, piloted by one (Dana Andrews) who is trying to race against a clot clogging his coronary regions, and keeping an erratic course on the path of the Boeing, chips off a vital anatomy of the Phantom, creating a pandemonium of giant sized proportions aboard the now limping giant. The pilotless plane is then heroically kept on an even keel by the stewardess (Karen Black), who receives minute instructions from the ground control, headed by Chief Instructor Al Murdock (Charlton Heston). As 120 lives hang on mid air in the balance, a breathtaking helicopter rescue is attempted, when cinema at its very best hits the screen. The photography, particularly the aerial shots, were a rare visual treat and tended to defuse at intervals, the gathering tension, as the plane kept drifting along aimlessly. The evergreen Charlton Heston, Karen and Kennedy acquitted themselves with credit, while the big names of the forties, Gloria Swanson (remember her Oscar in *Sunset Boulevard*), Myrna Loy and Dana Andrews contributed their aging mite, from take off to touch down of the ill-fated plane. I also espied the *Exocist* girl, Linda Blair, pleasantly among the passengers as one whose failing kidney hung on precariously, to the terrible climax of a story which was not only thrilling, but kept its incredibility well under control while it lasted. Take the family along—their nerves may be under full stretch, but the tranquillisers are at hand in the scenic splendour that reaches the eye, the song ('Best friend to yourself') and humour amidst deathly distress.

MURDER BY DEATH (English): A delightful Columbia Production, based on an unusual novel by Neil Simon, this film takes off in lighter vein on the serious business of "murder" and blows the lid off the ingenuity of the world's greatest detectives, which ultimately came to nought, while the calculating criminal has the last laugh. A Lionel Twain creates the appropriate murky atmosphere in his mansion before inviting five internationally acknowledged super sleuths for dinner and a spot of "murder" as desert! He closests

them in, kills and sways a gauntlet at the 'tees', to deduct "who dun it" for a rich reward. Among the cast are the brilliant Alex Guinness as the blind butler, the late versatile Peter Sellers as Wang, whose "party" style wisecracks are exacting clue-wise, to have you in stitches, the old timer David Niven, nimble as ever and the effervescent Elsa Lanchester, whose bubbles burst somehow. As the clue boiling is in progress, the bricks in the set up collapse both metaphorically and literally, saddling each sleuth with a motive for the murder. I do not wish to spoil the film for you by writing more, but do take on this spoof, keeping your ears glued to the dialogue, and you will come out laughing, if laughter, does not murder you in the cinema by the Just one clue to help you along—its not thee butler who did it! (Let not the brief run of this film at the Regal put you off its excellent fare).

James N. Benedict.

MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE TRUST

Memorial Lecture

—October 24—

THE MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE TRUST will hold the Martin Wickramasinghe lecture for 1980 in October. This year the lecturer will be an ethnologist, Professor Yulian Bromley, from the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The intention of the trustees has been to make the Martin Wickramasinghe lecture an annual forum for disseminating modern knowledge of a specialised nature to non-specialist audiences. Printed copies of the lecture in Sinhala, Tamil and English are distributed to the audience. The inaugural lecture by Professor Joseph Needham F.R.S. in 1978, and the second lecture in 1979 by Professor Trevor Ling, Head of the Department of Comparative Religion in Manchester, provoked much interest. Indeed, it can be said that the Martin Wickramasinghe lecture has come to be a window to the outside world. The annual lecture is only one of several activities in the intellectual, cultural and educational fields in this country, that the Martin Wickramasinghe Trust has initiated.

In the area of publications, the Trust has completed a major project by compiling and publishing a comprehensive bibliography of Martin Wickramasinghe's writings in books and periodicals, including newspaper articles, here as well as abroad, from the year 1907 to the time of his death in 1976. There are over 1300 entries in this bibliography. The writings listed in it constitute collectively a unique documentation relating to the cultural, social and political history of this country during this century. Another publication put out by the Trust is a book consisting of Professor Needham's inaugural Martin Wickramasinghe lecture on a Chinese Perspective For World Science And Technology, and a critical evaluation by Professor Needham of Martin Wickramasinghe's long essay "The Buddhist Jataka Stories and the Russian Novel". A third publication by the Trust, which is scheduled to appear this year, is Professor Tievor Ling's lecture on 'Buddhism and Marxism: Agreements and Disagreements', together with Professor Ling's evaluation of Martin Wickramasinghe's essay; "Buddhism and Social Philosophy". All these publications are available in both English and Sinhalese.

A third major area of activity of the Trust is a Museum of Folk Culture in Koggala, Martin Wickramasinghe's birth-place. The Museum, which is planned to be completed over several years, will consist of a number of inter-linked units for exhibiting artefacts of the various aspects of the folk culture of the people, from various regions of Sri Lanka. It is also intended to have units to display items of folk culture from other parts of the world, particularly of those that have influenced Sri Lanka culture. A small modern auditorium and an open-air theatre for cultural performances will also be included in the complex. A unit to house exhibits to show the toys and the games of children from Sri Lanka as well as other parts of the world is also planned as a Childrens' Ethnological Museum. In all about 15 units are planned for the completed complex. The first two units to house items of folk culture of the people of Sri Lanka will be opened towards the end of this year. Photographic exhibitions depicting Martin Wickramasinghe's life and literary activity over a period of over 60 years have been held in many places in Sri Lanka over the past three years under the auspices of the Trust. The

Martin Wickramasinghe Trust has made a scholarship award to the University of Ruhuna as well as donations to various literary fine-arts and educational institutions.

PROFESSOR YULIAN BROMLEY, Director of the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences, will deliver the Martin Wickramasinghe lecture for this year on October 24th at the Navarangahala. Professor Bromley will speak on the processes of cultural and linguistic differentiation and integration in multi-national societies. He will examine theoretical postulates in technology in this context, in the light of Soviet ethnographical research.

Professor Bromley's fields of scholarship and research have been ethnography, the history of diverse cultures, and the interdisciplinary links between ethnology, history and other social sciences. His work has been published in many books and journals in the U.S.S.R. as well as in the U.S.A. and Britain. His published books in English include "Soviet Anthropology and Ethnology Today" and "Ethnography and Related Sciences."

Professor Bromley is Deputy Chief Scientific Secretary of the Praesidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and Vice-President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Studies. He is also an honorary Member of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, and a member of the Administrative Board of the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore of Europe. He has made noteworthy contributions at international anthropological and ethnological congresses in the U.S.A., Britain and India.

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. 1719.50	Rs. 1722.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 4102.00	Rs. 4108.00
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 950.20	Rs. 951.80
French Franc	Rs. 409.65	Rs. 410.35
Japanese Yen	Rs. 8.2275	Rs. 8.2425
Indian Rupees	Rs. 220.80	Rs. 221.20

Sept. 30 – Oct. 7

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CO—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; SO—Sunday Observer; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Sillumina; SLDP—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; —RRRiviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30: Prime Minister R. Premadasa struck a blow yesterday for the many millions who are homeless in Asia and throughout the world; addressing the United Nations General Council in New York, Mr. Premadasa urged the world body to declare an International Year committed to build homes for the homeless. The North Colombo Medical College (NCMC)—Sri Lanka's first private medical college—which is expected to open in June 1981 is negotiating with foreign universities to build up an international teaching staff. The Japanese Government will give aid worth Rs. 40 million the equivalent of 600 million yen to develop Sri Lanka's fishing industry. Former Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawela (83) has been admitted to the Cardiology Unit of the General Hospital, Colombo following a heart attack last Sunday—CDN. Mr. Ronnie de Mel Minister of Finance and Planning took up the question of the need for a special facility to finance oil imports of non-oil producing developing countries at the Group of 24 Ministers which met in Washington on Sunday as a prelude to the annual meeting of the World Bank and the IMF today—CDM. Special service officers to be appointed by the Government shortly will be entrusted with the issue of food stamps and the preparation of electoral registers among other functions in the districts—SU. The decision to withdraw civic rights of Mrs. Bandaranaike and to remove her from Parliament has come under stern criticisms from the public; diplomats sta-

tioned in Colombo expressed their disapproval of the move and said they were unable to express their feelings in public for diplomatic reasons—DK. The Budget deficit for the year 1980-81 has surpassed Rs. 20 billions. The government needs Rs. 26 billion to continue the work started already; but the treasury points out that the reserves in the year will not exceed Rs. 14 billion; the government will have to find further funds to implement the development plans for the year 1981; the only for the government to generate this deficit is to increase prices all round according to commodities—ATH.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1: The New York-based Rizaco International will set up a massive Rs. 12.8 billion petroleum refinery at Trincomalee with a capacity to refine 200,000 barrels of crude oil per day for export with 100 percent foreign capital—CDN. A landlord who owns only one house will have to pay the tenant five years rent as compensation if he wants him to quit the house. Singapore and Sri Lanka today ratified an agreement guaranteeing most-favoured nation treatment for each other's investments; the agreement also provided for full protection of investments including adequate compensation in case of expropriation, and the free transfer of capital between the two countries—CDM. Twelve persons including Trade Union leaders Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Alavi Moulana, Gunasena Mahanama and G. I. D. Dharmasekera, who were allegedly involved in the mob violence of August 8 in Fort area, were yesterday charged on fourteen counts including causing hurt, possession of explosives and mischief before the acting ort Magistrate, Walter Jayawardene—SU. It is understood that out of those who lost their jobs in July this year, some who have agreed to the conditions laid down by the Government will be re-employed this month itself—DP. After a lengthy and strong debate, the Jaffna Municipal Council yesterday decided to accept the DDC Bill—EN.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2: Sri Lanka is getting two big development loans from the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund of Japan totalling Rs. 86,852 million; one of these loans—Rs. 594.32 million—is for the development of the Port of Colombo; it will be used for the construction of the Korteboam Quay as a container terminal with fully equipped container handling facilities; this work is

scheduled to be completed by December 1984. Lloyds Bank International Ltd., will head a syndicated Euro-Dollar loan of US 13.3 million dollars for financing down payment for the purchase of ships from Argentina and South Korea by the Ceylon Shipping Corporation; the loan is for a period of 10 years with an availability period of two years and a grace period of three years. Interest is at $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent over London Inter-Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR) for the first five years and 7/8 per cent over LIBOR thereafter. A public limited liability company will be formed for the third stage of development of the KKS cement works which is estimated to cost Rs. 600 million. A new set of fool proof passports, at least 500,000, will be printed abroad at a cost of Rs. 1,885,000 to put an end to the forging of passports by unscrupulous persons. An additional sum of Rs. 70 million will be used for the purchase of much needed equipment to streamline the railway services. In future the validity of a driving licence will be for a prescribed period of five years; at present a driving licence is effective during the lifetime of the holder—CDN. A considerable amount of arrears of revenue to local bodies have to be written off due to poverty and other causes of irrecoverability; these arrears are made up of a large number of items involving small amounts and also consist of accumulated revenue for a number of years. CDM. The U.N.P. has been called upon by Elections Commissioner, M. A. Piyasekera, to nominate a member to fill the vacant Pottuvil seat in Parliament—SU. Appointments will be given to 400 Agriculture and Science teachers immediately; these appointments will be given to graduates and if sufficient number of graduates are not available to those who have passed the GCE Advanced Level—DP. The Cabinet decided yesterday to allocate an additional Rs. 4.1 million to print school text books for free distribution next year—VK. Opposition parties registered strong protests against the Jayewardene Government's move to remove Mrs. Bandaranaike from the Parliament and to deprive her of civic rights; the TULF, the Communist Party, LSSP and the NLSSP have released communiques condemning this move—DK. The Education Ministry is considering a proposal to train 10,000 teachers in two years through a postal teaching scheme in a bid to counter the shortage of teachers quickly—DV.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3: "We join the country today in mourning the death of Sir John Kotelawala, a former Prime Minister and one of Sri Lanka's most popular personalities; the 83-year-old soldier Prime Minister suffered a heart attack last Sunday and died peacefully early yesterday morning at the Colombo General Hospital"—CDN.. Anura Bandaranaike, son of former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, said today his mother was the victim of what he called a campaign of political vendetta; speaking to reporters in New Delhi after meeting with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Mr. Bandaranaike said most charges against his mother, who faces expulsion from Parliament, were "faked and trumped up" the Press Trust of India reported—CDN. The funeral of the late General Sir John Kotelawala will take place with full military honours at Independence Square on Sunday, October 5. On October 16, the two motions depriving Mrs. Sirima R. D. Bandaranaike and Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike of their civic rights for seven years, will be taken up; the motion against Mrs. Bandaranaike also seeks to expel her from Parliament—CDN. The waters of the Mahaweli Ganga, will be diverted to the Iranamadu reservoir, the people of Jaffna were told; by Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Disanayake yesterday. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday released texts of Indian news agency and newspaper reports on Anura Bandaranaike's visit to New Delhi. The Presidential Secretariat yesterday officially announced that the warrant of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry has been extended up to September 28, 1981—SU. "We have not discontinued the Eelam campaign, we are resting a while as we would rest while travelling", said Mr. C. Kathiravelupillai M.P. for Kopay at a speech delivered by him on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of the late Sivakumar at Urumpirai—DP. Many religious leaders, it is reported have expressed their sorrow on the government's decision to deprive Mrs. Bandaranaike of her civic rights—DK. President Jayewardene is reported to have been informed by top party supporters of an alleged multi-million US dollar swindle in the awarding of a tender by the Railway Department; the tender has been awarded to a certain South Korean firm; a Director of the local agency of this

firm is a close relation of a top politician of the government—ATH.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4: The government has declared tomorrow when Sir John Kotelawala is to be cremated, a day of national mourning. Mr. H. W. Jayewardene QC, one of Sri Lanka's eminent Jurists, will lead a delegation of Sri Lankan legal experts to the People's Republic of China during the second half of December this year. From this month, Co-operative Societies will be able to buy their entire month's requirements of essential food items on credit from the CWE; hitherto, the CWE gave credit only on 50 percent of the purchases, irrespective of their requirements for that month—CDN. Thousands of persons filed passed the remains of General Sir John Kotelawala at his residence at Kandawala estate, Ratmalana yesterday—CDM. The Colombo Gem Auction continued to boom with sales totalling Rs. 8.02 million sales yesterday—SU. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake said yesterday at Jaffna that the economy of the country could be improved only by industrial and agricultural developments and that such developments should be undertaken by every citizen without religious, caste, creed and linguistic differences—VK. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake who declared open the Mahaweli Project Exhibition at Jaffna yesterday said that he hoped that the Mahaweli waters will flow up to Jaffna district—EN. Over 600 trained employees at the Polonnaruwa condensed milk factory have been handed over to the control of "Nestle's" of Switzerland from January next year; there are over 800 workers at this factory at present but it is reported that "Nestle's" plans to reduce the number to 132 when they take over the factory—ATH. It is claimed by SLFP sources that Mr. Jayewardene's government's move to remove the civic rights of Mrs. Bandaranaike has been strongly condemned by the international community; a group of Opposition and Government MPs of the British Parliament, it is said, have sent a memorandum to President Jayewardene protesting against this move; MPs of the Indian Parliament are also reported to be preparing to send a similar memorandum—DK.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5: "Grindlays Bank goes up in flames—units of the Armed Forces were rushed into the city last night to a massive blaze that completely destroyed Grindlays Bank and threatened to engulf the adjacent

buildings. At the time of going to press the fire was still raging. The Government is considering the introduction of a petrol rationing scheme to prevent any shortages of petrol from occurring in the future. The Education Ministry announced yesterday that the GCE Ordinary Level and Advanced Level examinations held in April and August 1980 will not be cancelled, however, the Ministry will hold special examinations for those candidates whose unmarked answer script were detected in unauthorised places—WK. Minister Gamini Dissanayake said that the development schemes that are to be implemented in the Jaffna district will be started without any delay and that the government was prepared to spend any amount of money for this purpose—EN. Employment opportunities in the Middle East may be controlled in the near future according to the Ministry of Plan Implementation; most of the Arab countries have taken steps to control the number of persons working in those countries—SLD.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6: The York Street, Fort main office of Grindlays Bank Ltd., was completely destroyed by fire on Saturday; the Bank's safety deposit vault and strong room were, however, unaffected by the fire. Ceylon Petroleum Corporation sources said yesterday there was no likelihood of any petrol rationing in the immediate future they already had three months stocks in hand; the supply position in fact was more favourable now than it had been for some time—but one had to be careful; they had a contingency plan—just in case. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) will give all its support to the government's development programs, A. Amirthalingam, Leader of the Opposition and General Secretary of the TULF said at the District Agricultural Committee meeting held at the Jaffna Kachcheri, yesterday. *Air Lanka* has commenced computerised passenger reservation systems from October 1 an official spokesman said yesterday; it is the first airline in Sri Lanka to automate its passenger reservations system—CDN. "General Sir John Kotelawala, when he was Prime Minister, summoned the Colombo Powers conference at which for the first time Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used the words non-aligned; this conference led to the Bandung conference; the Bogor conference and ultimately the Belgrade conference; one could, therefore say that the Colombo Powers conference which Sir

John convened was the beginning of the non-aligned movement", President J. R. Jayewardene paid this tribute during his funeral oration on behalf of the Government and the nation at the cremation of the late Sir John Kotelawala at Independence Square yesterday evening. The Armed Services and the Colombo Fire Brigade were still fighting the fire which devastated Grindlays Bank on Saturday night and which spread to a part of Mackinnon Mackenzie building Police said the fire had completely gutted the century-old bank building which has one of the best-known edifices in the city—CDN. Minister Gamini Dissanayake announced in Jaffna yesterday that he would visit Washington by December this year to negotiate further World Bank aid to Sri Lanka speaking at the conference held at the Jaffna Kachcheri yesterday; he assured his audience that every possible step would be taken to develop the Jaffna District. Opposition Leader A. Amirthalingam who was also present said that he and his party would render every assistance to the Government for the development of the north—SU. Prime Minister R. Premadasa will arrive in Japan on 8th October on a five-day official visit and he will also proceed to Osaka and Tokyo—DP. Minister Gamini Dissanayake stated yesterday in Jaffna that he realised the hardships of the cultivators of onions and chillies resulting from the import of these items and that he would make all endeavours to seek redress to the cultivators by taking this matter up with the Minister of Trade and Shipping, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali—EN. An island wide campaign will be launched by the SLFP to get signatures to a petition demanding the withdrawal of all charges against Mrs. Bandaranaike; the petition will be presented to Parliament on October 16. The delegates to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Lusaka recently had expressed their displeasure at the Government's move to remove the civic rights of Mrs. Bandaranaike, according to Mr. Maithripala Senanayake who represented the Asia-Pacific Region at the Conference—DK.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7: President J. R. Jayewardene has appointed a ten-member committee to report on the need for compulsory management accounting and cost auditing techniques in public and private sector undertakings, in order to maximise efficiency,

minimise waste, and stabilise prices; the Committee which has been asked to submit its report in three months, is headed by Dr. Mervyn de Silva, Adviser, Minister of Plan Implementation. The Sri Lanka Export Credit Insurance Corporation (SLECIC) backed a local firm with counter-guarantee, enabling it to sign a Rs. 158 million civil construction contract, to lay 360 kilometers of double-circuit transmission lines in Libya. Minister Gamini Dissanayake told a news conference on Sunday at the Jaffna Kachcheri that the prime need of the Jaffna district was water and land; the Minister said action would be taken to provide those needs; Mr. Dissanayake also said that he was touched by the industry and diligence of the Jaffna agriculturists; "all that he needs is water and land; the government intends providing him with both", he said—CDN. The United Arab Emirates will help Sri Lanka to develop the North West Fisheries Project to the tune of Rs. 86 million; this would include the stretch of coastline from Puttalam to Jaffna under the overall accelerated fisheries development plan—CDM. A tanker with a load of crude oil for Sri Lanka from Rastranura in Saudi Arabia has just been able to pass through the Straits of Hormuz; this will help the country to be assured of oil supplies till the end of the year. The ashes of the late Sir John Kotelawala will be interred in the Kotelawala and Attygalle family cemetery at Piliyandala on Friday. Central Bank Senior Deputy Governor Neville Karunatilake charged yesterday that the inefficient operations of commercial banks was a major cause for the non-recovery of agricultural loans running into hundreds of millions of rupees at a training seminar on "Small Farmer Credit Management" for local bankers; he pointed out that more than half the credit given to farmers from 1967 to 1979 had so far not been recovered—SU. A new army regiment to be known as "Mahasena Regiment" will be set up in Vavuniya and will start operations from January next year—DP. The Leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front said that the TULF will not support any move to protest against the decision to strip Mrs. Bandaranaike of her civic rights outside Parliament but that it will oppose the motion in Parliament—VK.

X X X

Confidentially

Coconuts

IS IT NOT SIGNIFICANT that in recent weeks *Tribune* has received a large number of letters, articles and comments all of them critical about the way the Coconut Industry is being looked after? That as it is not possible for us to find the space to publish even a small fraction of what we have received, we have thought it best to condense the points raised (including criticisms levelled at the Minister of Coconut Industries) into a series of questions which we have set out below? That the general trend of the criticisms is directed at the Ministry and the Government for doing little or nothing to rehabilitate an industry disrupted by Land Reform and devastated by drought? That many have stated, "we have had enough of promises of tube wells to water coconut areas but we want something done....."? That this failure to provide water from tube wells is main recurrent criticism? That the following questions came up again and again? (a) How many tube wells have been sunk so far from the time the promises were first made? (b) How much did they cost or what have they cost so far? (c) Why cannot tube wells be sunk at a reasonable price as in India? (d) Why cannot a subsidy be given for sinking such wells? (e) Why has Indian expertise not been used? (f) Are "appropriate technology" methods adequate for the Coconut belt? That the main thrust of the criticisms betray the thought that nothing would really materialise "for the better" unless there are some radical changes?

That one reader pointed out that Minister Festus Perera was able to offer a subsidy up to Rs. 5,000 for digging a pond in one's estate or compound to breed fish and asked: "If Minister Festus can do this for a pond why cannot Harold Herat do it for a tube well?" That many readers had also stressed that coconut growers did not want to fertilise because water is required for the fertiliser to be absorbed? That without water nobody will want to fertilize? That can anybody blame them for this? That many others had pointed out that growers were reluctant to replant because they had replanted not once but several

times over and each time the plants had died due to lack of water? That Minister Harold Herath who has a special way with the media should answer these questions and *Tribune* will publish them? That it is time that something is done about this matter of tube-wells in the coconut belt? That enough surveys have been carried out by local and foreign experts to establish that groundwater is plentiful in the Coconut Triangle? That is also known that with Indian equipment and expertise hundreds of tube wells can be sunk every month at a reasonably cheap rate—until the whole area is covered?

COCONUT PRODUCTION DOWN BY 20 PER CENT

By Ivor Milhuisen

Coconut production for the first six months of this year fell by 20 per cent seriously affecting the coconut export industry. The value of coconut export products fell by 30 cents during the first half of this year, a spokesman for the Coconut Development Authority said yesterday. The value of exports of the three major coconut products for the first six months of last year was Rs. 438 million, whereas for the first six months of this year the figure has dropped to Rs. 313 million. Though the export price per nut equivalent increased by three cents the quantity exported fell by 36 million nuts. According to official sources the drop in production this year has been the result of last year's drought. It would have been far worse if not for the increased use of fertiliser. Last year 51,000 tons of fertiliser were used by the coconut industry as against 29,000 tons in 1978.

The rainfall pattern this year was better than last year and next year's production should improve. The highest recorded production had been 2,989 million nuts in 1964 and the lowest has been 1,821 million in 1977, which was also due to the previous years drought the sources said. The Coconut Marketing Board said that Sri Lanka exports coconut products to the United Kingdom, the Middle East and European Common Market countries.

—Ceylon Daily News

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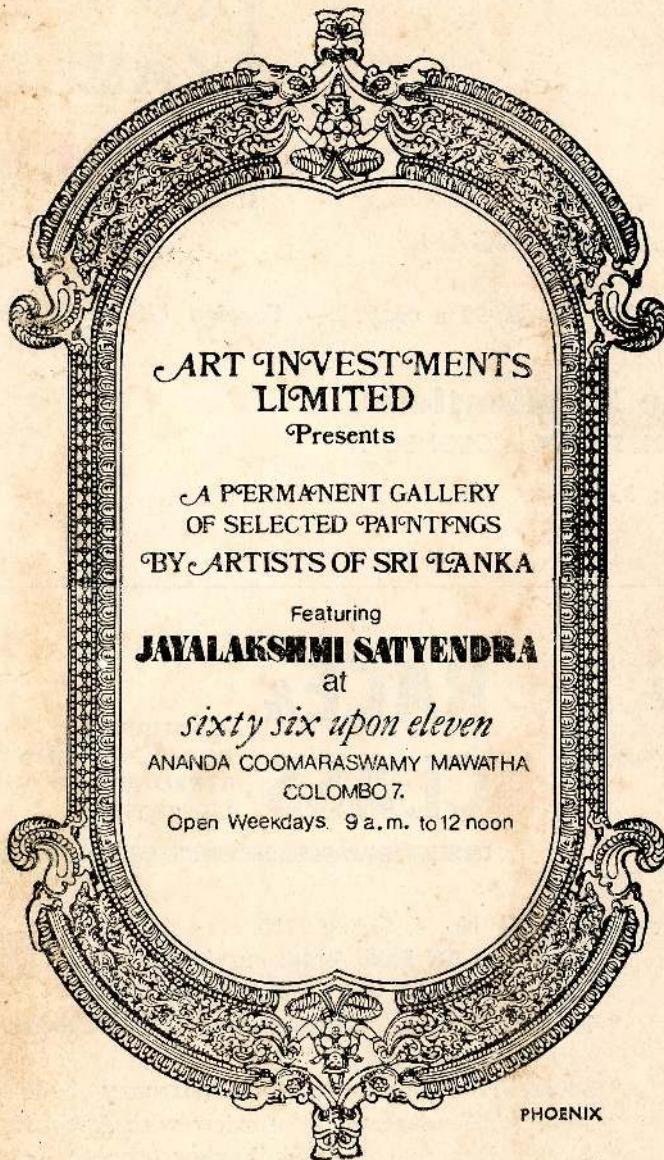
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