

Vol. 21 No. 16 — September 25, 1976. — **RUPEE ONE**

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW



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Letter From The Editor

The picture on the cover this week reminds us of the perehara of the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. The person in the kandyan chieftain's dress is seen performing one of his traditional functionary duties connected with the processions of elephants, dancers and what not that constitute the perahera. In recent weeks, some of the activities of the functionaries, in fact the highest functionary, namely the Diyawadana Nilame, (the boss man of the temple "elected" for five years by a limited and selective constituency of voters), have come sharply into focus. Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne is the present Diyawadana Nilame. He was formerly in the Ceylon Civil Service (later converted into the Ceylon Administrative Service). Even whilst he was a public servant (of consequence and importance as Government Agent, the Head of the Anuradhapura Preservation Board, the Secretary to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs—to mention only a few of posts he has held), he was "political". He was an ardent and dedicated (if not fanatic) worker in the group of aggressive and militant buddhists (such aggressive militancy being the anthesis of the teachings of the Buddha) which had carried on a don quixotic campaign against Catholic Action and other "forces" which were supposed to be in the way of the restoration of Buddhism as the chief religious, political, economic and ethical force in Sri Lanka. This campaign, no doubt, had succeeded: and, today Buddhism is the *de facto* and *de jure* (hidden under obtruse constitutional-law verbiage) official state religion of the Republic. The aim of the buddhist political revivalists, unfortunately, was to replace the role of the christian faith and christian hierarchy had played in the colonial era by buddhism, the buddhist sangha and the new buddhist hierarchy of politically-motivated laymen. Though this was a far cry from the kind of relationship which the Buddha had wanted his followers to maintain with kings and governments, the neo-buddhism which has emerged after the Donoughmore and Soulbury eras in the last stages of the British colonial rule in Sri Lanka has, whilst securing the restoration of the self-dignity (trampled under foot during foreign christian rule) and self-importance (something which the Buddha never wanted) of Buddhism, has also set in motion most divisive trends in the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-linguistic community of this island by the jingoistic chauvinism which has unhappily manifested itself in the neo-buddhist revivalism that has acquired tremendous momentum under the new Constitution of 1972. This aspect of the contemporary history of Sri Lanka is a matter for calm and objective study. Neo-Buddhism today enjoys such supreme political power that it has even succeeded in subduing the rationalist and materialist marxism of the leftwing parties. Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne was for long associated (whilst being a public servant) with militant buddhism. During this phase he was very close to the SLFP Establishment and was even considered one of the new intellectuals of the SLFP. But politics in Sri Lanka has, in recent decades, betrayed the strangest transformations. Just as the Donoughmore Constitution's adult franchise had induced a large number of leading families which had adopted the christian faith during Portuguese, Dutch and British rule to become buddhists overnight, so also we witness today SLFPers becoming UNPers and vice-versa. The case of Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne is an interesting study for any researcher. His father, Mr. E. A. P. Wijeyaratne, had a record of a christian convert who had returned to buddhism in the Donoughmore era to attain great heights of eminence in political life (and also in the diplomatic field). He was a pillar of the UNP. Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne was known to be a fanatical buddhist worker whilst his brother Mr. Tissa Wijeyaratne was involved in leftwing politics (and more latterly in SLFP politics). Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne's work among the buddhists, no doubt, helped him to win (in a sharply contested election) the coveted post of Diyawadana Nilame after his retirement from the public service. During the election, an influential and powerful section of the SLFP Establishment had opposed Mr. Wijeyaratne's candidacy, and it was after that he had drifted into the UNP camp and was tipped to contest the Dedigama seat. He began making his appearances on UNP platforms and arranged to celebrate the seventieth birthday (on September 17) of the UNP leader, J. R. Jayawardene, at Maha Maluwa. This had brought a sharp reaction from the SLFP-UF government which now insists that the post of Diyawadana Nilame should be divested of politics. Strange are the ways of history.

TRIBUNE

Founded in 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs

Editor S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

September 25, 1976

Vol. 21 No. 16

TRIBUNE

43, DAWSON STREET,

COLOMBO - 2

Telephone: 33172

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Mao Tse-tung

Apart from a solitary article by Mervyn de Silva in the *Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated* of September 11, there has been no attempt by any writer, commentator, journalist, politician or anybody else in Sri Lanka to evaluate objectively the life, times, politics and philosophy of Mao Tse-tung, or to prognosticate on the immediate developments in China. Mervyn de Silva's article briefly touched on the various aspects of Mao's life and hazarded the guess that the imperatives of the situation were likely to mark the beginnings of a Sino-Soviet detente and maybe rapprochement.

All the other articles, speeches, statements and comments only praised the dead Mao Tse-tung in the most eulogistic manner. Whilst there is no doubt that Mao is one of the most noteworthy human beings who has lived on earth, the uncontrolled unlimited and blind praise showed on Mao in Sri Lanka betrays a total refusal to face realities. Mao and Chou were friends of Sri Lanka because it suited their geopolitics—not for any other reason. It suits Sri Lanka's present geo-politics to pay homage (in fraternal and comradely fashion) to China and the Maoist faction (but the Sri Lanka Establishment might soon find itself on the wrong foot if certain political changes occur sooner than expected).

To keep our readers informed of the situation in China and to show how other commentators view Mao, we publish two editorial-rank articles. The first is the first editorial of *The Economist* of September 11. The second is a more incisive and informative article (with a lot of socio-economic and political background thrown in) from *The Far Eastern Economic Review* of September 17 by its editor Derek Davies. We hope to publish such reports and comments from different sources to show our readers the many

reactions which have been generated by the death of Mao Tse-tung. *The Economist* under the title MAO IS DEAD stated:

The Maoist era in China has ended, as it began, in bitter struggle. Mao Tse-tung died, aged 82, at ten minutes past midnight on Thursday, only a day after the *People's Daily* had suggested that China is lapsing once again into factional conflict and disorder. The unrest will be all the harder to contain without the godlike authority of Mao. But Mao himself would not have willed his death scene any other way.

One of his last published sayings, reportedly delivered in early 1976, was "Without struggle there is no progress," followed by the rhetorical question, "Can 800m people manage without struggle?" Mao's own answer was an unequivocal no. He proved his faith in struggle by fomenting it until the last days of his life. But each successive struggle cast a new doubt on the practicability of the aim behind them all—which was to create a society in perpetual, self-generating revolution.

Mao's final struggle—against the moderates in the Chinese Communist party led by Mr. Teng Hsiao-ping—was of a very different quality from his earlier epic battles against landlords, Japan and Chinese Nationalists. It was petty, personalised and reflected the strong influence which was wielded over the increasingly enfeebled leader by his increasingly ambitious wife, Chiang Ching. But it was also symptomatic of the central failure of Mao's last dozen years: his inability to settle on a successor he could trust to run post-Mao China in a true Maoist way.

In the final reckoning Mao must be accepted as one of history's great achievers: for devising a peasant-centred revolutionary strategy which enabled China's Communist party to seize power, against Marx's prescriptions, from bases in the countryside; for directing the transformation of China from a feudal society, wracked by war and bled by corruption, into a unified, egalitarian state where nobody starves; and for reviving national pride and confidence so that China could, in Mao's words, "stand up" among the great powers.

The credit for these accomplishments does not, of course, belong to Mao alone. Indeed, until he launched the cultural revolution in 1966 he shared power with what appeared to be a remarkably cohesive group of talented men who had fought, worked and governed together for more than 30 years. And for most of his 27 years in power, Mao's chosen role was less that of communist boss than philosopher king. But it was undoubtedly Mao, both as philosopher and as politician, who gave the Chinese revolution its distinctive stamp. The question now is how much of that distinctiveness will survive his death.

Mao never shied at the use of violence in promoting revolution. He believed that the two were inseparable. But one of his chief contributions to revolutionary theory was his belief in the efficacy of non-violent struggle: to inculcate revolutionary spirit and to turn that spirit into an engine for revolutionary change. By relying on thought reform, as opposed to Stalinist terror, he created a revolutionary system that was, despite brutal lapses, relatively humane.

But this same belief in the invincibility of "spirit" also led him off into shots at utopia which almost brought the whole system down. The first of these, in 1958, was conceived in a mood of high optimism. Two years earlier China had completed the collectivisation of agriculture well in advance of the target date because Mao intervened personally to accelerate the programme. In the flush of success, and in the wake of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, he then initiated his unprecedented experiment with free speech known as the hundred flowers. This time it was Mao's more conservative colleagues who were proved right when the invited criticism of the party turned into a torrent. Mao was forced to turn his open season into an anti-rightist drive. Then, a year later, he ordered another radical adventure: the great leap forward.

The great leap was based on the assumption that the people of China were by then so infused with revolutionary dynamism that they could industrialise and communise the country overnight. The economic chaos that followed was

later blamed on the over-enthusiasm of low-level party officials. But it was clear to Mao's colleagues, if not to Mao himself, that the great leap had torn great holes in theory about the omnipotence of spirit.

Mao's next wholly Maoist initiative grew out of an opposite mood of profound pessimism. After spending five years drafting polemics against "the restoration of capitalism" in the Soviet Union, he had concluded that in China too the spirit of revolution was being overtaken by mundane materialistic concerns. So he launched the cultural revolution to remould the entire nation, and especially its youth, in his own revolutionary image. He later admitted that the struggle had got out of hand and that his aims might not be achieved for generations.

The cultural revolution marked the beginning of Mao's obsessive concern with the succession problem and the fate of China after his death. He removed one heir apparent, Liu Shao-chi, on the grounds that he was likely to lead China down capitalist road and selected another, Lin Biao who seemed the incarnation of Maoist radicalism. Five years later, in 1971, Lin Biao was dead and disgraced, having clashed with the boss about Lin's own ambitions, about military priorities and about another radical innovation by Mao—his policy of detente with the United States.

After Liu there was no other head of state and after Lin there was no other formally anointed successor. In April, 1973, the second-ranking victim of the cultural revolution, Mr. Teng Hsiao-ping, was suddenly brought back from oblivion, gradually to assume the position of next-in-line to Mao's invaluable right-hand man, the prime minister Chou En-lai. But then Teng, too, went the way of all successors, after he offended Mao by cracking down on the radicals and the radical policies which had come to the fore during the cultural revolution. So when Chou died last January Mao moved—or was moved—to his last coup; to dethrone Teng. In April, the job of prime minister went to a relatively new and unknown member of the politburo, Mr. Hua Kuo-feng, who was also slipped into the hot seat as first vice-chairman of the Communist party.

Mao did not live long enough to take Hua Kuo-feng across the fences over which his predecessors had stumbled. But the circumstances of Hua's selection suggested that it was not his Maoist credentials but rather his acceptability as a middle-of-the-roader which won him his job. And given Hua's lack of a personal power base, it seems unlikely that he can risk alienating the entrenched moderate majority to follow Mrs. Mao and her radical friends in painting China Maoist red. What is more likely to happen is that Hua will be trapped between the two warring factions.

The reason Mao kept rejecting potential successors was not that he was a paranoid old man but that he perceived, accurately, that none of the chosen candidates could be relied on to run China as he, Mao, would have it run. For one thing, nobody could match the confidence that enabled him to take enormous political risks; for another, as successive campaigns have revealed neither his leading comrades nor the mass of the Chinese people share his commitment to struggle as a way of life. So whether Hua Kuo-feng manages to stay in power or somebody else seizes Mao's mantle, the prospect is that he will set out to govern China in a more conventional, less convulsive, Communist style. The spirit of permanent revolution almost certainly died on Thursday with Mao Tse-tung.

The Far Eastern Economic Review editor's article entitled **THE LAST OF THE GREAT MEN** stated:

WITH the death of Mao Tse-tung, the world has seen the passing of one of its great spiritual leaders. Like all such leaders, he enunciated his own dogma on the basis of which a system of thought has been created, and which will be variously interpreted by his future followers. Like all spiritual leaders, he was inspired by a vision of paradise—but of one that could be created on earth. In common with them all, the realisation of his vision entailed an attempt to change human nature, to create a better, less selfish man. And, like all over-idealistic leaders, he was doomed to ultimate failure.

At the centre of Mao's thought was the idea of an advance from the Hegelian or Marxist theory

that for every thesis there is an antithesis, an interaction which produces a synthesis. Mao argued that the process of division (which he identified as the class war) was a continuous one—that one would inevitably divide into two—and that unless the atmosphere split, unless there was a permanent confrontation within society, national energies would not be released and progress would be impossible. Society would lapse into complacency or stagnation and inevitably become "revisionist".

Mao's moment of truth came on October 1, 1949, when he stood on the balcony of the Tien An Men in Peking and announced: "Today, the Chinese people have stood up." That moment marked the triumphant culmination of years of revolutionary war, against both the Japanese invaders and the various corrupt and oppressive regimes which had usurped the imperial powers of the decadent Manchu Ching dynasty. It also marked the watershed between the days of the revolution, when the struggle was clean and pure and the enemy easily identified, and the forthcoming task of actually running a country, with all the compromises that involved. The poet had come down from his mountain retreat.

After little more than five years of working to create, from a China shattered by decades of war, a base upon which its future could be built, Mao concluded that the foundation was already too monolithic. He asked the intellectual elite of the country to help produce what he considered the vital element of fission by allowing "a hundred flowers to bloom, and a hundred schools of thought to contend." The result was Mao's first great administrative failure, for he released forces of intellectual divisiveness greater than he had anticipated.

So he resolved that the monolith which had to divide into two was that of the socialist camp—that China would no longer accept the developmental model being imposed upon it by the imperialistically-minded Russians. He would impose his own vision—that of a China which would turn an agriculture-based Great Leap Forward into industrialised socialism, a China not committed to Stalinist heavy industry but to maximising

wealth in order to finance new factories by mobilising the peasants, from whose ranks he had originally created his revolutionary army.

Once again the vision failed, although it is still a crime among China's ideologists to criticise the Great Leap, Mao's attempt to achieve miracles proved premature, with catastrophic impacts on the economy. There were no short cuts to communism.

After the break with the Soviet Union which followed the ideological heresy of the Great Leap, Mao pursued his philosophy of the salutary split, masterminding the bitter polemic with Moscow. He let the reins of direct executive power slip from his hands. For five years, the day-to-day running of China became the responsibility of the then Head of State Liu Shao-chi and, of course, the perennial Chou En-lai. The Maoist dream of creating a better socialist man faded, as industrial workers benefited from material incentives given to the most productive of the workforce, and as economic practice slipped further away from the theory that a socialist society would share its produce "to each according to his needs."

In the countryside, the communes became hollow administrative shells, with the real decision-making slipping down towards village level. Greed—or what Mao called "spontaneous capitalism"—flourished as the peasants decided to limit the amount of work, money and fertiliser they would devote to growing cereals which had to be sold cheaply to the State. Instead, they elected to grow vegetables, chickens, ducks, eggs, pigs and other cash crops not only on commune land but also on their own private plots, the produce being sold profitably to the towns on free markets. The trend was most prevalent on China's most fertile land along the coastal plains and the great river valleys, where the population centres are concentrated. Farmers' incomes rose and, their worries about their old age having been diminished by the welfare offered by the new People's Republic, they spent their money more freely—on textiles and other consumer goods. This demand in turn mopped up much of the produce of China's light industry, which was needed for export to earn the foreign currency necessary to finance modernisation.

This was the basic economic reason for Mao's dramatic return to the centre stage of executive power in early 1966. The Cultural Revolution was to be a permanent one, a continuous process of creating the new socialist men who would not fall to the temptations of *economism*, *revisionism* and *capitalism*, but who would grow the food necessary to feed the ever-increasing hungry mouths of China, as well as creating the necessary capital to finance industrialisation—men who would work not for themselves but for future generations.

However, the immediate target of the Cultural Revolution was the "headquarters" which Mao instructed the country's idealistic youth to "bombard." During the years of his withdrawal from immediate power, the Party and the Administration had fallen prey to Mao's bugbear; they had become a self-perpetuating, non-dynamic, elite bureaucracy, complacently united in the exercise of authority.

One had to split into two yet again. The Cultural Revolution was possibly the only example in history of a leader launching a revolution against his own Party and Government in pursuit of a philosophical Grail.

Once again the society of China proved itself unready for the demands Mao made on it—just as Europe failed Christ, the Muslims Allah and the Buddhists their faith. What should have been a magnificent exercise in Social engineering, in creating a new foundation for Mao's vision of what China should be, the Cultural Revolution degenerated into factional squabbles, personal feuds and xenophobic violence. Once again, as the army was called in and revolutionary committees set up to restore order and stave off anarchistic chaos, Mao had to accept that none of the basic contradictions had been solved, that the Cultural Revolution had hardly touched its ultimate target, the countryside, and that the realisation of the vision had again to be postponed.

Later attempts were made in widespread socialist education campaigns designed to persuade the people to read Lenin, or Mao himself, to reject the tendency to accept authority enshrined in Con-

fucian philosophy, and to wipe out the corruption of power now firmly back in the hands of the Party cadres and the mandarins of the Administration. But these campaigns were pale shadows of their poetic precursors.

Interwined inextricably with the visionary goals of the great experiments which have marked the history of the People's Republic were Mao's own disagreements with his colleagues. Any assessment of him as a leader must include an admission of his many failures in picking men as his top lieutenants. As early as the mid-1950s, he crushed Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih, senior military and Party officials in the northeast, on the grounds that they were concocting a pro-Moscow plot. His Defence Minister, Peng Teh-huai, fell in 1959 for daring to criticise the Great Leap, while during the Cultural Revolution he got rid of the Head of State, Liu Shao-chi, Chief of Staff, Lo Jui-ching, the Mayor of Peking, Peng Chen, and his chief Party administrator, Teng Hsiao-ping. His appointed heir apparent and his "closest comrade-in-arms" during that period, Defence Minister Lin Biao, disappeared in 1971—killed, according to Peking, in an attempt to flee after an abortive plot to assassinate Mao himself. It must therefore also be said of Mao that, as a leader, he failed to command the unquestioning loyalty of his closest colleagues.

But in many respects the fault was that of the victims; they were the Doubting Thomases who could not share his vaulting conviction that any heights could be scaled if one dared "to clasp the moon in the Ninth Heaven and seize turtles deep down in the Five Seas." There were also the Judas Iscariots, the small men who always attempt to pull down and betray those greater than themselves.

That said, it must also be recorded that, apart from winning the love and admiration of millions inside and outside China, Mao was big enough a man to choose another genius, Chou En-lai, to work at his shoulder. Chou once admitted that he had been sent by Stalin to take over the Chinese Communist Party, and that he did not gain Mao's full trust until he had defied Khrushchev in 1961. There are other grounds for sus-

pecting that Mao continued to have his reservations about his Prime Minister, for Chou was the pragmatist, ever anxious to keep the ship of state on a steady course, while Mao, supposedly the helmsman, was always hovering near, anxious to swing the ship's wheel sharply over to the left.

But, particularly during Chou's painful reconstruction of the Party and of the Administration after the damage caused to both by the Cultural Revolution, Mao realised the extent of his dependence on the supreme diplomat and administrator. In fact, like Yin and Yang, they were a near-perfect whole—a term made up of a poet and a pragmatist.

Ironically, and perhaps unfortunately for China, it was the pragmatist who died first. From that moment Mao was vulnerable to the pressures from the very radical left he had always favoured. His own fourth wife, Chiang Ching, espoused their cause. The radicals knew that they had to achieve a position of unassailable power within the Politburo and the hierarchies of the Party, the Administration and the army while the ailing Mao was still alive and his name could be exploited to further their cause. They persuaded Mao that his reendorsement of Teng Hsiao-ping had been mistaken. It is all too likely that Teng's own abrasive plain-speaking enabled them and Chiang Ching to persuade Mao that, if Teng was allowed to succeed in central power, he would denigrate Mao's place in history and diminish his revolution—"de-Mao-ising" China just as Khrushchev had once de-Stalinised the Soviet Union.

There is every reason to suspect that during the last months of Mao's life, after the death of Chou, Chiang Ching manipulated his failing spirit, "interpreting" his wishes to the rest of China's leaders much as the wife of Woodrow Wilson had monopolised access to her dying husband. The "kitchen cabinet" of the three women (Nancy Tang, Wang Hai-jung—reportedly Mao's niece and also a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs—and Chang Han-chin, wife of Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua) no longer attended Mao whenever he received visitors.

Chiang Ching's position was closely identified with that of the

radicals. Her popularity was limited, based precariously on her attempts to revolutionise Chinese art and culture. She must have been conscious that the Party had very reluctantly given Mao permission to divorce his third wife and marry her, only on condition that she would never be allowed to wield political power. She too had to gain a position as unassailable as possible while her husband was still alive.

The immediate future of China depends largely on how far she and her political supporters have succeeded in entrenching themselves since Chou's death and the demotion of Teng. Most evidence points to the fact that their success has been limited. Although they tried to follow up their victory over Teng by attacks on his associates in Peking and in the provinces, they have failed to dent the main centralist structure of the Party and the Administration. Their success against Teng was limited, for the man who took his place as Prime Minister, Hua Kuo-feng, had shown during his career (latterly as Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Public Security) that he was a "results man," a middle-of-the-roader as intent as was Chou En-lai on increasing production and achieving the transformation of China into a modern, industrial state by the year 2000.

It seems most likely that the very success—political, economic and diplomatic—achieved under the years of Chou En-lai's leadership, have created an impetus towards, pragmatic modernisation which will steam-roller the opposition of those who basically share Mao's view that, in the last resort, production must be sacrificed to ideological purity.

The basic debate (which in the past has caused China to zig-zag between revolutionary rectitude and pragmatic progress) will go on. But it will not be a debate between two extremes, rather between a "radical" minority and the rest who make up the massive traditional search of the Central Kingdom for the Golden Mean. Only Mao had the charisma and the poetic vision of society to turn the helm sharply to the left when, in his view, the ship was drifting too far to the right. China now probably faces a period of government by committee, em-

bracing compromises—of solid progress towards its destiny as one of the world's great powers.

But that is the extent of Mao's failure. Nothing can detract from the vastness of his achievement. He was one of the few really great leaders thrown up by the social, political and military upheavals of the first half of the 20th century, and he has been the last of them to die.

His greatest achievement is simply the unification of China, which has withstood not only the criminally mistaken "containment" policies adopted by the US until the early 1970s and the continuing threat from the imperial power of the Soviet Union, but also the centrifugal internal forces which he himself deliberately released in order to re-galvanise China on the road towards his vision. At times almost single-handedly, he made the Chinese people "stand up". He built the revolution which, while its future path may not prove to be what he would have plotted for it, has brought China into its rightful place among the community of nations and may still bring China to prosperity.



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Sept. 5 — Sept. 12

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; TOCSI—Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Achtta; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5: Sri Lanka Deshiya Agricultural Research Foundation which presented a scientific paper at the special sessions of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science in connexion with the Non-aligned Summit has said special units in Sri Lanka and other Third World countries should be set up to report directly to their heads on the activities of certain foreign experts on agriculture: the Foundation says sometimes the activities of these foreign experts could be well-planned sabotage to spread certain diseases to plants—CO. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, said yesterday at a public meeting in Urapola in the Attanagalle electorate that the Non-aligned Summit held in Algiers in 1973 decided to make Sri Lanka the venue for the 1976 conference because of the courageous stand taken by the present government on behalf of poor Third World countries based on the Non-aligned policies of the late leader Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike—CO. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth League, inaugurating a District Delegates Conference of the SLFP Youth Leagues said that the nationalised ventures in the country have not been of much service to the people because of corruption within the public sector and the people have become disillusioned and it is the duty of socialist youth to correct this situation—CO. Mr. Mervyn de Silva, former Editor-in-Chief of Lake House English publications, as joined the Times Group newspapers as Editor-in-Chief of English publications: TOCSI. According to the Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated the mass media committee formed during the Non-aligned Summit was aligned even before the Non-aligned Summit began: several local and foreign press personnel have complained that the Committee gave a step-motherly treatment to journalists from socialist countries by allowing a single reporter or a photographer to cover the opening ceremony while Western press personnel were allowed in large numbers from a single press establishment. Pakistan government disallowed a request by Air Ceylon to give landing rights for its second weekly flight to Sharjah through Karachi—TOCSI. Officials from Pakistan's Mineral Development Corporation arrived in Sri Lanka to sign an agreement with Sri Lanka to receive expert advice and technical co-operation on gemmology TOCSI. The Executive Committee of the UNP will meet tomorrow and the day after under Mr. J. R. Jayewardene to study the situation in the wake of fresh calls by government supporters to postpone the general elections—VK. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP and leader of the Opposition, in an interview with Asia Week has said that he would look into the lapses by the government towards the minority community

and once he become the Prime Minister would take positive action to solve the problems of the minorities especially the Tamils—VK. 7,500 families will be given lands in the Mahaweli development area soon after the development of 26,000 acres of land under the Mahaweli scheme is completed—ATH.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6: The Government Medical Officers' Association in a statement to the press said that the press statement given by the Ministry of Health explaining the circumstances under which a certain Medical officer was awarded a schol was a concocted one: President of the GMOA, Dr. R. R. Cooke, said that there was absolutely no difference between a fellowship and scholarship as the Ministry has attempted to make out in its explanation and the officer to whom this was awarded was over fifty years of age, nearing his retirement age: the President of the Association further said that there have been instances in the past where schols have been awarded to medical officers other than senior consultants and it was a false claim by the Ministry to tell that only senior consultants were awarded scholarships—CDN. The Bank of Ceylon has told the Monetary Board of the Central Bank that it cannot give advances to the private sector as it has already given Rs. 38 million to state institutions, the Janatha Estate Development Board and the State Plantations Corporation: the Bank has further said the granting of these advances is a big strain on its present resources—CDM. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing a meeting in Attanagalla said it was wrong to say that she was concentrating only on international crises: Mrs. Bandaranaike said that she always had the national problems in mind in every activities she undertook—VK. According to the Lankadipa several socialist countries have informed the Ministry of Trade that they could supply the country with various goods at a cheaper price which Sri Lanka is now importing from western countries at a higher price—LD. The State Gem Corporation earned a profit of Rs. 150 million during the first six months of this year by exporting precious stones: the Corporation expects the profit to be in the region of Rs. 300 million before the end of this year—LD. The Dudley Front, a breakaway group from the UNP, has said that it would contest nearly 100 seats at the next general elections under its president, Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama—ATH. According to the Dinamina farmers in the Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura areas cultivated paddy in 52,645 acres with a production of 3 million bushels in the Yala season of this year utilising Mahaveli waters: according to the paper this they did despite the severe drought experienced this year in the NCP.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7: Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and Justice, addressing a public meeting in the Dompe electorate said that the decision whether elections should be held in 1977, is as much a matter for the Opposition as for the government: he further said he believed that the present mood of the nation, impatient at the rate of progress the country is making, it is likely that when the question is raised in the National State Assembly, as it is likely to be, the decision could well be against an election next year: the Minister said this at a meeting held in connexion with the silver jubilee celebrations of the SLFP—CDN. According to a review by the Chairman of the Ceylon Tobacco Company a sum of over Rs. 1.5 million is paid daily by the company to the government

as taxes—CDN. Four armed gangsters got away with Rs. 215,000 yesterday from a tavern in Kollupitiya: Police said cash rewards would be given to any member of the public who could give information that would lead to the arrest of the suspects: the robbers came in a Peugeot 403 car at 6.30 am, fired a round of shots to scare the employees of the tavern who were loading the weekend collections into another car, and got away with the loot at break-neck speed—CDN. According to the Daily Mirror the Bill to grant pensions to members of the legislature will be presented in the National State Assembly shortly: earlier the presenting of the Bill was delayed owing to objections by two members over the question of the period of service by which a member qualified for the pension but now the government is of view any member could move an amendment at the appropriate time. Mr. Mostapha Ratab Abdel Wahab has been appointed Ambassador for Arab Republic of Egypt in Sri Lanka—CDM. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, told the Inter district Conference of the League that if the masses of the country feel that the general elections should not be held in the year 1977 and if the government takes a decision to postpone the elections, action must be taken to defeat attempts by reactionaries to work against the people's decision—VK. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the Opposition and President of the UNP, told a meeting of his Party's Executive Committee held in Sri Kotha that if the government postpones elections in 1977 the party should prepare itself to defeat such attempts by the government—VK. The Trial-at-Bar inquiry against seven youths charged for the murder of Mr. Alfred Duraipapp, Mayor of Jaffna, will commence at 9 am today at the High Court in Buller's Road, Colombo—VK. The Sri Lanka Fruit Board will start a campaign through Cultivation Committees and the Co-operative movements to grow fruits: the Board has requested the Land Reform Commission to get 2,000 acres of land for the purpose: the Board also decided to pay loans at the rate of Rs. 3,500 per acre for passion fruit growers, Rs. 5,500 for pineapple growers Rs. 2,500 for mangoes and Rs. 2,500 for lime: the loans will be provided by the Board through the People's Bank and the Hatton National Bank—DM. Government decided to establish a separate printing press for the printing of all documents of the National State Assembly: the press will be established at a cost of Rs. 6 million—LD. Mr. Lakshman Rajapakse, newly elected MP for the Mulkirigala seat, will take his oaths at the NSA when it meets this afternoon at 2 pm—ATH.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: The Ministry of Industries approved eightyfour new industries and out of this seventy are for the manufacture of soap for which there is a big demand in the country at present—CDN. The Trial-at-Bar appointed to try the suspects in the Alfred Duraipapp murder case will commence functioning on November 1: this was decided by the Trial-at-Bar yesterday when the case was called and the suspects produced—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will present the Colombo Non-aligned Summit mandate to the United Nations General Assembly on September 30 and will address the Assembly—CDN. Mr. Lakshman Rajapakse, Deputy Minister of Defence and External Affairs, told the NSA yesterday that the government was compelled to put out a reply in the form of a document published by the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and

External Affairs, Mr. W. T. Jayasinghe, because malicious propaganda was circulating as regards the so-called ill-treatment handed to Tamils in Sri Lanka: Mr. Jayakody said this in answer to a question by Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP for Uduvil, who requested the Deputy Minister to table the document in the House—CDN. Following information that a pirith chanting ceremony will be held on September 17 at the Mahamaluwa of the Kandy Dalada Maligawa in connexion with the 30th anniversary of the UNP and the 70th birthday of its leader Mr. J. R. Jayewardene the Government Agent Kandy has ordered the demolition of the structure that was being constructed for the purpose: the order of the GA was issued after Buddhist protested against the use of Mahamaluwa for political purposes—CDM. Mr. B. Y. Tudawe, Deputy Minister of Education, told the NSA yesterday that teaching appointments to graduates will be given from November this year—VK. Mr. Lakshman Rajapakse, MP for Mulkirigala, took his oaths at the NSA yesterday: large crowds of supporters from Mulkirigala were present in the premises of the NSA yesterday to cheer Mr. Rajapakse—ATH. Officials of the Ministry of Industries and Sri Lanka Bureau of Standards carried out surprise checks on two factories manufacturing electric bulbs and stopped over a 100,000 bulbs finding its way to the market: the officials said the standard of these bulbs were below par—LD.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9: Mr. Hector Kobbe-kaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, yesterday gave notice under section 4 of the Land Acquisition Ordinance of the Government's intention to acquire the Mahamaluwa of the Dalada Maligawa—CDM. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the Opposition, told a meeting in the UNP headquarters that the party is getting ready to contest the general elections next year and it was also preparing to fight those forces who wanted to prevent the holding of elections next year: Dr. N. M. Perera, MP for Yatiyantota and leader of the LSSP, told a meeting in Kalatura "elections could be postponed only over our dead bodies"—CDM. Cars used during the Non-aligned Summit will be handed over to government departments and state corporations—CDM. Mrs. Siva Obeysekera, Minister of Health, left for Canada: she will meet her British counterpart in London on way back to Sri Lanka—CDN. On October 2, birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, members of the Tamil United Front will hold demonstrations and perform fasting in every electorate in the northern and eastern province: on October 1, the TULF will invite school children to participate in the fasting and demonstrations—VK. Government has made order to supply all soaps produced by the government undertaking of the BCC through co-operatives until the strike at M/s Lever Brothers is settled—VK. Police investigating the Kollupitiya Tavern holdup in which over Rs. 200,000 was robbed still has not made any arrests: Police are also baffled as to how gangsters get ammunition for their weapons which are normally kept in the custody of the Police and other armed forces—CDN. Rural Banks will give loans to villagers to meet funeral expenditures: no guarantee will be required to get these loans—LD. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will ceremonially inaugurate work on the Gin Gang Scheme on September 26: this scheme is being financed by the People's Republic of China—LD. Government decided to import more

yarn to be issued to handloom owners to increase production to meet the demand during the Christmas and April New Year seasons—DM. Following a go-slow in the Kosgama State Timber Corporation's timber complex the authorities closed the complex and no work is being done here at present—DM. When the NSA meets today standing orders will be suspended to enable Parliament to debate to a finish the adjourned debate on the Land Betterment Charges Bill—CDN.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10: Mr. T. B. Tennekoon, Minister of Cultural Affairs, speaking at a public meeting in Kandy said that although there should be changes in the power now enjoyed by the Diyawadane Nilame and other Basnayake Nilames of the Kandy Dalada Maligawa he will act only according to the wishes of the Mahanayake Theras and other high priests of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters—CDN. A new Ceres medal released by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on August 16, featured Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike Prime Minister on the portrait side of the medal: Mrs. Bandaranaike is holding a sheaf of rice and on the revenues the inscription says "peace and food for all": a bulletin issued by the FAO states that Mrs. Bandaranaike "is a longtime worker for women's development and an active supporter of FAO programs"—CDN. Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, Speaker of the NSA, yesterday ruled that the Land Betterment Bill was in order following a point of order raised by Mr. J. R. Jayawardene and Dr. N. M. Perera that the Bill did not get the approval of the Cabinet—CDN. The Trial-at-Bar appointed under the emergency to try the case against three Tamil MPs of the TULF and the ex MP for Vadducoddai, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, for allegedly distributing editions literature will give its order on a preliminary objection raised by the defence today—YK. According to the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation's accounts a sum of Rs. 47.5 million has so far been spent on oil exploration works: the Chairman of the Corporation said the results of the survey are very encouraging—CDM. Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, leader of the Opposition, in a letter to his partymen said that they should find an alternate venue to celebrate his 70th birthday and the 30th anniversary of the party close to Dalada Maligawa: this follows government action against the use of Dalada Maligawa for political purposes—CDM. The Land Betterment Bill was passed in the NSA yesterday by 52 votes to 18: the UNP and the LSSP voted against the Bill—CDM. Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, yesterday appealed to all graduates who applied for teaching posts to refrain from using any influence or from giving bribes to any person as it has been decided that all candidates who had the necessary qualifications would definitely be given appointments: the Minister made this appeal following reports that certain unscrupulous persons were using his and his Ministry officials names to extort money from innocent applicants—ATH. CTB collected Rs. 160 million from passengers within the first three months of this year—DM. The Ceylon Oils and Fats Corporation sustained a loss of 14.7 million in the year 1974—ATH.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11: The Trial-at-Bar appointed to try the three TULF MPs and Mr. A. Amirthalingam, ex MP for Vadducoddai, on charges of distributing literature of a subversive nature yesterday gave a ruling on a preliminary objection raised by the defence and said that there was no valid decla-

ration of a State of Emergency and as such the three judges appointed to the Trial-at-Bar could not continue to exercise any further jurisdiction to try the accused: the objection by the defence was in regard to one of the accused, Mr. Amirthalingam and the court discharged him: the other three accused Messrs V. N. Navaratnam, K. P. Ratnam and K. Thuraiatnam, all MPs, were told that they would be informed in due course of their position: all three judges agreed on the ruling: soon after the judgement was delivered Mr. J. R. Jayawardene asked the NSA whether all persons detained under the Emergency would be released because of the ruling by the Trial-at-Bar that the Emergency Regulations were invalid: Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Defence and External Affairs, said that the Government was having consultations with the Attorney General with a view to appeal against the order: Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP for Uduvil, asked whether the government could appeal against an order by a Trial-at-Bar: Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, MP for Acalawaite, said that an appeal against an order by a Trial-at-Bar is not possible unless the Government intended to revive the Privy Council—CDN & CDM Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene, MP for Dehiwela-Galkissna, told the NSA yesterday that the Minister of Finance is trying to buy over four Opposition MPs of Parliament to join the government in a bid to amend the Constitution of the country: she further accused him of trying to bring corruption into the NSA—CDM. September 18 has been declared a holiday and a day of national mourning by the government because of the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung of China—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in a message on the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung said the late leader was one of the greatest known in the history of mankind whose monumental contribution to the cause of human progress will be remembered by generations to come not only in China but the world over—CDM. The *Aththa* in an editorial praised the attempts by the Prime Minister to solve the problems of the Tamils and to make the two major communities united: the paper further said there was nothing wrong in Tamil speaking people asking for the rights of their language as much as a Sinhalese would ask for the rights of his language: it also said the Tamil language was a more developed language than the Sinhalese language and it is quite right for the Tamils to fight for their rights and their language. Prime Minister will preside at a mass rally in Anuradhapura today in connexion with the silver jubilee celebrations of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party—LD.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12: Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, speaking at the SLFP rally in Anuradhapura yesterday, said certain persons had tried to sabotage the Non-aligned Summit Conference by organising strikes: she further said even the Federal Party had tried to upset the Summit by setting buses on fire but none of them had succeeded: referring to the Ceres Medal awarded to her by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) the Premier said this was an honour bestowed on the farmers of the country—CDN. The *Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated* in an analysis of the question of election in 1977 referred to various statements of MPs and other leading personalities in the government and the Opposition: the paper further said that Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, leader of the Opposition, has said that any move to postpone

elections would be opposed. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, told the SLFP rally in Anuradhapura that if necessary the government would nationalise more ventures but will not destroy any existing ventures that are being run properly—TOCSI. The Attorney General, Siva Pasupathy, will ask the Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari to quash the order of the High-Court-at-Bar which held that there had been no valid declaration of a State of Emergency by the President and to direct it (High-Court-at-Bar) to proceed with the trial of four leaders of the TULF indicted for allegedly distributing literature of a seditious nature—TOCSI. A big reception was accorded in Jaffna to Mr. A. Amirthalingam, ex MP for Vadducoddai, who was released by the Trial-at-Bar: several leaders of the TULF were present at the Jaffna station to receive Mr. Amirthalingam: heavy Police guards were deployed around the station—VK. Ceremonies connected with the Bandaranaike Day will be held in Colombo at the Galle face Green on September 24—SM. According to the *Sri Lankadipa* several Non-aligned countries have agreed to buy increased quantities of coconut, rubber and tea from Sri Lanka. 32,000 acres of Nindagam lands taken over by the Land Reform Commission in the Ratnapura area is being distributed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to landless peasants—ATH. The *Aththa* in an editorial said the prices of essential food items have still not come down in spite of several actions taken by the government: the paper further said the government should take repeated actions in this regard at international and national levels.

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4: Prime Minister, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan, speaking at a meeting in Mardan paid tributes to the Sri Lanka Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, for her speech at the inaugural session of the 5th Non-aligned Conference held in Colombo recently: he said the points raised by Mrs. Bandaranaike were the same as he himself would have made. Philippines will soon set up its own world-wide news service as part of the Third World's effort to provide its own news dissemination according to the popular newspaper *Daily Express*. The Saudi Arabia Press Agency has quoted Oil Minister, Sheikh Ahmed Yamani, as saying that the general trend in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is against seeking a rise in oil prices this year: he also said a slight increase might occur next year and expressed opinion this rise would not affect the world economy. Six persons, one Egyptian, two Jordanians and three Palestinians will be tried by a Cairo military court for trying to hijack an Egyptian Airliner on the 23rd of last month: the prosecutors will ask for death or life imprisonment for the hijackers: Egypt has already accused Libya for the hijacking but Libya said this was staged by Egypt. The International Institute for Strategic Studies in London said China was developing an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) which is thought to have a range of 8000 miles: the organisation further

said that it is very unlikely that this would become operational for sometime. For the first time Soviet Union yesterday appointed a Deputy Prime Minister, Nikolai Tikhonov: Reuter said this is an indication that the present Prime Minister, Kosygin will be removed from his post. According to opinion polls published in New York, Democratic President Jimmy Carter has gained in popularity and now heads President Ford by 52 percent to 37 percent.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5: American spacecraft, Viking II, touched down on the surface of Mars but owing to a breakdown in the radio communication it did not send back any data or pictures to the station in Pasadena. The Vietnam News agency reported that the government cleared 575,000 bombs and mines from South Vietnam freeing 26,000 hectares of land for cultivation and construction: in several areas people collected large number of bombs and other weapons. Mrs. M. Thatcher, President of the British Opposition Conservative Party, left for a three-week tour of South Asia and Australia: she will visit, India, Pakistan, Singapore and Australia to build up her knowledge of world affairs. President of Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique will meet today in Tanzania to determine whether or not US State Secretary, Dr. Henry Kissinger, embarks on immediate Middle-East style shuttle negotiations in Southern Africa: meanwhile, Dr. Kissinger and Prime Minister John Vorster will discuss the South African crisis in Zurich and high officials of the United States said the Secretary of State was ready and willing to conduct shuttle diplomacy between blacks and whites in Southern Africa just as he did between Israel and the Arabs. In Britain the Labour government launched a poster campaign against racialism: Mr. Tony Benn, a government Minister, said that Britain was now facing its worst outbreak of racialism since the 1930s. Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko and his Indian counterpart, Y. B. Chavan had talks in Moscow on co-operation between the two countries and international problems. The American-led US command and North Korean officials had a seven-hour discussion on ways to ease tension in the Korean Demilitarized Zone following the killing last month of two US officers: no details of the discussion were given but it is understood that the talks will commence again. The French government in a statement accused Cambodian Government of ruling with brutal and shocking methods and forcing unjustified suffering on the Cambodian people.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6: Palestinian hijackers holding a Dutch DC 9 airliner with 83 passengers arrived back in Cyprus after Israel refused permission for the plane to land: Israel also said that it would not heed to the demands of the hijackers: later at Cyprus the hijackers agreed to release all their hostages, according to official sources. India would soon introduce legislation barring over 3 million civil servants in the country to have more than three children. Scientists in Pasadena said the American spacecraft, Viking II, may have landed on a rock in the planet Mars and would have damaged the tiny equipments meant to send signals to the earth: meanwhile President Ford sent a congratulatory message to Project Manager, James Martin of the Viking spacecraft for the successful landing of the spacecraft. US officials announced that Dr. Kissinger, US Secretary of State, will meet

General Alexander Haig, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, in Zurich, and will discuss NATO matters. USSR's official daily *Pravda* said that Secretary of State of the United States was attempting to shield South Africa by concentrating more on Rhodesia: the paper further said that the Zurich talks between Dr. Kissinger and South African Prime Minister John Vorster was intended to co-ordinate the strategy of world imperialism in Africa. Dr. Anton Vratsa, Yugoslav's representative to the Sea Law Conference, returned to his country and said his country's stand was that the littoral states within a 200-mile offshore zone need to have the sovereign right to use sea resources while recognising the freedoms of overflying navigation and cable laying for the other countries: the conference is scheduled to end on September 17. On the eve of Kissinger-Vorster meeting in Zurich major clashes between the blacks and the Police were on in South Africa: in Zurich nearly 1000 demonstrators marched through the city demanding both leaders to quit Switzerland: just before flying to Zurich Dr. Kissinger told reporters in London that this is the time to prevent the escalation of bloodshed.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7: Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, told a meeting of teachers in New Delhi that the government proposed to amend the Constitution to incorporate a set of fundamental duties for citizens which will bring about a peaceful revolution in the country. Scientists after examining the first colour pictures sent by Viking II from Mars said the colour of the planet is likely to be red all over. Presidents of Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Botswana met in Dar Es Salaam to determine whether US State Secretary Dr. Kissinger's attempts to mediate in South African crisis was worthwhile: all five presidents agreed that negotiations in Rhodesia were useless and that the only way to independence was through armed struggle: meanwhile, Dr. Kissinger had his last day of talks in Zurich with South African Prime Minister, John Vorster. The American led United Nations Command and North Korean officials signed an accord in Panmunjon designed to prevent any further border incidents such as the clash in which two US army officers were killed last month. Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu will pay an official visit to Yugoslavia from September 8 to 11 on the invitation of President Tito. Mrs. Thatcher, leader of the British Opposition Conservative Party, had talks with Prime Minister Ali Bhutto of Pakistan in Islamabad: it is understood the discussions were mainly on the immigration problems in Britain. Jordan announced yesterday that the US will supply Jordan with a 540 million dollar Hawk missile system financed by Saudi Arabia: King Hussein thanked Saudi Arabia for financing to strengthen the Jordanian armed forces. Increased fighting is reported from all front in Lebanon. On the recommendation of the Attorney General President Ford decided to continue Mr. Clarence Kelly as head of the Federal Bureau of Investigations despite disclosures that he received gifts from subordinates and used government material to decorate his house.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: Following clashes between West Indians and Englishmen in Notting Hill on August 28, 325 policemen were injured: the West Indians at the time of the incidence were celebrating a festival: several people were arrested. Yugoslavia has proposed to the UNESCO general conference to be

held in Nairobi next month: that faster and better organised international action should be taken for restituting cultural assets and archives to the countries they have been taken out during colonial rule or otherwise illegally. Dr. Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, said that he is in favour of a conference to discuss disarmament as urged by the Non-aligned Summit held in Colombo. A USSR made Soviet Mig 25 also known as the 'Foxbat' flew into the Hakodate airport in Japan and Japanese Foreign Ministry informed the Soviet Government the pilot of the Mig 25, First Lieutenant Viktor Ivanovich Belenko, wished to defect to the United States: the officials further said that the pilot of the Mig did not wish to meet Soviet Embassy officials: Soviet Embassy officials requested an interview with the officer and access to the plane, as well as asking for the Mig to be returned to the Soviet Union. US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, told reporters in Paris after a meeting with French President Valery Giscard D'Estaing that he received the support of France to solve the crisis of independence for Namibia and for majority rule in Rhodesia: Dr. Kissinger also said that he briefed French President on the talks he had with South African Prime Minister, John Vorster. Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, said that his country would give the Laotian People support in the building of a free life and will do everything to develop relations of friendship, solidarity and Co-operation with the Republic of Laos: he said this at a dinner given in Moscow in honour of the visiting Prime Minister of Laos.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 9: Government of India has ordered that all press reports on the family planning program should be passed by censor authorities before publication. President Ford personally decided the United States should grant political asylum to the Soviet pilot who landed his supersonic Mig 25 in Japan: according to a White House spokesman President Ford has also decided to leave the fate of the plane with the Japanese government. A UN spokesman said that the Security Council will meet on Friday to consider the application of Vietnam for membership in the UN: last year the United States twice vetoed UN membership for both North and South Vietnam: meanwhile, President Ford in a news briefing in the White House said that North Vietnam should provide a full accounting for all Americans missing in action during the Vietnam war without further delay. US Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, told a news briefing in Hamburg, West Germany, that Tanzania has requested him to make a diplomatic mission in Africa to speed black majority rule in Rhodesia and the independence of South West Africa (Namibia): though Dr. Kissinger declined firmly to say whether he would make such a visit but US officials indicated that the mission is likely to materialise. US Democratic Party's Presidential candidate, Jimmy Carter, said yesterday that he is against any move to amend the Constitution to be an abortion. The three men who hijacked a Dutch airliner to Cyprus still remained in Cyprus after the release of all hostages: two of them wanted to go out of the country but many airlines refused to accommodate them without a Police escort: the third hijacker did not attempt to leave the country. Soviet News Agency, TASS, yesterday said that the statement by British Opposition Conservative leader, Mrs. Thatcher, that the Soviet naval buildup in the Indian Ocean was a threat to the

West as absurd and groundless. Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party's conservative members refused to co-operate with Premier Takeo Miki over the convening of a special session of the Parliament to discuss budget bills: anti-Miki members demanded that he should resign before the special session opened: they accused him of pursuing the Lockheed bribery scandal regardless of political consequences.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10: Chinese Communist Party Chairman, Mao Tse-tung (82), died at 9.40 p.m. yesterday (Sri Lanka time) according to Peking Radio: the New China News Agency too issued a statement on the death of Mao Tse-tung: the Agency said Chairman Mao died "because of the worsening of his illness and despite all treatment, although meticulous medical care was given in every way after he fell ill": loud-speakers throughout the streets announced the passing away of Chairman Mao and people gathered all over the streets to know the details: before announcing the news the Radio said that an important announcement would be made soon: according to observers the world over, the death of Mao gave deep uncertainties about the future of China and its relations with the rest of the world: it also left a deep gap in the Peking leadership which none of his subordinates can aspire to fill in terms of political or personal stature. Tokyo Police reported that the pilot of the Soviet Mig, Viktor Ivanovich Belenko, left for United States for asylum; Lt. Belenko was a first class passenger on a flight bound for Honolulu; Los Angeles and Minneapolis. President Ford commenting on the death of Chairman Mao said he was a great man of vision and said his death was tragic: he also said Chairman Mao had the vision and imagination to open the doors so that the United States and the People's Republic of China could do things in a new era and a new way: Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, described Chairman Mao as an eminent statesman who led the resurgence and the progress of the Chinese: British Premier, James Callaghan, said China's position in the world today was a memorial to Chairman Mao's unique achievement: Dr. Henry Kissinger said the late leader was a tremendous figure and it is too early to predict what the effect of his death would be: Japan said with the death of Mao Tse-tung its relations with China would enter a new phase. A vast memorial rally is to be held in Peking's Tien An Men (heavenly peace) square on September 18 to mourn the death of Chairman Mao: the rally will be the culmination of a week-long mourning period starting on Saturday.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11: An Indian airlines Boeing 737 was hijacked to Lahore, Pakistan, after it flew from Bombay for refuelling: the hijackers were overheard to say that they wanted the plane to be flown to Mecca, Saudi Arabia: two of the hijackers were armed with German made automatic pistols. Two airlines believed to be carrying a total of 62 people collided high above North Western Yugoslavia and all aboard were killed: the planes were reported to be a British airways chartered Trident airliner carrying 54 passengers and a DC 9, of the Yugoslav airliner with 108 aboard. Pakistan officials said that they are negotiating with the hijackers of the Indian plane to release all the hostages: there are more than eighty passengers in the plane according to officials. Prime Minister, John Vorster of South Africa, addressing a provincial congress of the ruling National Party said "there will be no sharing of power": he was applauded by a crowd of over 6,000: according to Reuters this

statement appeared to slam the door shut on the power sharing aspirations of South Africa's black majority: Mr. Vorster is scheduled to address a secret meeting of all Government Ministers, National Party members of Parliament and Members of the Provincial Council: this meeting is expected to brief the members on the meeting Dr. Vorster had with Dr. Henry Kissinger: in an anti-apartheid rioting in Cape Town two days ago over 200 people died. French President Valery Giscard D'Estaing, paying tribute to Chairman Mao Tse-tung said the late Chinese leader rescued his country from humiliation and restored it to the central place acknowledged by history: Pakistan declared a seven-day mourning on the death of Chairman Mao. Soviet Mig pilot Lt. Belenko arrived in Los Angeles yesterday and he was soon hustled into a waiting limousine from the Boeing 747 jet which brought him from Tokyo. Netherland Government relieved Prince Bernhard of all military posts by Royal decree because of his involvement in the Lockheed scandal. Indonesia yesterday said it was no longer appropriate for the United Nations to consider the question of East Timor following the territory's integration into Indonesia.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12: Pakistani security forces staged a commando-style raid and captured six hijackers who hijacked an Indian Boeing 737 plane in Lahore: the hijackers had released all 71 remaining passengers held hostage aboard the plane. At the Kelfavik airport in Iceland an American airliner was hijacked by Croatian extremists: the TWA jet had fifty-four passengers and a crew of six: the six hijackers have ordered the plane to be flown to a destination unknown. Egypt and Sudan have announced they had agreed to provide facilities in their own countries for the ther's navy and air force, to deter or repulse aggression, according to the Middle East News Agency. South African government announced several concessions to the coloured community but rioting in Cape Town continued: the government announced coloureds would no longer have to use separate lavatories, wash rooms and waiting rooms in public buildings: the government also announced coloureds and Asians could also set up businesses outside designated coloured areas. Following the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung leaders of three Municipalities in China that directly came under the administration—Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin—have pledged their continued support to the Party's Central Committee: a report from Moscow said the Chinese Communist Party maintained its low-key treatment of the death of Chairman Mao. Yugoslavian President, Marshal Tito, called off a visit by French President, Valery Giscard D'Estaing, on doctors advice: the 84 year old President was also asked to cancel all appointments and to rest. Japanese military experts have been given permission to probe the secrets of the Soviet Mig 25 jet—the world's fastest combat plane, flown to Japan by a pilot who sought asylum in the US: Japanese Defence Department announced that US might be asked for advice during the course of investigations but will not be allowed for any personnel inspection of the plane: Lt. Belenko, the pilot of the Mig, told in America that he wanted to defect because there is no freedom under the Communist system in his country: until the diplomatic wrangle over the plane is settled the Mig will be in the hands of the Japanese. The US Senate approved a Bill to give Foreign Aid in a sum of 5.3 billion dollars to South Africa.

MARGINALIA

* Why Elections * Pay On Results * Capitals

by Bryan de Kretser

ELECTIONS. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike had some interesting things to say in regard to the election business. If, with the assistance of a few members of the Opposition, a two-thirds majority was assured a Constitutional change could be effected and the elections could be postponed. I have a sneaking desire that he succeeds in his quest for those extra votes, providing—that this business of the MP's letter be dealt with at once. Nowhere should it be possible for folks to get jobs, favours, land, etc. via the MP's frown or favour. It is the MP's letter which turns an otherwise useful servant of the People into a virtual despot. It is the MP's letter which serves to signal our own serfdom and immediate dependence on the MP for our very existence. Remove by law and growing public opinion this barbarous practice, and the MP fellows will be cut to size immediately. The chaps with the charisma to get things done, will serve as catalysts in their districts to bring in development miracles; the others will be ignored and slowly but surely die within, and the ordinary process of death will also intervene fairly soon.

But of course we cannot always wait until this death event takes place. Some measure should be devised to ensure that one third of the members of the National Assembly go out of office at regular intervals and elections could be held for other citizens of the land to take their place. It all sounds revolutionary. But seriously, there is much to be said against the present Parliamentary system. For one thing, few of our Parliamentarians have serious political principles which determine whether they will be UNP or SLFP.

Most of them would cheerfully change horses if they knew in advance which horse was going to win the race. Some of them do indeed, hazard a guess and start jumping. But whilst they are riding the horses, it is we the poor chaps, ordinary folks, whose powers the riders extol around election time

who really lose most when the race is over. What is really taking place right now is that those who have been penalised for backing the wrong horse are hoping that through the elections they may be given a chance to do to the present powers-that-be — what those powers-that-be are now doing to them. I hold that this whole spirit is wrong, that it is building hatred amongst our peoples, and that a serious division is taking place in this land, not only between Sinhala and Tamils, but in the Sinhala peoples themselves. And this UNP-SLFP business has done much to bring this state of things about. I can still remember a time when the leader of the Opposition seriously tried to unite the UNP and the SLFP. This meant that in his mind there was no serious political principle which stood in the way of such a reconciliation. Personalities then prevented the reconciliation. And personalities today also probably stand to benefit by a continuing UNP-SLFP struggle. But the struggle however beneficial to individuals, will not help this people, this nation. Go ahead; therefore, I say to Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike with your plans—but please I plead with you have the courage to take up the issue I have raised, and ban the MP's letter.

THE DEVELOPMENT BLOCK.

I keep coming back to this problem because I feel it is an important and perhaps decisive one. The Government has set up excellent structures at regional levels to assist farmers and planters generally. Yet the more the structures are improved through more appointments, training facilities and the like, the more we seem to get bogged down so that development does not take place.

Corruption is of course one obvious reason for this. Both planter and official alike put money first. Often the main aim of the planter chap is to collect the subsidy somehow. And the Government official also can usually be persuaded to pass the effort, however minimal, for payment purposes, if "we see to his comfort". I know one official who does not even bother to visit the planting sites; he sits down in some comfortable village cafe, drinks tea, and via some permanent contact chap does the business-progress is

reported as being satisfactory, the Government pays the subsidy and the contact chap and the official chap share the bribe.

But the whole business is more complicated. Officials, even the honest ones, appear to have a most deleterious influence on agricultural production generally. They appear to act as a cold frost which attacks the roots of trees and defeats growth. They have a strange and disturbing influence on human initiatives. These just get arrested. Plants wilt in the presence of officialdom. Why?

I think it has something to do with the fact that the official has no immediate or real stake in the venture he is supervising. He will get his pay each month, he will be paid travelling and the expense allowance whatever happens to the trees or the area he is supposed to look after. I believe this system is fatal to results. The planter, whether the chap in trousers or the simple village type, sees the getting of the subsidy as the chief end; the official collects the bribe if he is that kind of a chap, and certainly his pay at the end of the month.

Payment of both subsidy and allowance, the money which goes either to planter or official, ought to be tied up much more closely with results. The details do not need to concern us here-but in some way both parties must have a real live immediate interest in ensuring that plants grow and yield their fruit, or else they should get much less at the end of the month. We ought to pay for results, not pay them anyway.

ANURADHAPURA AS CAPITAL.

For many years, have been a kind of 'voice crying in the wilderness' that for national development we must make Anuradhapura the capital city. More and more folks are beginning to appreciate the need for de-centralisation. For us the Capital Colombo still serves to distract us from the main issues of national life. All the key chaps are in the metropolis. Rural life suffers consequently. We must reduce the attraction of Colombo.

Anuradhapura should be made the political capital, Kandy the cultural one, Trinco perhaps the Tourist one, and Colombo would be the commercial one. In this

way we would deliberately attract far more of the creative native talent to participate in national life. Colombo is for the bulk of our peoples, despite its attraction, a foreign city. The village yokel feels ill at ease in a city where English commands the entrance to all significant portals. He freezes up inside of him, feel lost and a stranger.

For the robust development of art, music, economics and social life, we must move out. And instead of giving mere lip service to Buddhist values, we must prove our allegiance by building out in the country enduring symbols of this faith. Colombo is, for all its attractions, a simple common cosmopolitan city. And for the transformation of this land, we require a people transformed by a faith, not merely traditional, but alive with the awareness of need and the certainty of being able to meet that need.



REVIEW

The Crucifixion

by Jayantha Somasundaram

AT THE OUTSET itself let us reiterate the fact that we firmly believe that the Third World is entitled to an independent media, and that we are fully aware of the attempts by the Western media to discredit and distort events in our countries. Our *bona fides* in this field has been adequately established in the past to require no repetition. None of this, however, blinds us to the monumental folly of justifying everything that comes out of a Third World media that merely pretends to be nationalist.

For quite some time now we have been merely substituting one evil with another. The Ceylonese press had its faults, no two words about it, but in the process of rectifying these faults we have degenerated to a much more pathetic situation and are left with a press that is an example of how stultifying a bureaucratic stranglehold can be on an essential means of communication.

The *Tribune* has already dealt with many of the lessons that we have to learn from the disaster that

was the Press Centre during the non-aligned conference. What remains to be added is the state of the relationship that exists between professional journalists and the Information Bureau. This was brought to a climax in the incident which took place at the height of the conference when the News Editor of the country's principal English Language Weekly was stripped of his accreditation.

No doubt, there were faults on both sides. But what is of significance is the state of hostility and incompatibility that exists between the press and the authorities. The bureaucracy wants a docile press, the existence of a large, fawning press encourages them to believe that this is possible, given just a little more arm twisting. But if we accept the fact that mass communication is an expression of a states of awareness among the people at large, and that people in any democracy are entitled to hold and profess diverse opinions, then we have to ask ourselves the question whether as a nation we have become so politically apathic as to permit the elimination of freedom of expression.

Hard on the heels of this incident at the Press Centre came the fictitious article in *The Observer*, indicating the depths to which the docile press, or the kept press as it is sometimes called, would sink to cater to the illusions of grandeur of the powers that be. It is tragic that such a significant section of the press is today confining itself to catering to this kind of megalomania.

The hilarity of the situation however, is that two senior editors who do not belong to *The Observer* were hauled over the coals in an attempt to distract us from the true nature of the crisis that prevails in our national media.

This is not the place to advance a defence of this journalist or that. But it is not without its relevance to say that consistent harassment that has now led to crucifixion has become an unfortunate weapon in the hands of power crazed bureaucratic-elite. The case of Mr. Philip Cooray is worth recounting. We have been one of his harshest critics in the days when he was editor of *The Observer*. Nonetheless we never believed that

anything noble could accrue from kicking him into the *Ceylon News* in an attempt to make him a tame-journalist. What is remarkable is the fact that he had the courage to lump it and a stick to this post when the path of least resistance would have been to throw in the sponge and find a berth elsewhere. Not content with this the establishmentarians have now thought fit to finally nail him to the cross.

No doubt we need a press that is responsive to the times. But the times must be times of enlightenment. Bandaranaike would say that "rivers never flow backwards", nor must we suppose that we can retroactively ourselves into the dark regions of the past. No new generation of journalists can step into the arena of mass media, competent to contribute to national development and to foster a higher cultural consciousness, in an atmosphere that is characterised by witchhunts. Nor can minds develop in insulation. Isolating us from criticism from the west solves nothing—it merely provides a sellers market for the stooge media. For example, the *Newsweek*, of 23rd August was held up by the Customs while they deliberated whether or not the half-wits that they take the reading public for, could be exposed to that magazine's analysis of the non-aligned conference. The new Czars tell us not merely what to do, but what we should think, say and write—and woebetide anyone who refuses to don the straight jacket.



BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—91

Village Scrapbook (VII Revisions)

By Herbert Keuneman

KANTALAI WATER. The Kantalai kello, who have just been and gone back, having had a brief vacation are indignant with me for (they say) having misunderstood their letters and given readers —this, apparently, is what most disturbs them—the idea that they are inaccurate reporters. 'But', says Bisso forgivingly, 'don't put yourself out about it: it must be difficult for you to understand quite what we write in Sinhalese.'

Fiddlesticks! Now I am a little indignant, too! Pandit I may not be, but I understood their Sinhalese all right: what must have caused the misunderstanding—there has, indeed, evidently been one; though a minor one in my estimation—is their disorganized para-graphination: they mention their own local drought and the utter depletion of their (Mahaveli) river, and then their local rains and the welcome filling up of their tanks in the same paragraphs and expect me not to connect the one observation with the other!

However, to set the record straight: this is how, the girls tell me, things at their *vyapara* took place and now are. There were heavy and, though welcome, unseasonable local rains but the tanks had filled from the suddenly swollen Mahaveli. 'Our rains had ceased.' one of the girls told me, 'and our tanks were still only puddles of rain water; but we went to sleep one night wishing it would rain and rain some more, enough at least to swell the many small puddles into one big one which the sun would not find it so easy to evaporate; and when we woke next morning, though it hadn't rained at all in the night they had swollen into a very big pool, a real lake; and it had come from the river. So you see?'

I am not clear what she expected me to 'see' from this purely fortuitous piece of serendipity: I rather think, however, that she felt I had been in some sense disloyal in having in a previous article questioned the viability of 'their' scheme as a consequence of the rape of the river which should have insured it.

I still do. I still think that the fact that the scheme was saved this year by a providential up-country rainfall at a season when nobody could have counted on such a thing—I drove that way on 29 August, and there were the above-the-dam waters at Polgolla backed brimming up the Hunnas Oya tributary below the Matala/Katugastota Road as far as Ambatenna and beyond; the witness of a wetness not common in August in the Kandy region—should not lull anybody's criticism of an irresponsible political 'gundu' nor persuade anyone responsible for the success of the Kantalai schemes to lessen his efforts towards every

possible precaution for the future. I still think that to create a new Mahaveli by the facile process of robbing the water from the course of the old was an irresponsible act; that however pragmatic—shameful word—politically, it was arbitrary and despotical toward the second-class dependents on the river south and east of its old course; and that until steps are taken to let both Mahaveli flow full (which CAN be done by building those upper course reservoirs which were the heart of the original plan and were cynically neglected as not immediately politically profitable) a potential boon to the country for all time under whatever government will remain a monument to one government's self-seeking.

This I tried to make my *duvas* appreciate; for I do not hold it necessary that to be properly aware of and grateful for a benefit conferred a beneficiary should be careless of the benefactor's peccability. If a government does excellent things and deplorable things, it is right that each should be recognized and proportionably assayed. But I am not sure that I 'registered': the girls are so taken up with the renewed promise of all they had looked forward to that their full tanks—now only a foot below spill level—again hold forth that, ignoring the fact that they are only luckily and accidentally full, they are willing to ignore also depersonalized matters of priorities and policy. I fear the same, and in perhaps greater degree of self-centredness, in the majority of our voters: *I have benefited, and the price—or the future—is not my responsibility.* The career politician fears no such attitude: he counts on it!

Never mind. The girls are undoubtedly happy, and the prospects for their *vyapara* seem set fair. For 1976.

ONE WAY TO MAKE A LITTLE MONEY ON THE SIDE.

I've been having second thoughts, too, about P's complaint concerning which also I wrote last week. Truth to tell, I was not at first disposed to take it or him very seriously. (As I last week explained, he has lately completed a clearing contract in connexion with large project not far away and claimed that he had been mulcted in a considerable sum when it came

to the point of getting paid of the work done). Knowing P, I was satisfied that the amount he said he had been cheated of could not possibly be as much as he stated—it was a startling proportion of the value of his contract: but P always believes that considerable embroidery of the truth makes the truth look that much more impressive—and again, knowing P, I felt that had positions been reversed he would not have hesitated to benefit himself by much the same sort of squeeze he was complaining about just because he was on the squeezed side and fancied that I had the influence to get him off unsqueezed altogether. Whereas, in fact, I was not a little pleased that he should be choked with a little of the medicine he had not infrequently administered to me. So P, as I reported, has been 'angry with' me; because I would not support a petition he proposed to address to a Big Noise for the righting of his wrong.

Since then, I have had what seems to me good reason to change my attitude considerably; though not, perhaps, so much towards P whom I still regard as something of a twister. For a few days ago I had another complaint of precisely the same nature from a visitor who is P's very antithesis.

Kalu Banda *mudalali*—I shall call him that—is amongst the most upright villagers I know. Despite being a *mudalali*, that much-vilified breed of man. One instance will do. When the price of petrol suddenly rose so ridiculously high, Kalu Banda raised the charge for the car which he owns and hires from Rs. 12 for a trip to Galgamuwa (8 miles) to Rs. 20; just as every other owner did. But his price stayed there. Everyone else, in a short time, was trying it on: at Rs. 22, 25, even 30; and the price has dropped to Rs. 25—or Rs. 20 with a lot of bargaining—only because nobody would hire cars at such prices, nobody could, since every other price had shot up as well. But Kalu Banda had worked out a reasonable profit, and stayed with it. I asked why, during the Rs. 30 period. He simply said: 'Rs 20 is enough.' The very model of a *mudalali*, do you agree?

Well, when this model *mudalali* called to see me the other evening with a complaint similar to P's

(save that it rang truer) and asked couldn't I do anything to help, I was constrained to wish I could; and I have, since, been, considering ways and means. I confess that when P suddenly turned up after a pointed absence of several weeks while Kalu Banda was still talking with me, my partisanship was somewhat shaken. This was clearly a pre-arranged convergence. But as I listened to Kalu Banda's story and compared it with P's it became evident that the latter's exaggerations did not invalidate the conclusion that something more deliberate, cold-blooded and specifically and efficiently organized than a mere rake-off had been going on. P's claim that he had 'lost' Rs. 10,000 on a 25-acre contract—he later cut it down to Rs. 2,000 he was actually out-of-pocket—obviously hyperbolized in a bid to engage my sympathy in the typical 'P' manner, had in fact put me off altogether by its patent impossibility. But now, here was as trustworthy a person as Kalu Banda *mudalali* alleging the same sort of dishonest deprivation albeit on a much more likely scale. He, he said, had lost Rs. 1,800 actually out-of-pocket on a 77-acre contract. Moreover, he was able to explain how the cheat (at an organized and regular level) seemed to be contrived. It seems undeniable that some very dirty work is going forward; and I feel I ought to do something, as what reasonably responsible citizen ought not? But what can I do?

I can, at least, publish the general outline of this racket—it is nothing less—in *Tribune* and hope that someone with the authority and the will to investigate will read this article and be moved to move in the matter. I shall be glad to reveal to him all I know and to furnish him with at least two witnesses whose real names I shall divulge, as I shall divulge whatever I possess of any other relevant knowledge, to anybody with plausible motivation and satisfactory credentials.

It appears that in this kind of operation you do nothing so crude as demand an ordinary bribe or take a simple cut with the attendant risk of being exposed. Instead, you set up a Contractor of Straw—your own man; or merely a name in a book—and that is to begin with. You then welcome all the real contractors you can, and farm

your jungle between them. The promised rate for clearing it is Rs. 500 (I think) per acre of standing wood and Rs. 300 (I think) per acre of scrub jungle. The precise rates are not relevant.

You allot the contracts on the basis of a rough survey (but you do not emphasize its roughness) both of the total extent to be cleared and of the proportion of each kind of clearing the work will require. On such a basis you sometimes execute—but, sometimes, omit—a signed document: at this stage the village contractor is so eager to begin what seems is going to be a most lucrative labour that he will not quibble over formalities; if he is difficult, he just gets no contract, that's all.

It is after the clearing is all done that the pay-off comes. You have your officer whose business it is to pass the contracts inspect the sites, finally measure the land cleared under each category, and calculate the monies due. He finds that the 100 acres allotted to Contractor A is in fact only 77 acres (this was what happened to Kalu Banda *mudalali*) and the 30 acres allotted to Contractor B is in fact only 25 acres (this was, he says, what happened to P) and that the proportion of heavy clearing had been originally similarly over-estimated and that the actual work done is in fact so much and the payment due is in fact suddenly so unsuspectingly little! What to do! And, as I understand it, there is no appeal: the theodolite does not lie!

'But this isn't the end of this shocking affair.' The inspector doesn't pocket his money; there isn't any money for work not done, so nobody can be accused of taking it. Yet, THE WORK HAS BEEN DONE! It was all allowed for in the original survey; and the village contractor has done it! he isn't credited with it, is all. It is credited to the Contractor of Straw. PAID to him, too! *cui bono?*

I suggested to Kalu Banda that if he was sure of all this he institute legal action, have the extents checked by an authorized Surveyor. But he wouldn't risk the costs of that in the absence, as he pointed out, of official landmarks.

You can fool a lot of the villagers a lot of the time, even the comparatively fly ones, and make a nice

profit from it if you are flier. And if nobody supervises you very closely.



FORTY YEARS AGO
IN A TEA ESTATE—8

The V. A. Cometh

By Ina Trimmer

PREPARATIONS were completed and everything set for the Visiting Agent. The day dawned wet and dreary. The fine weather that we had been blessed with since our arrival broke suddenly. Soft night rains and the chain of jewel strung days blazing with sunshine were blotted out by a mighty grey hand. Rain pattered down all night on the tagram roof, noisy and disturbing. Morning brought no relief. The heavens had opened their floodgates.

"Break of the monsoon", said my husband. "You can set your clock by it. You are lucky to be here and not at the Big Bunglow."

He woke extra early that day. Nothing must disturb or hurry his morning session at the tea table, but I, the incorrigible liar, snuggled into my blanket and enjoyed another hour of the best sleep of all, in my opinion—sleep stolen from Time, from what belonged to the day. At nine-thirty Teddie set out to meet the V.A. at the Gap. This was his custom always. Not only was it a gesture of welcome, but in coming down they inspected the Upper Division, the slopes of which in places began almost on a level with the Gap. In a drenching icy shower he went down the steps to Mount George, his other horse, a bay. Mary was too high-spirited to be ridden on such a day. She was a one-time race horse but George was quick and easily controlled. My husband was certainly dressed for the occasion. No ordinary rain could touch him but this was no ordinary rain, and I wondered whether, he would keep dry in spite of his heavy raincoat and sou'wester which covered him as far as his shoulders.

At home everything was ready. The Beef Box and the stuff from Kandy had arrived the evening before. I was aghast when I saw the quantity of foodstuffs unpacked.

"Town Mouse" that I had been. I never stacked up for more than two days. But here was enough to feed the whole estate: fish, mutton, pork in prodigious quantities. Besides these, the Beef Box too had brought in from Kandy, vegetables, butter, cheese, coffee, more fish-pomfret, my husband's favourite, to be filleted and fried a golden brown in breadcrumbs and fruit. The back verandah, where everything was unpacked, looked like a Sunday fair.

My husband had asked for a lunch of cold lamb and salad but Arumugam thought otherwise. With many years of experience behind him, he advised me, "Doraisani, what cold lunch to-day! Raining, raining, all the time raining. Everything cold outside, so what for putting cold inside also. I give nice hot chicken pie. I making puff pastry like Mrs. Gray taught me. All the gentlemen liking chicking pie—my chicken pie."

"But Arumugam," I said dubiously, worried to death over this important matter—"What will master say? Will he be angry?"

"Aiyo! What for angry if making something nice! Anyone can cook cold lamb, but my chickie pie, Doraisani."

Dramatically he spread his hands. I was convinced.

"All right! Make your chicken pie." To myself I added—"And the blood fall on your own head."

Fidgety and restless. I walked about. A hundred times I inspected the V.A.'s room. It looked positively cosy. A white Muslim blind closely gathered covered the lower part of the window, and long curtains hung from above. They were the piece de resistance of my preparations. I found them in the old black box amongst all the other paraphernalia; of heavy brown material with wide bands at top and bottom of black, green and orange, a most attractive trimming, improvised holders of large two inch nails held the pole from which the curtains were suspended. What a difference they made to the barn-like room! I surveyed my handiwork with great satisfaction. A vase of yellow roses stood on the dressing table, and rugs from other lands brought by my husband on his many trips overseas made gay contrasts on the cane matting.

Arumugam was busy in the kitchen. I dare not disturb him. Water was sizzling away in large cauldrons for I knew that my husband's first call would be "hot baths". He was great on his "hot baths," his first gesture of hospitality. I too was ordered one the night I arrived!

The hours were so slow in passing. I looked at the time again. Eleven o'clock! Another hour at least; my husband had warned me they could not possibly finish all they had to do before twelve. It would even be later. Patience was never one of my virtues, so I fidgetted and fussed. Then at last I heard the sound of horses coming up the steep path from the factory, their hooves clattering on the stone-paved last rise. I saw my husband jump off George, the bay. Behind was the V.A. on his own horse which he sent ahead of him wherever he went. This was the custom; his horse accompanied him on all his "visits" together with bags of horsefood and the horsekeeper.

A tall, well-built, soldierly figure climbed the steps which had now turned into a cascade. Rivulets ran from my husband and the V.A. as they entered, making lakes on the verandah.

"Sunny, this is Mr. Williams, my V.A."

"How d'you do", he said in a very grave and decisive voice. With such emphasis on the "do" that I really didn't know what to say. I kept silent though that emphatic "do" surely needed a reply. However, it was evident he didn't expect one for he followed it up with "What is your definition of an optimist?"

I didn't know what to answer, so again I kept silent, so again he didn't expect me to reply for he answered the question himself.

"An optimist", he said, "in my opinion, is someone who comes to Brae with one pair of shoes, and one rincoat."

We laughed.

"Don't worry Williams, we'll soon remedy all that. I have at least half a dozen rain coats, and as for shoes" my husband looked down at his feet and so did Mr. Williams.

"My dear Trim" he said, "your shoes won't fit me. Mine are real beetle-crushers."

We all looked down. My husband's size-six foot was like a pigmy's compared with the V.A.'s

"Never mind" I said. "We'll soon get that right for you. Change into slippers as quickly as you can and we'll have your shoes dried by the factory furnace."

"Hot baths" shouted my husband.

"Palainimuttu, hot baths for Agentu Master and me".

Mr. Williams gave me a look. "There he is—hot bath! He evidently believes that cleanliness is next to godliness or does he put it first of all. But it's certainly most welcome now. We are both frozen. That, and er....."

"Hot cup of tea" said my husband.

"Tea er, er..er".

I could see what he wanted to say so I interjected with—"er damned," under my breath. He heard me.

"Quite right"! he said in that decisive voice of his. "Quite right! This husband of yours is a great admirer of his own wares. But not all of us are. Once when I was

Europe's Top-secret Invention

Madras, Sept. 8.

Invention of a machine that can perfectly reproduce the currency of any country, any bank draft or document is today's "most closely guarded secret of Europe's, the former Inspector General of Police. Mr F. V. Arul, said yesterday.

"I will let you in on this secret. This machine has been developed in one of the European countries and its reproduction of any currency or document is so perfect that it is impossible to tell the original from the duplicate". Mr. Arul told a meeting organised by the Institute of Public Relations and Management while speaking on Interpol.

Not only the Interpol, the world Governments were alarmed by the development of this machine and the country which had done it had been asked to keep it a top secret so that unscrupulous elements might not acquire it, Mr. Arul said.

—Samachar

visiting him we had the usual hot baths and then sat down to talk shop. There he was old Trim with his tea tray and I had a great array of whisks and brandies before me, but nary a one was I offered. While he drank cup after cup of tea I looked on thirstily. At last this torture was unbearable. Look here Trim old man, aren't you going to offer me a drink?" I asked him.

Teddie looked abashed.

(To be Continued)



FROM AD 870

Muslim Shrines In Sri Lanka

By T. M. G. Samat

Visitors from Muslim countries were many during the Summit month of August. Not many would have been aware the fact that Muslim have lived here from around AD 870. The island had the message of fraternity and equality before the Maldives, Pakistan, South and North India and the Far East. Very much in agreement with this view is the *Tarish-a-Farish*. Muslim Shrines in Sri Lanka are numerous. They are to be found in the lanes in cities and little known villages like Ampe and in small towns and are ample testimony of the tolerance of Buddhists matched by the peace in Islam.

Robert Knox commenting on the harmony between the two communities states, "Nor are the Sinhalese charitable only to their poor and particularly to Moorish beggars who are Mohammedans by religion. These have a temple in Kandy. A certain former Sinhalese King gave this temple this privilege—that every freeholder should contribute a ponnam (a silver coin struck by the King) to it. They very confidently, when they beg, said they came to fulfill the people's charity."

Just a little over 100 years ago the Maha Nayake Thero of Asgiriya temple offered land for the construction of a mosque in Kandy. In his letter, the Maha Nayake Thero stressed that the offer was free from all restrictions in the practice of Islamic rites. The founder of the mosque was however unable

to avail himself of the generous gift but it need hardly be said how much this act of goodwill was appreciated.

COLOMBO CENTRAL, for its size, has more Muslim Shrines than many other parts of the city. There are two behind Maradana Nursing Home. One in Clifton lane, Dematagoda, another a little more than a stone's throw from the offices of Tribune close to the roundabout in Slave Island two in Colpetty and the most famous of them all (associated with a woman oil monger's miracle) is in Lipton's circus. Many of these shrines are patronised by all communities; the one in Lipton's circus was patronised by more than one distinguished person among them were C. A. Lorensz and Sir P. Ramanathan.

The sanctity associated with some of these places is because of a Saint having stayed here (as in Kurugala in Balangoda where Qutub Mohiyaddeen Abdul Cader Jailani the foremost Muslim Saint, an Iraqi is believed to have spent a period of time here.) But almost all these shrines are the last resting places of holy men who came on pilgrimage to Adam's Peak and stayed behind to spend the rest of their days in Muslim concentrations here.

THE MEERA MECCAM Mosque in Kandy, which commemorates the Muslim saint Seyed Shahulhameed, whose last resting place is at the famous Nagoor mosque in India. This saintly person came on a pilgrimage to Adam's Peak with another saintly person. The latter stayed behind while the former went back to the sub-continent. In Kandy, a pagoda festival, a major event takes place in the island's Muslim Calendar annually at this mosque in commemoration of Saint Seyed Shahulhameed.

How each shrine was identified is its history in itself and perhaps the most recent is the shrine of Husseni Bee Bee in Slave Island. In the year 1875, the priest of Wekande mosque here, the late Khateeb Noordeen Tayif Hadjar, engaged some workmen to clear the site upon which some construction work was to be carried out. In the course of the work of these workmen they found some tombstones. The inscription on one indicated that it had been erected over the grave of a Pattini

woman by the name of Husseni Bee Bee. The priest had the grave fenced off and took steps towards keeping the place clean.

STRANGE OCCURENCES took place here subsequently. A voice from the grave drew the attention of a Tamil woman cutting grass in the vicinity of the grave. The voice said "Touch not that cow." The woman much frightened fell unconscious. The animal was in the proximity groaning. Shortly after it was delivered of a calf. The Muezzin of the mosque subsequently one night was asleep when he was awakened by someone tapping him on his shoulder. He saw a figure which said "I am Husseni Bee Bee, the Alamaram Awliya." There was a much worried Muezzin. Should he tell others or should he not? But as the day came he resorted to the line of least resistance.

The next night the Muezzin was awakened again by the same figure. He saw it dressed in white "You have failed to deliver my message" said the figure. A very much frightened Muezzin rushed to the house where the Khateeb lived.

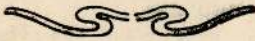
The Khateeb had gone to Alutgama and that was how one of the Trustees at whose house the Muezzin knocked came to learn of the whole episode. The following morning the Khateeb returned and he was informed of all that had taken place.

ACCOMPANIED by the Trustees, the Khateeb proceeded to the grave. He took with him a wick in a cup of cold water and lit it when he came to the grave. It continued to burn for over half an hour in the cold water and a crowd collected and wondered at the phenomenon.

Not long after a woman employed at the Commercial Company on her way to work suddenly took ill near the gates of the mosque when passing the gates. She moved to where the grave was sited in pain and threw herself on it imploring the Saint for relief from her affliction which had come so suddenly. She called for the planting of a green flag on the grave and since one was not available at the time a white flag was used instead for the purpose. The woman was soon after relieved of her affliction and was able to go back home.

Another instance where the Saint's intercession was sought concerned the sister of A. C. Sumps a well known figure in Slave Island who suffered a disease in the eye which had defied treatment. That night the mother in a dream was informed that she should take some leaves from a certain plant growing near the head of the grave and the juice squeezed out from these leaves used in the diseased eye. The sick eye responded to the treatment. On the 10th day of the Muslim month of Zul Quda (the 11th of the Muslim Calendar) a "Thalifathiya" is conducted here annually.

The places of these shrines are places of Muslim concentrations established long before the Portuguese came to the Island.



SAFARI

Coconut Country

By Alkardi Mugana

There is a map showing the tea, rubber and coconut areas of Ceylon in colour that is attractive. My foray from the estate last week-end was in the Kalutara and Beruwala direction. All the people I met in the Beruwala region, my night there, made it their task to warn me not to be alone anywhere, or I would surely be robbed, advice which I had perforce to ignore if I was not to make my journey a farce. A coconut region, this, there was a difference between here and where I had come from, no large estates as far as I could see, nor the barbed-wire fences that make a night journey over there so lonely. Lonely this was in a different way, just its remoteness from the main road. I felt there was more of a threat in the very warnings I was given, from the people who gave them than in an other wise seemingly innocuous, empty, sleepy, barren place that I found myself in that night. Later the place became alive enough for me to find some people to show me the place where I wanted to go. I was away before dawn, unfortunately, to find a place to get to mass. At my third church I was lucky. The breakfast where I had slept, and a leisurely move

northwards towards Colombo, where I arrived in the evening. Then another night foray, a friendly greeting from a man I had not seen for years, a guide, and another house. Some of the family were in. My arrival seemed to be providential. I do not know how things would have worked out if I had not come at all, but I might have poured oil on troubled waters by my arrival that night and not the next morning; and, in truth, if I had left my journey till the next day, I might not have gone at all. As seemed to be my wont just then, I was again away before dawn, this time to keep an appointment, and when I was able to meet them all again the next day, the situation seemed easier.

Tragedy had struck even a year earlier, in the shape of a suicide, of which I have always had a horror. I do not know what it was, but I missed the atmosphere that I have always attached to such places. The cause of that tragedy, I was told, had been a land dispute. These who have read the newspapers will have learned that death from even a judicial hanging is not instantaneous, and if a man does not lose consciousness at once, he may well have time to show some remorse and contrition, and it is the final moment of a man's life that determines his destination. Prayer by another can even bring a man to consciousness again long enough to re-arrange his dispositions, his peace with God. My third night on this long foray had to be spent in yet another place, and I did not find the place I was looking for even with the help of a most selfless guide; but thanks to the fact that he stayed with me, after constantly changing his mind about leaving me and going home, and all this, if I remember correctly, unsolicited, I was able to find a place to stay. The presence of my guide must have stood surety for me, for after my third unsuccessful expedition in as many half-hours, I decided to try to call it a day, or rather a night, and the people where I was then let me stay. Then my St. Raphael departed. I think I made new friends.

We have been having a quiet time on the estate. The clearing of the boundary in the subsidiary crop area went on apace, and a part, which has never been cleared, was cleared. Our factor here is

away, and his son deputised, taking sure charge of the labour and doing just as good a job. He worked with his gang of men and women, and a happy family they were. Later he did some very vigorous dancing to celebrate Christmas, and he invaded our front verandah, and when I placed my hand on his shoulder, I could not but wonder at the muscle of which he was made. This married lad is quite a character, as tough in mind as in body, but I hear he has a soft, malleable spot, too, fainting at the ticking off my brother-in-law gave him once, and not so long ago.

There is another section under a lad of similar age, a hard worker, intelligent, who leads well. His mother quite often works under him, when she is not leading the women gathering fallen nuts. We have some tall trees that cannot be picked with a kekka. Anyway we had an increase of seven thousand in the fallen nuts in the last pick, that is the nuts which fell of their own accord between the picks, and though our pick was over last week, in the four days since then we have already gathered our three hundred fallen nuts.

A man from the village was caught carrying off four nuts on the estate. When the superintendents chased him, he pulled out a knife, and as our man tried to get hold of him as he went through the fence, the thief threw a heavy pole and hit him across the head. One of our lads, hard-up for cigarette money, asked a boutique to make a bill out for a pound of the staples he had been sent to buy, but to parcel up only three-quarter of a pound, and he pocketed the change. Luckily the deputy superintendent spotted the short and the story came out.

A number of coconut leaves have been woven into cadjans, and a double-bullock cart made three journeys to bring all the cadjans in from near the pool where the weaving was done. Two men spent all day repairing their kitchen. One man was repairing a single bullock cart that had not been used for years. Tamarinds galore were shaken off a tree. Two men climbed an enormous trunk of a syembela tree without branches lower down, and once among the branches they shook the syembela or tamarind down. There large sacks were brought in, and that

was only the beginning. Each of these two men, when ascending the tree trunk, looked like climbers on the innominate on Great Gable, that fearsome looking crack on a bare rock face that only the best and most fearless of men climb in the English Lake District. Our countrymen were just as fearless in their own way.

Kuruminia had attacked, and they killed in a day, two young coconut trees some years old. As the Kotuwa, in which they were, had only just been cleared of its long-standing growth, and one of the trees was near the gate, one wonders why they were not reported and action taken. In another kotuwa, a tree far gone was saved, as we discovered that same day. We had not much hope for it when we treated it.

The paddy fields were watered with a pump. One of them had had urea applied to it that morning, and we wondered about a small parcel of urea that was found under some coconut leaves by the edge of the field, when the watering was being done. What was more serious was that it looked as if not all the paddy plants had received urea, and yet some if it had been brought back to the store. The man's explanation was that there had been dew on the ground when he had done the manuring at 9 a.m., and that the urea had melted on the wet parts of the field.

We had more men out cutting grass for the cattle. During the long dry spell there is not much grass anywhere, and yet when this dry spell was prolonged a year or two back, the cattle looked well right through it. We put it down to their easy access to the river. We have resorted to draconian measures without male buffaloes, starting them into submission, so that they can be yoked. Certain it is that if they are not tamed, there is only the butcher for them, which I would go to any lengths to avoid for such young animals. About those trees that were killed by Kuruminia, two men had to be put on burning them.

NEXT WEEK

- ON CATTLE IMPORTS

LETTER

*** Sinhala - Tamil**

Sir,

I read with great interest and concern the article in your *Tribune* No. 20 by Doctor R. W. C. Thambiah in reference to the (Ceylon Tamils). As far as I can see it is indeed a tragedy that we concern ourselves as Sinhalese, Tamils, Burghers, Muslims etc. The need of the moment as far as I can see is UNITY and SANITY irrespective of class, creed or race. This God-gifted Island of ours is too small though richly endowed to be divided regionally or otherwise. This country is blessed with most of the natural things needed for progress except for the separatist fallacies of its inhabitants. Why cannot we live as an intergrated nation, maintaining our different religions and customs while working together for the upliftment of the nation as a whole. I was sorry to see that such an eminent person as the author of the article referred as to who came here first, or, harked back to the contest between Elara and Dutugamunu calling it a stupid fight, while advocating UNITY. It is regrettable that at the same time he maintains that certain areas were indisputable Tamil areas. It is best in my opinion that everyone of us forget such separatist ideas and work together for the unity of the nation. The language problem can be settled by making the teaching of all three languages compulsory in schools at all levels. The urgent need is to join hands and work for the benefit of all. These controversies are originated in the fertile minds of our politicians of both sides who have only one eye to the benefit of themselves, and their tub-thumpers, and care not two hoots for the nation as a whole. Until such time as we entertain such politicians, so long will our nation drag itself along. We will achieve nothing worthwhile for the poor common man who is always in the majority whether he be Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim or burgher. Let us therefore discard such divisive ideas and join together in giving a better deal to the nation as a whole. When we look around us what do we see but chaos, penury,

unhappiness, frustration and extreme bitterness. It is certainly timely and urgent that we get together to arrest the decline of the nation which is fast gathering momentum for the final crash. It would be a pity if we were to permit such an inevitable end for everyone, while we still have a good chance of making this a proud and respected nation. I extremely regret that at a certain period of most recent origin the rolling politicians raised a (Sinhala only, Sinhala in 24 hours) cry whose reverberations and repercussions still echo and will continue to unless remedied. This has misled the younger generation into a false sense of pseudo nationalism, and some actually spurned and neglected the study of english as an unnecessary foreigners language foisted on us as a subjugated nation. But it is heartrending that these policies have not been strictly adhered to now, when every worthwhile profession calls for a credit in English. How do these politicians reconcile such contradictory ideas? Cannot the public see that they have been led up the garden path purely for the benefit of such politicians, their tub-thumpers and pall bearers. Where ever we look around us to day we see rampant corruption, bribery, and vote catching slogans. What we actually need to day are sane, honest, farthinking men. to lead us (Statesmen) and not slogan shouting politicians. In this every one of us can and should take a hand in separating the sheep from the goats. The time is at hand and that is election time to scop this eternal bickering whihc gets none of us anywhere. I, therefore say UNITY and SANITY NOW if we wish to see our future generations with a smile on their cherubic faces.

S. P. R. Fernando

"The Pinacle"
278, Kattuwa,
Negombo.
25.8.76

NEXT WEEK

- * POWER STRUGGLE IN CHINA
- * SEX MORES IN THE WANNI
- * MAHA PROSPECTS?

Confidentially

Packetted Meat— A Mirage

IS IT NOT A FACT that nobody has yet explained how the National Livestock Development Board was able to provide packetted meat during the Nonaligned Summit (just before and immediately after) at the price it did? That it is essential to know the dynamics and mechanics of the Board's meat packetting programme? That though a tight secrecy net has been woven around the whole operation, knowledgeable circles in the technological and bureaucratic world of Colombo (and Peradeniya) have begun to whisper about the manner in which the job was done? That *Tribune* has not been able to check on every single one of the facts mentioned below, but *Tribune* has good reason to believe that the information is correct? That if anything is wrong, and if the National Livestock Development Board or anyone else points out where we have been misinformed or misled, we will gladly publish the facts as they present them? That in the national interest *Tribune* feels that all this information (including gossip and whispers), which, has become available to us, should be made public? That though we are aware that other newspapers have also heard these "facts" it is doubtful whether they will want to tread the corns of certain VIPs who have taken credit (short-term) for solving the meat problem? That it would appear that for the purpose of providing packetted meat at cheap prices a Special Food Committee was set up? That 1,050 animals (one thousand and fifty animals) were released from Government farms for this purpose? That the distribution was somewhat as follows: 200 Burra/Burti buffaloes said to be positive brucellosis cases from Polonnaruwa/Thamankaduwa; 50 Burra/Burti buffaloes from the Ridiyagama farm; 250 Haryana from Nikaweratiya Farm, imported in 1971 at the cost of Rs. 1,350/-c.i.f. each (for some strange reason these animals were not distributed to farms or to Polonnaruwa as originally planned); 250 Sindhi and

Sindhi crosses from Polonnaruwa and stockades at Welikande; 300 from the upcountry area of which 200 were Freisians, Ayreshires and Jerseys from Dayagama Farm and 100 from miscellaneous farms? That it would be interesting to know why the National Livestock Development Board and the Food Committee picked on these animals for slaughter? Was it done by drawing lots? That it is likely that the Board will have a perfectly good explanation why these 1,050 animals in their prime in Government farms were chosen to feed a few people during the nonaligned Summit? That the choice of Government farm animals for slaughter has caused many technocrats to raise their eyebrows? That they know the standard cost of an animal from a Government farm must necessarily be very high? That an animal in a state farm is supposed to consume approximately 6 lbs of concentrates per day? That one animal is expected to consume 1 ton per annum and that this must cost at least Rs. 850 a ton? That most the animals slaughtered are believed to have been in government farms for about six years or more? That the cost of concentrates alone for each animal will be around Rs. 5,000? That to this must be added the cost of the animal, overheads plus capital amortisation? That in the past six to eight years almost Rs. 40 million has been spent on the Polonnaruwa Farm, 21 million at Kandekaduwa and 40 million at Ambawela/Bopatalawa? That is only to give an idea of the enormous sums spent at the farms? That it would be intriguing to know how the Board was able to fix the price of the packetted meat at Rs. 3 a pound (boneless)? That several other questions also arise from some of the facts mentioned? That it is reported (or rumoured) that some of the animals were positive brucellosis cases and the question arises whether it was safe or wise to distribute such meat to the public particularly to pregnant mothers? That an even more important question is whether a Government Board can condone the slaughter of buffaloes? That it is a moot point whether there is a law against the slaughter of buffaloes? That if it was permissible to slaughter and sell buffalo meat, was it not necessary to inform the consumers about the kind of meat

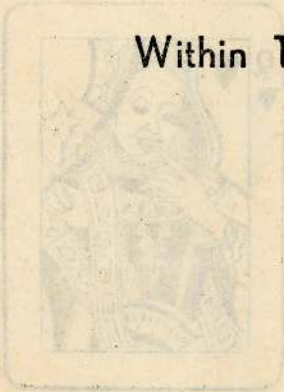
they were buying? That newspapers regularly report cases where magistrates impose fines on those who sell buffalo meat? IS IT NOT A FACT that nobody has yet asked the question whether the National Livestock Development Board has the further supplies and resources to continue its sales of packetted meat at Rs. 3 a lb (boneless)? That it would be interesting to know whether the Government farms are in a position to supply 1000 animals a month for the next one year? That if they cannot do this, will the Board tell the public how it proposes to continue the supply of packetted meat at Rs. 3 a lb (boneless)? That if the Board is not able to do this, it will be case of the National Livestock Development Board (—a pompously glorious name—) being caught with its pants down? That the packetted meat at Rs. 3 a lb (boneless) will go down to history as a Summit gimmick? That the few persons who were able to get packetted meat, once in a while, during the period when the meat was available, can count themselves the lucky ones (like those who win national lottery tickets)? That the Board should publish the total number of packets of boneless meat it sold to the general public (including the packets which went to the friends and relatives of those employed at the government selling points)? That the sales of these packets of boneless meat were confined to a few sales points in the city of Colombo alone? That those able to reach these points (mainly car owners and professional queue-standees) were only a tiny fragment of the meat eaters in the city of Colombo? That to all those who failed to get Rs. 3 packetted meat, the National Livestock Development Board (NLDB) has provided a first rate mirage of things that can never be? That those in the know say that the packetted meat is only a dream to be brought out when a gimmick was needed? That government-controlled papers and the SLBC do everything to make this gimmick-mirage look real—for a while? That it is also a question of importance whether the butcher who charges an honest Rs. 4 or Rs. 4.50 a lb for beef and Rs. 7.00 for mutton, or the NLDB, which dangles an occasional packet of Rs. 3 beef, is the real cheat?



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