

# TRIBUNE



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TRIBUNE

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## Letter From The Editor

EMERGENCY—WILPATTU is the latest in the emergency gimmicks that have descended on this country. *Tribune* has received cyclostyled circulars from one of its readers—we have five so far in hand—entitled EMERGENCY WILPATTU, dated 19th August, 1976, 25th August, 1976, 30th August, 1976, 10th September, 1976 and 20th September, 1976. If any have been issued after that—they must have been—they have not yet reached us. The worthy gentleman who has issued them with a touch of the condescending patronage of a saviour (reminiscent of the missionaries of old) is the controversial Thilo Hoffman who continues to boss the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (he is also the boss of the powerful Swiss firm Messers Baur & Co.). Readers will recall that *Tribune* had, some months ago, run a series of articles about some of the lamentable features of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society and how a group of young enthusiasts had failed to bring new life and thinking into the Society which is (and has been) dominated by "wildlife" vested interests. *Tribune* will once again revert to the affairs of this Society in the coming weeks because wildlife and nature protection is one of most urgent tasks before this country in the face of the continuing rape of our flora and fauna. In the meantime, the cyclostyled letters, (circulated mainly among business firms in the orbit of the Baur group—one of which has been good enough to send these letters to us), under the grandiose title EMERGENCY WILPATTU—call for attention and comment. The first circular, 19/8/76, begins on a highly personal note: "My wife and I have just returned after spending a few days at Wilpattu. The situation in regard to water is appalling. All villus are totally dry, except Kokkari and Lunuwila, both of which carry brackish water. Animals would drink this, but cannot approach due to vast expanses of sticky mud around the shrinking water surface....." The personal touch is the keynote of every circular: "As stated in my first note I returned to Wilpattu during the weekend, and was happy to be accompanied by Mr. Milton Aponso, Director of the Department of Wild Life Conservation. The situation has further worsened, with the entire park now being dry, except for the two saltwater villus and Maradanmadu Tank....." (25/8/76). Then, "I am happy to report progress and success in our operation to save wild animals at Wilpattu from the ravages of the current drought.....the drought continues unabated.....in fact this is a worse drought than the one in 1957 and is likely to continue till the middle of October....." (30/8/76). After that, "I am happy to report continued success in our joint operation.....for the distribution of water in Wilpattu National Park.....On Monday night there was a heavy downpour lasting nearly 1½ hours over the central and western parts of the Park. Whilst this has benefited the vegetation which is already a little greener and more turgid, it has not brought any relief to the thirsty animals because the soil has sucked up this water like blotting paper. On the following morning there was not a single natural puddle to be found. Thus, even if further occasional showers of this type should be experienced (which is rather unlikely) the distribution of water has to continue....." (10/9/76). Finally, "together with an Assistant Secretary, Chandra Liyanage, I spent a fairly tough weekend from Friday night to Sunday night (17th to 19th) at Wilpattu. The water distribution scheme was severely disrupted, partly because of breakdowns of the machinery.....whilst we are happy to recount successes, we cannot hide our shortcomings and disappointments....." (20/9/76). All this sounds very promising and exhilarating—in the same way the do-gooding of the Salvation Army had at one time brought admirers to its ranks (it was George Bernard Shaw who had first debunked the socio-political impact of the "evangelical missionary" work of the SA), but there is so much behind the sudden messianic activation of (an almost life) President, Thilo (not Tito) Hoffman, and his liege, the Wildlife & Nature Protection Society, that *Tribune* will once again probe some of these happenings. A century or two ago, under the smokescreen of "saving" the souls of the heathen natives of Sri Lanka (and other countries which had not wanted to develop the destructive power of gunpowder for military purposes), western adventurers had brought about the colonialist and imperialist domination of our island and other countries. Today, under cover of saving the "poor animals" in Wilpattu, there seems to be a new effort, in the era of the Fifth Nonaligned Summit to bring neo-colonialist "salvation" to Sri Lanka (and other countries similarly placed). A few years ago, Thilo Hoffman had been opposed to "disturbing the ecosystems of Wilpattu," but surprisingly he has done a neat somersault (with the finesse not second to that of Lydia Comaneci) to organise an exercise he had condemned earlier.

More Anon.

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## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

## Election Perspectives

THERE IS NOW A GENERAL CONSENSUS in knowledgeable political circles that the General Elections will be held in 1977 and that the wishful thinking of a number of Ministers, MPs and others that the elections would be postponed until "the masses wanted" one—Peking style—is far removed from the realities. The question which is now being canvassed, as we indicated last week, is when the elections will be held. In this, practically everybody who matters has turned to astrological omens and prognostications to find an answer to this conundrum. Some assert that the period January to March 1977 will not be astrologically favourable to the Government, and there is view therefore that the elections may be held as early as December 1976—the dissolution of the NSA being announced shortly after the Budget proposals. But this is not a practicable proposition as the Budget must be approved for state expenditure from January 1, 1977, and there is not the slightest possibility that the NSA will be able to complete the work on the Budget until the end of December. In these circumstances, a December election does not seem to be a possibility that can be taken seriously—astrologically or otherwise.

The last date for the dissolution is the 21st of May, because if the NSA was not dissolved by the 22nd, it would stand automatically dissolved according to the Constitution. And, if the NSA was dissolved on or before May 22, 1977, the General Elections must be held within four months, that is September 22. There seems to be one school of thought, astrologically speaking, that it would be most advantageous for the Government to have the elections in March or early April—dissolving the NSA immediately after the Budget is adopted. They say that the stars would favour a governmental victory. But even these astrologically-minded persons admit that August would be an even better month because at that time the planets would be at the weakest for the UNP. Anyway, all schools of

astrological thought seem to be agreed that the stars would be favourable for the SLFP and the Government after April 1977. Taking all these factors into consideration, one can safely say that the General Elections would come sometime between April/May and August/September next year.

Of course, mundane political analysts who pay some attention to the socio-economic impact of the policies, programmes and the plan implementation of the Government are in a quandary. These are some of the questions which they consider relevant to the issue: what kind of a budget will the Finance Minister produce next month? What kind of "aid" (and charity) has he been able to get from the rich nonaligned nations (mainly OPEC members)? Will these loans or gifts offset the inflationary consequences of increasing the printed money in circulation? Will the sunshine budget the Finance Minister presents persuade the voters that something good is round the corner? Will the sunshine in the budget hold out until the polls are over? Will there be a good Mahz—not over the radio beams of the SLBC but in realities the voters can recognise?

All these questions are no doubt important, but even more important is whether the UNP will be able to present a real challenge. After an initial glittery flutter about a new image, the UNP has slipped back to its old postures. Its propaganda and newspapers cannot win new support—with difficulty they can retain the loyalty of old stalwarts. The poor quality of UNP propaganda and the even poorer standards of its newspapers cannot induce enthusiasm except among the diehards who do not need papers or propaganda to keep them within the UNP fold. Moreover, the Dudley Front of UNP dissidents is making sizable dents into the image and prestige of the JR-led UNP. And, if the UNP hoped that the LSSP will provide enough three-cornered contests to enable the UNP to win a number of seats, they are building castles in the air.

And the UNP has also been sidetracked into fighting so hard to ensure a 1977 elections that it has forgotten that the greater need is to convince the people that the

UNP should be returned to power in order to take the country forward to prosperity. The UNP still does not have a programme to fire the imagination of the masses: it has not provided answers to questions that trouble everybody about the politico-economic future of the country. And there are sections within the UNP which fondly believe that it was still possible to forge an alliance between the UNP and a "rightwing" fraction in the SLFP (including the PM). But what the UNP forgets is that the PM, apart from everything else that stems from her brand of "progressive" politics during the last sixteen years, is now the Head of the Nonaligned Movement and she is not likely to taint her reputation and popularity in the nonaligned world by forging an alliance with the UNP—not, at any rate, until the UNP purged itself of the kind of diehard reactionary views it had put forward on international questions during the Nonaligned Summit Conference.

**The PM and the governmental United Front have recently succeeded in throwing the UNP on the defensive—and what is worse, the UNP leadership does not seem to have realised this. UNP propaganda is defensively aggressive (and vituperative) and its postures are daily becoming more and more apologetic. It relies entirely on picking holes in the Government's acts of commission and omission in order to build up its election image—and everyday the UNP is losing ground because the Party has not developed the punch needed to bring victory at the hustings.**

The UNP can, no doubt, derive some comfort that the Government's propaganda is clumsy and heavy-handed and that it has lost all credibility. But the people are willing to make allowances for governmental boasting and munchausenian gimmickry because this Government has done much more for the common man than the UNP was ever able to do in the periods when it was in power. There is a growing feeling among large sections of the voting population that the SLFP and its allies are *known devils* and that it is better to have them in power than to trust their future to the presently *unknown*

## No Postponement

devils who make the UNP. This is a very significant development in the thinking of the common (as well as the uncommon) man in the period after the Nonaligned Summit. The UNP does not even seem to be alive to the fact that this kind of logic has begun to pervade both urban and rural areas. The UNP is fooled by the fact the "people" grumble about high prices and corruption, and even rail against the government, day in and day out, without realising that such people will not vote for the UNP of today—they are shouting at the Government in the hope that some changes for the better would overtake bureaucrats, ministers and political authorities.

Whilst the UNP has been election-conscious for over three years now and has indulged in scare stories about postponements, the SLFP has not talked about the elections, but has done everything to be ready for one. The latest round of SLFP rallies is a clear indication that SLFP has a great deal of kick and power and that it has made a fine art of utilising state power to mobilise mass support. Though it is a customary quip to say that crowds at rallies and meetings were no indication of how people will vote, a study of a cross-section of the crowds at recent SLFP rallies will reveal that the vast majority of them (even if induced to attend the rallies by free bus rides, lunch packets, etc. etc.) are loyal SLFP-ers, ideologically and politically, and that they will work and vote for the SLFP at the next elections. What they will do in the elections of 1983 (or earlier) cannot be predicted, but there is no doubt as to how they will vote in 1977. The UNP has failed to make a dent into their pro-SLFP loyalties. The UNP also suffers from the additional disadvantage that it has very few leaders who have an all-island stature. Apart from Premadasa, the UNP has no leaders or speakers of note—except, of course, for its great leader and helmsman, J. R. Jayewardene.

Whilst the SLFP has begun to develop embryonic (suicidal) hallucinations about its political infallibility at the hustings, the CP, (the SLFP's main surviving ally in the UF), is at the moment enveloped in a kind of defeatism—that without "unity" again with the

LSSP, fascism (meaning the UNP) would rear its head successfully in Sri Lanka. This is the theme of all CP spokesmen for some weeks, but these pleas seem to fall on deaf ears so far as the SLFP is concerned. The CP, like the LSSP, want an election in 1977 because they hope that the left-wing parties would emerge stronger as a result of the elections. The CP knows that without an alliance with the SLFP, the left-wing would be isolated. But there are many in the SLFP who seem to think that they can go it alone and that they would be the better off for it. This confusion in the UF and the governmental ranks cannot be overcome easily.

But there is one political party which is not beset with such confusion. Though many disagree with the politics and the policies of then FP and the TULF, it must

be admitted that it is the one party in Sri Lanka which is not vague about what it wants. And it is also clear the TULF is going it alone. The *Daily Mirror* summed up the current attitude of the TULF to the coming elections in a frontpage news report of one of its meetings held in Kays on October 1. In the *Daily Mirror* of October 2, under the heading T.U.L.F. NOT PLEDGED TO JOIN JR'S POLLS CAMPAIGN—AMIRTHALINGAM. It was reported:

*The Federal Party and the TULF had at no time given an assurance to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene that they would join in his proposed campaign against the postponement of a general election due next year. So said Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Secretary General of the TULF speaking at a political seminar held at Kurumbaciddy. He said it mattered little to the Tamils*

### COVER

THE PICTURE ON THE COVER may seem unusual to people in Sri Lanka who will refuse to believe that a mahout would want an umbrella to protect him from the sun (or rain?) But we now live in a top-turvy world. We live in the era of EMERGENCY WILPATTU—an operation smokescreen of the greatest magnitude. At the 76th Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society held in December 1969, the Presidential Address of Thilo Hoffman (vide *Loris*, December 1970, pp. 125-128) contained this gem: ".....the President then referred to the well-meant but misguided suggestion frequently made by visitors and others that special and new watering places should be provided for the animals, also that fodder grass should be planted and similar 'humanitarian' steps should be taken. He said that, in nature conservation, sentimentality had no place and must be resisted. All ecosystems are subject to influences by natural forces which cannot be classified as good or bad, they all play important nature given roles; the periodic occurrences of floods and droughts have their place in the natural scheme of things in our national parks. To circumvent and tame these forces by human interference would mean the destruction of the natural systems and conditions in our national parks. Mr. Hoffman mentioned that he had observed wild life and wild nature in Ceylon for the last 24 years and could remember only one drought which could have really affected wild life stock. In all other cases, merely the weak and non-viable might be eliminated and this was a good thing, helping to maintain a high quality of stock which is also the effect of the presence of natural predators. Similarly floods have beneficial effects, fertilising the plains and altering the plant composition and communities in a favourable direction....." (Now, since there are no floods, why not fertilise the plains in our national parks with Baur's fertilisers to improve the fodder situation?). Thilo Hoffman, who was totally opposed to "human interference in the normal cycles and events of this type....." only a few years ago, (when other wildlife enthusiasts had suggested such intervention), is now leading a highly publicised campaign to save animals in Wilpattu. When agents of firms associated with worldwide multinational companies assume the role of "saviours", (even of our animals), it is necessary to look more closely into their activities. Was not Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, for long the President of the World Wildlife Foundation, on the secret payroll of Lockheeds, one of the greatest multinationals of the epoch? More and More Anon.

which party would capture power after a general election. The Federal Party and the Tamils United Liberation Front had a clear-cut policy and programme to lead the Tamils to their goal of self-determination. Neither the UNP nor the SLFP had in the past honoured their pledges to restore the fundamental rights of the Tamils. The Tamils were therefore the least concerned whether the life of the present parliament was extended or a general election was held next year.

Mr. Amirthalingam said that both the SLFP and the UNP were cast

in the same mould. There was now keen rivalry between the SLFP and the UNP to capture power. The Tamils should not be their allies in their battle for political supremacy. Both these parties had time and again deceived the Tamils with false promises. It was now up to the Tamils to provide ten volunteers from each family for a non-violent struggle to establish a Tamil Nad where Tamils could live with self-respect. The MP for Kopay said that when the general election was held it should be used as a plebiscite

by the Tamil-speaking voters in the Northern and Eastern provinces on the question of a separate sovereign state for the Tamils. Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP for Uduvil said there was historical proof that the Tamils had lived as a separate independent nation. They now had a right to carve out a separate state where their language and culture could be preserved and fostered.

Such are some of the election perspectives which have begun to emerge on the political horizon.

## SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

# Sept. 26 — Oct. 3

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; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina;  
LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;  
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa;

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26:** According to the *Sunday Observer* coconut trees are used to fire kilns to turn out quick lime in many parts of the Eastern province and this is considered to be a serious threat to the coconut industry of Sri Lanka: this alarming discovery has been made by the Wild Life and Nature Protection Society in the wake of Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's call for an end to indiscriminate felling of trees. According to the *Observer* the applications filed by the Attorney General against the order of the *Trial-at-Bar* in the case against Mr. A. Amirthalingam, ex-MP for Vadducoddai, is likely to be referred to a Bench of seven or nine judges: according to circles in Hultsdorp this case is likely to be referred to a fuller Bench in view of the importance of the issues involved. According to the *Sunday Times* the return to Sri Lanka last week of Communist Party's General Secretary, Pieter Keuneman, from Moscow and East Berlin has sparked off the question as to "what the CP got to say about elections next year": the paper further said that when people interrupted a speech by the Prime Minister at Badulla last week and shouted "we don't want elections next year" the Prime Minister replied "we shall consider that question later": but in the course of her speech the Premier said that Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the Opposition and UNP, will never become the Head of the Non-aligned movement, an office held by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike. Air Ceylon in its 29 year old history will operate an independent international service from next month: the national carrier will take over the operation of the DC-8 flight to London when its contract with UTA ceases this month—ST. The Cabinet has instructed the Mayor of Colombo to take immediate action to solve the problem of issuing of

water to residents of Colombo: the Cabinet in its instructions has said that the present watercut was one of the causes for the spread of infectious diseases in the city—ATH. China has gifted Sri Lanka with a particular variety of paddy that could be sown thrice a year: this gift has been made to Sri Lanka when Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, visited that country by his counterpart there—LD. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will leave for New York tonight to participate in the UN General Assembly: she is expected to address the UN on the 30th in the capacity of Chairman of the Non-aligned movement—SM.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27:** Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, yesterday ordered Mr. Nihal Jayawickrema, Secretary to the Ministry of Justice, to revoke all conditions imposed on nearly 10,000 suspects who were taken into custody during the April '71 insurgency: this would close the file on all security and other legal measures taken by the government to deal with the uprising against the government: with this order all restrictions and surveillance on the 3,500 persons who have already pleaded guilty to their involvement in the insurgency and on whom suspended sentences of imprisonment had been imposed by the Criminal Justice Commission (Insurgency): will come to an end: the order will also restore total liberty to about 6,500 persons who were taken into custody or those who surrendered to authorities: Mrs. Bandaranaike made this order yesterday soon after she paid homage at the Bandaranaike Samadhi to commemorate the 17th death anniversary of the late Prime Minister: the Prime Minister's order will come into effect from the 1st of October—CDN. The Prime Minister left for New York last night to participate at the 31st General Assembly of the United Nations accompanied by Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe, Co-ordinating Secretary, Dr. Mackie Ratwate, Private Secretary, and Mr. Dharmasiri Peiris, Secretary to the Prime Minister—CDN. Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle, Minister of Shipping, Tourism and Aviation, removed Mr. K. C. F. Wijewickrema, Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, from the directorate of Air Ceylon: according to the *Daily Mirror* this is a sequel to the dispute over the raising of the borrowing limits of the national carrier to enable it to operate the DC-8 service after the termination of the Air Ceylon-UTA tie-up at the end of this month: Mr. Ananda Meegama, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, has replaced Mr.

Wijewickrema in the directorate—CDM. According to the *Virakesari*, prominent Tamil speaking gentlemen who conducted talks with Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, on a 20-point basis to solve the problem facing the Tamil speaking community are now engaged in talks with the Tamil United Front, the UNP and the SLFP: they are soon expected to meet leaders of the LSSP too. Members of the GMOA will take direct trade union action from the 4th of October: from this date all doctors of the Government Medical Officers' Association will strike in support of various demands they have submitted to the government—VK. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, and the Leader of the House, will act for the Prime Minister until her return to the island—DM. Authorities of the Peradeniya Campus of the University have instructed students not to leave the halls as the strike by the employees is now over: meanwhile, government will take action soon to re-open the Campus for lectures—The DM. Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways, has launched a crash program to complete all development work undertaken by the Ministry before the end of this year—ATH. Only 6000 of the 7500 graduates will be given teaching appointments owing to lack of funds and these appointments will be made in November this year: the balance will be given appointments only after the budget in 1977: meanwhile teaching appointments to GCE qualified youths will be made in March next year—ATH.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28:** Chief Justice, Mr. Victor Tennakoon, Mr. Justice G. T. Samarawickrema, Mr. Justice V. T. Thamocharan, Mr. Justice Noel Tittawella and Mr. Justice W. D. Gunasekera have been named to the five-judge bench to hear the two applications filed by Mr. Siva Pasupathy, Attorney General, against Mr. A. Amirthalingam, ex MP for Vaddukoddai, who was charged for allegedly distributing seditious literature and with the possession of same—CDN. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, told the annual general meeting of the Sri Lanka Chamber of Small Industry yesterday that the government has found the scheme of Convertible Rupee Account has not realised the purpose for which it was set up and under the circumstances would soon reconsider the entire scheme—CDN. Professor P. W. Vithanage, President of the Peradeniya Campus, said that the conditions prevailing in the Campus is not conducive for the re-opening and he has asked all students in the halls of residence to quit: meanwhile Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, will discuss the Campus situation with his officials and the Vice Chancellor of the University today—CDN. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance, will leave for Hong Kong today to attend the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' conference—CDN. Mr. S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, addressing a meeting in Uda Pussellawa said that if elections were not held in 1977 that would spell the end of democracy and all citizens of the country would become stateless—CDM. According to the *Virakesari* attempts were being made by certain leaders of the Communist Party (Moscow wing) to join the LSSP in the government's common program: preliminary talks in this regard have already commenced between a top Communist leader and a leader of the LSSP. The Government Medical Officers Association in a statement to the press said that its demands are very reasonable

and as such to take action to solve their problems: the GMOA has also said that if the Ministry of Health failed to take action regarding its demands the Association would call all its members to strike from October 4—VK. The *Aththa* in an editorial said that whenever the government plans to embark on a new development program it should see that such programs do not get entangled in the bottleneck of the Planning units: the paper further said several good productive programs of the government never went past the planning unit of the Ministry of Planning and this bottleneck should be cleared for the benefit of the nation.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29:** Mt. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Trade, Home Affairs and Public Administration, addressing a meeting of the Mercantile Chamber of Commerce said that the government does not discriminate against any registered citizens whatever the origin of citizenship in the matter of internal and external trade or in any area of economic life—CDN. According to the *Daily News* Sri Lanka will sponsor two resolutions on Vietnam and Namibia in the 31st General Assembly of the United Nations currently being held in New York: Sri Lanka's proposal for making the Indian Ocean free of big power rivalry and a free zone is also being backed by black African nations according to reports from the UN—CDN. Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, yesterday appointed a three member team to probe the causes that led to the present state of affairs in the Peradeniya Campus of the University: the Minister also instructed his authorities to take steps to open the campus on October 5: Mr. Hemasiri Premawardene, Secretary to the Ministry of Social Services, has been appointed Head of the Committee to probe the varsity affair—CDN. Messrs V. N. Navaratnam, K. Thurairatnam and K. P. Ratnam all MPs of the Tamil United Front, who were also charged in the Trial-at-Bar which acquitted Mr. A. Amirthalingam, ex MP for Vaddukoddai will file applications in the Supreme Court today to include them too as respondents in the appeal by the state against the order of the High Court-at-Bar: these three MPs feel that the order of the court inquiring into the appeal might directly affect them and as such they too should be allowed as respondents in the appeal applications—VK. The *Aththa* in an editorial criticised the powers enjoyed by Presidents of the various campuses of the University to close the Campus whenever there is trouble in the Campus: the paper said this will in the long run affect the education of the students: the paper referring to the present state of affairs in the Peradeniya Campus criticised the attitude of the President in the dispute. The Third Conference on Postal Administration of Commonwealth countries will be held at the BMICH from October 4 to 10: the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake will declare open the conference—DM. All five suspects wanted in connexion with the Kollupitiya tavern robbery have been taken into custody and remanded by a Magistrate: Rs. 1,20,000 of the Rs. 2,13,525 robbed was also recovered by the Police—DM. A two square mile tank will be built in Dambulla to collect the Mahaweli waters according to reports from the Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways—LD. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, speaking at a seminar on "Paths to Socialism" at the Centre for Society and Religion yesterday said that he was opposed to a postponement of general

elections in 1977: Mr. Sarath Muthetuwegama, Communist MP for Kalawana, too, said that he was against the postponement of elections next year: Mr. Subasinghe answering a question said what was needed the country was not a postponement of elections but a radical solution to the problems facing the country—CDM. The UNP Journal quoted a speech by Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike in the Parliament on June 12, 1971, in which he said that the people of the country would shoot them if elections were postponed—CDM. According to the *Daily Mirror* the price of sugar in the world market has dropped to 253 US dollars a ton and the Food Department purchased its last stock of 10,000 tons at this price: the paper quoted departmental sources which said that under the current prices sugar could be sold in the open market at less than Rs. 2 a pound but still the department is not making profits because nearly five-sixth of the stock held by the Food Department is sold at the subsidised price of 72 cents per pound on ration—CDM.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30:** Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike will present a long-playing Sinhala music record entitled "profile of Sinhala culture in sound and rhythm" to the United Nations library during her current visit to the US to address the UN's 31st General Assembly—CDN. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, will inaugurate work on the Kaluganga Flood Protection Schemes and the Flood Scheme of the Ratnapura town on October 24: Kaluganga, the largest river in the island receives the largest rain fall every year—CDN. Vidyalandara Campus Students Union (C.P. controlled) has asked the Ministry of Education to remove the President of the Peradeniya Campus in keeping with the demand of the students as well as employees; the employees union of the Vidyalandara Campus too backed the demand by the student—CDM. According to the *Daily Mirror* authorities of the Education Department are unable to say when the teaching appointments to graduates and GCE qualified youths would be given: according to a spokesman of the department they were asked to receive applications and did not receive any further instructions thereafter. The five-judge Bench will take up the inquiry of the Attorney General's applications against the order of the High-Court-at-bar which inquired into the case against Mr. A. Amirthalingam, ex MP for Vadducoddai: today the five-judge Bench will also take up separate applications filed by three other Tamil United Front MPs who were earlier charged along with Mr. Amirthalingam—VK. According to the *Lankadipa* the proposal by Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in the United Nations for the creation of an international economic order has received the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. A conference held yesterday at the Ministry of Trade presided by Mr. P. R. Ratnayake, Deputy Minister of Trade, decided to confiscate all cotton textiles if it is found elsewhere other than the premises of the license holder who is empowered to purchase cotton textiles in large quantities for sale: this decision has been taken in view of the shortage of cotton textiles in the market—LD. Employees of the Meetotamulla and Aluthgama bus depots went on strike yesterday over two separate incidents in which unknown persons have attacked bus crews: according to the *Lankadipa* the strike of the Meetotamulla Depot has been settled. The Minister of Cultural Affairs

expects to complete the work on the printing of the Sinhala dictionary at least in six years time: this has been revealed to the *Dinamina* by Mr. K. H. M. Sumathipala, Secretary to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1:** Addressing the 31st General Assembly of the United Nations Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, said that the Non-aligned Movement cannot and will not allow itself to become an instrument of propaganda for any ideology, system or camp: she further said that from leading to the formation of a new bloc, the policy of non-alignment attaches primary importance to freedom to choose its policies and to decide on its actions without the inhibition and the inflexibility of alignments: she added that it was important that the world understood this because a genuine co-operation could flourish only in an atmosphere of right understanding—CDN. The Revision application and the writ applications filed by the Attorney General were taken up for inquiry before a five-judge Bench yesterday and further arguments were postponed for October 13: when counsel for the other three TULF MPs were charged with Mr. Amirthalingam who also filed applications praying that they too be included as respondent in this case the Chief Justice ordered arguments on behalf of these three would be heard after the hearing of the main applications: when Mr. M. Thiruchelvam, QC, asked the court whether the arguments could be fixed for October 18 instead of 13 as the arrival of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, QC, is expected the Chief Justice replied "whichever way this Bench may decide the general public must know whether the emergency regulations are valid or not and we cannot postpone a decision"—During the first six months of this year the Ceylon Shipping Corporation has earned a profit of Rs. 22 million—CDN. Mr. T. B. Tennekoon, Minister of Cultural Affairs, recommended to the President that Mr. Henry Dharmasena, the artist who sculptured the Aukana Buddha replica opposite the BMICH should be awarded the President's award for this year: several cultural organisations in the island have appealed to the Minister to recommend Mr. Dharmasena as the President for this year's award—LD. From today onwards the Air Ceylon will operate its international flights on its own: the agreement it had with the French UTA airlines ended yesterday and with the DC-8 flight to London this evening from the BIA Air Ceylon steps into the international airlines arena all alone—ATH. Following rough seas the Talaimannar-Rameswaram ferry service will be temporarily suspended for a two-month period beginning November 1—VK. Celebrations in connexion with Saraswathy Pooja will be held in all Hindu temples in the island today—VK. According to the Trade Ministry industrial exports during the first six months of the year had trebled when compared to the corresponding period last year—CDN. Several politicians have proposed to bring an amendment to the Parliamentary Pensions Bill to the effect that a retiring age should be stipulated for MPs: some have said it should be 60 and others said it should be 65 and the amendment is now being talked in the Parliamentary lobbies.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2:** According to the *Daily News* Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, has decided to launch a tree planting campaign in all parts



of the island to begin from November 1: this campaign will be co-ordinated by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs in close and active collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Local Government and other relevant Ministries. Dr. Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, at her hotel and both discussed international politics for over 35 minutes: this is the first time both have met—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, continuing her address to the 31st session of the UN General Assembly in the capacity of Head of the Non-aligned Movement said "we are neither passive spectators of history nor its pawns. On the contrary we are active participants in its shaping"—CDN. Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Trade, Public Administration and Home Affairs, yesterday addressing a meeting of Political authorities and Government Agents warned public servants not to abuse their political rights by condemning the government and speaking derogatorily of it: he further said if public servants under the guise of enjoying political freedom condemn the government, the government would use all powers under its authority against such officers—CDN. Britain has agreed to grant 300,000 sterling pounds to Sri Lanka as maintenance aid: an agreement to this effect was signed yesterday at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs between the representatives of both countries—CDN. Mr. A. Amirthalingam, General Secretary of the TULF, speaking at a seminar in Kurumbaciddy said that the Tamil Liberation Front has at no time given an assurance to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene President of the UNP, that it would join the UNP on the proposed campaign if the general elections are postponed—CDM. The *Aththa* in an editorial requested the government to look into the various demands made by progressive trade union movements and not to forget them. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, QC, will be given a rousing welcome by the TULF when he arrives in the island next Monday from Malaysia—VK. Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Trade and Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs, has decided to request all government agents and AGAs to resign any post they hold in the co-operative movement: the Minister also decided to request the Minister of Co-operatives and Food to relieve all GAs and AGAs from any co-operative work—LD.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3:** According to the *Sunday Times*, the Minister of Co-operatives, Mr. S. K. K. Suriarachchi's plan to clean up the co-operative movement and to remove the system of MPs holding offices in the movement, has created a stir in the Government Parliamentary Group; the Minister's move and public criticism about politicking, nepotism and corruption in the co-operatives have raised the hackles of many influential persons in the party and government's ranks particularly at this time when all politicians are engaged in electioneering. Mr. Mahinda Ellepola, Public Trustee, who held an inquiry into the circumstances under which "Maru Sira" a prisoner convicted of murder and sentenced to death was hanged has stated in his report to the Secretary to the Ministry of Justice that the hanging was not judicial: Mr. Ellepola was earlier appointed by the Minister of Justice to probe into this hanging following public criticism over this—ST. In an effort to avert the threatened strike by the

members of the Government Medical Officers' Association Mrs. Siva Obeysekera, Minister of Health, has invited representatives of the GMOA for talks tomorrow—ST. Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, said that the proposed conference of the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean will not come through as there is no consensus among the states concerned to hold such a conference—CO. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, greeted the UN General Assembly in traditional style before she began her speech: in her speech to the Non-aligned Group Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, said the Non-aligned Movement regards the problems of one country as problems of all the others and the Movement is a joint commitment for the emancipations for all peoples of the countries in the Movement: stressing the unity of the Movement the Premier added the economic targets of the Non-aligned nations are eminently realisable but they would pose new challenges which can be faced only in unity and solidarity—CO. The World Bank which is satisfied with dairy development work in the country has given 9 million dollars and SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) 2 million dollars for development of animal husbandry—CO. Since February 1973 the Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) has imposed fines totalling over Rs. 14 million on persons convicted of exchange control violations and gem smuggling—CO. Plans are afoot to construct a vast Rs. 10 million museum complex—the first of its kind in South East Asia—within the next three years—CO. The Tamil United Liberation Front will appoint a National Council consisting of MPs and prominent personalities in local government bodies in the north and east to draw the future programs of the TULF: a spokesman for the TULF said this proposed National Council will be the most powerful policy making body of the TULF—VK. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, speaking at a Communist Party Youth League meeting in Colombo said that all progressive forces should prepare themselves for the next general elections in eight month's time: Mr. Keuneman said that there is no point in arguing whether elections would be held or not next year and the Communist Party is for an election next year: the Minister further said arguments for and against elections next year will only strengthen the reactionary forces.—VK.

## INTERNATIONAL DIARY

Sept. 23 - Sept. 29

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23:** Mr. Shirley Amarasinghe, President of the United Nations General Assembly, in his opening address yesterday criticised western industrialised countries and said that white governments in Southern Africa had brought the world to the brink of disaster: Mr. Amarasinghe also called for restoration of Palestinian rights and a separate Palestinian State. At the end of a two and half hour Cabinet discussion Rhodesia's Prime Minister, Ian Smith, said that his Cabinet has reached a consensus on the proposals for ending the country's constitu-

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tional problems: Mr. Smith did not reveal the Cabinet decisions but officials later hinted that ministers favoured accepting the settlement package presented to Mr. Smith by US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger: Mr. Smith told reporters that he believed that Dr. Kissinger would be pleased with the Cabinet decision. Orlando Letelier, a leading member of the former Chilean Cabinet led by late President Salvador Allende, was killed in an explosion in Washington and Police believed that a bomb had been planted in the car of the 44 year old former Minister and Ambassador to the United States. Commenting on the proposals of Dr. Henry Kissinger and the Cabinet decision of Rhodesia's government of Mr. Ian Smith, Mr. Anthony Corland, Foreign Secretary of Britain said that for the first time there was a really good chance of getting a settlement on the Rhodesian problem. A Japanese defence office spokesman said that the dismantling of the Soviet MIG 25 has been almost completed by US and Japanese experts: a huge US plane would be used to transport the dismantled MIG 25 to a Japanese defence base for investigation. Indonesian government announced that it had uncovered a plot to overthrow the President of the country, Suharto, and to replace him with former Vice President Mohamed Hatta: several documents were seized by government authorities and several officials of the government too were arrested in this connexion. More than 10 million people have been affected by floods in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India. US officials testifying before a House of Representatives Committee considering an anti-bribery bill said publicity rather than punishment is the best way to prevent a repetition of scandals like the Lockheed affair: the Senate last week voted for punishments with heavy fines and jail for bribery.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24:** Disagreements over the naming of committee chairman yesterday held up the United Nations annual assembly while behind the scene moves were underway to reach consensus: at one stage the Latin American delegation threatened to walkout over the appointment of a Chairman to the Economic Committee. The Soviet Ambassador in Japan, Mr. Dmitri Polyansky, yesterday handed over a protest note from his government to the Japanese authorities over the handling of the "Foxbat" affair: meanwhile the "Foxbat" MIG 25 has been completely dismantled and is waiting to be transported in a large US plane to a Japanese defence base: in the second protest not since the landing of MIG in Hakodate airport on September 6 the Soviet Union said the manner in which Japan handled the jet and it's pilot, First Lieutenant Viktor Belenkov, would cause grave consequences to the future of the goodneighbourly relations between the USSR and Japan: however, Japan has deliberately disregarded the Soviet demand for the return of the MIG and strained the relationship between the two countries, according to the protest note Rhodesian Prime Minister, Mr. Ian Smith, said the final decision on Dr. Kissinger's peace package to end white minority rule in his country would be made at a crucial meeting today of Parliamentarians representing the Ruling Rhodesian Front Party: earlier the Cabinet, of Rhodesia reached consensus on the proposals of Dr. Kissinger which it is believed will make Rhodesia gradually transfer power to the blacks over a period of two years. Malta's Prime Minister, Mr. Dom Mintoff, sworn in for the second five year term yesterday stressed there

would be no foreign military bases in his country after 1979 when current leases with Britain and NATO expire: he said even an American or Rhodesian base won't be allowed in Malta. The annual meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was opened in Port Louis by Mauritius Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam: the South African issue is expected to be the most important point that would be taken up for discussion.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25:** Rhodesian Prime Minister, Mr. Ian Smith, is expected to announce today the willingness of his government to black majority rule in Rhodesia if war being waged by African guerillas is ended. About 400 black Africans were arrested by the Police in Johannesburg in South Africa following a demonstration march by placard carrying black students: according to Reuter the demonstration gave many whites their first glimpse of black power in action. West Germany's Development Aid Ministry yesterday began talks in Bonn about granting aid to developing countries to buy West German made ships: a West German official said that nearly a dozen countries in the Third World have been asked by the government to borrow about 120 million sterling for the purpose. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and British Conservative party leader, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, had nearly one hour talks in New Delhi yesterday. A Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesman in Hague said that President Mohamed Sayem of Bangladesh has pardoned a Dutchman sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for attempting to overthrow the Bangladesh government. Ethiopian military leaders announced that an attempt to assassinate the Ethiopian ruler Major Mengistu Haile-Mariam was made but the leader escaped unhurt: the car in which he travelled in Addis Ababa was sprayed by machine gun bullets, the military leaders announced: the attackers were unknown. Under the protection of Syrian troops Elias Sarkis was yesterday sworn in as President of Lebanon: soon after the swearing in the new President said it was up to the Lebanese authorities to decide whether Syrian troops should remain in Lebanon: Mr. Sarkis who was earlier a Governor of the Lebanese Central Bank pledged to reconstruct the country which was ravaged by civil war and where over 40,000 people died during the last seventeen months.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26:** Rhodesian Prime Minister finally surrendered to the western demands and decided to start talks next week on transferring power to the black majority: government sources indicated that Prime Minister, Mr. Ian Smith will take speedy action to implement the proposal put to him last week by US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, by which black rule will be made possible within two years by gradually transferring power to the blacks: Mr. Smith is expected to meet unspecified black leaders to arrange to set up a supra council of state: meanwhile, leaders of Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique are expected to meet in Lusaka to discuss Premier Smith's acceptance of majority rule within two years: the leaders or their representatives of the five bordering African states are expected to arrive in Lusaka today: Iranian Government announced that a Russian pilot, First Lt. Valentine Ivanovitch, landed in the province of Azerbaijan which borders the Soviet Union and asked for political asylum

in the United States. Indian Socialist leader, George Fernandes, was charged in New Delhi with conspiracy against the government and will go on trial next month in the first case involving a major opposition figure since the state of emergency in the country 15 months ago. Monsoon floods in Bangladesh left over 500,000 people homeless in the country's two northern districts according to reports from Dacca. Newspaper heiress, Patricia Hearst, was sentenced to seven years in prison by a US court for her involvement along with the Symbionese Liberation Army in the Hibernia Bank robbery in April '74. President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France appointed a government council to supervise, define and coordinate all nuclear exports from France: this committee has been appointed following worldwide criticism on France over its unrestricted nuclear sales during the last few years. US Senate Foreign Relations Committee rejected the proposal by the administration to sell 650 Maveric air-to-ground missiles to Saudi Arabia: the Saudi Government originally asked for 1500 missiles but opposition to the sale said Saudi Arabia need not have such missiles.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27:** The Soviet Union described the Rhodesian settlement plan negotiated by United States Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger as "a fraud" and said the Kremlin would back any African leader who rejected it: the Soviet position was conveyed in a series of reports by the officials Tass News Agency issued in the wake of an announcement by Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith that his government had accepted the proposals: Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, leader of one of the militant factions of the black community of South Africa, came out against the terms of the Rhodesian settlement accepted by Prime Minister Ian Smith claiming they were aimed at creating a "neo-colonialist regime". Left and Right wing forces were seen engaged in fierce fighting near the residence of Lebanon's President, Elias Sarkis: observers said there were a number of casualties. West German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, said that he would try to get the stalled east-west troop reduction talks moving again if he is re-elected: Herr Schmidt whose position is at stake at the national elections on October 3 said "it is a matter of urgent necessity to reactivate the negotiations". A bronze statue of Soviet Communist Party President, Nikolai Podgony, was unveiled yesterday in his home town in Ukraine. The USSR-Japanese Society in Moscow expressed indignation at the attitude of the Japanese authorities in the handling of the 'Foxybat' affair. Britain announced yesterday that it would soon send a leading expert on African affairs to Washington for talks aimed at setting up a multi-million dollar fund to help Rhodesia: meanwhile in Rhodesia political circles tipped African nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo, to be the first black Prime Minister of Rhodesia.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28:** According to a New York Times CBS survey President Ford won the first debate with his democratic party rival Jimmy Carter on Thursday in the eyes of American voters: the poll published in the paper said that of the 1,167 voters questioned 37 per cent thought Mr. Ford had done better in the televised debate: 24 per cent preferred Carter and 35 per cent called it a draw while 4 per cent did not express any opinion. New Zealand Opposition leader, Bill Rowling, who visited China recently said the leaders of China displayed a relaxed and con-

fidant approach to the future of the country after the death of Chairman Mao: he also said he had found deep personal grief at all levels of society over the death of Chairman Mao but with this grief there was a feeling of stability. Dr. Henry Kissinger, US State Secretary, told a radio interview in Washington that the hostile reaction by the five frontline African nations to peace proposals on the Rhodesian question was not an outright rejection: a report from Lusaka said that the presidents of Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola described the terms of the proposal as "...tantamount to legalising the colonialist and racist structures of power." Pakistan officials expressed disappointment at Britain's rejection of a claim to the Koh-I-Noor diamond richest of all the British crown jewels: but there was no immediate comment from Pakistan's Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who wrote to his British counterpart, James Callaghan, last month seeking the return of the priceless 109-carat diamond because of what he termed its immense sentimental value to Pakistan. South African Justice Minister announced that right-wing whites who demonstrated outside the home of Prime Minister John Vorster accusing him of a sell-out in Rhodesia will be charged in courts.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29:** Lawyers for newspaper columnist Jack Anderson filed a 22 million dollar suit against former President Richard Nixon and senior aides accusing them of massive conspiracy to discredit and possibly murder him: the plaintiff said Mr. Nixon used government agencies to prevent Mr. Anderson gathering information that would embarrass the Nixon administration. According to official reports from New Delhi nearly 4.5 million acres of crop were damaged and some 200,000 houses were damaged in the recent floods in Uttar Pradesh. The Soviet Union yesterday publicly promised that no punishment would be imposed on Viktor Belenko, the pilot of the top secret MIG 25 who defected to Japan and sought political asylum in the US if he returns to the USSR: this pledge was made during a Moscow Press conference in which the Soviet Foreign Office produced two women said to be the wife and mother of the pilot of the MIG-25. South African Government is negotiating to get a loan of 100 to 200 million dollars from European banks to overcome the domestic economic crisis which is described as "grave". Rev. Sithole Black Nationalist Leader of Rhodesia, welcomed the rejection of parts of the Anglo-American proposal forwarded by Dr. Henry Kissinger: Rev. Sithole also said the West had tried to "install a black pro-Western puppet government in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) which would ensure their capitalist interests at the expense of the toiling masses of the people and the gallant freedom fighters". British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, urged quick establishment of an interim government in Rhodesia saying "once that has happened there will be no going back—the die will then be cast": he told this at the Labour Party's annual conference in Blackpool. Lebanese Left leader Kamal Jumblatt yesterday arrived in Cairo for talks with Egyptian leaders and bitterly criticised the actions of Syria in Lebanon: he told newsmen at the airport that in Southern Lebanon there is coordination between Syrian and Israeli troops.

FROM THE WORLD PRESS

## More About China

Extract from *Time*, 20/9/76

### CHINA'S POLICIES

"The experts also discount the probability of any dramatic turns in China's foreign policy. American diplomatic officials expect no basic change in Peking's attitude toward the US even though Mao's death, and the uncertainty that it will bring, may make China even more cautious about 'normalizing' relations with Washington. Last week, in fact, Foreign Minister Chi'ao Kuan-hua warned visiting former Secretary of Defence James Schlesinger about what the Chinese consider an American softening of resolve toward the Soviet Union.

"As for Peking's relations with Moscow, some experts believe that the extreme bitterness of the Sino-Soviet split could gradually erode now that China's most influential and dogmatic anti-Soviet has passed from the scene. This could bring China some very practical benefits—economic and otherwise. For one, it makes no sense for Peking to keep a huge, expensive army in an almost constant state of alert along thousands of miles of border and risk a major conflict with the vastly superior Soviet forces. In addition, as long as China is fully deployed against a possible Soviet attack, Peking will be virtually unable to 'liberate' Taiwan by force—or to threaten convincingly to do so.

"Finally, unremitting hostility toward Moscow robs Peking of diplomatic flexibility in the tri-cornered world-power balance. The Chinese may feel that they are too much taken for granted by the West. They have recently been shaken by what they see as US vacillation in foreign affairs. If Peking decided that the US might not maintain the balance of power in Asia by a firm commitment to ward off the expansion of Soviet influence, it might well try to patch things up with the Russians.

"For Moscow, a rapprochement with Peking might ease the cost and strain of maintaining their huge armies in the Far East as well as free Moscow to get tougher in Europe. If that happened, the

US policy of detente—which assumes hostility between Moscow and Peking—would need further rethinking. Thus even limited Sino-Soviet rapprochement would profoundly affect the global alignment of forces.

"Still, as one expert puts it, 'a major nation does not change its basic foreign policy in a week or a month or a year.' The Chinese fears of the age-old Russian tendency to expand its influence into Asia will probably keep Peking at some distance from Moscow for a long time to come.

"Despite expectations that there will be a continuity in policy, Mao's death will make a big practical difference to China. There could well be a loss of some of the sense of self-sacrificing unanimity that China enjoyed while the Chairman was alive. Indeed, in the final months of his life there were already unmistakable signs of disorder and even open rebelliousness that Mao as an active leader would never have tolerated. The most serious came in April, when 100,000 Chinese rioted in Peking's vast T'ien An Men Square over what they regarded as a post-humous insult to Premier Chou En-lai (*Time*, April 19). Since then, travelers to China have noted numerous instances of undisciplined behaviour hitherto almost unseen in China: fighting between gangs of youths, widespread shoplifting, even a couple of bank robberies. In the wake of the earthquakes that ravaged T'ung-shan, there was apparently a good deal of looting, or, as the Peking press put it, "counterrevolutionary sabotage activities."

"Most observers in China are wary about predicting a genuine breakdown of authority. Nonetheless, they agree that these scattered instances of disorder may well presage what one analyst calls "an erosion of Maoist morality"—meaning increased factionalism in Peking, greater freedom of action for provincial authorities and some movement away from the very disciplined society that Mao tried to impose on China after the Cultural Revolution. One beneficial effect of this could be some loosening of the tight control that the party exerted over everyday life under Mao. With a less monolithic leadership, a relaxation in art and culture could follow;

there might even be a lessening of political discipline in China, which would allow for a measure of privacy and even individual preference that Mao, with his total commitment to the creation of a new man in a new society, would never have allowed.

"Will the rest of the Maoist legacy endure—the egalitarian stress, the constant campaigns for purity of thought, the animus against a new mandarin class of power and privilege? It is difficult to imagine those values, which Mao tried so hard to implant, surviving undiminished. After all, Mao was struggling against a centuries-old tradition and culture that was non-egalitarian, hierarchical, elitist and class-ridden. Moreover, as China becomes a more advanced and technological society, there will be ever more temptation for technicians, managers and political leaders to enjoy the privilege of position—in short, to become what Mao would call revisionists.

"The Chairman recognized this danger: he once admitted that it could take from ten to 20 generations to wipe out bourgeois, revisionist ideas forever. That may have been a hopelessly optimistic prediction. Mao tried to ensure that the next generation would carry forward his banner and pass it on to still another generation. For the immediate future, China's new leaders will certainly mouth his slogans. But without the presence of the Great Helmsman to back them up, they may have grave difficulties making his lifelong dream a reality.

Extract from *The Far Eastern Economic Review*,

I-10-76.

THIS has been the most politically traumatic year for China since the People's Republic was established in 1949.

The death of Chairman Mao Tseung on September 9 came as no great surprise. Indeed the biggest surprise was the restrained public reaction to the news, at any rate during the first few days after it.

Until Mao's death, the dramatic and tragic consequences of the Hopei earthquake on July 28 had tended to obscure the growing disunity in the political leadership

and the uncertainty about the country's future. But in the long run these political factors may prove more damaging to China's prosperity and stability than any earthquake.

The key link in the chain of Chinese politics since 1949 has been the authority wielded by Mao until he died at the age of 82. The intense interest which surrounds the question of the aftermath of his death is rooted in the obvious importance of the guidance which he was accustomed to give in matters of high policy and power struggle.

Observers of China, who dismiss this as speculation, are evidently not familiar with the Chinese press which has daily reiterated the "act" and "continuing" nature of the internal struggle, and the importance on it of the influence of Mao. Now that Mao is dead, there is little likelihood that this factor will be played down: on the contrary, Mao's authority from beyond the grave will be invoked by every contender for power.

If ever proof were needed of the inanity of astrology, it is the fact that all this took place in the so-called Dragon Year—supposed to be the most auspicious in the Chinese cycle. Dragons mean different things to Chinese and Westerners, but to a Western eye the most dragon-like phenomenon of the year was Chiang Ching's return to national pre-eminence.

It is more than likely that the Chairman's health was pushed sharply downhill by the nervous strain associated with the extraordinary power struggle which resulted on April 7 in the dismissal of Teng Hsiao-ping from his posts as Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party and Vice-Premier. These posts had made Teng effective head of government since Premier Chou En-lai went into the terminal stage of the cancer which brought about his death on January 9. In addition, Teng was known to be Chief of Staff of the armed forces since at least 1975, and this apparently made him the most powerful man in China.

Powerful or not, Teng was not invulnerable, something which was proved—to the astonishment of most foreign diplomats and other observers—when the campaign to unseat him built up to its climax

at the Ching Ming riots on Tien An Men Square (April 5). Although Teng was not at first blamed with personally instigating the riots, they provided the pretext to strip him of his government posts (but not his Party membership) two days later.

The origins of this extraordinary struggle go back to Teng's rehabilitation in mid-1973 after seven years of political obscurity following his unhorsing in the Cultural Revolution. Known throughout that period as the "number two party person in authority taking the capitalist road" (after Liu Shao-chi), he surprised the nation and the world by re-appearing at a function in the Great Hall of the People, and later virtually taking over the premiership from the ailing Chou.

Teng's rehabilitation was only one in a series of quiet returns to office by people purged in the Cultural Revolution. There is reason to believe that this home-going contingent, to use the Chinese phrase, was the focus of the two-line split which first showed itself clearly with the onset of the Campaign to Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius at the beginning of 1974.

Ironically, the growth of this essentially "radical" campaign was accompanied by a rapid growth of Teng's own prestige and influence, so that there seemed little reason to believe that it was aimed at him. Later it was disclosed that in connection with his rehabilitation he had promised "never to restore" (capitalism) in China, and his conduct in 1975 was alleged to have been a breach of this promise. In any case, Teng had quickly become accepted as China's leading figure in foreign relations: it was he who met visiting heads of state at the airport and feted them in the Great Hall; it was he who twice negotiated with Dr. Henry Kissinger and hosted President Ford during the latter's visit to China in November, 1975. He sat in on their meetings with Mao, and his position seemed unassailable, having behind it the Chairman's evident personal endorsement and the active support of Chou En-lai.

But the summer of Teng's rehabilitation was the winter of discontent for the Politburo's "radical" faction, the group of activists who had aided Mao in the organisation

of the Cultural Revolution and could thus be assumed to be old enemies of Teng and the other rehabilitees such as Lo Jui-ching (former chief of staff) and Hsiao Hua (former chief commissar of the armed forces).

This "radical" group consists, since the 1971 defection and death of Lin Biao, of a nucleus consisting of Mao's wife, Chiang Ching; journalist and propagandist Yao Wen-yuan; Party Vice-Chairman Wang Hung-wen; and probably chief military commissar Chang Chun-chiao.

Other Politburo members may have "radical" leanings over certain issues, and the group exercises almost total control of newspapers, magazines, broadcasting services and the theatre and cinema in China. It doubtless has lines of communication to sympathisers in the provincial administrations and regional military commands, but its centres of gravity are Peking and Shanghai. Elsewhere, its influence varies. It appears to have powerful sympathisers in Liaoning province, for instance, despite the fact that the present military commander of the Shenyang Region, Li Teh-sheng, was apparently demoted as a result of the military reshuffle which took place at the turn of the years 1973-74. In other places—for instance Yunnan, Shensi, Nanking and Canton—the local power-holders, both military and civilian, seem to be of a more "moderate" stamp, and repeated wall-poster attacks on them have failed to dent their armour.

The reason to write the word "radical" in inverted commas is that although this term has gained wide currency in international parlance when discussing Chinese affairs, it actually misrepresents the political stripe of the people referred to. In Chinese terms, they are traditionalists, even conservatives, whose aim is to promote the development of the country with as little influence as possible from the outside world. Many of their policies have been fundamental to Chinese political thought for some 2,500 years; these include the necessity for a stable agricultural base founded on irrigation works; the distaste for commerce; the desirability of a standardised ideology; the reliance on judgement and character rather than on written laws and statutes; the resistance to all but a small amount

of foreign trade; the contention that China's own science and technology are capable of performing anything that can be achieved by other countries; the conviction that music and other arts should reflect political dogmas; and the investing of god-like authority in a single man in the interests of centralised government.

The main innovations of the "radical" school of Chinese politics today are the opposition to the old examination system in education, and the idea that the intellectuals should be forced to work with their hands from time to time. These can be seen as reflecting a military strain of thinking in the Chinese Communist Party, which in its turn reflects the ancient opposition of *wen* (civilian/literati) and *wu* (military) elements in the conduct of affairs of state. The *wu* tradition, which was passed on through the long period during which the Party could survive only by military action, naturally tends to discredit the importance of the scholars and bureaucrats who represent the *wen* tradition. It is significant that the main historical Aunt Sally of the "radicals" is Confucius, whose very name is a symbol of *wen*; whereas they see their own conflicts and traditions most accurately mirrored in the novel *Water Margin*, the embodiment of *wu*.

If "radical" is an unsatisfactory definition of the group which has drawn its authority from Mao through Chiang Ching, "moderate" is still more of a misnomer for the clear majority in the administration and the armed forces which presents powerful passive resistance to the more extreme demands of the "radicals." The word "moderate" suggests that there is a further extreme, whereas the people commonly called "moderate" in the Chinese Communist Party are an extreme in themselves: for one thing, they are the spiritual descendants of those 19th century Chinese reformers who saw the country's salvation in the importation of advanced foreign technology and ideals.

Having come to national power at a time when Mao himself had decreed that China should lean towards the Soviet Union, these people are in many cases Soviet-trained and influenced by Soviet

ideas of government. In the 1950s that was mere orthodoxy. In the 1970s, it exposes an administrator to charges of "revisionism", since everything Soviet since the mid-1950s is nowadays considered in China to be poisoned by "revisionism".

Now that Teng is discredited and is held up as a prototypical "revisionist" or, in the more fashionable term a "capitalist roader," no one else in the Politburo would want to attract the label of "revisionism" or "restorationsim" by openly espousing Teng's ideas. But during the period of Teng's ascendancy in 1973-74, those who appeared most closely associated with him were Peking's mayor Wu Teh, Peking Region military commander Chien Hsi-lien, Defence Minister Yeh Chen-ying, Canton Region commander Hsu Shih-yu, chief economic administrator Li Hsien-nien and most of the other regional commanders.

Outside the Politburo, Teng was ably assisted by Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua Chairman of the State Planning Commission Yu Chiu-li, and many other top bureaucrats. Nor can it be overlooked that among Teng's most experienced and capable aides was Hua Kuo-feng, the Shansi-born administrator from Mao's native province of Hunan, who was named Minister of Public Security in January 1975, and is also regarded as an expert on agricultural affairs.

Nobody outside China tipped Hua as the man most likely to succeed Teng, until the surprise announcement in February that he would be Acting Premier following the death of Chou. This announcement coincided with the realisation by people both inside and outside China that Teng was the unnamed target of the poster campaign denouncing "the main unrepentant capitalist roader in the party," which had begun to rage at university campuses in Peking and Shanghai.

The reason for the appointment of Hua was evidently that he was a figure reasonably acceptable to both the "radical" and the "moderate" schools. He was a long-term favourite of Mao who had backed the Chairman at vital moments since the dismissal of Peng Teh-huai in 1959, and had it to his credit that Liu Shao-chi had accused him of propagating Mao's personality

cult too actively in Hunan. He also had a successful administrative career behind him, and had evidently played a role in the investigation of the Lin Piao affair in 1971, being appointed to the Politburo at the Tenth Party Congress in 1973. Most people surmised that he was destined to go far, but few if any realised how fast. Concurrently with Teng's dismissal, he was named Premier and First Vice-Chairman, a new title.

It is not generally thought that Hua himself masterminded the campaign against Teng, even though it rebounded to his benefit. A mass of evidence points to a personal vendetta conducted by Chiang Ching, using Teng's documented "revisionist" past and his somewhat arrogant style of administration as the pretexts. Teng was attacked primarily for attempting to "restore capitalism" in China after his promotion to Vice-Chairman was announced in January 1975. The principal issues over which he was assailed were import of foreign technology in areas where China could allegedly have been self-reliant; planning to sell off the country's natural resources at too fast a rate; attempting to dismantle the reformed system of higher education in effect since the Cultural Revolution; subordinating the barefoot doctors programme and the rustication of urban youth; over-emphasising heavy equipment in defence planning; calling for more material incentives in industry; and (perhaps his most heinous crime) talking disparagingly about Chiang Ching's pet projects in the theatre and cinema, which he called "ultra-leftist."

The exact cause of the April 5 riot in Peking is still unclear. On balance, it appears to have been a mass upsurge of unease and displeasure at Chiang Ching's attempt to downplay the memory of the popular Chou En-lai by removing thousands of wreaths which were placed round the Monument to the Martyrs of the Revolution at the Ching Ming remembrance-of-the-dead festival. It is hard, however to explain, the extremely serious acts of arson and personal violence which accompanied the disturbances, and it cannot be ruled out that these were perpetrated by provocateurs of the "radical" group.

Although the Chinese public showed a certain relief at the temporary stabilisation of the political situation through the appointment of Hua, the year witnessed a deterioration of morale and public order, probably caused by the expectation of Mao's imminent death against a background of political upheaval. By August, numerous reports told of unusual incidences of crime and public unrest in the provinces. The psychological effects of the July 28 earthquake and aftershocks, which destroyed the important industrial city of Tangshan and killed many of its more-than-one million inhabitants, while inflicting severe damage in Tientsin and quite serious damage in Peking, cannot be ruled out as a political factor.

It is possible to argue that the "radical" programme is the only one capable of saving China from unending poverty, and that the Maoist idea of continuing class struggle even inside the party is logical. But Chiang Ching herself has not proved a benign influence on the political scene. True, she revolutionised the country's culture—with results which, to most foreigners, appear lamentable—and in the process acquired a certain following among idealistic youth fired with the idea of destroying old-fashioned bureaucratism. But having apparently almost monopolised access to Mao since the death of Chou, and having obviously pursued a personal feud in her unseating of Teng, she offers the country no convincing alternative in the uphill battle for modernisation. It is not at all clear that she even grasps the issues at stake, for her only remedy appears to be the "red heart" which is supposed to accomplish miracles in a world which remains prosaically resistant to them. The country as a whole is probably aware that her attempt to rule through Hua is a violation of Mao's promise, widely believed to have been made when he married her, that she would never be permitted to tamper with Party affairs.

Once again, China has shown that, as the Empress, Dowager is said to have warned when she died, the country's temperament is inimical to rule by a woman, ironical though it may seem in a country which probably had a matriarchal prehistory, and which claims to be a pioneer of women's liberation,

its ancient and modern history is littered with the stories of harm, done by female rulers.



## UNITED STATES

# American Socialists In The Election

By Earl N. Mittleman  
Washington,

The United States, alone among the industrialized democracies, does not have a socialist movement that plays an important role in the country's political life. One reason is that the United States never developed as a class conscious society. But the main reason lies with the political system itself. The American development of two broad national parties composed of various—and sometimes antagonistic—social and economic groups in disparate sections of the country, left little room for political organizations appealing to narrow social, economic or regional interests.

But that does not mean that socialist political parties do not exist in the United States. Workingmen's Groups go back to the earliest days of the Republic and some Socialist Parties currently on the ballot can trace their history to the turn of the 20th century and before.

The four oldest Socialist groups are the Socialist Labor, Socialist, Communist and Socialist Workers parties, in that historical order. A new group on the ballot this year for the first time is the U.S. Labor Party. Yet another group, the National Liberation Party is hard to classify—either it is ultra right wing or ultra left wing.

It is unlikely that these groups will appear on the ballot in all 50 states. In the United States, the individual states set the legal requirements for political parties to qualify for a place on the ballot. In some States, only a State convention of a few persons is necessary while in others petitions signed by a large number of voters must be gathered. New York, for example, asks for some 60,000 signatures while California requires some 200,000.

None of these Socialist Parties have any illusions about winning. Why, then, do they bother to run candidates? Perhaps the best answer is supplied by Frank P. Zeidler, Presidential candidate of the Socialist party, U.S.A. (S.P.U.S.A.)

Mr. Zeidler concedes that his chances of becoming president are nearly nonexistent, but said he accepted the nomination this year because he feels minority parties play a major role in shaping the direction of the country. "Historically, the minority parties have furnished the lead ideas and, when popular movements started going toward those ideas, the majority parties took them over," he said.

Mr. Zeidler, who was Mayor of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from 1948 to 1960, is also Chairman of the SPUSA. Although the SPUSA has the same name as the party that was founded in 1900 by Eugene Victor Debs and that ran Norman Thomas for President six times from 1928 to 1948. It is technically not the same organization but a lineal descendant.

After not having run a candidate since 1956, when it received some 1,500 votes, the original Socialist Party, U.S.A. changed its name in 1972 to Social Democrats, U.S.A. and decided to work within the Democratic Party. It is this organization which is the American affiliate of the Labor and Socialist International. The present SPUSA took over the old name in 1972 when a number of members of the old group, including Mr. Zeidler, quit because of the change in political strategy. The SPUSA's main argument with the social democrats, U.S.A. is that the Zeidler group believes that socialists should not support a middle class party like the Democrats. However, the basic social, economic and political philosophy of both groups is similar to each other and to other social democrats.

The Socialist Labor Party's candidate is Julius Levin, a former U.S. marine who served in the South Pacific during World War Two and who at present manages an apartment house complex in Camden, New Jersey. The SLP is the oldest radical political organization in the United States, founded in 1877 by German immigrants. Its basic platform can be described as one calling for a

Socialist-syndicalist reorganization of American economic and political life. According to its platform, the Socialist Labor Party's goal is "a classless society based on collective ownership and control of the industries and social services, these to be administered in the interest of all society through a socialist industrial union government composed of democratically elected representatives from all the industries of the land. Production would be carried on for use instead of profit." The Socialist Labor Party is committed to "peaceful, civilized change from capitalism to socialism via the ballot" and claims to be the only socialist organization dedicated to the principles of Marx and Engels.

The Socialist Workers Party candidate this year is Peter Camejo, the 35-year-old son of Venezuelan immigrants. The Socialist Workers Party, which is the American representative of the Fourth, or Trotskyist, International, was founded in 1937. Both the Socialist Workers and the Socialist Labor Parties are bitter opponents of the Communist Party. The Socialist Labor Party regards itself as an indigenous democratic organization—unlike the Communist Party with its bonds to the Soviet Union. The Socialist Workers Party is hostile to the Communists because of the Trotskyist opposition to the regime of Stalin and his successors in the USSR.

In the 1972 U.S. elections—more than 76 million votes were cast—the Socialist Labor Party received 53,814 votes while the Socialist Workers Party got 66,677 votes.

The American Communist Party has always been one of the most orthodox of the Communist parties and Gus Hall, its candidate for President and General Secretary, has admitted that he still finds himself asked the question that has haunted his organization since its inception in 1919: "Is the Communist Party an agent of the Soviet Union?"

In his campaign speeches, Mr. Hall has called for ending unemployment by a "massive works program to rebuild the cities" and a "six hour day without a cut in pay" set by law. When Mr. Hall ran for President in 1972 he received 25,222 votes. New upon the American political scene this year is the U.S. Labor Party and

its presidential candidate Lyndon H. Larouche. The U.S. Labor Party is the electoral arm of the national caucus of Labor Committees which claims branches in Canada and Western Europe. The U.S. Labor Party has become known for its physical harassment of other Socialist organizations and has many times broken up by violence peaceful meetings held by other groups. Finally, there is the National Libertarian Party, whose candidate for President is Roger L. McBride. It is hard to characterize the Libertarians as either ultra-right or ultra-left. "We don't feel we're liberal or conservative," says Mr. McBride. "We just believe in human liberty." Like the Anarchists and the most orthodox of Marxists, Libertarians believe in the withering away of the state. The preamble to their party platform states "we...challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual."

However, their platform goes on to enunciate an economic policy that would gladden the heart of any 19th century laissez-faire capitalist. The Libertarians would repeal all taxation, end the social security system and abolish minimum wage laws. They would also abolish all laws regulating child labor and end trade unionism. Finally, the Libertarians would turn over to private enterprise all police, fire-protection and health facilities as well as every public utility.

USIS

### MARGINALIA

## Power Elite

by Bryan de Kretser

**IN THE BANDARANAIKE COMMEMORATION 1976** Supplement of the *Daily News* there are several statements which reveal the extent to which we are capable of self-deception. All along in describing recent past situations there is the assumption that today things are different.

Here for instance is one such quote "When the British made the decision to grant a substantial degree of political authority to 'natives' in 1924, 1931 and finally

complete political independence in 1948, they granted that power to Ceylonese who were most Westernised". Clearly, we are to assume that today things are different. In actual fact, of course, the same Westernised Elite, with an additional few recruits from out among the natives, still continue to rule the land, and hold effective sway. Anyone who does not know this is either stupid or deliberately dishonest.

Or from the article *The Message of the Charka* "The poor villager is compelled to grovel before the headman or aratchi who tyrannizes over him; the headman in turn grovels before the mudaliyar or Rata-Mahatmaya. These latter cringe before the Government Agent." Replace the words Headman with Grama Sevaka, punchi mantri for Mudaliyar, and Political Authority for Government Agent and the position today for the poor villager is unchanged.

And from the *Dawn of the Common Man* "Even a peasant who in the past could have considered it an achievement to interview a minor functionary suddenly now found even Ministers were easily accessible to them". The true facts are that if it is reported that the peasant backed the wrong Party at the last elections, he would be wise to stay as far away as possible from any of the MPs or the Ministers. If he voted for the Party, he will need to keep well on the side of the punchi mantri, generally the village tough, who may agree, for a consideration, to place his request before "god"—the Member of Parliament, when next he deigns to pay his occasional visit to his electorate.

Finally, there is of course the reference to Bandaranaike's great achievement in making Sinhala the State or Official language. No one denies that Sinhala today has a much greater place in the affairs of the people, but surely we all realise that real government and power rest entirely with the English-speaking group. Whether from the UNP or the SLFP the majority of candidates from whom we may choose a representative come from out of the Westernised group, from those who have attended the privileged Elite schools, from those whose national sport is cricket and not Elle.



Between them and the natives the enormous gap, social, cultural, economic, remains. Large numbers of these folks have left these shores to settle where their hearts really belong, many of the others would go if power were in any serious way to pass into the hands of the true natives of the soil.

This incidentally has nothing to do with learning English as a second or third language. But it has much to do with the failure of this people truly to become independent. Neo-colonialism of the soul is the present malaise of the ruling elite; at the drop of the hat, they would prefer to emplane for Paris or London, and only the constraints of office and privilege drag them off to Kekirawa or Kahatagasdigiliya. This is the tragedy of our nation. This is why all the aid, all the development programmes, flounder in the mire. Our leadership is essentially alienated from the masses of the people.

Come near election time, and the national frustrations begin to build up. We tell ourselves that once this Government is thrown out and another put in its place, all will be well. But all this means is that one group of 90 people, from the Same Elite group, will perhaps replace the present group of 90. And then the frustrations will build up again. Of course the frustrations build up also because we are persuaded that it is in some political party or another we must place our hopes.

Parties are not unimportant. But far more important, is there the need for us to accept responsibility for progress and development ourselves. And the main obstacle in the way of this is the existing practice of having to know to every MP before anything can get done. That is why I continue to plead with my countrymen to rise up in protest against the MP letter business—the symbol of our servitude.

## NEXT WEEK

- TREES
- TURMOIL EVERYWHERE
- POLITICAL EARTHQUAKES IN CHINA
- GENERAL ELECTIONS 1977.

## BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—94

# The Mail Must Go Through

By Herbert Keuneman

If Mr. Dias Bandaranaike, in charge of budgeting these things, or Mr. Kumarasuriar, in charge of executing them, whoever is responsible for the vital decision, would like to make himself thoroughly popular with Village Postmasters and counter clerks at larger Post Offices he, she or it should fix a new price for such things as the stamp required to authenticate a receipt or obtain treatment at a Government dispensary, or especially, to post an ordinary letter. The point is: the price should apply—or primarily it should apply—to such stamps as are most frequently called for but which the majority of customers do not purchase in quantity.

And the point of that is that the new price should be something like .17 cts. for a letter, or .28 cts. for what used to be a .25 cts. stamp, any price that leaves a balance of one, two, or three cents—I do not think the general public will stand for more, four cents might just turn the tide—when payment is offered in the commoner coin of the realm, so that the man at the counter may say, casually but with an air of finality, 'No change'. The would-be purchaser then has to decide whether to buy a stock of stamps of which the value totals some multiple of five cents (in which case the Government benefits at least temporarily; no small benefit when a Government runs as hand-to-mouth as ours does) or whether to go off to the bazaar in search of one-cent pieces and two-cent pieces, and generally decides not to, because it is a lot of trouble for a little money and in any case he would probably have to buy in the bazaar something he did not need, in order to procure the small coins, and something, moreover, at a price selected so it would yield them. Rather than undergo all this complication, he simply says: 'Huh! never mind the change.'

And there's—at last—the point. The *mahajanaya*, voluntarily accepts a loss which, innured as he

is by unprecedented costs of living tends to think of two-cents as chicken feed—less than the dust upon the politician's chariot-wheel—and the *nilcadariya* pockets all the two-cents and one-cents and even (but, as I said, beyond this things may become dicey) the three-cents he has amassed in the course of the day. It may not seem like much. But ten times two-cents is twenty cents; and a month of twenty cents a day—and there are bound to be twenty-five and even thirty cent days—is worth, say, Rs. 5/00? At a minimum. And Rs. 5/00 invested with the Savings Bank will bring (so they promise us) Rs. 10/00 after ten years. And in a lifetime of change-lessness this could amount to... You work it out. A tidy sum. And all due to whoever the Minister is. Could any seller of stamps, Postage and Revenue, but be grateful? And no one loses enough to hurt!

Honesty bids me disclaim this brilliant suggestion as a thought out of my own head: the Post Office seems to have the idea already, though it isn't fully developed yet. In the old days, when you bought a stamped envelope you paid the simple letter postage and had the envelope thrown in. Today they charge an extra .03 cts. for the envelope (which, no doubt, is justifiable enough and might even be considering cheap if they used a better grade of gum) but the actual selling price is .20 cts. Anyway, it is so in village Post Offices. Maybe it is by now so officially, by 'Gazette Notification'! and I am wronging the village postal *niladari*: not an easy wrong to bring off! but although I am almost sure that I bought stamped covers at Havelock Town Post Office a month ago, a week later I was made to pay .20 cents to buy them locally. And even when, thinking to beat the racket, I sent a boy and asked for a dozen stamped covers I still had to pay Rs. 2.40 for them. And I am quite satisfied it wasn't the boy who pocketed the profit. So, you see the idea works!

The scope of this thing could be considerably widened. Railway booking clerks, bus conductors, co-operative store salesmen could all be given a chance to operate the racket (as some of them already do) but it is essential it be recognized as a Government-provided op-

portunity so the gratitude will be directed towards the right quarter and thus effective as a vote-trap; an 'election gundu' sans any cost to the Party, and therefore sans pareil. Better even than hiring at however scandalously nominal a rate buses wrested from the regular routes (leaving the commuter lamenting and the mail service disjuncted) in order to convey joy-riders temporarily self-elected as enthusiastic Party-supporters to tamashas here, there and everywhere.

The right quality and degree of gratitude, though, is not likely to be created in all these candidates: the mind fruitful in this respect must be one conditioned to comparative frugality. Which is why I suggest the Post Office, especially the village post office—note my symbolic use of upper and lower case—as the place to begin. The Sub-Postmaster is accustomed to in terms of the cumulative profits to be made from small speculations, not in ambitious speculations. The former often end up in an impressive nest-egg; but they are not dazzling, as so many get-rich-quick opportunities are, so that the latter often end up—Did you think I was going to say 'in jail?' No, I was going to say no such silly thing: I was going to say (and now I am saying it) 'in having to share out with someone higher up the scale'. What the Sub-Postmaster gets he keeps.

I have given, from time to time, enough examples of the sort of almost-accepted-avenial sins he habitually commits (the paying out of social-service pensions at the old rate when the new rate is Rs. 2/00 more; the delaying of payments on such things as Money Orders so as to have accumulated money in hand and let it 'roll'; the unauthorized inspection of private mail; the deliberate holding back of urgent letters such as calls to job-interviews or notices of job-appointments; &c. &c. &c.) I say I have given examples enough, in these articles, to make it unnecessary to duplicate and reduplicate them. Besides, I have used disproportionate space in this particular article to vent a spleen that, at this moment, I nurse not against the Sub-Postmaster (or the counter clerk) but against the whole monstrous mismanagement of the Postal Department. And they can't

even keep their own men, leave alone the general public, happy! I have little doubt you, wherever you live, share some of this disenchantment, too. But if you lived in Ehetuwewa you'd know all about it! The blood boils.

Do you realize that if a business man in, say Kandy, writes me a letter requiring an early reply he cannot (unless I reply by literal return of post, on the day of receipt) expect my reply within the same WEEK? Long ago, more than 60 years ago, when I was a child in Pt. Pedro, we used to have letters from Matara—about 350 miles—the day after they were posted; and vice versa. Today, after 60 (or 28, or 7, years of 'development' depending on how you judge development) between Ehetuwewa and Kandy—miles; or 80 the longest way round—letters take the same time. So my business man writes to me on Monday, I get his letter on Wednesday; unless I write that very day within the seven hours left me—but sometimes the post (or the postman) is late—I post my letter on Thursday, and on Saturday when it might reach him, his office is closed, so it is Monday of the new week before he has my reply. And since business men don't reply by return of post it is the same when the letters go the other way round. I myself can convey myself to Kandy and back in one day!

Last Thursday I received a long awaited Money Order from Colombo. I received it late, to begin with: it had taken two days in the post, as letters sometimes do even from Colombo; and then it had not reached Ehetuwewa from Galgamuwa (which is, like, the postal 'clearing house' for this region) until mid-afternoon, instead of early morning, because the buses had been cut down, apparently for one of the usual reasons; if Pema had not happened to step into the Post Office, seeing a friend in the porch, I should not have had the M/O until the next day. Well, I sent Pema straight back with it (for I needed the cash badly) but he was told 'the Notice' had not come. On Friday it had not come. On Saturday it had not come. Today is Sunday. Tomorrow is a holiday. And there has not been a cent in the house since Friday morning and I am short of beef, condensed milk, my rations, kerosene, and patience! If I am

lucky and the Notice has not been sent to Ethiliwewa, as Enetuwewa letters often are although the names do not resemble each other in either English or Sinhalese, I shall be lucky to get paid on Tuesday: the sixth day (P. S. It came on Wednesday, the SEVENTH day!)

This 'Notice' is simply a carbon copy of the form the clerk fills out and hands to the drawer of the M/O; and the postoffice practice is (ideally) to place the copy at that very moment in an envelope addressed to the postmaster concerned. All that remains to do then is to post it the same day. But this much is evidently too much for our so-called postal 'service'—'service', my foot—to carry out efficiently. Or is it not, really, a matter of inefficiency but a total lack of a sense of responsibility? a lack of a sense the postal organization seems to be officially engaged in eroding? (Last Friday I sent off an 'urgent' telegram. Pema was given no receipt for it, the Sub-Postmaster assured him it was not necessary! And he could well have been right, at that, for the telegram-receipts one now gets (if the Ehetuwewa practice is anything to go by and is not a mere 'village' covenant) consist of nothing but the scribbled figure of the fee you have paid, and the date stamp, above a scrawled signature. Maybe, I don't quite remember, the telegraph number in the local office. At all events—knowing how local office records are kept—not much on which to base proof of ever having despatched a particular telegram should a complaint about it become necessary! Ah! but what good would a complaint do you? The People's Government current style, can do no wrong even in wronging the people: laws enacted in the People's behalf see to that!)

Seeing how vital to a modern nation an efficient and responsible postal service is, it is appalling to think how far the country has fallen, in its eagerness to propitiate its postal servants, by its toleration of their inefficiency, laziness and dishonesty (even while—where expenditure is involved—it shirks providing them with essential and legitimate benefits) from the ideal of the totally dependable Post, the faith that The Mail Must Go Through. In its unspectacular way no ignoble slogan.

## Moving Around

I remember, although I was at the time a very small boy, being deeply impressed by a story I used to be told about a *tappal* Runner on the Morawaka/Deniyaya stage, before the time of bus or even coach routes. Yet it could not have occurred very long before my time; for I myself recollect trips from Matara on which we travelled the night through, on the same road, by double-bullock cart.

I am not sure whether the *tappal* Runners, bearing only their mail-bag and a staff with a bell on it, travelled all night; but they certainly started well before dawn each day. And the mail went through: you could count on it.

This runner I was told about, somewhere towards dawn along the then forested stretch near Kotapola had turned a little aside from the main road to answer a call of nature and had been set upon by a rogue elephant. The animal had chased him some short way down the road; but he had escaped by taking refuge under a culvert. Then began an hour of terror; for the elephant tried repeatedly to reach him with his trunk; and might have, the fair-way being narrow, so that the man had to dodge, doubled up in the low flue, from each besieged end to the other. At last, as dawn broke, the elephant moved off; and the man shortly after heard an approaching caravan of bullock carts and came out and told his tale.

The carters succoured and encouraged him, as carters best know how, and they were about to move on, the runner with them, when he recollected that he had dropped his staff and bag of mail when the elephant attacked him and insisted upon going the short way into the jungle to retrieve them. At that moment a branch cracked. Everyone was in a bustle to get away; but the runner still insisted on rescuing his trust, arguing that the branch had snapped deeper within the jungle.

He was killed.

I suppose that, in these days of a different generation's own wisdom, his action would be characterized as a show of 'slave mentality'? ('Slave', anyway, mind you, not 'slav-ish'), which is a phrase Mahatma Gandhi never used and would denote a far worse thing.

A thing, moreover, that we have NOT outgrown. For it is a worse thing indeed to be a slave to exclusive self-interest, unmitigated by any sense of responsibility to the public or obligation to a contract of loyalty to a tradition, than it ever was to be a slave to a foreign raj

\* \* \*

## S A F A R I

### On Doing A Job

By Alkardi Mugana

Changing from writing eight pieces in a month to writing four has its problems. It was easy to pick out eight places I had been in, or that I had just been in, and to write about them, about simple facts, or the sequence of events, in great detail. Writing fewer *kazis*, (predecessor to Safari) I am reluctant to forgo any experiences, and I find myself trying at the week-end to write about all that I did during the week. It is hard on the memory.

In terms of small holdings, it seems easy to support a number of workers, so that two hinds or hands, two people, let alone a family per acre is the norm. As the acreage increases, the workers decrease, so that should it happen that a hundred acres supports fifty workmen, eyebrows would be raised. The wages per week would be in the region of Rs. 1,500/-. In a year it would be Rs. 75,000 in wages alone. Yet if there is development, there should be enough work for that number. This is on the basis of a six-day working week, with the Sunday stints that must be done. A five-day working week, with the week-end work that must be done, would mean a saving per week of only Rs. 200. In a money-dominated economy, it is not surprising that the wage bill is the first to be slashed, and that means people out on the dole. The Wages Ordinances are self-defeating, creating unemployment for the benefit of the lucky ones still employed.

All this seems a far-cry from Horana, but it covers the area, many miles away, from where this *Safari* starts this week. Husk pits had to be deepened if the

purpose for burying the husks was not to be lost. The contractor had dug them shallow, and his work had not been checked. Weeding with even ten people seemed a slow business, but the end is in sight. There is such a mass of vegetation for mulching, for the young palms must benefit. The weeds made it difficult to examine the trees for *Kurulminia*, that boring beetle that kills young palms, and the insect has taken its toll of trees.

The sudden fluctuations in the milk, its quantity, has not yet been solved. Doctoring cattle may be an art, but milking must be an art of another sort. There has been no loss in the number of head of cattle, and this has to be weighed against the apparent loss of milk. Cattle do kick their milking buckets, and they even put their foot in it and this can explain a drop sometimes, and this was one excuse trotted out. Another was that a cow had torn a teat on a wire. There was the bull who got loose and who is said to have got knotted up in the rope of another bull; but bulls are not alone in butting. The watcher, who sorted them out, told me the story. It is time we were abroad; I might have gone north, but I went south.

It was dark when I left, but buses fell into place and I got where I was going. The first household had mumps, or so I guessed and my guess was right. Then a chance meeting with people I knew. Then a house where I had not been before. All asleep, all around, the area strange, but a man up, and the house found. I retraced my steps. All asleep again, a chance encounter, and the next found. There I stayed. In the morning a walk, a well on the way back, the well was about to be emptied. A man called out to my companion. You are expected to help. A large pump, but at it was a little while before the pump was started, I was able to wash a shirt and have a bath. The well was oblong, large, the sides lined with cut stone.

As the well emptied, a man went in. He stood on a ladder and he used a section of coconut husk to scrub the stone. It was a section of husk such an mahouts use to scrub elephants. It was our village scrubbing brush. Then the man clung to the side while the bamboo ladder was moved. A second man

joined him as the level of water fell. He had a small knife sticking out of his waist-cloth. It was the sort of knife mahouts use to give a fresh edge to the husk. Then a third man, another companion of mine, joined them.

Scrubbing, or rather, cleaning the bottom of the well was not easy. It looked dirty, almost greasy, a black slime. The bottom of the well had a hole in it, a hole which took a bucket. The bottom was lined with cut stone, and it looked as if it would never be made clean. The men persevered. The buckets of water had to be handed out. The ladder came in useful. Small boys emptied the buckets into some kind of wicker basket. I think. Later I realised that it was to collect the fish that came out in the buckets, because, the next day, when the well had started to fill again, I saw fish swimming around. Coins found were the finder's. I wondered that such a dirty bottom had held the clean water that I had bathed in. I was off to lunch. My companion went later, the task done, but not before I had returned.

That evening I met a foreigner who said that his only newspaper reading, foreign and local, I gathered, was *Tribune*. He also read *Kazi*, and I told him its days were numbered. He had not received the last week's number, nor had I mine, but ardent reader of *Tribune* he was. He said something about a white beard anyhow he was grey. Back where I was, there were five of us in a room. A bedroom, it was, and it held a solitary bed. My friend sat beside me and drummed on the bedstead. The four sang a Sinhalese song. At the end of each verse, for verse it seemed, my friend did a little strenuous drumming, I do not know the musical term for it. I realize that he could have taken his place with the Spitfires, and that he would have probably put on a superlative show at the drums. Another Sinhalese song followed, and more. Then a Tamil song. There is more affinity between me and a Tamil song than a Sinhalese song. I once heard a great Basque solo, a carol, at Loyola. It was hunting, thrilling, and a Tamil lad used to sing a Tamil Song that had a similar effect on me, in Mihintale. It earned him many encores. This Tamil song by a Sinhalese lad was good. Then I was

treated to a Pali one. It outdid the professionals. Then came Sanskrit, then Hindi, then Chinese, each almost of epic length. Then one again and another, each song different. There was dancing, always solo, and a display of fighting solo, Karate, Chinese, all for my benefit, bull lengths, enjoyed, and with gusto. Encores, too unasked. I had been given gratis a concert, in the first row of the stalls. The star, in his own way, was my friend, a lad, quiet well built, a great carrom player, I heard.

Up was I at 4.20 a.m. I caught a bus not much later, and then another bus. I think it must have been still dark when I was half-way to Colombo. There was time for a visit home. Breakfast, and then it happened. Anyway all is well, and the patient, too. Then, troubles of another sort. How can a man spend more money than there is money? The books prove that it as has been spent, yet the money was never there. Ghost receipts? It was 11 p.m. when we finished our work, and 1 a.m. before I finished mine, and mine was the first two manuscript sheets of this article. Then up again at six, I woke up several times, and was it not cold?



## REVIEW

### A Legend In His Lifetime

by Jayantha Somasundaram

**October 8th is now set apart by the Third World, as the Day of the Heroic Guerilla. No guerilla fighter has made so great an impact in modern times than Dr. Ernesto Che Guevara, a hero to his own generation, a legend in his own lifetime.**

*"The greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends."*

When he was murdered in Bolivia in 1967, Che Guevara was still only thirty-nine years old. However, he had become a legend in his own life time, and the most dramatic symbol of social discontent the world has ever seen. Along with the other initiators of the

Cuban revolution, he was responsible for contesting and undermining U.S. supremacy on the American continent. The beard, the battle fatigue, the whole romantic aura that went to make up this remarkable personality, made him one of the most controversial figures of all times.

Che was born in Argentina into a middle class Irish-Spanish family. He suffered terribly from asthma which was to follow him throughout his adventurous life time. As a child his asthma attacks prevented him from attending school during the day, and kept him awake most of the night. In 1953 at twenty-five he graduated in medicine. However, a pan-South American tour that he had made in his student days kept him from entering into an uneventful professional life as a doctor. He had seen the devastating effect that U.S. imperialism and corrupt local regimes had on millions of Latin Americans.

While he was in Guatemala, he had witnessed a U.S. inspired anti-democratic coup. This was a turning point in his life. In 1955 he was to sign up with Fidel Castro and join the Granma force of Cuban revolutionaries.

In 1959 Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba. Che could choose almost any post that he wanted. In fact, in addition to being Minister of Industries, he was President of the National Bank, Director of National Planning and Commander of military regions. But he could not settle down to what appeared to him as a bureaucratic role, even in a country that had embarked on an exciting experiment. To him there was all of Latin America that still needed emancipation, and all of the world waiting for revolution.

Slinging a gun over his shoulder he stepped back from the limelight, from the citadels of political power in Latin America, back into its jungle. Che did not formulate elaborate theories to explain, define or justify his conduct. Theorizing was not necessary—his life was his best testimony. He was a revolutionary and into the jungle of Latin America did he go to fulfil his destiny.

While we have few accounts of the military engagements that he participated in during the period immediately before his death, his

conduct in Cuba established for all time his stature as a soldier. "Che was an incomparable leader. Che was, from a military point of view, an extraordinarily capable man, extraordinarily courageous, extraordinarily aggressive. If, as a guerilla, he had his Achilles' heel it was this excessively aggressive quality, his absolute contempt for danger," said Fidel Castro.

Che was an apostle of protracted rural guerilla warfare. He provided the inspiration and the ideals for a new generation of activities committed to a revolution that had a special significance for the badly oppressed people of the Third World. Che believed passionately in the victory of the Latin American revolution and the emergence from it of a new world, with new people, in a new tomorrow.

In *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, Che wrote, "In our country the individual knows that the glorious period in which it has befallen him to live is one of sacrifice; he has learned its meaning.

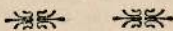
"The man in the Sierra Maestra—and wherever else there was fighting—learned it first; later, all Cuba came to know it. Cuba, the vanguard of America, must make sacrifices, because it points the way to full freedom for the Latin American peoples.

"...the true revolutionary is moved by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to conceive of an authentic revolutionary who lacks this quality. Herein lie what are perhaps the great dramatic challenges to a leader: he must combine an impassioned spirit with coolness of mind; and he must make painful decisions unalteringly.

"The love our vanguard revolutionaries bear for the people and for the most hallowed causes must be the same indivisible, spiritualized, love. Not for them the routine expressions of finite love as expressed by ordinary men.

"Revolutionary leaders are not often present to hear their children's first hesitant words; their wives must also share in their sacrifice if the revolution is to reach its goal; their friends are to be found only among their comrades in revolution. For them there is no life outside the revolution. If they are to sidestep dogmatic extremes, sterile scholas-

ticism, and isolation from the people, they must possess a full measure of humanity and a sense of justice and truth. Theirs is a daily struggle to transform their love of living humanity into concrete deeds, into acts that will serve as a mobilizing force and an example."



## Inania of this, that and the other

### Chum/Pa And The Down-And-Out

By INNA

I made a dreamy and sultry approach to Pelmadulla. The bus reeled along, packed to capacity. The hot afternoon, the rock-a-bye ride, the absence of serious road-bumps or potholes were all conducive to the dream. "Pelmadulla bahinda"—and the subconscious gave over to the conscious and the dream ended. In a daze, but steady I shouldered my Siamese satchel and got off. A jeep came out of the Kahawatte road (also the Emibilpitiya road) and disgorged a white man near the hospital. He was a tall, gaunt figure, with a chestnut beard. I watched him. He saw a man fallen by the roadside; found life to be extinct; went up to the authorities at the hospital and spoke to them. He came back, took a half sheet of white cloth, covered the face of the dead man and left two half-bricks on the flap-edges lest the cloth would go with the wind; moved his lips in what looked like a wish or a prayer, heaved a sigh (I clearly heard it) and he went away. It was unplanned, unstudied, a typical gesture of *maitreya* or *metta*, or kindness (or *agape* as Greek christians used to put it). I chummed up with him. He was from Naples, Italy; had worked for quite a while in Sri Lanka; was actually in Kahawatte. His trouser-legs jut out a good two feet from out of his 'robe' of white with muddy patches. He kept on mumbling that the roadside man—let's call him Ramasamy Sinappen—was his chum; was a good man. His

own name sounded something like "Chum", when he said he tried to be brother to all in the area, but some people called him 'father' (Pa). The roadside man was one of his 'flock' and had got ill with heart trouble ("you know, undernourishment, hard-work on estates, anxiety of feeding a family of five and the heavy burden of living had got Ramasamy down, what's to be done"); he had been hospitalized, but despite the care and concern of the hospital staff and nurses, he had slowly sneaked out to the neighbouring boutique to see if he could make it, and then had fallen by the roadside. That's when I saw the jeep come with our Chum.

Then I went up and saw the Kahawatte Social Centre, at my request. To it from all sides poured in estate workers and anyone, for a kind word, a gesture of hope, the drafting of a letter, the working out of a case, the helping in a cause, the extortion of a passport (tough at certain times); the obtaining of a ration card or book. How he would like to help in social integration of the peasant-villager and worker and help form one nation. The anguish of our people was his own anguish; the nation's yearning to be one, was his own yearning. This, he said, was his mission, this was 'why' he was sent. He tried to do it in a disciplined manner as did Ignatius of Loyola before him. Working also with Sarvodaya, he carried a bundle of leaflets with the single four-phrase reminder of Poson or of any Buddhist festival—*Metta*, *Karuna*, *Mudita*, *Upekkha*—the leaflets may have caused a flutter or even road pollution, but the message cleared the mind and cleaned it and thus counteracted the pollution! My all Neapolitan was dedicated to *sacca*, the Truth. He was sorry for the sufferers. Didn't he sum up in a couplet the grim sadness of many an estate worker: "Normally, people are innocent until proved guilty. In our case, the poor estate worker is normally taken as guilty, and he has to prove his innocence." And, this, for the men and women who made the wheels of our system run for 150 years and more.



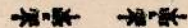
# Confidentially

## \* Milk Board

IS IT NOT TRUE that revelations in this column (vide Tribune, 2/10/76) about the way in which the Livestock Board had supplied boneless packeted meat at Rs. 3 a lb has led to serious investigations, thinking and re-thinking by some persons in high places? That Tribune is still awaiting denials, corrections, amplifications and/or clarifications by the livestock authorities regarding the information set out in this column? That no sooner we get any communication from such sources we shall publish the same? That what we are anxious about is that the truth (as far as it is yet possible to ascertain it) should become known? That last week, 9/10/76, this column had referred to some expensive mishaps in the import of pedigree cattle from Australia a few months ago? That here too we will welcome further information to enable the public to get a correct picture (if ours is not completely correct)? That, in the meantime, our attention was drawn to a publicity boast by the Milk Board? That in a news item in the Sunday Observer, 26/9/76, under the heading *Enough Powdered Milk In Two Years* it was stated: "Sri Lanka will be self-sufficient in powdered milk and fresh milk within two years. The National Milk Board sources said that they could hit this target because milk production has increased and more dairy farmers were now selling fresh milk to the Board. Last year about this time the Milk Board bought 170,000 pints daily. Now it buys about 320,000 pints. From this about 80,000 pints are put out daily in the form of sterilised, pasteurised and flavoured milk. The balance is used for manufacture of powdered milk, condensed milk and butter. Board sources said. The country needs about 1.5 million pounds of powdered milk a month, but the Board now manufactures about 1.2 million pounds monthly which is near full capacity of the Ambewela milk powder plant. About 2,000 pounds of butter are manufactured daily. The daily requirement of the country is in the region of 5,000 pounds. Milk Board sources said. Produc-

tion could be increased to meet the entire demand, but the Board does not want to do this until such time there is sufficient fresh milk to go round and sufficient powdered and condensed milk to meet all the requirements of the country. Milk production went up substantially during last year because of the high price paid by the Board to suppliers. The purchase price of milk by the Board was increased at a time when animal feeds and poonac were selling at very high prices. Now the price of poonac, has come down drastically, but the purchase price still remains the same. The Agriculture Department through its extension services has done immense work to improve animal husbandry in the country and more people are taking to dairy farming. The Milk Board has helped them by opening up several purchasing points throughout the country. At the moment there are forty purchasing centres. The Board hopes to increase this to 105 within the next three years." That the eight boasts could be summed as follows: (1) that the country will be self-sufficient in powdered milk and fresh milk in 2 years; (2) that this target can be achieved because milk production has increased and that more dairy farmers were selling fresh milk to the board—the increase being from 170,000 pints to 320,000 pints in a year; (3) that 1.2 millions pounds of the annual requirements of 1.5 million lbs of powdered milk were now being produced at Ambewela which was presently working to full capacity; (4) that 2000 lbs of butter were being manufactured daily—the daily requirement being 5000 lbs; (5) that the full requirement of butter could be met, but the Board was not doing this until there was enough milk for fresh milk, powdered milk and condensed milk requirements; (7) that the production of milk had gone up substantially because of the higher prices paid by the Board to the producer—though poonac prices had come down drastically in the last two years and the prices fixed when animal feeds prices were high were still being paid to the producers and, (8) that the Department of Agriculture and the Milk Board were doing wonders to expand and improve the livestock and dairy industry in the country? That Tribune will examine every one of these boasts, one by one, in the coming weeks?

That we will welcome all information and facts, in addition to what we can gather, on these eight boasts of the Milk Board Sunday Observer news blurb? That on one of the questions the facts indicate that the Board's claims are untrue? That this relates to question 7 regarding the poonac prices (and poonac is the basic essential of all animal feeds)? That the Milk Board claimed that poonac prices had come down drastically? That the poonac prices per metric ton in Colombo have been as follows: March 1975-Rs. 367, April-Rs. 344, May-Rs. 344, June-Rs. 344, July-Rs. 295, August-Rs. 273, September-Rs. 272, October-Rs. 271, November-Rs. 284, and December Rs. 429, January 1976-Rs. 472, February-Rs. 588, March-Rs. 648, April-Rs. 590, May-Rs. 617, June-Rs. 642, July-Rs. 786, and August-Rs. 817? That it is difficult to understand how the Milk Board sources could have told the Sunday Observer that the poonac prices had come down drastically in recent times? That if the accuracy of the Board's information is to be judged from the poonac prices, then it is not difficult to infer what the rest of the boasts amount to? Animal feeds and poonac have more than doubled since March 1975? That when the rest of the boasts of the Milk Board are similarly examined, the public will be able to get somewhere close to the truth in these matters? That a new boast of the Board is that it was turning out 125 lbs of cheese a day? That this is no doubt welcome news? That what is not so welcome that the product is sold at Rs 20 a lb when the cost of production is said to be less than Rs. 8 a lb? That if this is true it will be a strange commentary on the kind of "profiteering" indulged in by our state manufacturing and trading organisations? That if this is not true, the Board should make the public the real cost of production—without adding extraneous overheads? That, as a stop press item, readers will be interested to know that the Government is importing 10,000 tons of coconut poonac at a cif price of Rs. 2400 per ton and that this would be sold to dairy farmers at a subsidised price of Rs. 800 a ton to meet the current shortage of poonac? That this is a sad reflection on the state of our coconut industry?



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