

# TRIBUNE

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## POLITICAL CHOLERA?

One of the greatest acts of disservice that several politicians in North have done to the Tamils as well as the country as a whole was to decry, at the start and even later, the steps taken by the Health authorities and the Government to control the outbreak of cholera, originally only in Kayts, as a political stunt, conceived in malice and perpetrated in vengeance to denigrate the Tamils. That this cry that the Government's very necessary measures to control this disease was part of a UF scheme to punish the Tamil community? Many Tamil politicians had proclaimed that the Governmental action was only intended to create a scare and that the disease itself was nothing more than *Political Cholera*. This kind of propaganda had led to a great deal of slackness among the public and even among Tamil officials who were expected to enforce the necessary measures. Even Tamil MPs, who were with the Government, had become victims of this obsession that what had struck Jaffna was political cholera and had thereupon demanded the transfer of Health personnel who had taken the outbreak seriously and had wanted to enforce the regulations strictly. It was believed even by these pro-UF Tamil MPs that partisan Tamil officials were seeking to covertly victimise voters and constituents of the MPs in question. It is a tragedy that the mental diarrhoea which has afflicted Tamil politicians of all political persuasions for many years has now led them to reach the identical conclusion that the outbreak in Kayts was only political cholera. Jaffna has paid a big price for this stupidity. The disease was allowed to spread outside the Kayts area, because all quarantine measures were ignored, and broken, in the early days. A joke was made of the system of inoculations. The chits registering the fact that X or Y had been inoculated was made a transferable document for different persons to go in and out of the area. As a result of all this the Jaffna farmer lost lakhs in not being able to export out of the peninsula perishable market garden produce. It is an ill wind that does not do any good to anybody — which makes politicians fall victim to psychopathic obsessions.

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# Tribunānia

## \* Trivialities

## \* FP Short-Sightedness

## \* Maha Prospects

THE BUDGET DEBATE in the National State Assembly did not disclose any startling disclosures or thought provoking analyses. Every speaker followed his party line in talking about the Budget. All Government speakers were enthusiastic about the Budget and wishfully saw in it everything they hoped for in a Budget. Softening Communist Party's Tudawe went so far as to predict that capitalism and capitalists would be all liquidated completely by 1978. Why he chose the magic year 1978 is a puzzle? Does he think that in another five years capitalists and capitalism will automatically disappear from Sri Lanka—probably with the remaining Budgets of the United Front? Or, has he taken the deadline to 1978 because it will be after the next General Election in 1976/77? Does Tudawe expect the Communist Party to capture supreme power and thereafter legislatively abolish capitalism?

But if Tudawe hopes for the total liquidation of capitalism through UF mixed economy budgets, then he is only fooling himself and the public. The private sector is being encouraged to grow in terms of the Five Year Plan in certain specified fields and in these private capitalists

will attain such commanding heights that the private sector will be in a most powerful position in an economy which is seemingly dominated by state capitalism—a far cry from a socialist state without capitalists.

And what does Tudawe think will happen to the new United Front capitalists enjoying 15-year tax holidays with whom UNP capitalists have happily merged? What about the new gem capitalists? And what about those exporting non-traditional goods? Will all these capitalists be thrown into the dustbin before 1978?

Whilst the CP and LSSP speakers saw the shining lights of a new socialist milieu through the current series of United Front budgets and wanted greater acceleration towards the socialist millennium, UNP speakers bemoaned the fact that the Budget violated the pledges of the UF to provide two measures of rice cheap as well as all basic essentials at cheaper-than-UNP prices. UNP speakers in seeking to debunk the over-dramatisation of the food crisis by the UF went so far as to assert that there was no food crisis at all in the world whereas in fact there was indeed such a crisis which affected even countries like the USA, Canada and Australia, which had increased agricultural production in a big way in this crisis period. (In these countries it was a crisis of inflation and a crisis of energy).

SLFP spokesmen did not have anything new to say—everything that was wrong today was due to the mis-

deeds of the UNP in the past and even at present. The UNP was condemned to take the blame for the present crisis with the IMF, IBRD, international reactionaries, international capitalists and other forces hostile to progressivism and socialism—the culprits responsible for Sri Lanka's plight. In addition to the UNP, Government speakers blamed the *Davasa* for adding to the troubles of the Government by questioning UF *bona fides* and also debunking some of the fairy-tale claims made by the Government. The *Sun-Davasa* group, in the best traditions of partisan polemics, has not hesitated to swerve away from independence and objectivity in order to bash the Government at every point.

It is interesting to recall that it was the *Sun-Davasa* group which had helped the UF to power in 1970 and for a time after the UF Government was formed, the *Sun-Davasa* group of papers were almost like government publications. But this honeymoon did not last very long with many of the heterogeneous forces in the UF coming into direct conflict with the pro-Right postures of the *Sun-Davasa* papers. This has now grown into a serious confrontation: and certain UF forces have threatened to deal with the Gunasena's Independent Newspapers Ltd in the same way that Wijewardena's ANCL Ltd had been diffused in ownership. The Gunasena's, a few weeks ago, had announced that their plan to "broadbase" the ownership of the Company

was at an advanced stage in fact, they seem to have intelligently anticipated the green light which was given to private capitalists in the latest Budget that "broad-based companies" would be an acceptable institutional infrastructure for private capitalism just as Corporations have become an expensive superstructure for state capitalism. How this confrontation between certain sections of the United Front and the Independent Newspapers Ltd will end is difficult to envisage, but the Budget Debate also reflected this confrontation in the speeches of several MPs.

Most of the Federal Party MPs also did not rise above the petty levels to which parliamentary debates have now sunk. So psychopathetically obsessed were FP MPs about the Government's discrimination against the Tamils that they carried their pettiness to the extent of suggesting that the cholera scare had been specially exaggerated to discriminate against the Tamil people—and this at a time when the FP should have co-operated with the Health Services to bring the cholera outbreak under control. This kind of irresponsible and inane attitude by certain FP politicians in the North contributed greatly to public apathy about the cholera and which has been an added reason for the spread and prolongation of the cholera outbreak. The FP also has still not got over its ingrained complex to put the cart before the horse, and in trying to defend the FP decision not to recognise the National

Flag or the National Anthem, one Tamil MP made it clear that political sagacity and tactical strategem were totally deficient in the armoury of present-day Tamil politicians who have recently even started talking about self-rule—after abandoning the empty and verbose slogans about federalism in which they had been lost for over two decades now.

Neither the Flag nor the National Anthem are the first precursors of a separate state or a region demanding self-rule. These are the last outward trappings of a new state, and statesmen who change history (and boundaries) think of the Flag and the Anthem only after accomplishing many other preliminary steps of a grave and serious nature involving sacrifice and discipline. It is the most foolish of politicians who start a sentimental dog fight about a Flag and a National Anthem as a preliminary to even an ideological preparation for self-rule. If Tamil politicians still persist in sentimental slogans about outward trappings, Sinhalese politicians cannot be blamed for laughing at them and their quest for self-rule. If the speeches of some TUF MPs in Parliament are taken as indicative of their intentions regarding self-rule and their capacity to set up a separate state, then for the moment at any rate the whole thing must be taken as a joke.

**BUT THE FOOD CRISIS** in Sri Lanka is not a joke, and the TUF has done well to proclaim that it will cooperate

with the Government in its food production war. The full impact of food shortages is yet to be felt by the masses of the people. All hopes are being placed on the next Maha crop. As *Tribune* has indicated in earlier issues the 40,000 tons which Ceylon will receive from China in December 1973 as an advance

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on the 1974 Agreement will enable the half-measure ration of rice to be given until the end of March.

But, with all the threats held out to cultivators, it was hoped that farmers and landowners would rush to produce more food, and boastful claims were made that very nearly 110 million bushels of paddy would be produced as the Maha crop. On the basis of this estimate furnished by officials of the Department of Agriculture, Ministers and others made fanciful claims about how Ceylon would not have need to import rice in 1974 after the 40,000 tons consignment from China. Certain Ministers went so far as to boast that, after next Maha, all dollar debts would be cleared.

*Tribune* had always warned the Government that it would be stupidity of the highest magnitude to think that the production war could be won by orders from on top coupled with threats (of takeovers, expropriation and the like) from the chocolate-soldier-like Political Authorities of MPs whose capacity for administrative competence is a matter of doubt. *Tribune* had also pointed out that many measures which have been implemented by the UF could produce nothing but apathy from persons and groups who have so far contributed largely to agricultural production. *Tribune* has also pointed out that the inducements offered to farmers at this late stage are inadequate to produce fruitful results.

**The panic and over-dramatisation of the food**

**crisis, and the actual shortages and the high free market prices of cereals, yams and other food crops, would probably induce a number of farmers to go in a big way into agricultural production, but taking all factors into consideration, *Tribune* has felt that most landowners and farmers would not be willing to produce much more than for their own personal requirements, and that even if more was produced they would sell as little as possible of the surplus to the Government.**

All this may be dismissed as speculative conjecture, but even before the boasts made by Ministers and Government spokesmen that 110 million bushels of paddy would be harvested for Maha was forgotten, it is whispered in VIP circles that a counter-check by officials not belonging to the Department of Agriculture had already revealed that the estimates must be scaled down to about 60 to 65 million bushels. Even this estimate of the Maha is based on hopes of plentiful rain based on what had fallen in October and early November. But the estimates will go down still further if the Northwest is not as good as wished for.

There are signs why the present optimism is misplaced. People in the Wannu, who are steeped in local lore about the weather, have told *Tribune* that the early onset of cold dewy weather in the nights from mid-November was an indication that the monsoon would either fail or at best be only

partial. Dew in the dry zone comes normally only when the paddy is ripening in January and February and many Wannu people regard the early onset of dew as an unhappy and ominous sign.

One can only hope that these premonitions prove to be wrong. On the basis of the 60/65 million bushel estimates for the Maha, some daily papers made frontpage speculations that Sri Lanka would import 125,000 tons of rice from China to ensure the 300,000 tons required for the year to maintain the half-measure ration.

Land Ceilings, Income Ceilings, Takeovers and Compulsory Savings will all militate against agricultural production—and not promote increased production as some theorists claim. If gem merchants, exporters of certain classes of goods and tourist entrepreneurs have amnesties and tax holidays to circumvent all ceilings, why should not farmers and landowners (at least, the under-50 acre survivors) be given the same concessions?

*The Achilles heel of the United Front government will be the gem capitalism which is taking private enterprise in Sri Lanka to new heights of glory. The profit motive has been denigrated so far as agricultural production is concerned, but for gem merchants, exporters of non-traditional goods and travel agents and tourist hoteliers, the sky's the limit so far as profit is concerned—apart from everything else they also have many hidden sources of invisible earnings and profits.*

It is difficult as yet to see as to who will have the last laugh about the satyagraha which produced rain, or the divine intervention which is said to have brought the rain when Ministers and other VIPs invoked the rain gods in certain places of worship.

On a realistic and objective appraisal of all factors, it is difficult to be optimistic about 1974 or even 1975 about local production of food. The Government, in spite of elevating Political Authorities to supreme power, does not seem to know just what is happening at the grass roots.

*It is ostrich-like self-delusion to think that enemies, saboteurs and reactionaries were undermining the food production war. It is only when the Government is able to overcome the prevailing Alice-In-Wonderland myopia from which it is now suffering that any change for the better can be hoped for.*

### Baboon Mummy

An examination of mummies at the Cairo Museum with the aid of X-rays has made it possible to correct a 3,000-year-old mistake. One of the sarcophagi contains two mummies of the XXI Dynasty epoch. Until recently it was supposed that one of them was the mummy of the high priestess Makare, who died at childbirth, and the other of her daughter Princess Moutemhet. The X-rays proved beyond all doubt that the Princess was really a little baboon.

### EXPLOSIVE

## AUNT LILLIAN LAUNCHES A LITERARY MISSILE

by Canax

WATCH IT, folks, Aunt Lillian is at it again! At least you can't say you haven't been warned, and that's one more warning than I ever seem to have. From her. She descends on me every time like lightning out of a clear blue sky, and the effects are just as traumatic. So if you're in the mood to take the warning seriously, you'll resort to evasive action. I suggest you get into bed or into your favourite armchair and wait meekly for the worst, since there is little else you can do. If you're ready, then, read on....

"My dear boy" she says in launching her literary missile which, for sheer accuracy despite difficult terrain and a whole host of commonsense counter-measures, leaves the Soviet's newest SA-6 ground-to-air weapon in the shade, or what precious little there is of that in the Sinai Desert.

After Aunt L's last attack some time ago which left my psyche as shattered then as Israel's belief in its military invincibility is now, I seriously considered many electronic antidotes but soon discarded all, for not one of them had been tested in actual battle conditions against Aunt Lily before.

It was my wife who came up with the idea most likely

to fox her for keeps. Let's move out of this house, she said, get ourselves an unlisted telephone, and not leave any forwarding address—and she'll soon give us up for dead. It seemed a brilliant idea; it proved a costly one as well.

THAT FOOLED her for awhile all right but, alas, not for long. We had clearly under-estimated Aunt Lilly's determination and/or her capability to seek us out, dead or alive. Probably alive, though I'm only guessing of course.

She adds: "During this unfortunate break in communication between us over which I had no control whatever, and hope and pray you hadn't either, you must have been hanging on every word coming your way from the likes of James Reston and Stewart Alsop, to name just two pens that have been flowing with ink and insight from the New World. Well, you may think this too much of a good thing, but I insist you now hang on every word of mine; I may waste less ink than either of them, but my own insights or intuitions are twice as fascinating as those of Jimmy and Stewart put together.

"Take, for instance, their output on Nixon and the Watergate Affair. The Press

as a whole has provided more invective than insight, but what no one has brought out clearly enough so far is the reason why the President and the Press were, from the start, headed on an inevitable collision course.

"Dick vowed quite early on that he would 'get to the bottom of it' Before he could get very far, though, the Press made a vow of its own and managed, as only the Press can, to get to the top instead. Uncle Leo says there was no place else the Press could go but up, since the whole thing started at the bottom. I don't know if I agree with that, for when you find yourself at the top over a mess like Watergate, you normally don't look up farther unless you suspect the Almighty also of having a hand in it. I doubt if Nixon feels even at this late stage that Watergate was, after all, an Act of God. The Press on the other hand, probably views it that way, and only God knows why.

"I was quite disappointed, dear boy, with Nixon over the tapes. No, not that he refused to give them up, which is what I would have got Uncle Leo to do had he been in the Oval Office, and I been First Lady. After holding on to them for dear life for so long, he comes out and says he's been holding onto something that wasn't even there! He should know better than anyone else that even Americans can't be fooled that easily.

PITY I didn't bring myself to drop him a line when the tape controversy first surfaced. He could have said

anything, except that they were missing, and got away. He could have said that Pat felt lonely one evening when he was busy over some crisis or other, and decided to listen to one of the tapes to while away the time, but inadvertently pressed the "record" button instead of the "play back"; so the historical record was lost to posterity, and not merely to the Watergate Grand Jury alone.

"He could have added, in a show making the nation privy to a personal secret, that he was so cross with his wife he had cut her monthly pocket money by half for the rest of her stay in the White House. The story would have gone down very well, I tell you.

"As for the other missing tape, it's not fair to let Pat take the rap for that as well. My advice would have been to say that when Leonid Brezhnev dropped by recently, he had casually mentioned having read 'something called Watergate' and asked to know more; so he had let him choose one of the tapes as a token of friendship to take home and listen at leisure. He couldn't very well ask the Soviet leader for the tape back without seriously damaging the progress of detente. Kissinger had warned him of that. The matter would have ended there.

"Of course, it's too late now, unless Brezhnev feels like coming to his rescue, in which case Leonid could make out that *both* tapes were safe in Moscow and give the credit for getting

them there to his network of secret agents in the United States. It would get Nixon off the hook, I think, and also help divert attention by starting a spy scare. Maybe I'll drop Leonid a line on that.

"Despite all that has happened, dear boy, I still free. Nixon is the right man, only he is in the wrong place. America may be right for a lot of people who make it from rags to riches like in the fairy stories, but it is the wrong place to be President of, and certainly for a guy who has his own interest at heart as much as he has the country's.

"YOUR UNCLE says that if Dick is as smart as he's cracked up to be, he'll stop fooling around with false alarms over the Middle East and, like Christopher before him, jump the first available boat for another voyage of discovery. He may or may not prove again that the world is round, or square, or rotten, or whatever it was that Chris set out to prove in his time, but he'll surely discover a place more suited than America is or ever could be to his unique genius.

"As usual, Uncle won't name the place he has in mind, which is what makes me mad at him. "You'll never guess it in a million years!" he taunts me, and I doubt if I'm that bad at guessing games. Now I want your honest opinion, dear boy. Would you think me very wild if I guessed that Uncle was actually having our place in mind? Dick might have second thoughts when

he sights the Inter-Continental from way out at sea, but if he can overcome that initial shock, he'll find every other prospect pleasing.

"For a start, we don't have TV, and Nixon will love this place for that small mercy alone, if nothing else. It won't be long before he finds out for himself that we have, by and large, a very responsible Fourth Estate which has discovered the profound truth that to bite the hand that feeds you (with paper, what else?) is one sure way of going hungry, maybe even starve to you-know-what. Well, what more could Nixon ask for? I can't think of anything, but perhaps he can, and he won't be pushing his luck one bit.

"Nixon will learn after a short spell here that to be a rich country is not everything. You can act like a bully abroad, I suppose, but you're never master in your own home. And that, after all, is what counts when it comes to the crunch.

"I don't know if you agree, but there are many advantages in being a poor, underdeveloped nation, short of everything from food to foreign exchange. Of course, it's not everybody who can see the advantages, for it's best seen, and enjoyed, from the top."



# Inania *Of This, That and The Other*

## Opening Still More

By INNA

In the TRIBUNE of several weeks ago, the back-cover carried a title: "*The new Catholic morality*". It was a searing article that exposed new auto-critical lines in the largest christian community in Sri Lanka. Undoubtedly its social doctrine of today is most outstanding though it is shy and reluctant to march deed to word in certain areas of social action: sporadic efforts abound; conspicuous by the absence of higher coordinated effort.

A friend placed certain facts before me recently about another S. E. Asian country where on one Sunday, the christian leader issued a Circular letter entitled: "*Why Priests should not wear long or short-sleeved shirts*", and the following week: "*Why Guitars should not be used for Youth Masses*" and it "was about August 1971" (he added, "some months after our own crisis in this country", though the relevance of that addition was a little lost on me.)

Knowing the terrible tragedy of this country in question, with its sixteen TV channels, its massive pot-holes in large streets of the capital city, I was not surprised when I heard these statements of my friend, Nor was I surprised when I found this:

*"In—5% of the population owns 85% of the nations' wealth.. the wealthy may live and spend according to their social status, but social justice and charity demand that they do not squander.. such grave irresponsibility (for example 5000 p, or nearly 1000 US dollars for a wedd-*

*ing gown worn only once)"*  
(Corospe)

BUT is it only in certain countries that such a musical extravaganza is being played to keep the have-nots mesmerized? What about Dumont's revelation:

*"Top-class marriages at the Galle Face Hotel, Taprobane, Samudra went on even in full rebellion. The—cousins had a marriage at the GFH on 6th May 1971 with 600 guests and a minister. It cost 8000 Rs. There are other marriages where expenditure was in the region of 100,000 Rupees; a precious stone given to every invitee! This is a spectacle of corruption; highly indecent" (Dumont, p. 72: Peasantry)*

So we see that it is not only religions that need auto-critique. A healthy government needs fearless auto-critique and decision—making that is sure and swift. Whatever their sources, Corospe, for that other country, and Dumont for ours, have described situations of some years

ago. That the countries in question (including ours) may have seen the usefulness of this critique and done at least something in that direction—to adjust, correct, control—is very certain.

WHAT IS happening in Sri Lanka today is this: the poor are getting exasperated when they see stately cars speeding down impossible highways carrying neo-colonialists and big-wigs of certain social institutions and leaders of certain religious bodies, whose founders then, now and always decried the frightening of the poor.

To tinker around with long or short-sleeved shirts when social priorities are at stake and the people faced of starvation, is like hunting for lacto-Calamine for a nose-pimple when the man is dying of cancer or TB of the thigh-bone!

Fiddling with "Rome", while the violin is burning! There are stalwarts who are equal to the task of critique in christian circles in Latin America: Helder Camara, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Antonio Fragoso, Camillo Torres (who died for the cause) are not empty names. They are vivid and vibrant.

For News Behind  
the News  
read  
**TRIBUNE**  
regularly

SHAMBA

# Daily Chores: Occasional Frustration

by ANATORY BUKOBA

August 5,

It is gratifying to look around and see that we really have a vegetable garden at last. The plants tall, all except the chilli and the cucumber, and all the vegetables in various plots and all plots planted rather higgledy—piggledy. The plants that are more wont to be missed out altogether, had a watering this afternoon. A friend, strong in frame and limb turned up, and made just that difference by fetching three more pails of water, large buckets full nearly to the brim, the short way up from the river, which I can, barely manage with just a *Kalla gedi*. The numerous corrections in the manuscript of this piece betrays how tired I was when I began to write, and after two attempts, I just had to leave off till the next day.

Well, it was yesterday that I think I discovered a new way down to the river, a route with a gentle slope, and being directly behind the house, the closest possible to the vegetables. If I can be better organised from now on, this route, the clearing of it will be at the top of priorities. Other clearing, to be sure of losing no wood-appie, will be near the top of the list, too. The most important thing is to have

good and reliable helpers. I hope I get a new break in this matter from today.

Yesterday, on my return after a brief time away, I found that people have had started to put up a new house, which they had taken down again, trees had been felled on this land, the front of the house had been altered, and some of this despite my express wishes to the contrary. This really will not do. The intentions may be good, but I have found from past experience gained years ago, that there must be plan rigidly adhered to. Writing down the plan will not do either. It must be in the mind, and although by force of circumstances the plan will be continually breaking apart, it must be put together again. Failure to do that leads to ultimate failure.

August 6,

Today was a great one in the life of our village. It was someone's silver jubilee. About sixty-two of his conferees turned up on time and others arrived late for the chief function and so I could not count them. We could not but regard today as a holiday. As a result of all this, my *Shamba* had some distinguished visitors. They could hardly have been impressed by the material achievements,



## The One-Acre Farm

and I wonder what they thought of the idea. interested, however, they certainly were, I thought. They saw my humble abode, now without some of its magic because of the unsolicited alteration to the front of it.

Watering was done, but much of it was not, and I hope it can be done tomorrow morning.

We have been joined by another companion, but he will not be moving in just now. He is an old associate of mine, and he ought to have some inkling of what I am about, of what I am trying to do.

Last night I was so tired, I just could not go on writing. I will conclude with some verse.

*Perseverance pays a lot these days*

*When Governments don't know what to do;*

*Devaluation is a "crime" all fear,*

*Half-done, as done, it comes to nought;*

*Well done, as not yet tried, it's fine.*

*There is too much vested interest*

*Everywhere, to try its cure.*

*Its not that we don't value our own coin,*

*We value it too much to fool around,*

*While some to have those jaunts abroad must try,*

*We others have to stay, and pay sky-high.*

*Rather should we want our currency*

*To rise, to buy much more.*

*To make the foreigner cry out,*

*The rupee's sound.*

*To get this we must learn to pay much less*

*All along the line for what we buy.*

*That I might add, is the philosophy behind this Shamba.*

August 7,

With the completion of this morning's watering, and together with last evening's, all had been watered except the murunga, the plantains, and possibly, the papaw. I feel more sure of myself now. My companions are near neighbours. They are beginning to see the necessity of conserving money. Drink tea without sugar they would not, but one of them did so today when I told him that one day he would bless me for teaching to do so. To have bought sugar today, would have meant borrowing money for tomorrow's breakfast.

We had a good day at the fair. My spending money was down by half, but we bought a lot of good vegetables cheaply; tomatoes at -/50 cts. a pound, *kekiri* and *pipigna*, which are both of them kinds of cucumber, and spinach.

Today, too, we were blessed with a visitor. I took him to visit a friend. Both are farmers and he went away armed with some spinach cuttings and some Australian seed.

A Macmillan wrote a book years ago on tropical vegetables. There is a copy in the

village. He mentions a vegetable which he calls squash, in ceylon. I was interested when I saw it today, because I have mentioned in this chronicle already, how a farmer here has grown successfully the strange American squash.

August 8,

Besides watering this morning some of what had not been watered last evening, everything was watered again this evening, and not a thing escaped. The murunga was given a good watering after weeks or even months, and all the plantain was watered. Our two surviving plantain trees and the manioc was done, too, both twice today. The broken murunga tree was propped up and earth piled around.

At last I have come to grips with the vegetables. The biggest and most advanced are *bandakka* or lady's fingers, but they are a few. We have chillies growing in several places, but only three big plants as yet. As numerous or nearly so, are *kekiri* which is a kind of cucumber, a different shape from the English variety, and short and fat, but some of it is not doing too well; it is a creeper.

Then we have *mackerel* or bean, growing in about two places. The tomato is advanced in size and, the spinach very much so. There is a little red onion, planted at two different times, and also a minute quantity of sorghum. A little *mungatta*, or green gram is just coming up.

Of the trees we have one surviving jak, two cadju plants and two lauerlu. These last

are growing together and will have to be separated. There is a passion fruit and a coconut tree, both small. There are ten plantain trees of various sizes and eleven murunga and the two papaw I have mentioned. One mango has sprouted in a coconut shell. The six pineapple tops sown represent the six pineapples we have eaten here.

Growing wild are wood-apple trees, and *vel pennisla* a creeper. I must not forget to mention the two surviving water melon creepers and one vine which still seems to be alive. There are two bamboo shoots planted; which may be alive or dead.

One vegetable I have forgotten to mention is *vatterkollu* or luffa. This has been planted just behind the tomato, the manioc was left out, too, but mentioned in another connection. •

August 12,

Boredom is something I have rarely experienced here. It hit me today and I hated it. It may have been caused by feeling a sense of frustration. A fine-looking fallen tree which made a good seat and a convenient clothes horse, has been cut up again for firewood. As I asked the chap concerned, would he have cut up a table or chair if had been short of firewood? This represented something more than a chair or a table, I said, for it was beautiful and, I might have added, irreplaceable. I told him also that although the front verandah, or porch, or room, leaked, the house had looked beautiful; but now

after his alterations again during my absence, and without prior consultation, the place might look like a house, but it certainly did not look beautiful any more. I wonder if the point went home. Later on today, I found two murunga trees cut, missing. One almost thought they might have gone for firewood. All this because the chaps left here had failed to bring in some firewood one night, and it had rained. The fallen tree they had damaged had, I presume, dried more quickly, with its outlying branches, than anything they could find on the ground. They had designs on that tree because it came up in conversation more than once. I used to wonder how they would manage for firewood once the tree had gone. The only inference I could draw was that they intended to be birds of passage and would not be here to solve that one.

August 13,

Back to a little farming, but let me first say that if I felt bored yesterday, I felt really ill today, but when evening came, and as it wore on, I felt better. I think I have developed an allergy, as I think it is called, to my rubber sandals. It hurts one of my feet just to have them on.

What we had thought was beans is really cowpea; and it is coming on well. The friend who sowed them was here yesterday and put me wise, and the others who had unwittingly misled me have confirmed that it is cowpea. I bought a sugar cane stick today and the man who sold

it to me for seventy five cents, cut it up into pieces for planting. There were five such pieces, and too more for eating. We planted the five in a row along what will obviously be a waterway when it rains

The *ratta cadju*, what the old readers of this journal may remember had somehow been planted beside a wood-apple sapling, and which I had had to throw away because it had died, has somehow or other resurrected itself, or left an offering, a young *ratta cadju* plant, which appears to have come from the roots of the former plant. All this while it has been hidden by the wood-apple and this was removed this evening. The man who had given me, and planted, the original plant was the one who pointed out the new *ratta cadju* to us this evening.

August 17,

The last of the two coconut saplings seems to have died. I have been told that it was planted too deep in the soil, with not enough of the nut showing above the soil. Everything else seems to be doing well, all except, I should say, the plantain which does not seem to be growing at all, and the manioc. The woodapple has started to fall. I was out with my new *vc katha* the other day. The flower plant is in bloom again, with lots of flowers.



CHRONICLE**August 8-28**

*A Diary of Events in Sri Lanka and the World compiled from English-language dailies published in Colombo.*

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8:** Mr. Hector Kobbakaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, yesterday announced a massive mobilisation campaign to place food production on a war footing. According to a spokesman of the Electricity Board the poor supply situation was easing a little and the penalty surcharge on the domestic use of electricity has now been lifted. The *Sun* has posed the question whether Sri Lanka had sent a progress report to the World Bank and the IMF in order to obtain credits: in the front page lead story, the *Sun* has quoted a letter sent by the Planning Ministry to the World Bank confirming the discussions the Government has had with the World Bank regarding price increases of certain essential consumer items. According to a news story in the *Sun*, the number of detonators caught by the Navy in the high seas off the coast of Jaffna was, only 20,000 and not 48,000 as all papers had reported earlier. A *Reuter* report stated that at least 100 people died and 300 killed when American aircraft accidentally bombed a town in Cambodia.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 9:** An Indian delegation arrived in Colombo on Tuesday to follow up moves for joint economic collaboration between the two countries initiated by the leaders of both countries. According to the *Daily News* which reported the return of the Finance Minister from Washington, the IMF was likely to grant Ceylon the 25 million dollars stand-by loan. Nearly 1000 employees of the Ceylon Tobacco Company are on strike since Monday. The Chilean Government has ordered the arrest of the leaders of the National Lorry Owners Federation whose 13-day old strike has paralysed the country's public road transport system. At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference now being held in Ottawa leaders of the developing nations appealed to the

richer partners to help accelerate the growth of the poor countries.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 10:** The Food Purchase Board has accepted two tenders for the supply of raw and white sugar in October at £ 110 and £115 respectively. The Government is losing nearly Rs. 1 million a day as a result of the strike now going on at the Ceylon Tobacco Company. According to the report of the Controlling Examiners for Science and Maths for the GCE (O) level, December 1972, sent to the Commissioner of Examinations (as reported in the *Daily Mirror*), almost 50% of the candidates who offered science and mathematics are totally unfit to study these subjects. Over 1000 children, in rags and many of them bare to the waist, staged a sit-down in the middle of the road near the residence of the Indian Prime Minister as part of a protest against the rising prices. American Vice President, Spiro Agnew, declared yesterday that report of alleged criminal violations on his part were scurrilous, malicious and false.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 11:** Negotiation to end the 6-day old strike at the Ceylon Tobacco Company were held at the Labour Department yesterday. Following the change in the Indian rupee, as a consequence of devaluations in both countries, the Postal Department has increased the rates on telegrams to India. The Senate Watergate Committee has asked a Federal Court to order President Nixon to hand over tape recordings of his talks with the White House aides about bugging scandal. According to authoritative sources from China, Lin Piao, the former Chinese Defence Minister who died in an air crash after plotting to kill Mao Tse tung, will be formally denounced at the forthcoming National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 12:** 2,371 suspected insurgents will be brought up against the Criminal Justice Commission (Insurgency) shortly on charges framed against them by the Attorney-General in 74-more cases connected with the April '71 insurrection. A majority of these cases relate to attacks on Police stations. Four provinces—Northern

North Central, Eastern, and Uva—which are not under the outer Colombo Area Telecommunications Development Scheme have been provided with operator direct dialing devices. The Constitutional Court inquiring into the alleged contempt of Court by the MP for Nuwara Eliya found that five pages in a note book in which a Police Constable had taken down notes of a meeting had been torn off. The Associated News Papers of Ceylon Ltd has announced the arrival of a shipment of news print and that the print orders of their publications will be restored.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 13:** According to the Sri Lanka's delegation at the Ottawa Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, the joint communique issued at the conclusion of the conference was "very satisfactory". Weather reports yesterday indicated that very soon Colombo will experience a shortage of water. The National Housing Department will shortly institute action against more than thousand persons to recover over Rs. 13 million now due to it by way of arrears of rent and instalment payment against housing loans. A four member Russian team arrived in the Island today to start a preliminary survey in connection with the work to drill for oil in the Mannar area. Land owners whose lands are vested in the Land Commission cannot postpone their payments on the ground that compensation will become payable to them by the Government. Libya has ordered the nationalisation of 51 per cent of the assets of the American Occidental Libya Oil Company.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 14:** The Labour Department will make another bid this week to settle the week-old strike at the Ceylon Tobacco Company. There are an estimated 600,000 unemployed persons in Sri Lanka out of a work force of about 5 million. The Radio Isotopes Department of the University of Sri Lanka is trying to find out whether the French Nuclear tests in the Pacific have harmful effects on Sri Lanka; the discovery by the Indian Meteorological Department that the nuclear fall-out had adverse effects on the Indian sub continent has urged the scientists here to conduct experiments. The Minister of Public Administrations has warned all Grama

Sevakas not to take part in political activities. The United Nations Security Council meets urgently today to take up Lebanon's complaint against Israel for intercepting an Arab airliner last Friday. The American state officials denied the claim by Palestinian Guerilla Organisation that the American Embassy in Beirut was involved in the interception of the airliner.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15:** The chances of Sri Lanka receiving wheat flour under American PL 480 aid are extremely bleak this year; there is speculation that America might ban the export of wheat flour owing to the world-wide shortage. The Auditor General has pin-pointed irregularities and has drawn the attention of the Bribery Commissioner to a transaction involving the purchase of electric generators for the Police Department. The Strike at the factory of the Ceylon Tobacco Company has entered its second week without any settlement. The estimates for the proposed new building for the National State Assembly had been reduced from Rs. 54 million to Rs. 24 million. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands have directed all Government Agents to give three months time to the owners of uncultivated lands within which time if the lands are not cultivated, to take over same. Worst floods in the history of Pakistan swept through the country: the 26th Independent anniversary celebrations to be held today were cancelled owing to the floods.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 16:** According to the Daily News, Sri Lanka is likely to get a big commodity loan amounting to 24 million Deutsche Marks from West Germany. The ten-day old strike at the factory division of the Ceylon Tobacco Company was settled yesterday. The Tamil United Front Youth League has planned to begin a series of token one day hunger strikes in all the electorates of the North and East on September 11. A Condor charter flight was delayed for over two hours at the Bandaranaike International Airport yesterday owing to information of a bomb threat but a thorough search by the security personnel revealed nothing. President Nixon has firmly denied he was involved in any way in the Watergate scandal but ack-

nowledged that some of his subordinates took part in attempts to cover it up.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 17:** Exporters of non-traditional items can no longer plead non-availability of technical know-how to cover up losses through imports rejecting sub standard exports: the Bureau of Ceylon Standards has laid down specific requirements for a number of non-traditional export items. The Attorney General's Department has framed charges against another 1,200 persons connected with the April insurrection. American bombing in Cambodia ended today.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 18:** The Constitutional Court discharged the rule it has issued in the MP for Nuwara Eliya, Mr. Gamini Disanayake, for alleged contempt of Court. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, is expected to return to the Island tomorrow from Ottawa. Thirty Picasso prints valued at 500,000 francs were stolen from a chateau near Avignon, France.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 19:** The Ministry of Agriculture has called for crash-contingency measures as the country is expected to undergo a major food crisis in view of the weather and rising world market prices of essential food items. According to an investigation carried out by the CID and reported in the Weekend, 43,000 forged rice ration books are being used to draw the weekly ration. A lecturer of the Colombo campus of the Sri Lanka University has been dismissed for giving special benefits for students of his community: the committee investigating the complaints against this lecturer has also found him guilty of having marked the Sinhala scripts without being competent in that language. According to the military high command, Cambodian troops have regained massive areas of territory from Communist forces.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 20:** The Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs has set up A National Engineering Research Centre to promote the growth of indigenous technology. The Colombo Municipal Council decides by the end of this week whether or -not it will restrict water supplies to the city because of the deteriorating water levels of the Labugama

and Kalatuwawa reservoirs. The action committee of the TUF has decided to launch a civil disobedience campaign from October 2. India's tea crop has been badly affected by the severe floods in the north of India.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 21:** The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, returned to the Island yesterday after attending the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference at Ottawa: questioned by reporters she said "it was a very fruitful conference. It is the best conference that I have attended". Government's total outstanding debt topped Rs. 10,000 million at the end of the first quarter of this year. 1,232 estates totalling nearly 400,000 acres have come under the Land Reform Act. Former Minister of Finance, Mr. U. B. Wanninayake, died early this morning at the General Hospital Colombo. 400 pounds of opium worth over Rs. 768,000 about to be smuggled into Sri Lanka, has been seized by the Indian Customs. The Secret Service said it had received information concerning a possible plot to assassinate President Nixon during a visit he is making to New Orleans.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22:** The Minister of Internal and External Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, has ordered that the monopoly for the export of betel leaves should vest with Government agencies from September 15. Plaints have been filed against 87 suspects including three Buddhist monks and a girl in connection with the alleged attack on the Jaffna prisons during the April '71 insurrection. President Nixon has announced the resignation of Secretary of State, William Rogers: White House adviser, Dr. Henry Kissinger, is to succeed Mr. Rogers, President Nixon announced.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 23:** According to the Sun Sri Lanka's application to the IMF for a stand-by loan of Rs. 24.5 million dollars still hangs in the balance: according to this report, the Minister failed in his bid to secure the loan although he did some hard bargaining in Washington. The Government has been granted a six million dollar loan from the United Nations Family Planning Agency (UNFPA) to undertake a Family Planning Programme. A last minute effort was made

by the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to break the stalemate in the Indo-Pakistan talks now being held in New Delhi.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 24:** With the flooding of Pakistan's rice growing areas, hopes of Sri Lanka buying any rice from abroad next year have to be abandoned; prior to the floods, Sri Lanka was negotiating to buy 50,000 tons of rice from Pakistan. From mid night yesterday the prices of petrol and kerosene have been increased by 80 and 60 cents respectively per gallon; certain other oil products too of the Petroleum Corporation, have been price increased: according to the Corporation, the increase in price of crude oil has compelled this price increase. At the Executive Committee meeting of the UNP Youth League, the Leader of the Opposition has told that the Youth and their ideals will fashion the policies of the UNP in future. China has devalued the yuan by 1.4 percent against the Hongkong dollar: this is the third devaluation in ten days. President Nixon facing the press for the first time since the Watergate scandal, admitted there had been scandalous conduct on his behalf.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25:** An amendment to the Exchange Control Act, enables the officers to search premises for detection of Exchange Control offences without a warrant from a magistrate: 20 more charge sheets on nearly 600 persons were issued yesterday by the CJC inquiring into the April 1971 insurrection. The two-day trade talks between India and Sri Lanka began today in New Delhi. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene explaining the reasons for the UNP's boycott campaign has said that it will help break the shackles of servitude. Widespread flooding in Pakistan has sent the City of Khanpur under 16 feet of water.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 26:** Forty one passengers booked on the Air Ceylon flight to London could not be found accommodation on the plane on Friday: all these passengers had prior confirmation of their seats. According to the Minister of Health, the main reason for drugs shortage in the hospitals was the lack of transport facilities. The second stage of the UNP's boycott campaign starts on

Saturday September 1. Pakistan's flood condition has become worse in the Sinal Province.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 27:** According to the leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, the boycott campaign has brought down the circulation of the Lake House papers by 100,000 copies a day. The postal department has reported the loss of Rs. 23,000 from the central mail sorting office. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, has said that the Government will be compelled to take more unpopular measures to save the nation from a dangerous situation arising out of an acute shortage of food throughout the world. It is estimated that nearly 8 million people are affected by the floods in Pakistan.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28:** The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, leaves Colombo on August 31 to lead the Sri Lanka delegation at the Non-Aligned nations summit opening in Algiers on September 5. Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP, said that the TUF was very likely to pick the Postal Services for its civil disobedience campaign on October 2. The Sun published, an article from a Russian weekly "Literatuanaya Gazette" written by E. Astapenke in which the writer has attacked China's role in Sri Lanka. Government has received information to the effect that shipments of flour will be loaded to Sri Lanka from France to supplement the depleted stocks. The near deadlocked Indo-Pakistan talks took a dramatic turn with the Pakistan delegates making certain fresh proposals at their third meeting with Premier Indira Gandhi.

*For News Behind The News*

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THE INDIAN OCEAN

## MORE BRITISH BASES

by J. P. Anand

Institute of Defense Studies & Analyses  
New Delhi

**MASIRAH ISLAND.** The island, about 40 miles long and 10 miles wide—off the southern coast of Oman in the Arabian Sea, is the territory of Muscat and Oman sultanate. The airfield was first used by the RAF in 1930 when a fuelling base for the Aden-India route was set up. During World War II, it was used by RAF flying boats which patrolled the oil routes to the Persian Gulf and later by long range bombers which were used in operations against the Japanese raiders. The island is, therefore, of considerable strategic importance.

Britain is reported to have taken the island on lease for 99 years since July 1958. The Staging Post has a RAF complement of 300. In 1970, the RAF constructed and renovated the derelict rail track built during World War II and abandoned subsequently. The BBC has set up a powerful new medium-wave relay station on the island for broadcasts to South and South-East Asia.

**BAHRAIN ISLANDS.** Bahrain became independent on 14 August 1971. A new treaty of friendship signed on 15 August replaced the 1898 special relationship treaty under which Britain was responsible for the defence and foreign affairs of Bahrain. It does not commit Britain, as before, to military support. It provides instead for consultation between both the countries when necessary in times of need.

The archipelago has an airfield at Muharrag and a naval base at Al Jafair which is used by the US and British fleet. The base on the island of Moharrag had served as headquarters for British forces stationed in other parts of the Gulf besides serving as a transit or staging post for the British aircraft to and from South East Asia. Britain

vacated the base on 22 December, 1971. Bahrain would continue to make available transit facilities for British aircraft and thus keep open the "east bound" route—via Cyprus, Bahrain, Masirah and Gan.

With a view to demonstrate Britain's general capability to move troops quickly to the Far East, a major exercise was held in April-May 1970. Aircraft of the RAF Transport Command carried a massive airlift of the 19th British Brigade from a base in southern England to Singapore between April 11 and 21 for the five-nation Commonwealth exercises, *Bersatu Padu*, in the Singapore Malaysia region. They transported 2,600 soldiers and airmen, 20 helicopters, 12 howitzers and 250,000 pounds of equipment and other freight.

The first part of this article was printed in our issue of October 6, 1973. With the American Task Force in the Indian Ocean there is a greater interest in the bases in the Zone.

The aircraft made 93 sorties with brief halts at Bahrain and Gan. The first aircraft, a VC-10, took 19 hours and 10 minutes with 2½ hours stop at Bahrain and Gan while covering a distance of about 8,500 miles. Freighters like *Hercules*, *Belfast*, and *Britannia* took 30 to 38 hours. In a proving flight, a *Phantom* did the trip in 15½ hours.

**SEYCHELLES GROUP.** The group, a British colony north of Malagasy (Madagascar), serves as a British observation post in the south-western region of the Indian Ocean. It is of strategic importance lying 1,100 miles east of Mombasa (Kenya), 950 miles north of Mauritius and 1,000 miles south-west of the Maldives. It is a potential staging or transit post in the centre of the western region of the Indian Ocean.

The principal island in the group *Mahe* has a good harbour at Victoria. A civil and commercial airport was completed in mid-1971 with British assistance at a total cost of £ 3.5 million in the island of *Mahe*. The 9,800 feet long airstrip can take in large jets. The first aircraft to land on the runway in June 1970 was an RAF *Hercules* transport from *Chagai* air base in Singapore which took part in the Commonwealth exercise, *Bersatu Padu*.

**MAURITIUS.** A six-year mutual defence pact in March 1968, provides for the continuation of existing British facilities in the island such as the use of the airport and Naval Radio Station at Vacoas, "HMS Mauritius". The relay station is a vital link in Britain's defence communications network extending to the Far East. It is, in fact, one of the important British observation posts in the south-western region of the Indian Ocean.

**BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY (BIOT).** In November 1965, the British Government decided to set up a new colony, known as the British Indian Ocean Territory, in the south-western region of the Indian Ocean "to be available for the construction of defence facilities by the British and US Governments." The new colony comprised the islands of Aldabra, Farquhar, Desroches (detached from the Seychelles Group) and the Chagos Archipelago, a former dependency of Mauritius. The islands are virtually uninhabited. The project was designed to establish a chain of staging posts which could be "stand-by bases" when British left Aden, Singapore and elsewhere.

The island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, was partially surveyed for the possibility of setting up some staging and communication facilities. The plan, however, remained dormant during Wilson administration and the arrangement did not bear fruit as the US pre-occupied with the Vietnam

War. With the return of the Tory Government to power, the UK and the US reviewed their mid-sixties plans to set up military facilities—a chain of "eyes and ears" in the Indian Ocean. Washington and London simultaneously announced on 15 December 1970 that a Naval Communication Centre would be established in the island of Diego Garcia.

The island of Diego Garcia is about 1,200 miles to the south of India just in the centre of the Indian Ocean with an itinerant population of about 300 to 500 fishermen. Being situated far away from the African and Asian mainland, it is expected to be free from political troubles. It has a good harbour in a deep lagoon and a site for large airfield. A weather station sends report by radio to Port Louis in Mauritius. During the second World War, it was a naval port of call and the RAF used it as a base for its flying boats. In the first World War, the German battle ship *Emden* took refuge there during flight from two British cruisers.

On completion, the base will be a strategic link in the Pentagon's global network of spy satellites, Polaris submarines, naval yards and military airfields especially aimed at offsetting Soviet and, also if necessary, Chinese fleets.

**SKYNET PROJECT.** Britain has launched one of the world's most advanced military satellite communications system, called Skynet Project, between UK and the

Far East. It consists of nine earth stations and a relay spacecraft. RAF is in operational control of the project from its master control terminal, command monitoring station in southern England. Apart from the central RAF control base, there are eight earth stations—four fixed earth stations located in Singapore, Gan, Bahrain, and Cyprus and two on board British Navy's assaultships *Fearless* and *Intrepid* and two smaller air transportable stations operated by the Army. Bahrain and Singapore stations can be re-deployed if desired.

### Tubewells in Bihar

Under the accelerated program of rural water supply as many as 6,413 hand tubewells, 296 deep surface wells, 240 drilled tubewells and two piped water supply schemes were completed in Bihar during 1972-73.

A sum of Rs. 125 lakhs was made available last year to the State Government under the scheme sponsored by the Government.

In all, provision of Rs. 15 crores was made by the Union Government for arranging water supply in villages or areas where the problem was most acute. The water supply problem was to be tackled on the compact area basis, preference being given to villages predominantly inhabited by tribals, harijans and backward classes.



## British Bases

The relay spacecraft, weighing about 240 kilograms, placed in a stationary orbit 23,000 miles above the Equator over the Indian Ocean—just off the Coast of Kenya, provides instant and clear telephone and teleprinter communications free from effects which interrupt high frequency radio circuits on which most long distance defence communications depended earlier.

**CAPE ROUTE - SIMONSTOWN BASE.** At the end of a small peninsula jutting into Cape Town's False Bay is a naval dockyard that has made the Simonstown world famous. Since the conservatives returned to power, the British Government has reactivated its interest in the Simonstown base and its "obligations" under the Simonstown Agreement of 1955 leading to the resumption of arms sup-

### Scotch?

Scotch whisky is now made in many countries. Japanese distillers are especially busy. One firm has announced that the world's biggest whisky distillery will soon go into operation at Hakushu, Yamanashi Prefecture. It will put out 16 million litres of "Scotch" whisky a year, while the biggest distillery in Scotland produces only 8.8 million litres. Scotch distillers and wine merchants are greatly perturbed—and understandably.

plies to South Africa. Britain has the right to use facilities at the base. Visits from British forces are usually once a year.

In his first foreign policy statement, British Foreign Secretary, Sir Douglas-Home, told the House of Commons on 6 July 1970 that Britain could not take risks with its life against the mounting communist military presence in the Indian Ocean. It was in the context of the sea routes, particularly the trade routes that carry oil that the Simonstown Agreement was to be viewed. Since then, the Conservative leaders have been speaking about hypothetical Soviet threat to their vital sea communication—their "arteries."

Sir Alec told the House of Commons on 3 March 1971 that Britain was forced to use the naval base because Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia had refused these facilities. The Royal Navy, he said, needed a base for its operations in the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean "to counteract the growing presence of the Soviet Navy". "Britain", he said, "could not get the marvellous harbour in Trincomalee in Ceylon. Ceylon wanted to be non-aligned. We wanted a defence agreement with Nigeria but they wanted to be non-aligned. And so we are thrown back on Simonstown as the only base—that serves our naval needs." Addressing a Press conference in New Delhi on 8 February

1972, Sir Alec reiterated his stand and expressed apprehension over the "considerable" Soviet naval presence in the context of the security of oil supplies and the safety of oil routes. He justified the sale of arms to South Africa and the necessity to maintain the naval base at Simonstown.

The conservative position received very little support at home and abroad. An American study pointed out that the Soviet naval strategic is essentially deterrent and defensive. The Conservative leaders had been exaggerating the threat. Soviet ministerial and "intermittent" naval deployment—a cruise by about four warships in the vast expanse of Indian Ocean for a period of four or five months—hardly presented any threat.

However, the action of the UK supplying arms to Africa, closer links between NATO countries and the White Rhodesian regime, the Portugese colony of Mozambique and South African racist regime, the development of defence facilities at Diego Garcia and elsewhere, disregard of the call of the Indian Ocean littoral countries to create a zone of peace, and the proposed extension of NATO naval protection of Western oil supply lines (as decided in Bonn in November 1972) in South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, cannot possibly promote the security of the maritime routes in the Indian Ocean. (Foreign News & Features)

## SAFARI

## THE NIGHT LIFE IN CEYLON

by ALKARDI MUGANA

July 5,

THE BUS was due at 10.30 p.m. and I waited on. Near midnight a lorry gave me a lift. The bus overtook us when we had not gone far, a No. 177, the bus that plies down Greenpath, and now near a hundred miles from its proper route. It was a replacement for the bus that did not run.

Shortly afterwards we had a puncture. The Tamil cleaner of the lorry went under the vehicle and began to jack it up. The Tamil driver put a stone in front of and behind a wheel, and then he began to loosen the bolts of the twin rear wheels. The jacking up done, the wheel came off. It was the inside wheel that was punctured. That, too, came off and the spare wheel was put in its place. Back went on the other wheel and the bolts were fastened.

The lorry was going on to Jaffna, and I had a mile to walk from the Jaffna junction where I was dropped off, to the Anuradhapura bus stand in the New Town in Anuradhapura. There were three night *kaddays* two of them making *hoppers* almost all the time. I ate them as they were cooked, all nice and hot.

My connection was at 2.30 a.m. I was told. It left at 2.00 a.m. The rather sleepy man in the office had made

the mistake. It caught me on the wrong route and I was left behind. The next bus was at 4.15 a.m. or so. At Kekirawa I changed buses again.

The man I had gone to see, an expert tree climber, had fallen off a coconut tree that morning and bruised his wrist. He was using native medicine and he had his wrist in splints. He showed me the tree and the hand hold that had given way. If I had been there, he said, I could have picked the coconut off the tree without him having to climb it, for it was a short fruit-bearing tree. I had to wait four hours for a bus to take me back to Kekirawa, and I passed the last hour with a copy of *Das Kapital* which I had fortunately brought along.

THE TWO halves of the Kala Wewa looked very empty. It looked so at a distance. As one got near each half by turns, it was borne in on me that what "little" water remained was really an enormous lake, looking comparatively small only because of the vaster expanse of dry lake that surrounded it.

A fast turn into the main street at Kekirawa deposited me and my baggage on the floor of the aisle of the bus, fast asleep as I had been on the seat. Where I had been, it seems that Government

has taken a ten-acre piece of land and given one acre to a family to plant with vegetables more or less under supervision, but certainly had hand-in-hand with on-the-spot "expert" advise, and the farmers have taken to this form of co-operation. They have their own land which they will not till at this season because of the lack of water and rain, so they spend their time on the "farm" as they call it, doing some cultivation there instead. It seems an admirable example of the good things socialism can do, no socialist though I am. I am all for private enterprise.

Strange though it may seem, capitalism is to me the anti thesis of private enterprise or rather, it is "private enterprise" for the few, and the mergers that are taking place in the capitalist world proves it. Capitalism, I think, is a disguised form of socialism, or, to put it another way round, socialism is an extension of capitalism, and I do not like either.

What I like is private enterprise and I see life as a continuous struggle to preserve it. Coming to think of it, all the social pronouncements of the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church have been nothing but a continuous secession of pontifical teaching directed to preserve, or restore, just this very freedom of the spirit in the material or materialist world, a freedom which I identify with private enterprise.

## Night Life

ALL THIS waiting for and missing buses made me very late. I had to fall back on visiting one friend at 1. am. or giving him a miss altogether. He took it very well. Then there was a long wait on the roadside for a bus which came along at 4 am. and catching its connection at 5.15 a.m.

You might almost call this the night life of Ceylon, contrasting it with the night life of the fashionable world, which is mixed up with parties, dances and night clubs. Of course the fashionable world has to choose these times because it is too busy during the hours of daylight doing other things. This "night life" on the roads of

Ceylon reminds me very much of its counterpart in England, where I became such a past-master at hitch-hiking that I used to do all my long journeys at night. The lorry drivers over there do not have a cleaner as they do in Ceylon, they are entirely alone and they like the companionship of a hitch-hiker, someone to talk to, during these long hours of night driving, and it helps to keep them awake. Some of our vehicles are so noisy, conversation in them is impossible.

The long night drivers in England were broken up by stops at the night restaurants, catering for the long distance drivers, and you replenished yourself and assua-

ged your hunger or your boredom with plates of bacon and eggs, bread and butter, and cups of tea. I think one reason why the Ceylon lorry driver has a companion is because thieving from lorries is, or is believed to be, more prevalent, and possible also because of more breakdowns, and possibly because of unconscious reasons of caste, such as that it might be infra-dig for the driver of the vehicle to fill up the radiator with water. The driver who had that puncture could certainly have changed that wheel all by himself. He was energetic and strong, although tending to fatness and he certainly was completely competent. He knew hardly any Sinhalese.

## STILL BORROWING THE TRIBUNE ?

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## RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

### ✱ Budget

### ✱ Indian Ocean

### ✱ Omega System

THE BUDGET DEBATE was concluded on the evening of November 19 and the NSA adopted the Budget by the anticipated majority — the voting being 114 to 23, giving the Government its usual majority of 91 votes. Senkadagala's MP, N. Wimalasena, wound up for the Opposition and he said nothing new. The Prime Minister repeated all that has been said in favour of the Budget and in favour of the Government in recent times, but significantly she threatened to take action against the *Sun-Dawasa* group for publishing "anti-national news." She did not define what she meant by "anti-national news", nor did she indicate the kind of action she would take. Would it be before the Press Council or does she contemplate some other kind of action.

Dr. N. M. Perera wound up the debate for the Government. Quite correctly he pointed that the Opposition had said nothing worthwhile about the Budget. It was unfortunate that the Opposition was lost in trivialities whilst Government speakers had indulged in tall claims and empty boasts—all of which will soon boomerang

on the Government itself. The boasts about the food production drive is a supreme example of counting the chickens even before the eggs are laid—leave alone the question of hatching the eggs. One has to drive through the paddy producing areas to know how far the reality is from the alice-in-wonderland wishful thinking which is government propaganda—this is a matter to which we will revert in a later issue.

IN THE DEBATE, government speaker after speaker had stressed how "non-aligned" Sri Lanka was, how friendly she was to all countries, and that it was all wrong to say she had tilted too much in favour of China. To show that Sri Lanka was really non-aligned it was pointed out that this country was fighting the Big Powers to keep the Indian Ocean as a Peace Zone. The *Janawegaya*, regarded as one of UF's establishment papers close to the Palace, had blasted both the USA and the USSR for bringing more warships into the Indian Ocean and Peikng's *Hsinhua* had quoted the editorial in full with obvious approval.

The *Newsweek*, 12/11/73, gave the explanation for moving new units of the US Fleet into the Indian Ocean as follows: "For years, any sign of trouble in the Middle East has riveted world attention on the potent naval forces that the U.S. and Russia maintain in the Mediterranean. But the latest Mideast war, somewhat surprisingly has served to cast

a spotlight on sea power elsewhere. And even more surprisingly, this development stems from a nonchalant aside in an elaborate U.S. military briefing in Washington. After detailing reports of the growing Soviet naval presence in the Med (now at a record high of some 96 ships), a Pentagon spokesman casually told reporters: "The U.S.S. Hancock, by the way, is transiting the Strait of Malacca and will shortly be at sea in the Indian Ocean." Equally casually, the spokesman added that the massive U.S. attack carrier was accompanied by four destroyers and a backup tanker.

"The Pentagon was quick to characterize the development of the Hancock as little more than a routine flag-showing exercise. 'We like to be in the Indian Ocean from time to time', deadpanned one Navy man. Still, news that a U.S. task force was steaming into the strategic ocean east of Suez was inevitably interpreted as Washington's response to the Soviet buildup in the Mediterranean—and as a possible U.S. warning to Egypt to lift its blockade of Israeli shipping at Bab el Mandeb, the straits that command the entrance to the Red Sea."

The *Newsweek*, then went on to explain some of the highlights in the background to the new US naval build up in the Indian Ocean. "Both these factors may well have played a part in the decision to dispatch the Hancock. But in longer range terms, Washington's prime motive for deploying such naval force in

the Indian Ocean was more likely the growing Soviet naval presence in that vast expanse of water. The regular U.S. naval force in the Indian Ocean is composed of only two destroyers and a command ship based in Bahrain on the Persian Gulf. By contrast, the Soviets now maintain an Indian Ocean fleet of twenty ships—including missile carrying cruisers and destroyers. And in recent months, the Russians have hinted that they will soon station their new Pacific Fleet carrier, the 45,000-ton Kiev, at Umm Qasr, an Iraqi naval base within easy range of the oil-rich sheikdoms that line the Persian Gulf.

"In fact, although the Russians steamed into the Indian Ocean for the first time only five years ago, their buildup there has been swift and wide-ranging. As yet, they have not been able to establish a full-scale permanent naval base there, but Russia's growing ties with Arab and African nations on the ocean's periphery have already afforded Moscow access to harbours and dockyards throughout the entire region. Soviet ships now have anchorage privileges in some eight ports from Hodeida in Yemen to the island republic of Singapore. They also have the use of extensive base facilities in Aden, Somalia and at the South Yemen island of Socotra."

FROM WHAT the *Newsweek* writes it is perfectly clear that the balance is still very much in favour of the US in the Indian Ocean, and an article else where in this issue of *Tribune* indicates that

Britain is still a potent force in the region with a ready capacity to increase its power at short notice. "The Indian Ocean is of course, still a long way from becoming a Soviet lake. But the active presence of the Soviet fleet in its waters does much to bolster Moscow's prestige with its newfound allies in the region. Above all, however, the Russians see their Indian Ocean fleet as a vital element in their domestic defenses. America's Pacific-based nuclear powered Polaris submarines are within easy cruising range of the northwest corner of the Indian Ocean

And the A-3 and Poseidon ballistic missiles that the Polaris subs pack have an arc of attack that extends as far north as Leningrad.

"Most American experts still consider the military balance of power in the Indian Ocean area to be in favor of the U.S. In addition to its base in Bahrain, the U.S. maintains naval and air facilities at Sattahip in Thailand and at Subic Bay in the Philippines. In times of crisis, the Americans would also almost surely have access to British air bases in Oman and at Gan in the Maldives. And to get a

#### Ayurveda

#### DYSENTERY

When a person passes motions with mucus and blood it is called dysentery. In acute condition, there may be temperature and gripping pain in the abdomen. When the mucus with blood is passed there may be some relief from pain. The frequency of motions depends on the intensity of the disease. In moderate conditions, it may be 10-12 times a day and in bad conditions it may even reach 30-40 times a day. There are two types of this disease—bacillary dysentery and amoebic dysentery. By examining the stool amoeba may be found, and this often becomes a chronic disease and difficult to eradicate from the system. The bacillary dysentery is more common and is easily curable. When a person passes more blood and less mucus and when there is rise of temperature it is bacillary dysentery. When there is more of mucus and the frequency of motions is less then it may be amoebic dysentery.

In acute stage bed rest with careful dieting is essential. Only liquid diet like gruel with sago or arrowroot should be given. Milk or butter milk may be added. Pomogranite juice and apple juice may be given.

Syrup made of pomogranite juice, or *badri phala* or *bilva phala* is considered good. *Jatheephaladi churna* and *Dadimashataka churna* may be given. Preparations of *Kutaja* (*Holerina arti dysenterica*) as *Kutajarishtha*, *Kutajavaleha* or *Indrayava churna* are good both in acute and chronic stages.

Dr. V. Narayanaswami.

head start on any Indian Ocean arms race, the U.S. is putting the finishing touches on a \$ 19 million naval station and communications center on the British-owned island of Diego Garcia."

IN CONCLUSION, the US sets out its apprehensions about Soviet Power in the Indian Ocean thus "Nonetheless, the continued expansion of the Soviet naval force in the Indian Ocean could erode that U.S. head start. And given the fact that much of Russian's Indian Ocean fleet sits athwart the West's vital oil lifelines, some analysts saw the dispatch of the Hancock last week as a sign that Washington had begun to edge toward a semipermanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean. "It could be," said Dr. Thomas Millar," the

highly respected director of the Strategic Studies Center at the Australian National University, that the Americans are starting to think that the balance is tipping just a bit too far in the Soviets' favor."

IT IS OBVIOUS that US power in the Indian Ocean region is very considerable. A monthly called *The Beacon*, published by The Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church, East Melbourne, in Victoria, Australia, devoted a recent issue to the US War Bases in Australia which were capable of nuclear attack. Perhaps the most interesting feature in the article is a reference to the OMEGA SYSTEM.

It was reported that the United States has resumed the negotiations with Aus-

tralia concerning the installation on the Australian territory of a U.S. OMEGA Station. This project envisages the construction of eight surface surveillance stations to trace Earth satellites in order to create a united navigation system to control ships, submarines and aircraft. The USA claimed, it is reported, that the OMEGA system, four stations of which are functioning at present in Minnesota, Norway, Hawaii and Trinidad, served mainly civil purposes and created conditions for safe navigation at sea and in the air.

That is why, the Americans point out, the OMEGA system is of use to all countries of the world, to all mankind, since it will increase the security at sea and help to save many human lives. But to do so, the system should cover all the globe, and hence it was necessary to build stations on the islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans as well as in Australia and in South America.

Many, however, refuse to accept the peaceful character of the OMEGA system. Their apprehensions are based mainly on the fact that at present only submarines and the ships of the U.S. Navy are equipped with receivers which enable them to use the navigation information transmitted by the OMEGA stations. Everything points to the fact that the USA will not supply with OMEGA receivers either foreign states, or even their own merchant fleet. This, seemingly, accounts for very high prices of the receiving equip-

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ment which practically excludes the use of this "world" navigation system by such relatively poor states as India, Australia and other countries of South East Asia. At the same time, it is known, that OMEGA is the only system which is perfectly fit for a reliable control of submarines, ships and aircrafts. With its aid a submarine under water may be directed to any place on the globe.

Many countries, in the Indian Ocean region are worried by the U.S. attempts to turn this region into a possible hot-bed of war by means of setting up new military bases, a project that is obviously at variance with the era of detente and cooperation which has just begun in the world.

The question arises: Who needs the expensive installations under the circumstances when the United States and Russia have come to the agreement to prevent nuclear war, and are actively trying to avoid critical situations which could lead to a conventional war? It would be more logical to dismantle

the existing military installations.

Australia is a country where there are three of the most important U.S. military bases to control nuclear vehicles, situated in the North-West Cape, Pine Gap and Woomera. Besides, according to *The Beacon*, another fourteen U.S. military bases are under construction in Australia. The Australian authorities receive no useful information for their marine and air force from those bases, and have no access to the territories of the bases.

There has been a great deal of agitation in India, in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore about the increase of the recent US Fleet Strength in the Indian Ocean. Lee Kuan Yew's government flamboyantly had proclaimed that it would not supply oil to ships of the US Seventh Fleet.

Will these protests stop the growing naval confrontation between the Big Powers and also active the navies of other Powers which have powerful navies in the Indian Ocean?

### Dryland Farming

The Government has at last made up its mind to do something to improve agricultural production in the drought prone areas.

The greatest promise seems to lie not in the traditional cereal crops but in new cash crops such as sun-flower and castor and in the cultivation of improved pulse strains in areas where they have so far been grown only on a modest scale. If farmers are to be expected to take advantage of these new opportunities the government will first have to convince them that it has made adequate arrangements to cope with their marketing problems. Seen in this perspective, Krishi Bhavan's seed distribution programme merely marks the first step to help dry farmers. It will have to come to grips with a host of other problems if there is to be a worthwhile improvement in their lot.

— *The Times of India*

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TRIBUNE, November 24, 1973

# IS IT TRUE?

## Sherlock Holmes

### \* Manual Labour and Queue —standing for Ministers?

IS IT NOT TRUE that the man in the street is very amused that the Government's proclaimed policy in the last two Budgets that public servants and corporation officials would perform two weeks "manual labour" every year has turned out to a joke? That it was correct a few Ministers had once turned up in short shirt sleeves and had waved mammothies about at specially appointed tamashas, but this scheme to enforce a fortnightly exercise of manual work by all public servants had not even got off the ground? That there was no doubt that this scheme was inspired by the manual labour that was enforced on intellectuals in China, but what is done in China cannot be done in Sri Lanka?

That street corner cynics in Sri Lanka have proclaimed that it is the popular wish of the common masses that instead of wasting toil and energy in "manual labour" the top elite in Sri Lanka should compulsorily be made stand in bread and co-op queues once every week? That every

Minister should join a queue either outside a bakery or a co-op and get his weekly ration or his daily doze of bread just like a common man without any favours being shown to him? That this "operation-queue-standing" will do the nation and the Ministers themselves far greater good than the Maoist exercise? That Deputy Ministers and Members of Parliament should also take their place in one or more queue every week? That at the same time Permanent Secretaries and the whole tribe of VIP bureaucrats should also be enforced by law to stand in these queues instead of their servants who now obtain supplies for them by standing in queues? That in respect of these VIPs in the public sector a rule must be enforced that they should obtain their daily supplies and weekly supplies by queuing up themselves personally? That queue—standing by proxies should be abolished? That servants should not be permitted to collect the rations of the top bureaucratic elite of the UF government? That

even lesser bureaucrats, who now get their weekly supplies and daily bread through privileged secret pipelines, should be compelled to stand in queues for what they have to collect?

That a socialist government, like Sri Lanka's United Front, cannot create a new class of privileged persons of non-queue standers? That the levelling down to the queues should start at the top from Ministers and MPs right down to new UF bureaucrats who collect their weekly rations and the bread through the backdoor? That co-op officials have a big hold on top bureaucrats in the Government and in the Corporations by giving them all they want without their having to stand in queues and even by giving them hard-to-come-by articles under the counter? That a co-op official who can save one ounce in every pound he sells by under-weighting ration book holders will have enough to keep the VIP elite happy? That Regional and Area managers of top Corporations are compelled to hide the corruption of their retailers (mostly co-ops) because they are under obligations to the co-op bosses in each area and even co-op underlings who are part of the racket? That if Ministers and VIPs stand in queues, *coognito* or *incognito*, for at least 4 hours every week they will get to know what it is really happening in the country? That 4 hours every week (52 weeks) will be just around a fortnight's "manual labour" at 4-6 hours a day?