

Vol. 24 No. 31 — February 9, 1980 — No. 2-50

TRIBUNE



25TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION



Printed by the Ceylon News Review
at the Ceylon News Review Press, Colombo

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Letter From The Editor

THE STONE CARVINGS ON THE COVER this week are from the ruins of newly discovered Buddhist Temple not far from Trincomalee. What is remarkable about this temple is that it was built by Tamils in very early times. Much has been written in the newspapers and we do not propose to go either into the history, archaeology or significance of this Tamil Buddhist Temple. We would, however, like to remind our readers that Buddhism had flourished among the Tamils of South India for nearly a thousand years until the master dialectician, saint, philosopher and propounder of advaita saivism, Saknarachariya, had brought brahmanism back to the subcontinent from Cape Comarin to Kashmir. But, in its heyday, Buddhism had produced some of the great epics of the Tamil Language and had also profoundly influenced the religious logic of Tamil saivism. Some of the early Mahanayakes of Anuradhapura were Tamils wellknown for their scholarship in Pali. The *Tripitika* had been translated from Pali into Tamil nearly eight hundred years ago. Yet in spite of such close and intimate ties that exist between Buddhists and Hindus and the Sinhalese and Tamils, western imperialism had succeeded in tearing them apart. In more recent times, inter-communal rivalries had led to clashes and even blood-shed. Separatist secessionism had added fuel to the flames kindled by unscrupulous chauvinists who stood to gain by conflict and conflagration. There are signs however, that in the year of grace, one thousand nine hundred and eighty, in the third year of the Jayewardene era, that communal hatchets are being buried and that peace and harmony are coming back as in the past. This year 1980 is likely to usher in a new era of national unity in the midst of multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multi-caste diversity. National day was celebrated with the usual pomp and grandeur on February 4, at Matara this time. The President's speech at Tangalle on February 3, and his other statements drew attention to the grave economic situation in the country. Like previous governments this one too finds it easy to put all the blame on world conditions and global inflation. It is true that prices have risen sharply in the world and there is little Sri Lanka can do about containing world prices. But there is a great deal that Sri Lankan governments, and especially this government, could have done to minimise the impact of this inflation. It was clear even to the blind and the stupid as early as 1975-76 that a world inflationary spiral was building up and that in five to seven years it would reach bursting point. (We are still a couple of years away from that). But the last government after 1975 and this government from 1977 had behaved as if this global inflation did not matter so far as Sri Lanka was concerned. After 1977, this government opened the floodgate of imports indiscriminately—a few more transistors, television sets and the electronic gadgetery would not have mattered, but the unbelievably and unconscionably large number of petrol and diesel guzzling vehicles has cast the burden of increased oil imports on this country is only one of the many mistakes made by this government.

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Ceylon News Review

Founded In 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs

Editor S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

February 9, 1980

Vol. 24 No. 31

TRIBUNE

43, DAWSON STREET
COLOMBO — 2.

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Dark And Dismal Unless.....

ONCE AGAIN, this week we will confine these notes to a few questions to remind the Government and our readers that whilst serious matters are cold-storaged and pigeon-holed, matters of little consequence have been blown up into mighty tamashas that will ultimately either boomerang on the perpetrators of such gimmicks or turn out to be soap bubbles that quickly burst. Either way, the credibility of the government will suffer.

1. IS IT NOT TRUE that ever since this Government came to power *Tribune* has been drawing attention to the deteriorating conditions in the plantation sector? That to the credit of the LSSP Minister, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, it must be said, that he did a great deal to make the nationalised tea plantations work efficiently and develop along correct lines? That he was also able to attract expertise and talent and above all he did not indulge in or tolerate political interference in the day-to-day-administration of the plantations? That after 1975, when the LSSP quit the coalition government, plantations went into a Kobbekaduwan spin where politics predominated and economics and management vanished? That, among other things, the plantations became the dumping ground of favoured SLFP unemployables and school drop-outs? That much was expected when the UNP came to power? That all such expectations proved to be only a mirage? That a little more fertilizer was applied and a little more attention was paid to agricultural aspects of the plantations, but management-wise, matters went from bad to worse? That even a simple matter like the salary scales of top, middle and the lower managerial staff has not been resolved after 31 months of this Government? That the bureaucrats who encircled the minister and influenced his decisions knew no better than think that estates could be run like provincial Kachcheris or DRO's offices? That when the clamour of indignant criticism and resentment against such bungling mismanage-

ment grew in volume, there were talks of a reshuffle—but nothing happened until Minister MDH (a jolly good soul-like Old King Cole) talked out of turn (a little too early)—though much that he said in his Budget speech in November 1979 will probably come true before the Budget of November 1980—and had to retire hurt? That from all accounts, the change from the old cavalier MDH to the gallant (musketeer) Major has turned out to be a case of a jump from the frying pan into the fire? That the President would do well to do the re-shuffling while the gallant Major is still “acting” and not after more damage is done once he is “permanent”? That our columnist—Grassroots—in the last issue of *Tribune*, 2/2/80, drew attention to some of the sad and glaring defects in our plantations? That if one looks through the pages of *Tribune* from July 1977 to December 1979 one can collect vast amounts of expose data that has not been challenged? That from this data it will be clear that the *malady number one* which is ruining the plantations is political interference in the management? That a Canadian team of “experts” on management have in their report (not yet fully released to the public) described the Plantation Industries Authorities as “authorities which at present do not give the Corporations or the Industry any specific instructions on what they are to do....” That the team had observed that there was generally an agreed and unwritten target that the Corporations could easily attain with a minimum of efficiency? That the targets, unfortunately, have not been defined in terms of profit and output? That one of the major points made by the Canadian “experts” was that political interference was mainly responsible for subverting the management and administration of the plantations? That political forces, they said, compelled managers to take detrimental decisions against their own better judgement? That the other points made by the Canadian team are easily remediable on the administrative level, but the problems of political interference can only be solved only at a political level? That what the Canadian team has discovered to could very easily have been spotlighted by a Sri Lankan team at much less cost? Unfortunately, this country still suffers from the mania of wanting a “foreign”

touch to everything? That in this case, many believe that aid will come from rich countries only if their "experts" earn a few millions of our rupees writing useless reports? That everybody who knows anything at all of the plantations say that apart from getting a dynamic minister to be in charge of plantations, steps must be taken to insulate the plantation industries from the marauding and predatory incursions of Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Subject Ministers, District Ministers, ordinary MPs and other political VIPs? That the stupid proposal of putting the plantations under eight Corporations to be sited in Colombo should not be permitted and the bureaucrats who had thought of this suicidal plan should be asked to leave the plantations alone? That everything is going from bad to worse in the plantations—our main foreign exchange earner—and the government must act promptly if the worst is not to happen? That it will take twenty to thirty years for the investment in Mahaveli to bear fruit and yield dividends? That in the meantime, this country should not kill the goose that lays golden eggs (of tea) only to pamper the whims of withering politicians and outdated bureaucrats? That priority No. 1 for the Government—reshuffle or no reshuffle — is to put the plantations into order? That unless this is done what is already a fast-dwindling asset may turn out to be no asset at all?

2. IS IT NOT TIME that after all the dilly-dallying tamashas for image-building in the last 31 months, the Government should seriously settle down to the problem of deciding on a realistic list of priorities? That, so far, each Minister has regarded his own ministerial function or functions as priority number one? That with the result development has now reached a point where priorities have become mixed up and nobody seems to know what is good for this country or what is real, possible feasible and beneficial under the present conditions? If estimates and expenditure are to be pruned (reports indicate that a pruning amounting to 40% is to be implemented in 1980) where should the cuts be?

3. IS THERE, OR IS THERE NOT SOME HANKY - PANKY about the gas turbine tender? That there is a popular belief that Prof. K. K. Y. Perera's resignation from the

chairmanship of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) was a protest against the awarding of the tender to the highest bidder with plans based on obsolete technology (overlooking two other lower tenders based on more advanced technology)? That the Ministerial statement that the Chairman's resignation was because of "personal reasons" is not believed by anyone? That until the mystery of the gas turbine tender is solved, the public will be wary and suspicious of all official statements on the CEB? That the stories going round town seem to indicate that everything is in a bad way in the CEB? That very soon the stink and stench emanating from the CEB will reach unconscionable proportions?

4. IS IT NOT TIME for the Competent Authority who took over from the Board of the National Textile Corporation to inform the public whether he has recovered the large sum of money due from a private contractor who had a monopoly over certain activities of the Textile Carnival held early last year? That in several issues of *Tribune* we had raised this matter? That it will be good to know whether this matter has been hushed up or whether something has indeed been done? Has anything been done by the CA about the monies due to the Government on some purchases of sub-standard cotton yarn by the NTC?

5. SHOULD NOT THE FILM UNIT be called to take photographs of all who genuinely succeed in buying a couple of pounds of Dutch "Bombay" onions at the proclaimed price of Rs. 3/75 a lb? That in truth and fact employees in the CWE, MD stalls and the Co-ops, buy (personally as well as through professional buyers and friends) the bulk of the onions in lots of one and two pounds (so receipted to satisfy investigations) and later sell these onions to hawkers and traders who resell them to onion-hungry consumers at prices between Rs. 6/50 and Rs. 7/50 a lb? That if the government had guts enough to fix a floor price for local red onions at Rs. 3/- and Bombay onions Rs. 4/00 (or even at slightly lower prices—now people pay Rs 7/- to Rs.10/ a lb for red onions—farmers in this country will grow all the onions needed within two or three seasons? That the dream of making local farmers sell their onions at Re 1/- a lb.

by importing onions has proved to be a dismal failure? That Government would do well to regulate imports on the basis of guaranteed floor prices so that neither the consumer nor the producer suffers? That the foreign exchange saved in importing onions could be diverted to development programmes? That though there are faint indications of a glimmer of fresh re-thinking in government circles about this matter, nothing concrete has so far transpired to indicate that Government has decided on a positive and realistic policy to hold the balance evenly between the consumer and the producer? That for over 30 months the tilt was so much in favour of the consumer that many producers have gone out of business? That it will take a little time to inspire (with some coaxing) confidence in the producers? That this can be done if the Government maintains an even-handed policy for two seasons? That production of onions and all other subsidiary crops will thereafter increase by leaps and bounds?

6. HAS THE GOVERNMENT not realised that the centre-piece of any programme to curb and minimise inflation must revolve round production. That in Sri Lanka at the moment what is of paramount importance is the agricultural sector—the plantations, the paddy and in subsidiary food crops? That plantations are looked after by one Ministry and paddy and subsidiary food crops by another? That if the Plantations Ministry is in a bad way, the Ministry in charge of paddy and subsidiary food crops is in shambles? That only those who are familiar with at least some aspects of the agricultural sector know how bad the situation really is? That seed—even seed paddy—that really germinates is hard to get and thousands of acres were not been cultivated in 1979 because of the lack of seed (or because of seed that did not germinate?) That even if the marketing of produce at fair prices may seem a Herculean task, farmers like to see something grow? That to do this they need seed, they need advice and encouragement? That all these elementary requirements are not available except on paper, in SLBC broadcasts and in newspaper supplements? That the Minister of Finance has already begun to bemoan that inflation will soon be near 30%? That as far as we know the 30% mark was

passed long ago—but not for the pundits of the Central Bank—and that soon 40% will be topped and touch the 50% mark before the year is out? That whilst these fires of inflation rage all around us, our Naros will be fiddling away revelling in self-adulatory news paper supplements? That unless something drastic is done to stop this rot and induce production in the agricultural sector, 1980 will become bleaker and more dismal as the year advances?

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UNDER THE CHOLAS

Grassroots Democracy

by R. Nagaswamy
Director of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu

WILL OF THE PEOPLE UNDER THE CHOLAS

Chola inscriptions reveal the working of grassroot democracy during their reign. They throw much light on the qualifications and disqualifications of candidates serving village assemblies and their tenure of office. The ideal seems to be to ensure that every citizen had a say in promoting the full, free, independent and happy life of the members of the Community.

One of the greatest contributions of democracy to human life is the right of every individual to express on and participate in the country's affairs. (There is a common belief that this concept is of comparatively recent origin—say within the last three countries—and was the gift of Western nations that has spread to the other parts of the world). It would be interesting to know whether in ancient times, when monarchy wielded absolute power, the individual had any say in the administration of the affairs of his country. The second point of enquiry which would interest us today, is whether there was any written document like the modern constitution that specified the rules, qua-

lification and mode of elections and, in the event of failure on the part of any, whether there were powers to remove the individual. The third point of interest would be whether in the light of experience or as a result of intellectual dialogue, society had the freedom to amend or alter the system (constitution) for better efficiency.

AN ATTEMPT is made here to discuss those points on the basis of ancient documents. From about 850 A.D. to 1250 A.D. the Cholas held sway over the southern region, perfecting administration, judiciary, art and literature. In their records, they have left in clear terms their ideals and what they were aiming to achieve. The inscriptions of Raja Raja Chola II (1150 A.D.), found in many parts of Tamil Nadu, specifically mention that their goal was to see that every individual in the country should feel satisfied that he had a full, free, independent and happy life. *Ellorum Tanittanie Vaalatanam ena manam mahiladu*, says his *prasasti*.

They also wanted to so rule that there was no hatred or bickerings between one life and the other and one man and the other, and that they should all mix freely and happily with each other. *Oruvarudan Oruvarkkum Veruvaru Pahamai manathu intri vilaintu Kaadal Udan Cera*. It is clear from the above epigraphs that the Chola monarchs had thought of the right of every individual to have a full and free life. They seem to have been conscious that they could neither usher in economic nor social equality, but it was their duty to create simple conditions in which there will be no hatred between one individual and the other, or between one section of society and the other. The emphasis was that such a feeling should arise in the mind of every individual.

The second point of interest is how the individual participated in the country's affairs. Though the king was recognised and accepted as the individual in whom the ultimate authority, was vested and there were commanders to maintain law and order and officials to collect taxes, yet the main administrative functions that touched the life of the people were in the hands of the village assemblies. It is in the deliberations of these villages assemblies that individuals participated and had a say. This is what this writer would like to call "grassroots democracy."

AN INSCRIPTION, dated around 920 A.D. in the region of Parantaka Chola from Uttaramerur (near Madras) is an outstanding document in the history of India. It is a veritable classical written constitution of the village assembly that functioned a 1000 years ago. The village assembly of *Uttaramerur* met and drafted the constitution for election. Its salient features are as follows: The village was divided into 30 wards. One representative was to be elected for each ward. Specific qualifications were prescribed for those who wanted to stand for election.

The essential qualifications are age limit, possession of minimum immovable property and minimum educational qualification. The one who wants to be elected should be above 35 years of age and below 70. This minimum age limit was considered essential, because those who were entrusted with public administration should have attained maturity by a certain measure of experience gained through age. The upper age limit was prescribed, so that the elected persons did not perpetuate himself in power even after attaining the age of 85 or 90 or perhaps even till death. By keeping themselves in power till such ripe age, they would create a sense of frustration in the younger generation and there would be no smooth or gradual change-over. The minimum property qualification was prescribed on the ground that the members elected to the assembly would be administering public property and therefore ought to have had some experience in administering property and, in the event of loss, should have security by way of immovable property. It is interesting to see that the rule prescribes that one should possess half a voli of tax-paying land (non tax-free holding). Another interesting stipulation is that he should possess a built house on his own site (not in public *porambokku*). A minimum educational qualification is prescribed, so that the elected member would have acquired the basic discipline in drafting suitable legislation. Besides these, a candidate should be an honest man and should have acquired his property through honest means (and not be one who takes shelter under legal intricacies and appears formally to be honest). Another point of interest is that the candidate should be

known for his administrative ability (*kaar-yattil nipunar*).

The disqualifications detailed are far more severe and might come as an eye-opener to the students of constitutional history. It is illustrative of the great care the Chola society attached to "moral values" and "conduct" in public life. Among the disqualifications listed, the one that tops the list relates to the rendering of public accounts. One who, having been elected to one of the public committees, has not rendered proper accounts at the end of a year is disqualified from standing for election throughout his life. (2) Any elected member who accepts bribes is also permanently debarred from standing for the elections. (3) One who misappropriates the property of another is also disqualified. (4) One who acts against the interest of "society" (here the village) and is a potential danger to the peaceful life of the people (*gramama kantaka*) is also debarred from election. (5) One who is found guilty of incest and other sins has also no place in the village assembly. It is not only the individual who was guilty of any one of the above acts, but all his relatives in the father's family, the mother's family and his wife's family who are permanently debarred. Even those who administer purificatory rites to any one of the sinners are debarred.

Having detailed the disqualification, the record gives the mode of election. The name of all those who had the required qualifications and were free from disqualifications in each ward were written on separate leaves and made into a bundle. On an appointed day all the members of the village assembled at the village assembly hall. The village elders would be seated on a raised platform and the election would be held for one ward after another. For each ward there was a separate pot in which the bundle of leaves was placed. An illiterate young boy would be asked to come to the platform and pull out one leaf from each pot and hand it over to the village *Madhyastha*. The village *madhyastha* was required to stand and before receiving the leaf, show his opened palm to all the assembled villagers, receive the leaf from the boy, and read loudly the name found on it. He would then pass it on to the elders seated on the platform. Each elder would verify the name

on the leaf and read it aloud. The name of the person found on the leaf was deemed to have been elected.

AMONG THE MEMBERS THUS ELECTED, those who were old, highly learned and had served earlier on the Tank Committee or the Agricultural Committee could be elected as members of the annual supervision committee which was the most vital committee. Among the rest, the young and the energetic, from whom physical exertion was expected, were chosen for the tank committee and agricultural committee. It was the duty of the tank committee to see that all the water resources in the village were kept in good condition and desilted at the appropriate time. Similarly the duties for each committee were defined. The members thus elected would serve for one full year. Once a person served in any of the committee, he was not eligible for three more years to stand for election. When one on the Committee was found guilty of any offence, it was required that he be removed at once.

Having detailed the mode of election as found in the inscribed record of the 10th century, it is now necessary to understand the positive aspects of this system. This is a simple and most inexpensive system of election conceived of in ancient times. The impersonal mode of election was to eliminate hatred and bickerings between one candidate and another. All the able, efficient and duly qualified could offer themselves as candidates and, given luck would participate in the affairs. Since the term of office was restricted to one year and since one who served a term was debarred for three years, other members of the village community would get an equal opportunity. Every individual of the village was sure to get a chance at least once to get elected in about 30 years of his active life. The transition from one generation to another would not only be smooth but also imperceptible.

The age restriction ensured a certain maturity of thought and the terminal age assured that the age should leave the affairs in the hands of the active generation. The emphasis on good conduct and moral values—known to every member of the community—ensured honest men handling public life. That the erring representative would be thrown

out at any stage must have acted as a check on mischievous elements continuing in office or grabbing power. The ideal of the Cholas that every citizen should have a full independent life, as mentioned in their *prasasti*, becomes meaningful in this context. The Cholas primarily addressed themselves to organising such duly elected village assemblies throughout their kingdom. This system of grassroots democracy, judging from the result, has proved itself to be the most dynamic system that functioned efficiently for well over 400 years, from about 900 A.D.

A QUESTION would arise naturally whether membership of the village assembly was restricted to the privileged classes, other sections of society, particularly the members of the lower classes or castes, being kept out. In other words, did all sections of society have equal rights to participate in matters of State interest? The question is certainly of great interest in view of the fact that ancient society was dominated by caste hierarchy. Unfortunately, the number of epigraphs throwing light on the subject is sparse; particularly references to elections to the assembly are found in very few inscriptions. However, from a perusal of signatories who constituted the village assemblies, it is clear that there was representation for all castes in the assembly which went by the name "Ur". (There were assemblies like *Nagaram* standing for merchant settlements and *Sabha* for Brahmin settlements.) The "Ur" represented the village assembly consisting of all castes. I would cite two inscriptions to show that all castes were represented in the assembly. An inscription from Enkan village in Nannilam Taluk, referring to some transactions gives the name and caste of the signatories which includes many persons (who may be called in modern parlance non-Brahmin castes), a *Sivabrahmana*, a *Vaikhanasa* (Vaishnavite) *brahmana* and a *taccan* (a stane mason).

But the most important information comes from Chengam. The inscription is dated 1258 A.D. A vital question relating to the security of the country had to be decided by the people of a territory. The representatives of all sections of society met and took the decision. Luckily the names of all castes, that took part in the deliberations are listed in the inscription. More than 36 groups are

mentioned which includes besides Brahmins, Mudalis etc., the Panars, the Paraiyahas and the Sakkilis—whom we now described as Scheduled Castes. What is more significant is the inclusion of even the hill tribes, *Vedars* (hunters) and *Iralas*. The epigraph finally says "Beginning from Brahmins to the very Arippan (who was at the end of caste hierarchy) participated and took the decision." This certainly seems to indicate that in the corporate life, all castes had a say in the affairs of the countor. Whether the ancient system could be revived now is not the concern of this writer—this falls within the realm of the political scientists—but it is essential to know that an efficient system was in force on this soil.

One more point that needs notice is whether the village assemblies had the power to amend the constitution. The epigraph from *Uttaramerur* throws valuable light on the subject. The same village assembly met in the 12th year of the same king, Parantaka (918 A.D.), drafted a constitution—but it was brief and at places seems to have been vague. So two years later, the constitution now under study was drafted. A study of the second one shows that the latter one is detailed, clear and at places shows amendments to the first one. This clearly demonstrates that in ancient Tamil villages, there was freedom to frame suitable constitutions for elections to village assemblies and that such constitutions were written documents. They were drafted clause by clause with meticulous care and when the necessary arose, were also amended to give fuller participation, to all members and to help them express themselves on the affairs of the administration.

—Hindu

LETTER

Floor Prices

Sir,

For favour of publication of the following letter in your esteemed journal.

The chilli and onion farmers of this country, particularly the farmers of the North where the bulk of the country's requirements of onions and chillies are produced, have been

agitating for the introduction of a guaranteed price for these crops so that they would not only be spared the exploitation perpetrated on them by repacious middlemen but also have no anxieties about a fall in prices should the Government resort, as happens now, to the importation of buffer stocks from time to time.

Soon after the present Government came into power, the farmers of the North began to entertain some misgivings about their future incomes from these crops as they feared that the Government might lift the ban imposed earlier on imports of these commodities. Their fears were justified as subsequent events proved. The Govt. started importing buffer stocks, and prices fell. The argument trotted out by the Government spokesmen has always been that the consumers cannot suffer. It even used to be pointed out that the price of a pound of chillies went up to Rs. 40/- during the tenure of the last Govt.

It is perhaps not realised that the price rose to that level for a very brief time due to large scale hoarding and the artificial shortage created thereby. It is as well to recall in this connection then the few months before the General Elections of 1977 the Pettah go-downs were raided and some 13,000 or 14,000 cwts of chillies of flushed out. And hoarders are found not only in Pettah!

The Jaffna District Agricultural Producers' Association addressed a memorandum to the Hon. Minister of Trade and Shipping on 12.9.78 (this was published in the *Tribune* of 7.10.78) pleading for a floor price for both chillies and onions. Detailed facts and figures showing the costs of production were furnished (chillies Rs. 8.93 per lb. and onions Rs. 151.95 per cwt). The Deputy Minister of Trade and Shipping made a visit to Jaffna subsequently to study the position at first hand.

Ever since the submission of the above-mentioned memo the cost of production has risen by 50% on a very conservative estimate. Seed, manure, fertilizer etc. have risen steeply in prices. Cost of ploughing land preparation and other labour service have almost doubled. Cost of irrigation has become frightening as kerosene prices have risen from Rs. 3.48 to Rs. 13.63 per gallon. Cost

of labour services will go further up with the ever rising cost of living.

One is happy that the Hon. Minister of Trade and Shipping made a visit to Jaffna recently, inter alia, to take a serious look at this question of fixing prices for hillies and onions. The Hon. Minister's position is always that prices must be fixed without detriment to both the producer and the consumer. It is hoped that this well meant policy will be translated into deeds without allowing the producer to be exploited.

Incidentally it has been asked why we should produce chillies at such heavy costs when it can be imported from India at about Rs. 5.60 per lb. Conditions differ from country to country and it is not fair to draw such comparisons. The paramount factor is that our own human and land resources should be fully utilised, thereby reducing unemployment and also conserving foreign exchange. As a matter of fact guaranteed prices should be fixed not only for chillies and onions but also for soya beans, kurakkan, maize etc. as these items are not only very nutritious but would also serve as substitutes for flour.

V. Thirunavukarasu

Ananda Veethy,
Manipay.
Jan., 29, 1980

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SHORT STORY

For Better Or For Worse

by Sita Selvadurai

Sugath, Lankan born, 45 years old, economics graduate, with a doctorate in Banking, married but single since a year, sat surveying his surroundings sipping scotch, on the roof garden of his bungalow, situated in the high class locality as befitted his status there as a diplomat. The natives of the amorphous city which had been his abode for the last five years, chatted affably among themselves as they passed by on the road below. They were all dressed gayly in their Sunday best. Their mellifluous voices drifted upwards and reached him, but it left him untouched and bewildered. He felt an alien. He knew deep inside that though he was among them he was not of them—that he did not belong. 'No man is an island unto himself,' they used to say. But there he was, an island; cut off from his origins and everyone he held dear, adrift and despairing in a strange land.

Each time he had asked himself the question—why was he here? And each time the answer was the same. It was because of his wife that he was here. Even in the worst moments, when a wild regret flooded him for the peaceful, beautiful world he had forsaken, even in those moments he did not seriously regret having married her. There was a void in his life now, since she had left him. It seemed to have no meaning, and he scorned its empty decadent affluence.

He poured himself another stiff scotch, and sat down again to sip it. Sugath knew that he took more whiskies now than were good for him. Even the doctor had remarked about it when he had gone for his last check up. But Sugath had ceased to care. After all, it gave him the tranquility that he could not find 'within the narrow limits of his turbulent personal experience.'

The housework posed no problems for Sugath. In fact he used to do the cooking, washing, and ironing even when Sushila was there. "How do you expect me to cook without a cook woman?" she had asked him, when he had protested mildly to a month of

eating out of cans and packets. So he had taught her, and improved his own culinary knowledge in the process. The story was not very different with regard to the washing either. After the novelty of the washing machine had worn away, Sugath had noticed the dirty clothes pile up. "You don't expect me to do the work of a dhoby all the while?" she had demanded, and so it was that Sugath had taken it up as another of his weekend chores, and acquainted himself with the whims of the washing machine and the dishwasher as well. What's more he had given Sushila a remarkable sense of innocence, which was now in his mind a point very much open to question.

But what Sugath could not get used to, was to being alone. The rickety silence of the long and endless nights, when he lay awake, listening to the creaking of the cross beams, and the short sounds of the rats as they ran and romped in the deserted rooms. Many a night, unable to bear the wretchedness of lying awake he used to creep downstairs, and sit in the hall, sipping glass after glass of scotch, with Sushila's ostentatious decor of brocade curtains, brass lamps, curios and carpets staring coldly at him. He missed her, and he knew that there would never be another woman in his life.

It had seemed such a long time ago, their early days together. "You love me really, Sugath darling," she had said, nestling her tender body closer to him. How clearly he remembered that moonlight night, their first dinner out together, after both their parents had met and approved all details. She had seemed so trusting and innocent then, her loose black hair dropping down to her shoulders, draped in a light pink saree, and Sugath had developed an almost paternal and protective responsibility towards her.

The first few years of their married life they had lived as Sushila had been always used to—in the big house which was her dowry, with servants to wait on her hand and foot. It followed the same pattern of their growing up years with their parents, who were both upper class Civil Servants. Gradually social changes started setting in—the levelling of standards with the lower middle class coming up. Costs of living rose, servants became

increasingly difficult to get, and incomes were barely enough to make ends meet. Then Sugath had secured a post with the World Bank—with his Ph.D. in Banking it had not been difficult to get. But he had accepted it mainly because he had wanted to provide Sushila with all the comforts she was used to. "She was born with a silver spoon in her mouth", he told himself, and it was his duty to maintain her that way. When he had mentioned it to Sushila she was so overjoyed at the thought of living abroad, enjoying diplomatic status, that Sugath had accepted the position without hesitation, qualms or second thoughts.

But within a few months of their leaving, Sugath began to regret the step he had taken, for despite his lending a hand with almost all the household chores, Sushila continued to be moody and despondent. She constantly complained of migraine and slept most of the time. Perhaps it was time to start a family Sugath had thought, but she had immediately turned down the suggestion. "What's the good of children out here?" had been Sushila's reply, and Sugath had regretted more than ever that he had ever left his homeland. He couldn't say for sure that if they had had children it may have united rather than divided them. Though he did not rule out the fact that life was fortitious to a certain extent, yet with him it still remained a debatable point whether there was a 'Divinity that shaped your ends, rough hew them as you will', or whether "Men at sometime are masters of their fate."

Nevertheless, he tried to face reality. "You think you would like to do a job?" he had asked her one evening, when she pouted and complained of the heat, and her face had immediately brightened up. "You think you could find me one?" she had asked enthusiastically. So he had found her a job as a receptionist cum secretary in an office of one of his contacts. For the first few weeks Sushila was cheerful and happy and things seemed in fine feather. But the good form was short lived, and very soon changed for the worse.

Sugath had felt the nihilism creeping up his very bones. It started when she refused to have him drop her and began to go in taxis. "Its my money and it has nothing to do with you" she had retorted, and then

when he had expressed his disapproval of her hideous new hair style, she had said, "You don't want me to be modern and progressive like the others?" and Sugath had given up trying to make her understand. One event had led to another and to climax it all had come the dates. "All the girls in the office have, dates, its the best part of working," she had insisted, and gone on her dates heavily made up and scented while he sat up, sipping scotch all the while until she returned. The dates started getting more and more frequent and the hours later, until one day she had returned from one of her dates and announced, "Its all over Sugath, its no use our continuing this way." In her newly acquired stylish accent, and stalked upstairs. Sugath felt as if the end of the world had come. He could not believe his ears. He mounted the stairs two at a time, and into her bedroom, and flopping down on the bed he had asked, "What's over Susie?". "Our marriage," she had replied calmly. "We've got to get a divorce," and Sugath had stared in utter disbelief. All the moral and religious values he had built his life on, had no room for this sort of thing. His marriage had been to him a challenge of a lifetime. How could he go back home? How could he face his people? Sushila couldn't be serious? She couldn't mean it? "May be, we could talk things over in the morning," he had told her, trying to sound unflustered, and climbed into bed and lain there, eyes closed and mind buzzing and tried to sleep. But the morning brought no solution. "There is nothing to talk about," she had said and left for work in a taxi.

That day Sugath's mind was so diffused and diverted that he did no work at all. He couldn't concentrate. So in the evening he visited Bertie who lived across the golf links in a less important part of the town. The two had been classmates in junior and secondary school, and Sugath had met Bertie again last year and renewed acquaintances. Bertie's amiable and ingratiating ways had drawn Sugath to him, and the two had become friends. That evening over two glasses of gin and lime, Sugath had unburdened to Bertie the rueful story of Sushila and himself. He had felt somewhat relieved as he left Bertie's and walked back home. Good old Bertie,

as usual quietly smiling had taken no sides, but nevertheless he had remarked that it takes two to make a marriage.

Perhaps, Sugath thought, he should make another attempt to gather together the fragments of their marriage before it fell fully apart. He passed the great grove of mangoes that flourished in the sub-tropical climate of his alien homeland and headed for his house, his step no longer light. A chill wind blew his hair and sent a shiver through his body. It also did strange things to his eyes, for when he reached his destination they were no longer dry.

His attempts at conversation with Sushila that night had been futile and ended in morosyllables. It was the same the next day and the next. Then on Saturday just before setting out on another of her dates she had asked for the umpteenth time, "What have you decided about a separation, Sugath?" And Sugath had relented. "O.K. if that is how you want it," he had said. She seemed obviously relieved. "I am glad you see sense at last." "I will go tomorrow. I will take a few things with me." "Of course. You can take all you want to." Sugath had replied. "No. Just a few things of sentimental value. Like the Chinese chest, the painting on the landing and the statue of Venus. You can keep the rest to remember me."—and that was how it had been.

On that last fateful day, when with an awful headache, he had let himself into the house earlier than usual, there were signs of her having already left. He hurried upstairs and there sure enough was her wardrobe wide open shorn of all its contents. Papers, bills and empty boxes cluttered the floor of the bedroom. Susie's photograph, a bust size one stood on the chest of drawers where her handbag used to be, and her door key lay beside it.

Sugath felt an utter failure. It was something he could not bear, for he never had had much to do with failure. She will come back to him he consoled trying to pick up the last crumbs of comfort and reassure himself. Her accent, her hairdo and likewise the taxis were perhaps only steps towards modernising herself in her own eyes. She was bound to tire of them he hoped fervently.

The sound of the door bell had alerted him. Two short shrill sounds, just the way Susie used to ring. Perhaps she had already changed her mind. He had rushed downstairs and opened the door, and there she had stood in her red maxi, with a red handbag slung over her shoulders. He always thought that red was the colour that suited Susie best. It matched so well with her fair complexion and jet black hair. "Susie sweet, you come back?" he had asked relieved. "I have just come to take something I had forgotten," she had said with a haughty air and brushed past him upstairs.

He was still at the door when she returned with a parcel. "Won't you even kiss me goodbye" he had asked and there was no mistaking the febrile ring in Sugath's voice. "No", she had answered and tossing her head high had moved towards the blue car waiting a short way down the drive.

Then as the car came up to his front door he had run outside his face devastated with emotion and cried out in a frenzy of desperation and hope, "Come back to me Susie. Come back, please—please". but she had looked straight ahead. Only the driver of the blue car had turned his head and waved a sympathetic hand, and Sugath had noticed to his horror, that it was no other than his trusted friend, Bertie.

Sita Selvadurai

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IN THE WORLD TODAY

Bureaucracy On Trial

by Devaratnam Danforth

BUREAUCRACY is a Colossus. It attracts persistent attention. Criticisms continue. The public complains that it is exasperating to transact business in a public office. I experienced this at a City Post Office recently. This almost universal attention attracted by the bureaucracy indicates the measure of concern that prevails. A writer has commented that the bureaucracy "resembles a passionate mob which can capture and conquer man unless he is wise enough to subdue it and shape it to his own purposes." But we need a bure.

TRIBUNE, February 9, 1980

ocracy. Berkley has written that "Bureaucracy is the only rational way to organise and operate the modern mass societies and most modern societies seem to have concurred."

In Sri Lanka the bureaucracy is assailed from all sides—that it is manacled by red tape, impervious to innovation and unable to comprehend the problems confronting the country and the politician. While this may be true in individual cases, such criticism when directed against the entire fraternity is bound to be counter-productive, promoting a feeling of insecurity and a strong urge to take shelter in its own lair.

This malaise is not peculiar to Sri Lanka. recall reading a comment that attempting to move a bureaucrat in Italy was like attempting to tune a TV set with a 1000 KM tuning fork. That same bureaucracy was reported to consume twenty tons of printed forms per day. Albert Speer of Germany was relieved when allied bombing destroyed some of the government's ever growing files. The Romanian President, Nicolas Ceausescu, was aghast when he learnt that 2 million directives were being sent each year among various Ministers in his government. He made order that there should be a 50% cut in paper supplies to departments with immediate effect. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka has made it clear that he does not want long and verbose reports.

In Washington a joke that was gaining currency was about an unsuccessful weapon about to be named "civil servant" because it won't work and you can't fire. Referring to the bureaucracy during his time in France, Clemenceau regretted "Nothing can equal the zeal of the functionary for his function." A columnist in Argentine feels that the "bureaucracy is a national joke. Old people stand in line for hours outside government banks to collect their pensions.....The Argentine Telephone Co. for instance made headline news when it published a Telephone Directory for the first time in five years."

Under the colonial administration the functions of our own bureaucracy were largely:

- (1) Maintenance of law and order;
- (2) Collection of revenue;
- (3) Provision of services to the plantation sector;
- (4) Administration of social welfare programmes.

These are no longer the imperatives of the present. The demand of the free people for the better things of life and a fast growing population has brought about a new dimension in the determination of priorities. In this context, a malfunctioning bureaucracy results in heavy costs in economic and social terms. The country now needs officials who are not only capable but are also sensitive to the new environment and ready to respond to it's challenges. Sri Lanka has been subject to foreign domination for nearly 450 years. The bureaucracy that grew in this climate may find it hard to come to terms with the elected organs of government in the free and independent country, but yet it has overcome this impediment to a remarkable degree.

THE ADMINISTRATOR is at the core of government machinery. Success of projects depends to a large extent upon the dedication of the public servant. Unfortunately, it is the failure that receives publicity. The ego-need of the human being is very often forgotten. A bureaucrat is no less a human being by virtue of being one. The British had recognised this and introduced the award system of local and imperial honours to public officers. In purely financial terms the state officer, even at the highest rung, bears no comparison to even a middle level mercantile executive. Anthony Sampson wrote "profit will always be the criterion of success, and the manager's prestige is identified with profits as a Civil Servant's is with the CMG."

The bureaucracy has to learn to work truly with and for the people. It must therefore abandon its exclusive identity and re-examine it's role. It is an incontestable fact of history that it is the bureaucracy that upheld the social and economic fabric of nations during the turbulent times when governments fell with monotonous regularity. The Third French Republic which lasted nearly 70 years up to the dark days of World War II owed much to it's bureaucracy. William L. Shirer in *The Collapse of the Third Republic* writes "honest to a degree unknown or unpracticed among the old nobility and aristocracy..... possessed of a strong sense of public duty or a remarkable esprit de corps, they were a pillar of the state.....and saw to it that

the business of government got done even at the most chaotic moments."

In picturesque language, Anthony Sampson in his *Anatomy of Britain*, has described the role of the British Civil Service during change of governments in that country "It gives the working of democracy the dramatic immediacy of a *coup d'etat*, with removal vans in place of machine guns. But the combination of sudden change and smooth continuity reveals that behind this apparent break there is a heavy fly wheel that keeps its momentum and survives any transition: the great machine of the permanent Civil Service. The moment of change of government is the moment of truth in the relationships between the politician and the bureaucrat."

IN OUR OWN COUNTRY, I never could understand why successor governments view with suspicion public officers who served earlier governments with loyalty and dedication. This continued to be the perennial paradox. In Britain "even the Minister's Private Secretary will stay to serve his master, abandoning overnight his loyalties and policies of his predecessors, suddenly acquiring that professional enthusiasm for the ex-enemy which is the special mark of the dedicated Civil Servant" writes Harold Wilson in *Governance of Britain*. On the other side of the spectrum we notice the fears of the public servant for the politician. I cannot understand this either. "Civil Servants sometimes talk of politically sensitive areas as if they were regions of radio activity where geiger counters frantically oscillate....."

In this situation if all political parties agree to leave the public service outside the pale of political activity and at the same time discourage those state officers who cringe and fawn upon them in the expectation of favours, it would unquestionably promote the growth of a healthy tradition in the public service itself. A senior member of the Home Civil Service in Britain has had on one occasion referred to the "difficulty to reconcile personal integrity with a role which requires the deliberate suppression of part of what I am" and went on to say that "it is the tension and not overwork"

that brings him to the "point where I am ready to contemplate leaving a service which I care about very deeply." If those who inhabit the citadels of power find an echo in their hearts, moderation will be found in criticism and commitment in the public servant.

PUBLIC SERVANTS have been accused of unwillingness to take responsibility and of lack of initiative. But where initiative is shown there is trouble—though not always. I have been told recently of how an Advisor in an important Ministry had forwarded copies of a document he had prepared direct to two Ministers. For this transgression he has been hauled over the coals and reprimanded! Would he show any initiative again? It was a bureaucrat in the Ministry who considered that a reprimand was called for—not the political head. I am thus inclined to the view that this action has proved Parkinson who commented that "if the head of an organisation is second rate, he will see to it that all his subordinates are third rate; and they will see to it that all their subordinates are fourth rate. There will soon be an actual competition in stupidity".

The politician wants results, not procedures. But the bureaucrat complains that he is compelled to work within parameters set for him by the politicians. All that the politician asks is "translate our political decisions into positive action. If you have problems, we will sort them out, but give us the solutions as well". Surely nothing could be more reasonable. The politician has sure instinct for what is troubling the people and why.

In a study undertaken by Robert Spadaro of Temple University USA he found that the politician and the administrator had a low opinion of each other. "Over 90% of the administrators felt that they represented public interest best. They were willing to concede to politicians only on the broadest matters of policy. The percentage of politicians who had a low opinion of the administrators also topped 90%." It is naive for the bureaucrat to presume that he is the repository of the public interest. It is a thin line that divides policy from administration. There are no black and white areas—there are half tones. The statement "the administration looks upon

politics as a loose woman who runs around the street, while she, the wise virgin that she is guards the house" has been attributed to Francois Mitterand.

The public asks "if the bureaucrat thinks he is the repository of the public interest, why was it necessary for the Minister to intervene when there was chaos at Barnes Place when Food Stamps were issued? Why is it necessary for the Minister to order officials to visit housing complexes or restore water supply? Why was it necessary for His Excellency the President to order immediate steps to improve conditions at the Katunayake International Airport before it deteriorated to the level of international disgrace?"

The Sun pointed out in an editorial "hardly any Sri Lankan has escaped the clutches of the Octopus-like tentacles of the administrative machinery. Almost every matter gets bogged down in a file full of forms, papers, memos—all in triplicate." Writing about another country a columnist wrote "A Civil Servant's job is precarious. He stands on a mountain of paper. The higher the mountain the more secure the Civil Servant."

This then is the nub of the problem. Such is the dilemma. A politician's political fortunes or a bureaucrat's personal advancement, however important, must give place to the national interest. This is not the time to carry in our intellectual baggage cliches such as job satisfaction, political interference and bureaucratic apathy. The politician and bureaucrat declare time and time again that their one interest is to serve the toiling masses. So what is the difficulty to discover fresh options that would help both?

Our Prime Minister declared on one occasion recently "But before doing building construction, what is required today is to build man." I believe that one seldom thought of ingredient is conspicuous by its absence in the public service. This is the "sacramental element." I believe also that if this "sacramental element" can be injected into the craft of Public Administration, the process referred to by the Prime Minister will be achieved. This would be compelling enough to stimulate a new orientation and dedication in the Public Service. This is the challenge, as I envision

it, when Bureaucracy is on Trial. It can be the bureaucracy's finest hour.

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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Jan. 21 — Jan. 30

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; SO—Sunday Observer; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLDP—Sri Lanka-dipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release.

MONDAY, JANUARY 21: The hottest contraband in Sri Lanka today is silver, customs said yesterday; with the price of gold at an all-time high now smugglers have begun to smuggle in silver, a senior Customs official said yesterday; Leslie Gunasekera, Deputy Collector of Customs and Landing Surveyor, said that several detections had been made recently and that Rs. 1 million worth of silver had been confiscated in recent weeks. Agricultural Development and Research Minister E. L. Senanayake has alerted the Department of Agriculture to take all possible steps to control the Brown plant hopper pest now reported to be attacking paddy cultivation in several parts of the country. Local engineers are working on a machine to eliminate the colossal waste of raw materials at cement factories—CDN. The government will soon export gold jewellery to earn additional foreign exchange; the Central Bank of Ceylon will import Rs. 50 million worth of gold solely to make the jewellery for export every three months. Flour, bread and sugar will cost more from today; the new prices announced by the acting Food Commissioner, Mr. N. Pulediran yesterday are; flour R. 1.50 a pound, bread Rs. 1.35 a pound loaf and sugar Rs. 4.50

a lb; local raw rice Rs. 1.78 a pound, local parboiled rice Rs. 1.78 a pound, imported raw rice Rs. 1.90 a pound, and imported parboiled Rs. 2 a pound. The Asian Development Bank has approved the provision of technical assistance to Sri Lanka for the West Coast Fisheries Development project—CDM. Police yesterday swooped down on an opium den at the entrance of the Colombo Port and discovered a massive quantity of liquid opium believed to have been stolen from the Ayurvedic Drugs Corporation. Former Sri Lanka Ambassador to the United State and well-known urban planner Oliver Weerasinghe died yesterday at the age of 73 years—SU. Minister of Trade, Lalith Athulathmudali now on a visit to Jaffna sated that farmers in Jaffna should cultivate more chillies and sell them all to the CWE only; if this is done import of chillies can be stopped—DP. Minister of Trade Lalith Athulathmudali said in Jaffna yesterday that a floor price for chillies will soon be fixed which will not affect the producers nor exploit the consumers and the government was working on this—VK. The government has decided to grant a large number of tax concessions to employers who build houses for employees and to companies that build houses—DM.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22: TULF leader Appapillai Amirthalingam said in Jaffna yesterday that he did not seek to blame the government for the price increase in sugar, flour and bread announced on Sunday night; that could not be helped; but the government should as far as possible make available other essential commodities to consumers at reasonable prices, Mr. Amirthalingam told a conference of officials of the Trade Ministry and Corporations under the Ministry. The visiting four-member US Aid Mission told Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel yesterday it would seek formal US Congress approval to give Sri Lanka Rs. 858 million worth of aid this year. The sacrifice of animals in Hindu temples has been completely banned; the law came into effect from Thai Pongal day—January 15. Some eighty muslim delegates from many Muslim and non-Muslim countries arrive in Sri Lanka this week to participate in the Hijra International Conference to be held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall this

month; the four-day conference will be opened by President J. R. Jayewardene on January 25 at 4.15 p.m.—CDN. Mr. Ronnie de Mel, Minister of Finance and Planning yesterday disclosed at a Press Conference that the United States of America has pledged Rs. 858 million aid outside the normal commitment at the "Aid Sri Lanka Club"—CDM. President J. R. Jayewardene has appointed an eight-member committee to introduce human rights as a school subject from this year. The government has given the greenlight for the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation to go ahead with its proposal to establish a giant offshore oil storage complex. The principal of a leading school in Chavakachcheri was held up and robbed Rs. 55,000 by an armed gang yesterday morning; this is the first gang robbery reported from the northern province since the state of emergency was lifted on December 26. Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali replying to a query put forward by Opposition Leader, A. Amirthalingam about the price increase of flour said that the government had to purchase flour at Rs. 2.20 a pound from the World Market and the government was losing 70 cents on each pound—SU. The government has decided that no new posts will be created in the public service in 1980. City butchers have jacked up their prices and the CMC has decided to fight back by opening fair price meat stalls at the Municipal markets; beef was now being sold at Rs. 7 a pound, the Mayor of Colombo said; he said that he was of the opinion that price control was not the way to check the butchers—CO. The leader of the Opposition and General Secretary of the TULF Mr. A. Amirthalingam generously praised the Minister of Trade Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali in Jaffna, thanked him for his help and promised him total co-operation—DP. Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali informed a conference held at Jaffna Kachcheri that the KKS harbour would be brought up to date without delay—VK. The Department of Agrarian Services is to forward a full report to the President on paddy lands which have not been used in the Yala season even though they had water facilities; these lands will be taken over by the government—DV. The President has ordered all MPs not to interfere in the work of the Educational Services Commission—LD.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23: The Central Bank of Ceylon has given sanction to Bartleet and Company Ltd., a long standing broking firm in Colombo to set up an international interbank money market in Colombo with two Indian collaborators; the market is expected to operate from the second week of February. Traders in Jaffna gave a standing ovation to Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmudali when he addressed a Trade Conference in Tamil, Sinhala and English, at the Weerasingham Hall yesterday. President J. R. Jayewardene and Prime Minister R. Premadasa visited the Wekande Jumma Mosque at Slave Island yesterday where tension prevailed following the deaths of three persons on Monday; they were killed when a gun went off accidentally. A large mob of people, armed with hand bombs, bottles and stones yesterday attacked the Slave Island Police station at Colombo Fort magistrate Mr. T. Jaganathan began the inquiry into the deaths of two women and a man who died on Monday during a clash between rival factions in Slave Island—*CDN*. Branches of leading government schools will be opened in the outstations and the suburbs of Colombo; initially a branch of Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya will be opened in Kegalle, Homagama will have a branch of D. S. Senanayake Maha Vidyalaya, Borella and a branch of Royal College will be opened in Kotte. The People's Republic of China has offered AMBY 50 million (approximately Rs. 500 million) for development projects. The dangerous paddy pest the Brown Plant Hopper (Keedawa) is spreading in almost epidemic proportions because of serious disruption of the bio-balance in paddy-producing areas by widespread misuse of the insecticide DDT. Tea chest boards valued at millions of rupees belonging to a private company went up in flames in a fire that gutted the stores at Panchikawatte in the early hours of Monday—*CDM*. Government has ordered that all State sector institutions—departments, corporations and boards—cut down their fuel consumption this year by 25 per cent of last year's consumption; Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali who disclosed this yesterday, warned that the Government had also decided not to increase the country's oil imports this year, but maintain the 1979 level of supply. Trade Unions representing

workers in the state organisations in the plantation sector have expressed opposition to the government's move to dissolve the present institutions and set up eight new agencies to take over the management of the plantations. Sri Lanka's one time Ambassador to Rome and eminent lawyer R. A. Kinnangara passed away in London in the early hours of yesterday morning; he was 61 years old and had been ailing for some time. A Presidential Commission will be appointed to probe the Slave Island incidents on Monday, President J. R. Jayewardene announced yesterday—*SU*. The government's contingency plan to ensure security countrywide went into effect yesterday and the Army, Navy and the Air Force supplemented Police in Colombo and the provincial areas to ensure that there were no incidents following the rioting in Slave Island; the Army Commander Major General Dennis Perera said this morning that there had been no incidents anywhere and everything was quiet—*CO*. The Secretary of the Tamil Youth Front in a statement says that the food stamp scheme of the government has become meaningless because of the increase in the prices of sugar, flour and rice and the benefits of the free school text books have been wiped out because of these—*EN*. A survey has revealed that some companies have imported and distributed Agrochemicals that have been banned, this has caused diseases in the paddy cultivation—*DM*.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24: Iran's Foreign Minister said today that the deposed Shah was being detained in Panama following an Iranian request for his extradition. A central monitoring agency under President J. R. Jayewardene would soon be established to monitor the impact of the Mahaweli Development program on the environment. Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake told a four-member team from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that is now on a visit to Sri Lanka. The Slave Island area was quiet yesterday after the incidents of Monday and Tuesday; traffic which was diverted away from the centre of the storm on Tuesday evening was flowing along Kumaran Ratnam Road where people were getting about their normal business. President J. R. Jayewardene has recommended that seven

army officers who were politically victimised by the previous regime be reinstated and restored to their former ranks with full arrears of salary up to December 31, 1979. Minister of State Anandatissa de Alwis announced at a press briefing yesterday that Sri Lanka would be celebrating 50 years of adult franchise in June 1981. Sri Lanka's electrical energy requirements for this year could not be met by the present hydro-electric generating capability a Ceylon Electricity Board spokesman said yesterday—CDN. Most bakeries in Colombo and the suburbs have reduced their baking supplies and in many instances bread is baked only in the mornings; however, many residents have complained to the authorities that most bakeries are diverting their stocks of flour to make cakes and buns which brings them bigger profits. The King and Queen of Nepal will be visiting Sri Lanka from February 24 to 27—CDM. The duplication of functions and the wasteful use of resources by State organisations in the agricultural sector warrant the serious attention of the Government; progress in this sector is also retarded by the failure to define clear objectives and to formulate firm policies, a high powered team has reported to President J.R. Jayewardene. The government will translate some of the best works in Tamil and Sinhalese into Chinese and some of the best from Chinese literature into Tamil and Sinhalese; the Chinese government will give a great deal of money for the purpose—DP. A large number of international ship building companies are offering massive commissions to individuals to get the contract to build 5 ships for Sri Lanka; the government has given permission to the Shipping Corporation to call for tenders for 5 new ships. A certain company of a developed Asian country has offered to fully construct a certain development project free of charge if the contract build the 5 ships are given to them—JD. The price of a bag of cement has been increased to Rs. 60/- with immediate effect—ATH. About 1000 small scale industries are opened each month all over the country according to the Registrar of Companies—DV.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25: President J. R. Jayewardene has set up a committee to review areas of the Greater Colombo Economic

Commission Act with a view to empowering the GCEC to set up investment promotion zones outside its present area of authority. Some 175 motor-cycles and scooters are now registered daily, on an average, at the office of the Registrar of Motor Traffic. Heavy consumers will have to pay more for their electricity from February 1. The entire country will go metric by October 1 this year—CDN. Prospects of further employment for Sri Lankans in Iraq seems bleak unless a dispute between certain employment agencies and the Department of Labour is settled without delay; it is understood that the dispute relates to terms and conditions of employment. The customs yesterday blew the lid off what is believed to be an internationally organised racket to use Sri Lanka as the base in this region for smuggling narcotics, including opium and harshish to the West and the United States. A day each week in all government hospitals will be set aside solely for the examination and treatment of children, said Mr. Gamini Jayasuriya, Minister of Health—CDM. The Anti-malaria campaign took hurried emergency precautions yesterday to deal with any health hazard that may be posed due to a large stock of malathion being destroyed by fire; the major fire that broke out at the store of a private paper merchant on Monday night spread out to the Health Department's Stores where a huge quantity of malathion had been stored. Charges on electricity consumption will be raised from February 1, Ceylon Electricity Board General Manager, J. X. L. Phillips announced yesterday. The subsidising of the cost of certain consumer items by Government will have to be ended if the country is to concentrate more resources on economic development and thereby solve the unemployment problem, Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said yesterday—SU. In a statement issued yesterday, the TULF Parliamentary Group states that schemes like the government's free book distribution scheme and free house owning scheme are good for the people and therefore we welcome them; just because we are in the opposition it doesn't mean that we should oppose schemes which benefit the people—VK. The CTB will be handed over to the World Bank for 3 years in exchange for the 90 million dollars

loan given to CTB; 10 member team of world bank officials will be in charge of the administration of the CTB for this period—ATH. The government has decided to increase the price of flour, petrol and other consumer goods before February 9th—JD. Police investigations have revealed that 1860 children under 10 years of age have disappeared in the last eleven months—LD. The government is to implement a programme to plant trees in Mahaweli basin at a cost of Rs. 280 million to solve the shortage of firewood in the dry zone—DV. An electronic telegraph system will be introduced shortly by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication; a telegram can be sent to any part of the country in 2 minutes when this system is installed—DM.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26: The prices of petrol, kerosene, auto diesel and other petroleum products were increased with effect from midnight yesterday; petrol Rs. 37.50 (increased of Rs. 7.50); Kerosene Rs. 13.68 (increase of Rs. 3.00); Auto-diesel Rs. 13.50 (increase of Rs. 3.00). The Education Ministry yesterday warned Principals who demanded cash donations from parents seeking admission of their children to schools that stern disciplinary action would be taken against them. Colombo's General Hospital will soon have an emergency Unit where serious cases brought to the Out Patients Department will be attended to at once, the hospital Superintendent Dr. Joe Fernando said yesterday—CDN. The government has accepted in principle that salaries and allowances paid to public servants should be consolidated. Belgium has offered to assist Sri Lanka in her efforts to step up economic development by not only granting direct aid but also by active membership of the Sri Lanka aid Club—CDM. The Army was yesterday called in by the Ministry of Health to help decontaminate and remove the stock of malathion burnt, following a fire which spread to the Health Department stores at Panchikawatte, on Monday night. A further wage increase by the Government is not likely in the near future despite rising living costs, Finance and Planning Minister Ronnie de Mel warned yesterday—SU. Just as the oil exporting countries have joined together to increase oil prices, tea and rubber exporting countries should come together to increase their prices said Finance Minister

Ronnie de Mel—VK. Mr. S. Rajadurai, Minister of Regional Development and Tamil and Hindu Affairs has been dismissed from the membership of the TULF—EN. Rs. 1000 million was earned from the Tourist Industry last year; the Minister of State revealing this said that tourism would secure the biggest foreign exchange earner in the near future—DM. The MP for Habaraduwa has refused to bow to the request made by the UNP high command to resign from his seat in Parliament; he has challenged them to unseat him if they can; a number of allegations have been made against the MP according to knowledgeable sources—ATH.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27: The Government is deeply concerned about large scale thefts of tea both from the state plantations sector which accounts for about 75 per cent of the country's production and from privately owned estates; it has been officially estimated that about 5 per cent of the country's tea production which was over 200 million kilos in 1979 is stolen, causing enormous losses to the exchequer—SO. The Norwegian parliamentary delegation which visited Sri Lanka recently has told Foreign Minister, Mr. A. C. S. Hameed, that the so-called "Tamil problem is completely overblown". The police will take a closer look at those red numbers on "hiring" cars and check them with the registration certificates during the Sunday ban. The price of sugar was increased from Rs. 3 to 4.30 a few days ago; however, the world market price of sugar is expected to drop by July or August this year; so said the Minister of Trade and Shipping Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali yesterday—ST. A National Service Movement to involve the country's youth in the nation building process has been recommended to the Cabinet by Youth Affairs and Employment Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe. A massive racket in the pilferage of 100 per cent proof spirits from the State Distilleries Corporation installation at Seeduwa has been uncovered by the Police. The second phase of trade liberalisation under which there will be greater incentives to enhance production, will get under way this year, Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said yesterday. Armed Navy personnel will be placed on board all trawlers belonging to the Fisheries Corporation in a bid to curb

the incidence of local fishermen being attacked by foreign fishermen on the high seas—WK. The World Bank has agreed to provide Rs. 220 million to conduct a survey to find out the possibility of diverting excess water from the Mahaweli project to the North—RR.

MONDAY, JANUARY 28: A program for development of Sri Lanka's rural markets (polas) to stimulate rural agriculture and economic development has been drawn up by the Ministry of Plan Implementation. Sri Lanka's food imports bill is mounting because of rising prices in the world market and increased consumption. One of the causes of overstaffing in government departments and corporations is that in the past political parties in power gave employment to their supporters regardless of overstaffing and inadequacy of education of their nominees for employment; the point is made by the committee headed by Mr. A. W. H. Abeyesundera QC, former Supreme Court Judge, which was appointed by the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs Major Montague Jayawickrema to report on staffing problems in government departments and corporations—CDN. The Government has decided to import 25,000 bicycles from China on a priority basis; this move is in anticipation of a big demand for bicycles following the oil price increase. Several thousand persons will get their compulsory savings refunded next month; the Compulsory Savings Scheme was introduced by the late Dr. N. M. Perera when he was the Minister of Finance; a Bill to amend the Ceiling on income and compulsory Saving has been tabled and it is expected to be disposed of early next month by Parliament—CDM. Government will consider the possibility of allowing the import of tea to Sri Lanka to help in the expansion of a local tea-blending and packeting industry for export; local tea exporting firms are learnt to have asked the Ministry of Trade and Shipping to consider allowing such imports to enable them to build up a major tea blending industry here for the export of packeted tea on a large scale. The Transport Ministry is considering the increase of railway and bus fares by 20 to 30 per cent following the recent fuel price hike as well as the rise in wages and costs of vehicles, spares and equipment—SU. Steps are being

taken to construct windmills all over the country with Holland's help; windmills may also be used for generating electricity—DP. The TULF has decided to boycott all functions held by the government to mark Independence Day on February 4; they have further decided to observe that day as the day on which to reaffirm the Liberation of the Tamil race—EN. The country may face an acute shortage of flour and bread in February as the stocks have not been ordered; if the 50,000 tons that are expected by the Food Department do not arrive in the next few days the distribution of flour for the next month will come to a complete halt; the department has been able to find ships to transport the flour ordered by them—DK. The government is earning a 200% profit from petrol and faces the loss from kerosene oil and diesel; according to knowledgeable sources the full cost of a gallon of petrol is Rs. 10.11; the government earns a small profit from both kerosene and diesel—JD.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29: President J. R. Jayewardene has invited trade union leaders for a discussion this morning regarding the complaint that the recent cut in the leave entitlement of government clerks is unjustified; invitations were sent out from the President's office last week to the Joint Trade Union Action Committee which comprises 17 trade-union organisations, the Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya and several other independent trade unions. Mr. Justice M. M. Abdul Cader, Elections Judge, yesterday declared null and void the election of Deputy Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, A. B. H. Pilapitiya to the Kalawana seat in Parliament at the 1977 general elections. Hilton International will operate a new 750 room hotel in Colombo; it was announced yesterday; the hotel estimated to cost 50 million US dollars will be constructed on a seven-acre site at Echelon Square in Colombo under a contract signed between Hilton International and Cornel & Company Ltd., of Sri Lanka—CDN. The Soviet Union, presumably due to the Afghanistan crisis, has begun panic buying in the Sri Lanka tea market according to tea brokers; meanwhile the Colombo Share Market has gained momentum according to the Colombo Brokers' Association. The World Bank will provide

Rs. 250 million in aid for the integrated development scheme for the Vavuniya district—CDM. The functions of the present Power and Highways Ministry are likely to be brought under Prime Minister R. Premadasa; according to authoritative government sources, this is expected to be one of the Cabinet changes President J. R. Jayewardene is likely to make later next month. The government is seriously concerned that a brown hopper pest, now establishing itself in the Eastern Province rice bowl, would seriously affect domestic paddy production—SU. The Ministry of Food and Co-operatives has said that the prevailing wheat flour shortage in the country will ease with the arrival of 28,000 tons of flour in the harbour today—DP. A massive increase in bus fares is now being finalised by the CTB; the minimum fare will increase from 20 cents to 50 cents; or they will be increased by 60% up to 10 miles by 40% up to 30 miles 20% above 30 miles; the decisions on which system to be enforced from next month will be taken shortly. Over Rs. 55 million worth of medicines have been secretly destroyed by the State Pharmaceutical Corporation—ATH. The government is considering giving a special concession to MPs regarding the price of diesel—JD.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30: Food and Co-operatives Deputy Minister Sarathchandra Rajakaruna said yesterday that Rs. 90 million worth of foodstuffs were stolen each year from various food stores throughout the country; the food stuffs include rice, flour, and sugar, he said. Matara, the heart of the Ruhuna goes gay on Monday, February 4, when the National Day celebrations are held there. President J. R. Jayewardene yesterday assured trade union leaders their request for the withdrawal of curtailment of leave of government clerks and right to protest over labour laws will be placed before the Cabinet of Ministers for a decision; the President who met 26 union leaders from 17 trade union organisations in his office yesterday morning (honouring a pledge to meet union men protesting against a cut in their annual holidays) reminded them he was with them as one of the first trade union leaders who had been voted to high political office. The Bribery

Commissioner's Department has found that allegations made against Mr. Albert Silva, Member of Parliament for Kamburupitiya (former MP for Galle) could not be maintained, the Speaker Mr. M. A. Bakeer Markar said yesterday. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation has concluded contracts for 2.2 million tonnes of crude oil from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq, a CPC spokesman said yesterday—CDN. The government is examining the possibility of extending the period of the Sunday six hour ban on motor cars in addition to imposing bans on Poya Days and at night time on a week day; this suggestion has been made by the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Cyril Mathew. The sugar cum power alcohol industries will be opened to the private sector, according to a decision taken by the President in consultation with three of his Ministers—CDM. A close surveillance on all foreign yachts and other private pleasure craft entering Sri Lanka's territorial waters will be maintained by the security forces; following intelligence reports that the growing number of foreign private craft now anchoring off our coasts poses a possible security risk, the Defence Ministry yesterday alerted all Police stations, Navy and Air Force bases to monitor the movements of such vessels. Government has ordered a massive crack down on the growing and transport of ganja (cannabis); this follows intelligence reports that the flow of ganja into Colombo this month has reached an all time high; police sources yesterday estimated the inflow at around 200 pounds a day. A reward has been offered by the Police to any person volunteering information, leading to the recovery of 45,000 rounds of rifle ammunition believed stolen from a Pakistan cargo vessel now in the Colombo Port. The office of the Commission probing the August 1977 communal disturbances was broken into on Saturday night and Police are investigating to find out whether any of the Commission's records, are missing—SU. The Deputy Minister of Public Administration said yesterday that a scheme is being worked out to transfer married government servants to stations where they could run their families; this will probably come into effect by mid year—VK. An earth tremor at Trincomalee on Monday night made people panic for they feared it would be like the devastating cyclone in Batticaloa; the

metereological station knew about it only after the event, hence no warning was given beforehand. The World Bank has promised 30 million rupees for the development of the coconut industry in the island—DP. The Swedish Blind People's Association has donated Rs. 70 million to rehabilitate blind people in Sri Lanka. A survey done by a group of energy experts in South east Asia has revealed that there is potential to harness massive amounts of energy from the sea around Trincmalee—LD.

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HAVANA DIARY—19

FIFTH DAY—Sept. 7th

by S. P. Amarasingam

In the morning plenary session of Friday, the 7th, the speakers were Juan Mari Bras, General Secretary of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party; Ali Triky, foreign minister of Libya; France Albert Rene, president of the Seychelles; Spyros Kyprianou president of Cyprus and Kenneth Kaunda, president of Zambia. The session ended at 2.50 p. m. and the afternoon session, which had been scheduled for 4.45 p. m. began 30 minutes late. Maurice Bishop prime minister of Grenada chaired the meeting. In the afternoon session the speakers were Florencio Maye Ela, vice president of the Supreme Military Council of Equatorial Guinea; Henck Arron, prime minister of Surinam; and Ibrahim Yazdhi, Foreign minister of Iran; then Foreign Minister H. E. O. Adefofoe of Nigeria; Boutros Ghali of Egypt; Myint Maung of Burma; Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen of Malaysia; Rashid Abdulla, Ali Al-Noaimi of the Arab Emirates; S. Rajaratnam of Singapore; Gustavo Fernandez of Bolivia and Mohammed Mestiri of Tunisia.

Later that evening the speakers were Akape-Anyo Koma Anavi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Togo; Gamani Corea, General Secretary of UNCTAD; Carlos Roberto Cavadoli, Under Secretary for foreign affairs of Argentina; Sahr R. Filli Faboe, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone; Ahmed M. Adam, Ambassador of Somalia to Great Britain; Ali Ahmad Sahlool Ambassador and

Permanent Representative of Sudan at the UN; Sayyik Bin Taimur, representative of the delegation of Oman; and Simon Pierre Kibanda, permanent Ambassador of the Central African Empire at the UN. The session ended at 4 a. m. Saturday the 8th with replies from Vietnam to Singapore and Malaysia; from Zambia to the Central African Empire; and from Singapore to Vietnam.

JUAN MARI BRAS, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PEURTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY described the presidential pardon for Lilita Lebron, Irving Flores, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Oscar Collazo as the first tangible victory of the 6th Summit. He went on to denounce the new escalation in repression on the part of a whole conglomeration of forces against the liberation movement. He said that the Puerto Rican people were now engaged in a protest campaign against the presence of the US Navy in Vieques Island, which has become a base of operations detrimental to the peace and the life of the people of that island; that the liberation of Grenada was a source of encouragement to the Puerto Rican people in their struggle and that the Nicaraguan victory also fired their hopes for achieving liberation. He said that the US investments in Puerto Rica were four times as great as in the whole of the rest of the Carribean area and that this represented 50 percent of total US investments in Latin America! That as far as profits were concerned, he said that they amounted to 60 percent of the total from US operations in Latin America. Two fifths of the Puerto Rican population were forced to emigrate to the United States to do the lowest paid jobs and become the victims of US racism.

ALI TRIKY, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE SOCIALIST POPULAR LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA, head of his country's delegation at the Summit began his speech by denouncing the imperialists' schemes to try to block the holding of the 6th Summit in Cuba and hailing the victory represented by the large attendance at the Conference and Fidel Castro's election to preside over it. After hailing the Cuban Revolution as an extraordinary example for the non-aligned countries because it is always fighting and never surrenders—which proves that a nation determined to survive can never be defeated—he voiced

his opposition to the blockade against Cuba and the presence of the Guantanamo naval base. He congratulated the new members and said that the toppling of the Shah's puppet regime gave the Iranian people new strength and motivation in their struggle against the enemies of the human race. Following the 5th Summit held in Colombo, he said, the Movement had won important victories but it was also the target of bloody imperialist aggressions. He also spoke in memory of the late President Houari Boumediene.

Africa was today witnessing the racists' repression against the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and the Front Line countries since colonialism is bent on imposing its own alliances and leading the continent into colonial bondage. He said that the escalating struggle in Zimbabwe and Namibia has aroused the concern of the imperialists who are now trying to block it by setting up puppet regimes. He referred to armed struggle as the only way to oppose colonialism and mentioned the examples set by Libya, Algeria and Angola, among other countries. About west Sahara he said the Saharan people were still deprived of freedom and the right to self-determination and on behalf of his delegation he hailed the stand taken by Mauritania. He also reiterated that the peoples of Palestine, Zimbabwe and Namibia were entitled to go on struggling until they achieve total liberation. He branded as treason the stand of the Egyptian regime and as unnatural and unhealthy the alliance between Egypt, Zionism and US imperialism. He charged the Egyptian regime with aggression against the Socialist Popular Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and with concentrating its troops to use them against his country. He said the Camp David agreement represented Egypt's deviation from the Movement and said that the time has come to review the situation and reiterate fidelity to the principles of non-alignment. He charged Egypt with having become Zionism's ally and moved for the adoption by the Movement of a resolution condemning the Sadat regime.

Referring to other issues, he said that imperialism, shaken by the Nicaraguan and Grenadan Revolutions, was bent on committing continued aggression against the Cuban Revolution. In South-East Asia he expressed his

solidarity for the Vietnamese people. He pointed out that close economic co-operation among the non-aligned countries was required to strengthen the Movement with a view to securing a new world order in the interest of the majority. He said the present world crisis was characteristic of the capitalist system and he mentioned the "poisonous" campaign unleashed by the imperialist nations against the oil-exporting countries. He added that his country was ready to work for closer co-operation with the non-aligned countries. Ali Triky concluded his speech by saying how happy his people will be to host the 8th Summit in Tripoli.

FRANCE ALBERT RENE, PRESIDENT OF SEYCHELLES, said how happy he was to speak freely in Havana, just a few miles away from the heart of imperialism. He recalled that some years ago he was demonstrating with thousands of people in London shouting, "Imperialism no, Castro, yes" and he shouted again the same slogan in the Plenary Hall. After mentioning the Movement's anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-racist and anti-Zionist principles, Albert Rene spoke against negative neutralism and said that President Castro's chairmanship strengthened the Movement since no one could brand him a coward or a fence-sitter and because he faithfully upheld the Movement's principles. He described as "refreshing" the fact that since the Conference opened, its chairman had clearly delineated the specific, concrete situations. He blamed capitalism and imperialism for the death of hundreds of patriots struggling for independence and freedom in southern Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, the Middle East, Western Sahara, Southeast Asia and Latin America. He said there could not be any progress made as long as the developed countries insisted on having a high standard of living at the expense of the aid given to other peoples. He said that given the importance he attached to the speech made by Didier Ratsiraka, President of Madagascar, he felt this should be considered as one of the pavers of the Conference. Concerning the economic crisis and the prices of raw materials the non-aligned countries should tell the imperialists "to get lost" and set the prices for their own raw materials. On the Middle East situ-

ation, he branded as treason the stand taken by the Egyptian regime concerning the Arab cause. He expressed solidarity for the Canary Islands, now struggling for their right to self-determination and stated that Kimpuchean was a member of the Non-aligned Movement and that its government was that of Heng Samrin.

KYPRIANOU, PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS, the next speaker, said, "This is a critical hour for non-alignment" and insisted on the need for unity. The issue is not simply to be able to say we are united, but that we are actually united on issues, goals, views, united on all the issues to which we are committed. "As a man of action, Mr. President Fidel Castro, and not simply a man of words, you are the appropriate person for the chairmanship of this organisation." And he said that Fidel, in his important inaugural address, "set out the tone and the direction" and that "the dream that emerged from Belgrade has now almost become a reality and what we now need to do is put it into practice, make it a reality; otherwise we are doomed to failure". The President of Cyprus said that in spite of the difficulties his country was going through it would continue, regardless of the possible consequences, to firmly adhere to non-alignment, a principle that was faithfully followed by Makarios. He showed concern over the situation in the Middle East and said that, "we fully support the demand for total Israeli troop withdrawal from all occupied Arab Territories," and he recognized the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the only representative of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people should be guaranteed their inalienable rights to human dignity and freedom, he said.

On Southeast Asia he felt that a solution to present problems should be found within the framework of the United Nations and the principles of the Non-aligned Movement. He appealed to the non-aligned countries for support, "because five years have passed since Cyprus was a victim of conspiracy and aggression and that situation has not changed." Thousands of people have lost their lives for no reason at all. We still have thousands of people who are listed as "missing" whose actual whereabouts we have been unable to determine because the aggressor has refused

to co-operate on this issue, he said. He said he hoped that Cyprus would be a land of peace and harmony for its inhabitants, whether they be Greek-Cypriots or Turkish-Cypriots, and he said that often people describe the Cyprus question as a religious question. He said, "Religion has nothing to do with the Cyprus problem." Let's make Cyprus a Cyprus free from foreign troops, a Cyprus of freedom and happiness," he exclaimed.

PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA OF ZAMBIA reminded his audience that on September 7, 1974 five years ago, FRELIMO, represented by Samora Machel, signed the final accords with Portugal in Lusaka. He asked Samora, Machel to come forward so that all delegates could congratulate him on the anniversary. Machel went up to the main conference table and was hugged warmly by Fidel, Nujoma and the other members of the chairman's table. Then Kaunda congratulated Fidel on his election to the chairmanship of the Movement and thanked Cuba for all its efforts toward making this Conference a success. In a critical analysis of the role international monopoly capital plays in its relations with the underdeveloped countries, Kaunda said that he didn't want any part of that capital "that enslaved us", and he added that that capital is the very same capital that supports those who left a wake of death in Lebanon, supports the racists of South Africa and Rhodesia, kept the Shah in power in Iran and attacked Benin and Cuba. Our children want food, not bullets, we want plowshares, not swords," he said emphatically. Alluding to the serious economic problems that plague mankind, especially the underdeveloped countries, the Zambian President said that "our salvation is in our own hands" and that the Movement of Non-aligned countries "is intrinsically tied to the imperatives of our era."

On the situation in the Middle East, he said that Sadat had committed a serious error in not attending this Summit, but even worse when he had supported Moroccan aggression in Western Sahara and met with the arch-Zionist Begin precisely while the Non-aligned Summit was in progress. Kaunda said that no Middle East settlement could be accepted that excluded the Palestinians, "whose struggle we support until final victory is won." In

another place in his speech, he strongly condemned the Smith-Muzorewa regime's attacks on the Popular Republic of Mozambique. He welcomed the entry of Nicaragua and Grenada into the Non-aligned Movement and announced "Zambia's modest contribution to Dominica," while he had the highest praise for Cuba's internationalist aid to other countries of the world. Kaunda ended his speech with an emotional appeal in Spanish for all to fight imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and Zionism.

(To be Continued)

FROM DELHI

India In USA's Asia Design

by Narayan Kurup

THE AMERICAN AND CHINESE PEOPLES hold the destiny of the world in their hands, proclaimed President Nixon from the soil of the Celestial Empire in 1972. And the inscrutable Mao nodded in appreciation. Today this dream is taking shape in the configuration that is emerging in Asia—that of America, China and Japan, not inspired by the future destiny of Asia, but by thoughts of turning it into a fief. The architect of this policy of US-China entente was Dr. Kissinger, a devotee of Clauswitz. Today Brzezinski carries on the legacy.

Nixon and Kissinger have been thrown on the dun-heap of history, but not their policies. "Henry Kissinger, in or out of power, is a judicious analyst of geopolitics", complimented the US *Time* magazine only last February, for who could have inferred but Kissinger that the difference between unrest and revolution in Iran was provided from the outside—namely by the Soviet Union? And who could have told the Soviet Union that detente means maintaining the geopolitical equilibrium? No one but Kissinger, the exponent of US imperialism, can say with his tongue in the cheek that if a revolution took place in a country, it disturbed the global equilibrium and was therefore the work of the Soviet Union, and if a pro-American coup was

engineered in Chile, it meant the preservation of stability. So go Kissinger's analysis and logic!

American foreign policies are of course not made by American Presidents. At best they are conductors of an orchestra of US national interests which are permanent. One of the first Americans to advocate the containment of Russian power was Admiral A. Mahan, a geopolitician, who was fascinated by the idea of organising an anti-Russian alliance of Britain, Germany, Japan and the US. His strategy was to use the Japanese and the Germans against the Russians and remain the "third rejoicing party". Here was the doctrine of the balance of power in its naked form—that America should enjoy the imperium at the cost of the other nations.

That is how the US remained the "third rejoicing party" in both the world wars, and emerged as the leader of the Western world by improving its positions in the meantime. In the postwar years it tried to stampede the newly free nations into the American military alliances so that it could make Asians fight Asians, Africans fight Africans and Latin Americans fight Latin Americans, all in the interests and advancement of American objectives.

AMERICA'S POSTWAR POLICIES were influenced by such theoreticians like Prof. Nicholas Spykman, who called for an "equilibrium" between the Soviet Union and the outlying countries and suggested Germany and Japan as formidable counterweights to the Soviet Union. What was good for Europe and Asia, Spykman said, was a state of "unstable equilibrium" between states. NATO was created to provide this "equilibrium" in the West. But the East remained "vulnerable" till the Soviet-Chinese ideological conflict opened up new possibilities for the US to build up an Eastern "equilibrium". *in essence, the present US policy in Asia expects China and Japan to promote US global interests. In return, it is prepared to give both a free hand to dominate Asia. China has already become a close ally of the US. in fact, it calls for a global alliance against the Soviet Union. The Japanese are rather reticent, being more conscious of the fact that they depend on the world for their live-*

What is the Chinese game? Obviously, by aligning itself with imperialism, it hopes to build up a mighty China both in economic and military terms. The imperialists are prepared to satisfy China's ambition up to a point, but they cannot nourish China's ambition to be the master of the world. What they want is to make China willing partner in shaping the world which will largely remain under Western dominance. In this scheme, China as an effective counterweight against the Soviet Union is the main Western consideration. *The Chinese leaders are well aware of these eventualities and are determined, to exact a heavy price from the United States, namely a free hand in Asia, which has been their main ambition. The aggression against Vietnam was a glaring example. Here lies the danger to Asia and to India.*

WHAT DOES THIS PORTEND FOR INDIA?

Above all it would imply that the United States would be of no avail to India against Chinese excesses in Asia or even in China's designs against India. In fact, India has never been a significant factor in American geopolitical calculations in Asia, either against China in the earlier years or against the Soviet Union, because of India's refusal to play the American game. But, at the same time, India cannot be ignored because of its size, resources and strength, and because it can frustrate America's game in some ways. In any case, America knows that it would make a substantial difference if India throws its weight on either side of the Great Divide. Hence there is a convergence of interests in the case of both China and the US to weaken and, if possible, balkanise India. They cannot countenance the emergence of a powerful India. Conversely, the Soviet Union welcomes a strong India and has taken steps to strengthen India's economic and military strength without in any way impinging upon its independent policies.

Already efforts are on by China in the Northern border of India and in the eastern parts to stir up revolts and disaffection against India. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka are all under Chinese diplomatic pressure to the Chinese line, and if possible isolate India in the region. The US is

in full sympathy with this Chinese move. The extent of its own involvement is not yet clear.

IF THE INDIAN LEADERS can free themselves from their petty squabbles and manoeuvres in the political arena to ponder over threats, they should bestir themselves now, for it will be too late later. India's options are not many. Part of them are already charted. It has to strengthen the movement of the non-aligned, which is now being increasingly threatened by both the US and China. And, if it is true to its historical experience, it has to strengthen its understanding and co-operation with the socialist forces.

If the Western long term strategy is to divide the socialist forces between the East and the West, alternately compelling the Soviet Union to shift focus from one to the other, then it is clear that both Western Europe and China have a basic interest in stirring up tensions in each other's region in order to draw the Soviet forces away itself. *The recent decision of the US to site new American medium nuclear missiles in Western Europe against the wishes of some of the West European countries in an example of how on one pretext or other, tensions could be mounted.*

But all these calculations of Washington and Beijing could go away. Today Western Europe is in revolt against both the economic and foreign policy leadership of America. It is still an ally of America, but not its "your obedient servant". That is definitely the reason why the new eastern configuration has become so important to America. But, here too, there are contradictions. A significant example of this was recently provided when the US threatened to arm China if the Soviets continued their presence in Cuba. While this showed the usefulness of the China connection today to US global policies, the opposition of Japan to the arming of China with sophisticated weapons showed the essential contradiction within the Pacific permutation. The Kissingers and Brzezinskis are paid to provide the framework and permutations to checkmate the adversaries and hold the rest of the world in thrall—that is, if they are permitted.

An Error Of Calculation

IN THE LIGHT of the return to a "Cold War" atmosphere in recent days after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, many analysts are beginning to ask if the recent European decision to allow the United States to install "Pershing 2 and "Cruise" missiles in Western Europe was not an error of calculation on the part of the USA's western allies.

ACCORDING TO SOURCES IN BONN, this is the question that Helmut Schmidt, West German Chancellor, is asking himself as tension between the United States and the Soviet Union increases. Schmidt had argued strongly that the installation of the missiles was in compatible with continued efforts to deepen "detente" between the two rival world blocs. The decision adopted recently during a summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), at least far as the Bonn government was concerned, was gamble based on the assumption that Western Europe's approval of the US initiative would not in the long term affect negotiations on disarmament and detente. Although the Europeans abandoned the idea of making approval of the plan conditional on the United States' ratification of the SALT II treaty the position of West Germany and other countries assumed that the Brussels agreement must open the way to renewed efforts at negotiating disarmament. According to Bonn's sources, Schmidt agreed in the belief that Moscow after taking a hard position would return to the negotiating table.

Given that line of argument, one begins to wonder what attitude Schmidt would have adopted if he had known that the Brussels agreement would be followed within two weeks by a Soviet military decision to suspend the ratification of SALT II, and the virtual paralysis of detente. Although factors removed from the missiles controversy the Soviet intervention, some observers believe that the action was partially due to a generally readjustment in Soviet strategy faced with what they interpreted as a turn about in Western strategy exemplified by the Brussels agreement.

The Brussels resolution could have been "read" by Moscow as an indication that Washington was returning to a policy harassing the Soviet Union also by involving China in an anti-Soviet understanding. The recent short dialogue between Moscow and Peking petered out. The attitude of European allies of the United States, who, led by West Germany disassociated themselves from United States policies toward the Soviet Union at the time of the "opening" toward China and influenced decisively Washington's subsequent attitude to detente seems to have been downgraded in importance by the White House. When the United States "friendship" with China started to take on an anti-Soviet overtones, Schmidt did his utmost to persuade his European colleagues of the dangers which in his judgement were implicit at moments of irresponsible foreign policy of President Carter's administration. Schmidt apparently played a key role in the European decision to disassociate itself from that aspect of United States policy and seek formulas that would safeguard the policy detente. This attitude, in the judgement of many observers, facilitated the extremely moderate reaction of Vietnam and was influential in the United States return to a policy of detente.

Schmidt's recent position seems to reflect the conviction that Washington's foreign policy had taken a definite conciliatory direction in line with the policies pushed by the Secretary of State Cyrus Vance rather than those of the more aggressive Zbignew Brzezinski, adviser to the President on the matters of national security. Schmidt did not interpret the United States wish to install missiles on western Europe soil as an expression of the strategy inspired by Brzezinski and consequently did not adopt the attitude adopted at the time of the opening towards China. The West Germans are now asking themselves if this was not an error.

The turn of events has surprised the Europeans trapped in a supporting role that leaves little room for manoeuvre and has serious implications for the "Ostpolitik" that forms the cornerstone of West German social democracy's foreign policy. It could also interfere with Schmidt's efforts to present a viable

foreign policy at the crucial elections of 1981 when his rival will be the conservative Bavarian Franz Josef Strauss.

Is there still time for Europe to take an independent position capable of saving detente? It is clear that the survival of Schmidt as West German Chancellor and a European leader depends to a great extent on the recovery of such an independent role.

—Baghdad Observer, 12/1/80

FROM THE WORLD PRESS

:: IRAN :: AFGHANISTAN

CARTER'S ADDRESS

Washington, Jan. 25,

There have not been many state of the union speeches as devoted to foreign affairs as the one President Carter delivered to the American people January 23. It was a speech mainly devoted to two related issues: Soviet-American relations and US interests in the Middle East and South West Asia. The United States must defend its interests in the Middle East and South-west Asia. That was an important theme which ran through the President's state of the union address. And Carter had hardly gotten into his speech when he made clear that he was going to be talking about two developments in that part of the world: the holding of American hostages in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "These two acts", said the President, "one of international terrorism and one of military aggression, present a serious challenge to the United States and to the other nations of the world." And he emphasised his intention to meet the challenge.

AS REGARDS IRAN, the President reiterated the five-point policy he set out earlier—to protect American interests, to seek the release of the hostages, to avoid bloodshed if possible, to enlist the help of other nations and to persuade the Iranian leaders that the real threat to their countries lies to the north. Carter indicated that the "unwarranted" quarrel with the United States actually hampers Iran's ability to meet this challenge. He

also delivered one of the strongest warnings yet on the matter of the hostages: if they are harmed, he said, "a severe price will be paid."

But in discussing the **Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan**, the President entered a broader and more complex area. For the invasion's consequences are not confined to Afghanistan alone. The region threatened by the Soviet action, he pointed out, is of great strategic importance, and the Soviet Union "is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil". To meet this threat, said the President, requires both the collective efforts of users of Middle East oil and the close co-operation of countries in the area which might be threatened. And he laid down the United States position in the strongest possible language: "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." This statement by the President was greeted with prolonged applause.

THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN has, of course, raised broader questions about Soviet-American relations, and Carter devoted much of his speech to that relationship, which he called "the most critical factor in determining whether the world will live in peace or be engulfed in global conflict." He made clear that recent Soviet aggressiveness represents a serious threat to the peace—one which cannot be ignored. For this reason, American and NATO defences are being strengthened, a long-range striking force is being organized, and Congress will be asked to approve a strong defence budget, to reaffirm the commitment to Pakistan, and to revitalize the selective service, or military conscription system, so that it can be used quickly should the need arise.

At the same time, however, President Carter indicated that the United States would remain ready to "develop ways to resolve disputes and keep the peace." For after all, he pointed out, "preventing nuclear war is the foremost responsibility of the super powers." And he made it clear that he would abandon the effort to control strategic nuclear weapons.

pons. And that even in the absence of a signed Treaty the two sides should "abide by the mutual constraints imposed by the terms of the treaties."

If one were to pick out the most important sections of Carter's speech, one would certainly be his statement about American determination to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf region. The other would be two questions which the President directed to the Soviet Union: "Will it help promote a more stable international environment in which its own legitimate, peaceful concerns can be pursued? Or will it continue to expand its military power far beyond its own security needs, using that power for colonial conquest?" Carter called these questions "basic"—meaning that the answers to them will go far toward determining the shape of Soviet-American relations—and the prospects for which peace—in the years ahead.

—VOA Commentary, USICA

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MISFIRING OF US PLANS MADE CARTER FURIOUS

Moscow, Jan. 20,

The Pentagon was busy selecting possible sites for American military installations in Afghanistan to replace those lost in Iran when the turn of events totally upset their applecart, the Soviet Union has said. It is this basic fact that lies behind the fury and ire of President Carter, who has unleashed a series of measures against the Soviet Union, including cutback in trade and cancellation of grains sales, and put the clock behind to the cold war era, it was stressed. It has also directly accused the US administration and the CIA of attempting to subvert revolution in Afghanistan, and has revealed that Hafizullah Amin, who murdered President Taraki, was maintaining secret contacts with US agents.

In an expose on the cause and events in Afghanistan, CPSU central committee organ *Pravda* in an authoritative article today revealed several facts to establish how far the imperialist plans and operations in Afghanistan had gone. Tens of thousands of mercenaries armed with American and Chinese weapons and trained by US and Chinese instructors,

"were sent into Afghanistan" to carry out the whole operation, *Pravda* said. It said two Pakistani vessels, "Al Kalsoum" and "Rustom", had sailed into Karachi Port on 20 and 21 June last year. While "Al Kalsoum" arrived from Britain, carrying nearly 2000 tonnes of US made arms and munitions, "Rustom" had brought 8000 tonnes of military materials from China. The weapons and materials were taken into the area off Peshawar and put at the disposal of gangs that were sent into Afghanistan. CIA's representative Louis Duprix supervised the whole planning and implementation of the operations from Pakistani territories and headed in Pakistan a group of "specialists" on subversive anti-Afghan operations, the daily said.

It also revealed that Amin had planned large-scale massacre on 29th December and said if usurper Amin had not been deprived of the power as a result of decisive action taken by the Afghan people themselves, the number of victims of his arbitrariness would

My No. 3/40/1/137
Kachcheri, Matale
1980.01.18

Notice Under Section 7 Of The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act. No. 28 Of 1964

It is intended to acquire the lands described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 75 of 08-02-1980. (Part III)

Schedule

Situation:— Pilihudugolla village, Wagapanaha Udasiya Pattuwa, Naula D.R.O.'s Division, Matale District.

Name:— Nugawelamulahena, Weeragolle-yaya, Rathunekathralagehena and Batala-yaya.

Extent:— A. 26 R. 3 P. 26

Plan and Lot Nos:— V.P. 252 Extract 8—Lot No. 36, 37, 49, 50, 334, 962 & 964

R. Pitakotuwa
District Land Officer,
Matale District.

have increased by many thousands. Indicating that these facts had been revealed by documents and testimonies of witnesses, it asked "Can it be that Mr. Carter is unaware of all this and many more things?" The annoyance of the US administration, the daily said, was explained by the fact that the events in Afghanistan took quite a different turn from what it expected.

Chiding the Carter administration for taking recourse "not only to a policy of negotiations and detente, but also confrontation and force as the "decisive argument", the daily said the keynote of Carter's new programme is an unprecedented buildup of military might, on which reliance is placed in settlement of world problems. It said Carter had been moving towards this policy beginning with 1976, that is right from the time he assumed presidency. By his militaristic programme, Carter seeks to thwart "winds of change", which are unsuited to American monopolists, the daily asserted. In Carter's statement there is not a desire for co-operation, but a striving to impose bellicose confrontations, to counterpose American interests to those of the rest of the world, *Pravda* said and termed Carter as being in captivity of cold war dogmas.

—Vinod Taksal

x x x

THE SINAI WITHDRAWAL AND THE AUTONOMY NEGOTIATIONS

Washington, Jan. 15,

This past week Israeli forces withdrew from another large section of the Sinai Peninsula, which it had occupied for the past 13 years. And this week-end Egypt and Israel are scheduled to normalise relations. The Israeli withdrawal, and the pending normalisation of relations between Egypt and Israel, are significant steps toward full implementation of one part of the Camp David agreements. This is the most important withdrawal the Israelis have made so far, since it includes the strategic passes which played such a key role in the 1967 war. The withdrawal leaves two-thirds of the peninsula under Egyptian control, with the remainder to be returned

two years from now. And the establishment of diplomatic relations is equally significant from the political point of view, since it marks the first time an Arab state has formally recognized Israel.

In the Arab world outside of Egypt, however, this latter event is being greeted with scorn and hostility. Most of the other Arab governments have long since made clear that they reject the Camp David agreements—both the one which calls for an Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty and the one calling for autonomy for the Palestinian Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza strip regions. What supporters of the Camp David agreements are hoping is that this Arab hostility can be abated—perhaps even turned into co-operation—by having the autonomy negotiations produce a formula for self-government in the West Bank and Gaza strip which will be acceptable to large numbers of Palestinians. That is the object of the talks which have been going on for almost a year. Unfortunately, they have made—at best—only very slow and limited progress.

The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) As Amended By The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964. Notice Under Section (7)

Reference No. 25/4/176

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 75 (Part III) of 03/02/1980.

W. M. T. B. Menikdiwela
Assistant Government Agent.
Kegalle District

The Kachcheri,
Kegalle.
23.01.1980

Schedule

Situation:— Situated in Kitulgala village, Kitulgala Palatha, Yatiyantota D.R.O.'s Division in Kegalle District.

Plan No:— P. Plan No. 1597

| | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Lot No. | Name of land. |
| 1 | Gonnagahamulawatta |
| 2 | Gurugalhinna |

The chief problem is the definition of autonomy itself—whether it gives the Palestinians legislative or merely administrative powers. Only last week Egypt rejected the latest Israeli proposals, and Prime Minister Begin has said that Egypt's concept of autonomy distorts the Camp David understandings. The hope is that when negotiations resume later this month the impasse can be broken. Another reason for urgency has emerged in recent weeks—events in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and president Carter's call for "collective action" to insure the security of the Persian Gulf and South-west Asia. A number of Arab leaders have already indicated that they think such collective efforts hinge upon a settlement of the Palestinian issue. Furthermore, Ambassador Linowitz, President Carter's Personal Representative to the autonomy talks, has stressed the need for concrete progress. The United States, he said in a speech last week, favours "a major effort to prevent further Soviet encroachment and to guarantee regional security." But, he added, "this strategy cannot be fully effective if it fails to address one of the major causes of instability in the region—the Arab-Israeli problem."

The *New York Times* remarked editorially that "only the most diligent diplomacy can... resolve the Palestinian issue to liberate Moslem politics from a passionate grievance." Another unofficial observer—former Under Secretary of State, George W. Ball—expressed himself in somewhat harsher terms: "Let there be no mistake about it," he wrote in the January 20 *Washington Post*, "so long as we delay a frontal attack on the Palestinian issue, we are alienating the whole Moslem world.....".

If news reports are accurate, there are Israeli sources who do not agree that events in Iran and Afghanistan underline the need for urgency in the autonomy talks—and who feel that failure to reach prompt agreement on autonomy need not impede regional security measures. No doubt the differing views will be thoroughly aired in the coming round of talks which Ambassador Linowitz is scheduled to have with the Heads of several Middle East governments, including Egypt and Israel. But in assaying the climate in Washington

one would have to conclude that the Carter administration believes that the time has come for redoubled efforts to reach agreement on the autonomy issue—and to remove a cause of instability and tension among nations who should be co-operating for their own mutual security.

—Ronald J. Dunlavy, VOA Commentary

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SERVING THE US HOSTILE DESIGNS

By Kalid Jassim
Baghdad, Jan. 14.

On January 11th, traitor Sadat and terrorist Begin concluded their 4-day talks in Aswan. As has been announced that the talks ranged between the granting of "autonomy" for the 1.2 million Palestinian Arabs in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and discussions on the question of normalizing relations between the Sadat regime and the Zionist entity. Meanwhile, the joint Zionist-Egyptian military committee was resuming its meeting to draw the map of the Zionist withdrawal from occupied Sinai. This means that this issue was not included in Aswan talks. As a matter of fact, there are no disputes between Egypt and the Zionist entity on the issue of normalization of relations between them. Sadat has bypassed this point to the point of announcing his preparedness to supply the Zionist entity with the waters of the Nile River. This means that Begin and Sadat did not preoccupy themselves with discussions of this issue.

As concerns the issue of the conspiracy of "Palestinian self-rule" for occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the two sides have similar views in how to implement this conspiracy. The only remaining obstacles is the incapability of the two sides to find the Palestinian partner who agrees to participate in this conspiracy despite the utmost efforts exerted even by the US to search for any Palestinian who agrees to join the talks of "Palestinian self rule" for occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. All indications and present consequences point out that it is impossible to find such Palestinian partner. On the contrary, the Arab rejection in general and the Palestinian rejection in particular have increased inside and outside occupied Palestine to confront this conspiracy and all the capitulationist designs.

Yet, we should realise that the Aswan talks concentrated on how to serve the US military designs in the Arab area and to grant more military facilities to the US in the area under the pretext of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the complicated situation in Iran due to irresponsible behaviour of the leading Iranian clergymen. In this respect, Egyptian Defence Minister General Karmal Hassan Ali, in a statement to Reuters said that Egypt had offered the US military facilities for the passage of troops by air or sea, refuelling and supplying. He added that the US would be given facilities "if we are asked and this totally depends on the situation in Afghanistan".

Before Begin's arrival to Aswan, the Zionist Broadcasting Station disclosed that Sadat has signed a military agreement with the US to grant a strategic military air base in the depth of Egypt to be used by the US for the purpose of transportation, training and strategic, tactical and regional moves. Undoubtedly, Aswan talks were held in a time when the Arab area experienced grave circumstances characterised with the escalation of conflict of the two major super powers particularly after the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, the US extensive military presence in the Arab Gulf and Indian ocean areas and the US exploitation of the Soviet intervention to justify its military show of muscles in several parts of the area. Yet, and as confirmed by *Ath. Thawna* of January 10th, what is most important for the Sadat regime and the Zionist entity is to discuss their roles in implementing the US military strategy and the hostile designs of the Pentagon in the area and to interfere in its local affairs turn it into a field of conflict between the major world super powers at the expense of the independence, sovereignty and security of its states.

Of course, it is not fortuitous that Begin announced in Aswan that it is possible for the US to use the military bases in both Egypt and occupied Palestine. Also, it was not fortuitous when Kamal Hassan Ali, Sadat's Defence Minister announced Egypt's preparedness to grant military facilities to the US to enable the latter's troops to reach any spot, particularly the Arab Gulf, area. In addition the US war planes since five weeks have made

military manoeuvres in Egypt. Thus, it is quite obvious that the Aswan talks concentrated on bilateral military co-ordination to ensure the required prerequisites of the US hostile strategy. Also the two sides should have evaluated the present situation in the area and the new developments and consequences of the stands of all its countries and what the alliance of Camp David could do in such circumstances to pass its capitulationist designs.

It is true that the Zionist entity is performing its "duty" and obligations in keeping with the strategic alliance with the US imperialism. yet, it is not in the interest of Egypt and her people to establish US military bases on her soil and to turn her sea, air and land into the service of US imperialism and its greedy and hostile designs against the will and interests of the Arab nations and the sovereignty of its states. Certainly, what was done by Sadat is but a natural result of the path he had trodden, the path of capitulation, treachery and collusion with the enemies. This path has turned Sadat into an obedient tool in the hands of the enemies of Egypt, the Arab nation and humanity in general.

—Baghdad Observer

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◉ Monkey's Year ◉ Leap Seconds

IS IT NOT STRANGE that our papers which have a overdoze of columnage on astrological forecasts—daily, weekly, monthly and yearly—based on either the Indian, Sri Lankan or the Western systems (or a jumble mix of all three) have not paid much attention to the East Asian Astrological systems—l-Ching and the like? That nothing comes now officially from China because of the current addiction of the ruling hierarchy to Marxism—although China is the home of the many East Asian systems? That by chance we came across a little snippet from Japan, the Land of the Rising Sun and Cherry Blossoms? That this is what the report from Tokyo said about 1980 the Year of the Monkey: "When temple and shrine bells toll 108 times on New Year's eve—once for each of man's passionate sins—it will mark the passing of the year of the sheep and ring in the year of the monkey. 1980, according to Japanese soothsayers familiar with the ancient oriental zodiac, will more or less be a continuation of 1979—a year that was supposed to have been 12 months of peace but became a year of turmoil. According to Buddhist lore, the monkey was the ninth of 12 animals that hurried to the bedside of the dying Buddha to pay homage. First came the rat, then the fox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster dog and boar. A year was named for each. The 12 animals and what they symbolise are said to influence the year and the personality and character of those born in the period. The Japanese soothsayers predict food problems and say the oil crisis may ease later in the year. But economic upheavals will continue, with trouble for the dollar and other world currencies. For people born in the year of the monkey, which comes every 12 years, it is time for patience and caution. The last monkey year was 1968, the next one will be 1992."

THAT THE YEAR 1980 was also ushered in by other strange events? That Reuter reported

from Washington on January 1, 1980 as follows: "Revellers waited an extra second before cheering in 1980. That's because yesterday the last day of the old year, was 24 hours and one second long. The extra second required to bring the world's standard time into line with solar time. 'Leap Seconds' have been added to the official times kept by super-accurate atomic clocks nine times since June 30, 1972. Leap Seconds are mandated by the International Bureau of Time in Paris whenever solar time begins to get out of step with the time given by atomic clocks at the world's timekeeping laboratories." That whilst Leap Years come once in five years, Leap Seconds seem to come more often, i.e., nine times since June 30, 1972? An UNI report from New Delhi pointed out: "India ushers in the New Year on Monday night one second late. The Indian Standard Time is to be put back by a second for studies in astronomy, astrophysics, space physics and day-to-day work, says a National Physical Laboratory release. It says there is a 19-second time difference between earth and atomic times. The astronomical time is based on the rotation of the earth on its axis and the rotation rate is said to be slowing down owing to various celestial forces acting on the earth. The slowing down rate as compared to atomic time is three thousandth of a second per day or almost a second per year. This makes it necessary to make a correction by retarding clocks at a pre-assigned time." *That except for a tiny para in the back page of a few dailies, no papers in Sri Lanka drew attention to this Leap Seconds which should be of interest to all children studying science? That instead our papers give its readers an overdoze of thing that do not matter?*

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*President J. R. JAYewardene
in Tangalle on February 2, 1980.*

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