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Letter From The Editor



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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—Politics Of Drifts p. 2

BETWEEN THE LINES

—CTB's Balance Sheet p. 3

WEST ASIA

—Ford-Sadat Summit p. 4

CHRONICLE

—May 24—30 p. 6

HOUSE KEEPING

—In The Wannii p. 8

GALENBINDUNAWEWA

—Dry Again p. 10

BROWN SAHIBS—2

—Awakening Essential p. 11

GUYANA

—Many Races p. 13

PESALAI

—Warning p. 14

GOVT. ADVERTISEMENTS

—In India p. 17

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Postal Karma p. 20

THE NEW VOLUME of *Tribune* has begun to attract attention and new readers. Our twentyfirst anniversary special offer of a cut rate three-year subscription has evoked encouraging response from old as well as new subscribers. The offer is valid upto June 30. There have also been a few changes among our regular columnists and writers. *Ariel* who has done our *International Affairs* for sometime now is on holiday: on his return he will resume writing on foreign affairs. *Kautiliya*, who has been out of the island for some years, will write on *The Changing World*—he was a regular contributor over ten years ago. *Serendib*, another of our old regulars, has revived his comments on local affairs in *Between The Lines*. *Sherlock Holmes* is on vacation, but other *Tribune* investigators will probe into matters of interest in the *Confidentially* column in the same idiom and style popularised by *Sherlock*. We have expanded *Chronicle* to cover Sinhala and Tamil language dailies in addition to the English. This digest of events helps our readers to keep in touch with the news. Those who want spot news on the spot have to read the daily papers (and listen with faithful regularity to the SLBC with its repetitive officialese): but, for independent interpretative analysis and objective news-behind-the-news there is only *Tribune* in Sri Lanka, at the moment. We should be pardoned for this little touch of self-glor y because we are justly proud about the little niche *Tribune* has carved out for itself in the field of political journalism in this country. Naturally, we have our bias, our special views, and maybe even our allergies and inhibitions, but we have always permitted those who held contrary views the courtesy of our columns if they said what wanted to say in readable and printable form.

ON THE COVER we have a picture of a local gipsy fortune-telling girl reading the palm of somebody who wants a quick insight into his future. People resort to the occult not only in the mansions of the rich but also in wayside resting places. Fortune telling, through astrology, palmistry, numerology and the other methods like seances and trances, has been traditional in this country. Unlike in some sophisticated countries, where resort to the occult is one of the unsaid things in polite society, in Sri Lanka (as probably in many other countries) the hidden power of the occult is regarded as part of daily life. For the marxist-minded Minister scouring the world for aid and the lowly Beggar cringing on our streets for alms, the fortune-teller is an inevitable adjunct. The Minister consults his favourite occult expert before he ventures on anything—the Minister who *does not* is a *rara avis*. The Beggar checks with the street-corner fortune-teller what luck would be on any day or week—the Beggar who *does not* is not typical of the profession. It is not only ministers and politicians who depend on astrologers and trance-men for guidance. From the highest to the lowest, people who matter in Sri Lanka, are addicted to occultism in one form or another. The minister's secretary, the bureaucrat's peon, the chairman of a corporation and his car driver have their favourite occultists. Those who cannot afford a private seer rely on the astrological forecasts in the Sunday papers and in the astrological magazines which now abound. Admittedly, in recent times, there has been a proliferation of interest in things occult. People are no longer able to explain failure, calamity, disappointment, unemployment, inflation, recession—and the ensuing tensions, confrontations and crises—with ordinary logic. Hence the resort to the supernatural. It is one thing to believe; but it is another matter to have to fall back upon the occult as an escape. The gipsy girl is only a part-time fortune-teller, but she is an attractive features of our landscape.

Politics Of Drift

THE PRIME MINISTER is scheduled to leave the island on June 8 to attend the annual general meeting of the ILO at Geneva. She has been specially invited to address the sessions because the organisation wanted to commemorate Woman's Year by getting the first woman Prime Minister in the world to inaugurate the meeting. After that she will attend another international conference which will commemorate Woman's Year also by having Mrs. Bandaranaike and other well-known women leaders to address the delegates. This will be in Mexico on June 19. At the time of writing there are hints that she will visit the USA en route from Geneva to Mexico. Will she meet President Ford? Before this issue of *Tribune* is out, it is likely that something more definite will be known.

The Prime Minister will, therefore, be out of the island for about two and a half weeks to three weeks from June 8 and it will be safe to conclude that no significant political developments are likely to surface either before she goes or during her absence. The *status quo* will continue with the gossip factories (which now work overtime with the daily press bottled up) feeding the people in the cities and in the rural areas with colourful stories about political goings-on. That such a situation of *do-nothing* (until the different problems sort themselves out, anyhow) has become a chronic feature of the island's politics. The Prime Minister has a supreme capacity, with rare political insight, to carry on without ruptures until mini-crises and mini-confrontations die down owing to the passage of time. Indignant and disturbed groups are kept satisfied with a yes here and a no there.

In this process, there are abundant reasons to think that all foreign banks will soon be nationalised, or at least Ceylonised with a 51% control by the Government. The

same fate of Ceylonisation will soon overtake the Agency Houses because the Government does not have enough foreign exchange to pay full compensation for a full takeover. It is believed that the Wilson Government and the British vested interests will not blow their top off and unduly disturb the tea market for Sri Lanka if full compensation in foreign exchange is assured. Such compensation will no doubt be pumped into the new tea plantations in different parts of the world where British interests have a secure foothold at least for a few more decades. By the time the other tea plantations come into full production, it is hoped that Sri Lanka would have diversified its export trade to other fields so that the loss of tea will not undermine the economy.

All hopes are now being placed on the discovery of oil in Pesalai and the Prime Minister's most recent statement last weekend was that there was hope that Pesalai oil would be reality before the end of 1976. There is doubt that her estimate of the chances of striking oil in commercially exploitable quantities is nearer the mark than boasts by others that oil would be found around the corner next month or the next New Year. The Prime Minister will no doubt like to have oil in Pesalai before the 1977 elections, and even if there is an element of wishful thinking in what oil can do for the political fortunes of the UF, it is best to remember that a great many other events may emerge between now and the general elections which may supersede the premia placed on oil as an election winning slogan. It is difficult to envisage the hard realities of the 1977 elections, but an oily way to political success may prove slippery and unsuccessful.

The Prime Minister will set out on her journey to Geneva and Mexico (with a possible stopover in the USA) without finding complete solutions to many matters of significance. With her consummate tact and diplomatic skill she will no doubt calm the ruffled feelings of the Americans over the Finance Minister's charges in respect of the PL 480 funds without pushing the Leftist partners of the UF into a flurried campaign about the matter. And even if she accepts (even publicly) the hard facts set out in the American *aide memoire*, the Left

is not likely to be unduly perturbed if they score a forward push in regard to the nationalisation (or at least a 51% Ceylonisation) of foreign banks and agency houses. The politics of drift which has characterised UF politics in more recent times will continue with radical measures being pushed forward in some sectors whilst diehard conservative trends get solidified and strengthened in other equally decisive sectors of the administration.

Whilst foreign banks and agency houses together with their local collaborators are being eliminated, the UF government has created a new class of rich capitalist interests (with powerful foreign patrons) in other sectors of the economy. This new class has even more powerful political punch than the earlier Brown Sahibs. If in the old days, the Brown Sahibs held court at the Galle Face Hotel, the Orient Club, the Eighty Club and the like, the new set hold their durbars at the Hotel Ceylon Intercontinental, Hotel Lanka Oberoi and a host of other places where the new rich of the UF display their wealth and their power with vulgarity unmatched at any time in the recent past of Sri Lanka. The new and vulgar rich have taken over places like Nuwara Eliya where they have even revived betting on pony racing even though there is a post-1956 law that horse racing and gambling were legally taboo in any form. A sociologist studying the manifestations of wealth at Nuwara Eliya during the last season—where CRA wealth had made the 6 Sri car, a total "mod" outfit of foreign origin together with all the gadgetry of the electronic age, the minimum status symbol for acceptance as a member of the set—will be able to focus attention on the new rich who will no doubt make their presence and influence felt in the 1977 elections.

The Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, is also scheduled to leave the island this week, even before the Prime Minister, to attend meetings of the IMF, the World Bank and other international monetary organisations. He will no doubt be one of the leaders of the poor and developing third world countries in confrontation with the big bankers of the developed countries. With him also out of the island, politics are likely to move into the customary doldrums we have known

in recent times. Even the threatened crisis over the Colombo South by-election has been smoothed over. Nomination day has been fixed for June 19. Though it is possible to keep postponing nomination day, and even election day thereafter under the Emergency laws, this is not likely to happen. JR may even be returned unopposed. Minister T. B. Illangaratne who had first mooted the talk about legislation to prevent the abuse of by-elections for political gimmickry is now talking about the impending takeover of foreign banks. What the UNP and other centrist and right-wing forces in the country (including those in the UF) do not realise is that each time they have sought to create a crisis for the Government and the Left (in the hope that there will be a break in the UF), the Left has been able to push the economy towards greater public control which they think will pave the way for socialism.

The failure of the Centre and the Right in this country—as in many other developing countries—is the failure to evolve a new kind of leadership and a new kind of political programming that will carry the masses with them. JR and the UNP have got bogged down in gimmickry and adventurism (and now by-electionism) and have not been able to give any lead which will enthuse the masses.

One notable exception to centrist politics in the contemporary world is what Jawaharlal Nehru and now Indira Gandhi have done in India. The Centrist content of the politics of the father and the daughter were clothed in a radical image, and together with large doses of public sector control and even more importantly dynamic leadership, they have been able to carry the Indian masses in a way that has surprised the world. Gimmickry, adventurism, intrigue, arm twisting and all the other paraphernalia essential for maintaining political power today have been used by the Nehrus, but the manner in which India has been carried forward in economic development, political stability and international power and prestige is amazing. If the Indian experiments in Centrism works out, it will become one of the wonders of the world—like the Taj Mahal.

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

- CTB's Accounts
- Bribery and Private Secs

C.T.B. MYSTERY. On May 29, the Daily Mirror published a front-page story with a four column heading: APPLICATION FOR RS. 4 1/2 M FROM BANKS—CTB IN THE RED. The report read as follows:

The Ceylon Transport Board has applied for overdrafts for Rs. 4 1/2 million from two State-owned banks to meet urgent bills. The Board has applied to the People's Bank for an overdraft of Rs. 2.5 million in addition to the present credit facility of Rs. 18 million and to the Bank of Ceylon for Rs. 2 million in addition to the current credit facility of Rs. 12 million. According to informed sources the CTB had to delay the clearance of about Rs. 10 million worth of goods from the Port due to lack of funds. These sources said that the Board had to meet heavy purchase bills this year. During the first three months of this year the Board had to pay about Rs. 75 million for the purchase of tyres and foreign and local goods. A capital grant of Rs. 42 million has been made available to the CTB by the Treasury for 1975. Of this about Rs. 25.7 million had already been made available to the Board. Although provision had been made for this capital grant in the national budget for assistance as and when necessary the experience had been that these monies could not be obtained at the time it was actually required because of the liquidity problems the Treasury too had to face, these sources added.

On the very next day itself, May 30, the Daily Mirror carried a frontpage two column top box under the heading: SORRY. It read:

We regret that the headline "CTB in the Red" published in yesterday's issue of the 'Daily Mirror' is likely to have created a wrong impression in the public mind with regard

to the financial position of the Board. We are informed that the overall financial position of the Board is not only sound but that it is also making a daily profit. However, we understand that the Board is at present experiencing a temporary liquidity problem on account of vastly increased expenditure on capital development and purchase of vehicles and spares and due to the inflationary rise in prices of commodities. The position, it is learnt, has been further aggravated due to the heavy inflow of goods from abroad in the past three months, the orders for which were placed last year. We wish to apologise to the Chairman and members of the Board for any embarrassment caused as a result of the headline.

—Editor

The apology was for the headline CTB: IN THE RED. Reading between the lines of the apology it is clear that there must have been a great deal of arm-twisting and top layer pressurising for the recantation. The facts set out in the report of May 29th has not been challenged. In the face of what had been stated in the report, the headline CTB IN THE RED cannot be considered misleading—if one accepts the normal meaning of the word "in the red". What the apology says is that the liquidity position of the CTB was bad because of a sudden onrush of bills for imported goods. Such difficulties arising from the sudden arrival of indented goods does not place the finances of an organisation like the CTB "in the red". The apology proudly proclaims that "the overall financial position of the Board is not only sound but that it is making a daily profit." This is excellent news. But inquisitive people who keep chasing such matters are curious why the CTB which, it is claimed, was making a daily profit was losing money on an annual basis.

It is known in reliable quarters that in the last Balance Sheet available the net operational loss for the CTB was in the region between Rs. 30 to 37 million for one year (probably for 1973 because it is inconceivable that 1974 Balance Sheet has been finalised). Any correction will be welcome for publication in this column, but it is unlikely that gossip-and-rumour broadcasts on a

person-to-person basis within the close confines of bureaucrats and bankers can be very far from the truth.

CTB IN THE RED is certainly an unfortunate heading for which due apologies have been made. A better and more accurate heading would have been CTB LOSES OVER Rs. 30 MILLION IN ONE YEAR, together with a full report under it setting out some of the salient features of the Balance Sheet, coupled with a comment on the fact that earlier debts and deficits (due no doubt to UNP mismanagement) had been wiped out by the Treasury and that Treasury grants running into millions (is it only Rs. 42 million or does it total up to more?) have been given to the CTB to get its accounts into 'the black'.

Nobody would mind all this if the State spent the money it did and also lost the money it has for the pleasure of running a state-owned road transport service if the service was satisfactory. It would be revelation to many of the top and middle echelons of the CTB who now ride in 5 Sri and 6 Sri cars, and also MPs and highly placed bureaucrats who have long forgotten what the inside of the CTB bus looks like with a complement of passengers, if they chose to use only the CTB for all their transport needs for just one day. If they manage to survive the travails of travelling in the CTB for one week, one must admit that service was more than satisfactory.

Everybody who believes in nationalisation and socialism wants the CTB to do well and show that it is an efficient and profit-making organisation. But this cannot be achieved by keeping the light hidden under the bushel. The CTB, and all other corporations, should place their balance sheet, their profit and loss accounts and other necessary financial papers before the public through the daily press for public scrutiny.

This is done, no doubt, in the Reports tabled in Parliament, but it is not often that these Reports are available within a reasonable time after the year in question. And the report of the Auditor General on such accounts and balance sheets take an even longer time to be completed. Such limitations make it difficult for the public to take an intelligent interest in the affairs of the CTB and they are therefore prone to believe the

worst because their minds are badly prejudiced by the unsatisfactory services provided by the CTB in most areas, especially in the rural outstations.

If the CTB is so proud about the soundness of its overall financial position, why should it not make public the Balance Sheet on which it based its most recent applications for loans to the two state banks. With the Lake House totally inhibited about publishing anything about Corporations which might reveal unpleasant facts and the Times group subject to arms-twisting on the slightest provocation, it is necessary for the Government to place all its cards on the table if it is to eradicate the existing credibility gap which has corroded popular confidence in some of the nationalised undertakings of the Government. The best way for the CTB to establish the reality of its sound financial position in the public mind is to publish for public scrutiny and examination its Balance Sheets and other documents for the last three years on which the financial stability and creditworthiness of the CTB can be tested.

BRIBERY QUERY. The Times of Ceylon on May 30 published a query raised by Mr. Prins Gunasekera, MP for Habaraduwa, which is on the order paper for the meeting of the Assembly on June 19. The Times group from time to time heroically publishes such news which the Lake House avoids the like the plague. The people of Sri Lanka have to be thankful to the Times for such small mercies as these. The Times report read as follows:

When the National State Assembly meets on June 19, Mr. Prins Gunasekera will ask the Minister of Public Administration, Local Government and Home Affairs and Minister of Justice—

“Will he state the number of (i) Private Secretaries of Ministers and

(ii) Private Secretaries of members of Parliament, who have been taken into custody so far on suspicion of bribery or against whom charges of bribery have been made by officials of the Bribery Department under the anti-Bribery activities sponsored by the Ministry of Justice?

There is a great deal of public interest in the matter. If one went by press reports alone it is known that the Private Secretary of one Minister is on bail on an allegation of bribery. But Mr. Prins Gunasekera's questions imply that more than one Private Secretary is involved.

If this is true, then the Bribery Commissioner's Department must be congratulated for moving into action into the outer periphery of the political Establishment. Corruption in Sri Lanka cannot be eliminated unless the Olympian heights of corruption in political circles is brought within the active purview of the Bribery Commissioner's Department.

THE CHANGING WORLD

BY KAUTILIYA

Ford-Sadat Summit

THE FORD-SADAT meeting now taking place (at the time of writing) at Salzburg in Austria is likely to bring the problems of war and peace in West Asia into sharp focus. The USA had always wanted to solve the Israeli-Arab conflict through bi-lateral agreements between the leading protagonists, viz Israel and Egypt on the one hand and Israel and Syria on the other. The Palestinians (with their PLO) straddling over the west bank and Jordan have become a complicating factor inhibiting the options open to Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Israel and the USA. The developments in Lebanon, where fighting has broken out between the Phalangists and the Commandos, has complicated matters even more. Whilst the USA wanted to resolve the West Asia conflict through bi-lateral negotiations (and for this Kissinger has spent unduly long stretches in West Asian capitals to work out his shuttle-diplomacy), the Soviet Union has pinned its faith on a broadbased Geneva Conference. With the failure of Kissinger to bring about an Egyptian-Israeli agreement last December-January, Cairo had formally asked the USSR and the USA to re-convene Geneva Conference. But the USA and Egypt are still keen about a bi-lateral agreement. And Egypt has, in a conciliatory mood, decided

to open the Suez Canal to traffic on June 5 after eight years, with a proviso that Israeli ships should not use the Canal until a peace agreement was signed.

In pursuance of the objective of arranging a bi-lateral agreement, the meeting between President Ford and President Sadat had been arranged. In fact, the Egyptian President, with his many disagreements with Moscow on a wide range of matters had wanted a meeting with the American President in a bid to resolve the conflict with Israel under US auspices. Sadat seems convinced that only the USA could pressurise Israeli into agreeing to a reasonable peace agreement without another war.

WHILE SADAT and his chief Arab supporter, the Saudi King Khalid, have cleared the decks for fruitful negotiations by declaring that they would be prepared to recognise Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state within its 1967 borders, President Ford has had a restraint placed upon him by the very strong support which 76 US Senators had extended to Israel on the eve of Ford's departure from Washington for these talks. This action on the part of the US Senators will tie the US President's hands in regard to the leverage he may try to exert on Israel. Mr. Ford is scheduled to meet Mr. Sadat on June 1 and 2 and the Israeli Premier, Mr. Rabin, on June 11 and 12. "At these talks Mr. Ford was expected to try and bridge the gap between the Egyptian and Israeli positions on an interim Sinai accord—it had been Dr. Kissinger's failure to achieve this which had contributed to the failure of his last round of shuttle diplomacy, and opened up the prospect of the whole West Asian issue being thrown into the lap of the Geneva Conference. The relations between the US and Israel have been cool since then, partly because Dr. Kissinger blamed Israeli inflexibility for his failure, and partly because the US has withheld a decision on further military aid to Israel, pending a "reassessment" of its West Asia policy."

But the prospects of easy negotiations have been dampened by the pre-empting action taken by a large majority of the US Senators. Easwar Sagar writing to the *Hindu* summed up the situation in this way.

He aptly pointed out that the action of the US Senators will strengthen Israel's hands. In the meantime, Israel, realising that there were unsurmountable disagreements between Egypt and the Soviet Union has dropped its rigid attitudes to Moscow and has been having quiet diplomatic exchanges with Moscow. It was also significant that not so very long ago the USSR had re-iterated that she was prepared to guarantee Israel's sovereignty and territorial integrity within her 1967 borders. "But Israel's feeling of isolation from the US was broken last week when an unprecedented majority in the Senate wrote a letter to Mr. Ford virtually demanding that the US Administration provide all the military and economic aid Israel is asking for, estimated at \$ 2.5 billions for this year. The strongly pro-Israeli letter, timed more or less to coincide with the Ford-Sadat meeting, also supported Israel's right to secure and defensible borders a phrase which Israel always uses to denote its intention to hold on to some of the Arab territories seized in the 1967 war.

"What the US Congress in effect has done is to go over the heads of Mr. Ford and Dr. Kissinger and tell Israel that it can stand pat on its negotiating position, and need not yield anything, because it has Congress behind it. Israel apparently has decided to do just that. It has, it appears, decided to ignore Mr. Ford's request to it, in advance of his meeting, with Mr. Sadat, to produce fresh proposals which Mr. Ford could have presented to Mr. Sadat in a bid to find a compromise. Now all that Mr. Ford, his hands weakened by his own Congress, can do is to talk to Mr. Sadat and Mr. Rabin, in a sort of vacuum, hoping that in the process they might throw up some ideas which could get negotiations started again.

"In the period since March last when Dr. Kissinger's effort failed, the Israelis have not been idle on the diplomatic front. Sensing that Mr. Sadat's coolness towards the Soviet Union continues, they have themselves been in touch with the Russians—it has been disclosed that there have recently been several meetings between the Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Dobrynin, and

the Israeli Ambassador, Mr. Simcha Dinitz, in Washington.

"The Israelis also apparently believe that they have less to worry about a new war with the impatient Arabs, now that Syria has agreed to extend the UN mandate on the Golan Heights for another six months. As the US Administration pressure on it has been relieved by Congressional support, all that Israel has to do is to wait and see what the current US re-assessment of policy will produce, and what the Egyptians may have to offer by way of new concessions."

IT IS IN THIS SETTING that the Ford-Sadat meeting will take place in Salzburg. The US has so far not relented in its total support for Israel, and has also not indicated its position on the crucial question about Israel's borders with its neighbours and the establishment of a new Palestinian entity. The Egyptian President and his Foreign Secretary have made it clear that they expect a US declaration which will concede the principle that no country should be allowed to acquire territory through aggression and that the Palestinians have a right to a State of their own. Both President Ford and Secretary Kissinger have avoided any such declarations and their difficulty is understandable. The Congress, as evidenced by the action of the Senators, is opposed to the US making any public appeal calling on Israel to withdraw to its 1967 borders. The US has, so far, also cleverly avoided interpreting the November 1967 UN Resolution to be understood in this way. The US has argued that the Arabs had not unambiguously subscribed to part of the same resolution requiring the Arabs to recognise the right of every State in that area to exist within safe borders.

But today, in spite of objections from other Arab bloc countries, two important Arab countries have publicly stated that they were willing to recognise Israel's right to exist undisturbed within its 1967 borders. Egypt and Saudi Arabia have done this in no uncertain terms during recent weeks. Both countries have also stipulated that a Palestinian State should be established. With these concessions, the burden of making Israel to make matching concessions has fallen on the US. But can either

Ford or Kissinger do this in the face of the strong support in favour of Israel by the US Congress?

It is not clear which way the Ford negotiations will go. Will Israel, in spite of the strong support given to it by the US Congressmen and Senators, decide to adopt realistic policies, dropping the ultra hawkish attitudes which many Israeli leaders have always betrayed. If Israel hopes to achieve peace, there is no doubt that the Rabin government must make concessions in terms of the November

1967 UN resolution and also satisfy the Palestinian demand for a separate existence. Egypt seems anxious to go the furthest it can even in the face of opposition from many Arab governments to come to a separate peace settlement with Israel. Sadat no doubt feels that this would be the only way of ending Egyptian dependence on the USSR for arms and aid. Sadat has made it clear that he would like to lean heavily on the USA and in this resolves he has been fully supported by the Saudi Arabian monarchy. In this intricate

situation, the Israelis have started flirting with the Russians. And, Libya, whose leader is fanatically anti-communist, has now sought to buy arms from the USSR (which the Soviets are willing to sell.) Relations between Libya and Egypt are strained and has reached breaking point on some matters of delicacy.

The world awaits the outcome of President Ford's efforts to resolve the Egyptian-Israeli confrontation through direct personal negotiations.

CHRONICLE

MAY 24—30

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

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

SATURDAY, MAY 24: The Maha Nayake Thera of the Asgiriya Chapter, the Venerable Godamunne Sri Nagasena Dhammananda Maha Nayake Thera, will give public audience from the Octagon of the Kandy Maligawa and deliver a Vesak message to the Buddhists of the world: this is a tradition that existed during the time of the Kandyan kings and from today after a period of nearly one and a half century this is being revived and will be continued every year hereafter—CDN. Thirteen undergraduates including a woman are now warded in the Kandy hospital after severe incidents of ragging of the freshers at the Campus of the University of Sri Lanka in Peradeniya: a large number of students out of the 1200 freshers received outdoor treatment at the University Health Centre and at the Kandy hospital—CDM. At a Moscow meeting held to celebrate the third Republic Day of Sri Lanka, Mr. Andrei Ledovsky, Vice Chairman of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural relations with Foreign Countries, said that Sri Lanka's peace initiatives specially the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal have met with an understanding on the part of the USSR—CDN. At a massive conference of co-operative representatives held at the BMICH yesterday the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, stressed the importance of running the co-operative movement free of corruption and maladministration—CDN. The General Medical Council of Britain yesterday announced strict curbs on doctors who qualify from Indian Medical Colleges and wish to practice in Britain, will be required to pass a linguistic competence test to work in Britain and they will have to pass further tests to get complete registration: reacting to this new curbs a spokesman of the Indian Medical Society asked why India had been singled out and why

the General Medical Council did not mention about the graduates of the white Commonwealth universities. Soviet and US space officials gave the formal go-ahead to link up an American Apollo and a Russian Soyuz spacecraft in orbit on July 17. Libya announced that it would only receive arms from the USSR but no Soviet military bases will be set up in Libya.

SUNDAY, MAY 25: The new Privena Education Bill designed to uplift the religion, culture and language of the country which had declined in the past owing to colonial influence has been drafted and now it is ready to be placed before Parliament—CO. There were more Vesak 'dansalas' this year than decorations—ST. Heavy rains in several parts of the country caused damages and the Police sought the help of Navy to rescue persons who have been marooned by flood waters in the Avissawella and Dehiowita areas: many approach roads to Avissawella and Ratnapura were under water—ST. According to 'The Economic Review' published by the People's Bank Sri Lanka is being denuded of its antiques by tourists and other random buyers—ST. Following the resignation of Dr. M. B. Ariyapala, from the post of President of the Colombo Campus of the University of Sri Lanka Dr. P. P. G. L. Siriwardene has been appointed as Campus President from June 1—ST. A leading Soviet cancer specialist claimed to have isolated a human blood cancer virus that could provide doctors with an anti-leukaemia vaccine within two years. Egypt has prepared well over 100 fortified positions on the east bank of the Suez Canal which could be occupied within hours of a decision to breach the disengagement of forces. Six London High Commissioners of Caribbean countries said that a recent remark by a London judge, who sentenced five West Indian youths, could aggravate racial tension in London: Judge Gwyn Morris while sentencing the youth said that immigrant re-settlement in the past 25 years has transformed peaceful and safe suburbs into high crime areas.

MONDAY, MAY 26: According to the Petroleum Corporation the fuel crisis and the price hike of petroleum products resulted in lesser consumption of petrol by motorists: consumption of ordinary petrol dropped by 31.4 per cent in 1974 compared to 1973 and that of super petrol dropped by 20.9 per cent: consumption of kerosene dropped by 21.1 per cent—CO. A compulsory insurance scheme for paddy crops will come into operation from the Yala season of 1975 and according

to this scheme farmers will receive compensation ranging from Rs. 100 to 500 per acre during any season depending on the productivity of the area—CO. During the last 17 months frauds involving Rs. 130 lakhs had been detected in the private and public sector institutions and in this connection Police had received 1,116 complaints—CO. The United Front Government completes its fifth year of rule today and during this period the Government has passed 224 laws—VK. The proposed Debt Council will function from the middle of next month and the Council will provide loans upto Rs. 25,000 to needy Government servants—VK. The fight between left-wingers and Palestinian commandos in Beirut and Israeli air and ground strikes in the south had placed Lebanon in a grave position. Arab Heads of State meeting in Cairo on June 28 will draw up the new Arab strategy towards the Middle East crisis. Emir of Kuwait and French President Valery Giscard D'Estang will have talks today in Paris on Arms for oil, huge investments and extensive technological corporation including the building of nuclear power plants.

(Except for **Observer and Virakesari**, all the other dailies were not published today owing to Vesak holidays).

TUESDAY, MAY 27: The first meeting of the Iranian trade delegation headed by its Minister of Industries and Mines with the Sri Lanka Joint Committee for Economic Co-operation headed by Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, began today; during the Prime Minister's visit to Iran in October last year, Iran indicated to Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike willingness to assist Sri Lanka in economic development projects and the visit of the trade delegation is a result of this visit—CDN. Heavy rains in Colombo and the suburbs resulted in floods and thousands of families living on the banks of Kelani river were rendered homeless—CDN. Summons has been served on Rev. Brother Lawrence Jayasinghe in Pakistan who is being charged along with one Mr. F. J. Dias before the JJC (Exchange Frauds) with foreign exchange violations involving a sum of 20,500 US dollars—CDM. The UNP is holding an anti-fascist mass rally today at the New Town Hall Colombo and on June 1 it holds a mass rally to felicitate Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the party, on his resignation of his membership from the NSA—CDM. Several trade unions of teachers in the Northern province decided to hold protest rallies following an alleged assault of a teacher by a senior official of the Education Department inside the Jaffna branch office of the Department of Education—VK. Addressing a seminar in the Bank of Ceylon, Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, said that before long he intends to nationalise all banks in the country—DM. The Soviet Union will provide a loan of Rs. 300 million to Sri Lanka to complete the Samanalawewa electrification schemes; this loan is payable within a period of 15 years on very low interest rate—ATH. Lebanon's three-day old military government resigned yesterday in an effort to restore calm after three days of fighting in Beirut. The *New York Times* stated that the US had used submarines to spy on the Soviet Union and other nations: the Defence Department in Washington declined to comment on this. According to a Gallup poll published in Washington Senator Edward Kennedy has been picked as the Democrats top choice for the 1976 Presidential nominations.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28: While away in Paris with official business with the UTA, Mr. Sam Silva, Chairman of the Air Ceylon, has sent in his resignation from the post—CDN. An amendment to the Administration of Justice Law which will be introduced shortly will enable a person to ownership of land if he proves that for a period of ten years he was in possession of the land without interruption and disturbance—CDN. At the opening address to the Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Committee for Economic Co-operation commenced at the Central Bank Auditorium, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, said that the proposal of the Shah of Iran to link values of the primary commodity exports to those of imported and manufactured goods has acted a catalyst in contemporary thinking on the establishment of a new international economic order—CDN. The Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade has instructed the Controller of Exchange that is future dll applications for the import of dyes and chemicals under the Convertible Rupee Account must be referred to the Ministry for approval—CDM. Security guards and Security inspectors will be posted to all the campuses of the University of Sri Lanka to safeguard campus property and for the safety of students: already 60 such guards and inspectors are posted to the Vidyalandara and the Vidyodaya campuses—CO. A poll to elect the first President and Secretary of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka is being held today in all the District Courts of the country—CO. The CTB earned a profit of Rs. 21.2 million during 1974—JD. Speaking at the anti fascist mass rally organised by the UNP, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, MP for Nuwara Eliya said that if the Government fails to hold election in the Colombo South electorate or an amendment is made to the constitution to prevent Mr. J. R. Jayewardene from contesting the seat all MPs of the UNP will resign their seats in the NSA—VK. Australian Deputy Prime Minister, Jim Cairns, said in New Delhi that the US should not move into Indian Ocean following the end of the Indochina wars and create more problems for countries of the region. Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, issued an ultimatum to the country's Nationalist leaders to agree to a constitutional conference on the future of the country or the discussion will be called off.

THURSDAY, MAY 29: Mr. D. B. I. P. S. Siriwardene, Assistant General Manager of Air Ceylon, was yesterday appointed Chairman of Air Ceylon—CDM. The Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Co-operation yesterday keenly discussed economic collaboration in ship building, and the development of Sri Lanka's infant merchant marine. It is very likely that an agreement in these fields between the two countries will be signed shortly—CDN. A three-man committee consisting of the Commissioner of Archaeology, the Director of Museums and the Commissioner of National Archives is now engaged in drafting recommendations for changes in the Antiquities Ordinance for a check on the traffic of antiques following detection that a large number of valuable antiques are removed abroad by tourists—CDN. According to the Ministry of Public Administration lack of funds had been the main handicap in getting through the program of decentralisation of administration which is closely linked with the country's development program—CDN. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, left on Tuesday for Britain, USA, and Japan—CDM. The Iranian trade

delegation left for Trincomalee yesterday to consider an aid from Iran to develop Trincomalee—VK. The Government has decided to compensate all Government servants who were victimised in 1965, during the UNP regime, for trade union activities: nearly Rs.2 lakhs will be paid to these employees as compensation—DM. At a meeting of UNP organisers from all over the island Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the Opposition, said that it would not be a by-election but would be a general election in which he would win the Colombo South seat at the NSA—LD. Nearly Rs. 650,000 worth passion fruit juice kept for export was destroyed by the Marketing Department as it was found spoilt because of bad storage—ATH. Following a series of successes by the team engaged in petroleum exploratory work in Pesalai, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation intends digging another ten wells with Soviet aid—JD. Senator Edward Kennedy warned Iranians that an discriminate flow of arms into the Gulf region went beyond the needs of East-West military balance and could threaten peace in the area.

FRIDAY, MAY 30: At the conclusion of the Iran-Sri Lanka Joint Committee for Economic Co-operation a protocol was signed which act as a guideline for further trade promotion for the two countries: commenting on the agreement and discussions, Mr. Farook Nadjimbadi, Minister of Industries and Mines of Iran, said that steps already taken to improve bilateral trade between the two countries were showing encouraging results—CDN. Addressing a conference summoned by the Minister

of Foreign and Internal Trade for representatives of co-operative societies, Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, said that Co-operatives that did not promptly and regularly repay bank loans could be refused further credit facilities—CDM. The *Daily Mirror* had carried an apology regarding its first page lead story yesterday entitled CTB in the Red. The Government announced that it has decided to effect promotions in the nursing cadre of the Department of Health on seniority and efficiency: this follows trade union action launched by the Nurses' Union two months ago—VK. A Faculty of Worker's Education will be established by the University of Sri Lanka in July this year—ATH. To enable the quick broadcast of the speeches of delegates attending the Non-aligned Summit Meeting in August 1976 a satellite station will be established in Colombo—LD. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, has ordered the heads of Departments and Institutions under his Ministry to implement all proposals submitted by the Workers' Councils at their monthly meeting—JD. US President, Ford, who arrived in Brussels for NATO summit, pledged America's unwavering support for the Atlantic Alliance. Life in Lebanese capital was returning to normal after the appointment of Mr. Rashid Karami as Prime Minister. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, will pay an official visit to Cuba next month. Britain's Home Ministry announced that over 1,500 illegal immigrants from the Commonwealth and Pakistan have given themselves up since an amnesty was declared a year ago.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—35

Housekeeping In The Wannu-1

By Herbert Keuneman

APART FROM THE UNRELIABILITY of our local Co-operative, my biggest housekeeping problem is Dinga (wife of my friend and onetime houseboy Banders) who 'does' for me. She is a dear girl and invaluable and normally absolutely uncomplaining and a pandect of all the village virtues: modest, self-effacing, laboriously hardworking, in every way subservient to *machismo*; but she is so determinedly virtuous that sometimes human nature, of which she has a share, rebels. And then she can get to be a pain in the neck.

The other day, for instance, she had a pain in the neck: since she seemed sure it was a major illness let us give it an impressive name: torticollis, a stiffneck. Would she complain of it? Never! She just went about all her tasks, as conscientiously and meekly as ever, but with her head held at the angle of a tortoise's who is suspicious

of something on one side, and an expression in the eye like that of the same tortoise who has then been unfairly attacked from the other side. Pained, sort of.

And goodness! the tact I must use to keep from wounding her. It is not incidental that a proportion of Sri Lanka murders—and, more significantly, suicides—spring from husbandly criticisms of the seasoning of a dish. I feel I have no right to exercise that particular critical function, and do not exercise it. But it is difficult to run a house without criticism in any department at all and I have not yet become sufficiently adept at it. I have only to suggest that a smaller spoon be used for the mango chutney and Dinga, appropriating to herself not the suggestion but the inferences, is forthwith stricken. When stricken, she tends to sulk: the eyes (which can be very merry) are downcast; the voice (which can be most pleasant) becomes peevish; the actions (which are usually brisk and efficient) grow torpid; the conversation (which can be cheerful and intelligent) ceases.

IT WOULD BE QUITE WRONG to give the impression that such behaviour is peculiar to Dinga. It is

characteristic of Sri Lanka. I was at the IPI Conference of 1957 when a fairly senior Ceylon journalist made an impassioned plea that the mistakes and misjudgements 'underdeveloped countries'—we had had by then passed the stage of acquiescence in the term 'undeveloped' but not yet learnt to insist upon 'developing' in its place—this man asked, seriously, that such *faux pas* be not criticized! He granted, as a concession, that they might be sympathetically pointed out with 'constructive' suggestions (such, doubtless, as foreign aid) but any amusement at Ceylons' expense of a more spontaneous, less consciously benign nature hurt his feelings. And, he implied, not without justification, it hurt the feelings of all of us compatriots.

The first lesson our National Institute of Management needs to teach is this. To manage Ceylonese personnel—or to make and keep friends and influence People—one must be preternaturally sensitive to their preternatural sensitivity. It is quite useless to point out to us that we are doing something wrong: 'wrong', whether morally or technologically used, connotes, blame; and a Ceylonese

Management In a Rural Household

is not interested in whether he is to blame but in whether he is being blamed, and if he is being blamed he sees red. Like some Africans who see all death as witchcraft, most Ceylonese see any ascription personal of blame as determinate insult. That is one indubitable communist achievement: amongst its true devotees, mutual criticism is getting fashionable. (But the fashion has not reached the high-ups yet. Or they have outgrown it in their own estimation. If they cannot force a retraction they start a splinter-group!)

I have wandered far from my subject. My difficulties with Dinga are complicated by the possibility—after years of disappointed hopes, and every variety of frustration caused by the barbarous necessity for Banders to work at a job that lets him see her about two days in the month—that she is going to have a baby. Whatever she is going to have, she has already the conviction that she is ill (my wife and I were amazed, on our arrival in Ehetuwewa, to find that so down-to-earth a community referred to the inmates of the local Maternity Home as *leddu*) although she has been medically examined at Maho Hospital—I wanted the specialist at Kurunegala; but Dinga had an attack of perversity and did not—and has been pronounced healthy. But her temperament has now grown positively hyperaesthetic, and between her determination to be 'village womanly' and her determination to be ill I must tread delicately.

Every domestic relationship I have in the village is thus. In fact, with the boys who in one way or another render me help about the house it can be even more and longer soured, if less quotidian and exasperating. I have had two actually employed boys in succession to Nesan (whose story I have told) and had my problems with the *amour propre* of each; and there has also been P.B., Banders' younger brother—one of them—not formally employed but not unrewarded, who has been perhaps the most difficult to relate with of all.

THE TROUBLE with P.B. ... Sorry, the troubles with P.B. are that: he is phenomenally lazy; he is extraordinarily selfish; he has ambitions, without purpose, and he is convinced that man (and

not woman) is Lord of Creation—I have seen him, and stopped him from, taking a stick of firewood with which to chastize a sister only two or three years younger than himself, while his parents looked on distressed but unprotesting; a hindrance which he did not forgive me for several weeks—if he takes the requisite care not to be usurped! P.B.'s contribution to our domestic economy (but never, I ensured, if making it interfered with any especial interest of his own) was lighting our lamps—three hurricane lanterns and a pressure lamp—doing the marketing at Galgamuwa once a week—something of a picnic; since he often took the opportunity to visit his married sister who lives a little beyond Galgamuwa or to take in a picture show, while the beef went bad—and to run the occasional errand if he happened to be available. Not once has he volunteered anything else (though he has, in fairness, been known to respond to a special request) and certainly, never has he offered to help Dinga in her heaviest task, of fetching water, however tired or poorly she may have seemed to be, nor has he exposed himself to the risk of being asked to do so by being around whenabouts it had to be done!

And yet, he is at the moment in high dudgeon because, in order to ease Dinga's 'labour' pains, I have taken on at a very nominal wage an ex-successor of Nesan, Sitale, to sleep here and each morning fill our water-bins and then go off, if he liked, the rest of the day. I now find Sitale stuck (by P.B.) with the charge of the lamps as well; as though to emphasize some sort of abdication!

Actually, I am very happy to have Sitale back. He was Nesan's immediate successor, and quite as full of personal charm—a quality for which most village males are hardly noteworthy—charm, moreover, of a wholly engaging extrovert and outgoing kind, with none of Nesan's repressions and complexes and banked fires of rebellion, though he too is (by village standards) a disadvantaged member of society—if far less disadvantaged than Nesan—being a Washerman by caste. I was particularly fond of him, and still am, because of all the servants I have ever employed only he would come upstairs at

a leisure time and sit down—quite without forwardness but also without special bidding—and 'have a chat', regaling me with the village's gossip, as though, bless him! he regarded the egitarianism I professed as a fact and not merely a ideological piece of claptrap!

IT WAS A SAD DAY when I had to dismiss Sitale in his turn—but I think we both are the happier now for the restoration of our good relationship—but at the time and in the circumstances there appeared no alternative. There was at this period a group of ex-insurgents, a majority of them from Hiddewa, who ran in Ehetuwewa what they called a *kade*. In so far as it was a *kade* they kept their small stocks renewed largely by shop-lifting and, it was said, even by major thefts; but the place was primarily a gambling den, a *kasipu* shop and a drug 'joint.' It may also have been something more sinister: politically, perhaps. I am not prepared to say. The local police seemed to be aware of the place but not particularly perturbed by it. But, shortly after I had to sack Sitale and thought it wise to communicate to the police that I had done so, and why, they broke it up and some arrests were made. The thing caused not much indignation or excitement anyway, for people are growing used to ignoring what Power and Authority seem content to ignore. Which, I suppose, is about as low as civic responsibility can get.

Sitale became mixed up with this cell of young delinquents, I think, from sheer easy-goingness: through nodding acquaintance to some degree of friendship to an eventual dependence on them for 'kicks' of all the sorts they had to offer. In the end he could not keep away from them or their *kade* and took to absenting himself without leave for unconscionable periods, to 'rolling' money entrusted to him for housekeeping purchases, to being often Under The Influence...and finally—what gave him away—to pinching my Second Sodium as a home substitute for whatever it was the *kade* supplied him with outside home. He had to go.

HOWEVER, it was apparently fated that he had also to come back; and here he is to our mutual pleasure and, I believe, profit.

He came back still under a cloud (although a new cloud) having been arrested for receiving stolen property; indeed, as I write this it is only a few days since his case came up in open court at Galgamuwa and he was fined Rs. 30 to discourage him from bad companions. One applauds the purpose even if one doubts the device! But it is obvious he has changed back to the Sitale I used to know; and I am inclined to accept his excuse that the stuff was hidden in his house without his actual participation, though I have yet to become gullible enough to accept that it was hidden also without his knowledge. At all events, he clearly no longer drinks nor drugs; his behaviour at (my) home is exemplary; and he marks his gratitude by willingly volunteering much more service than contracted for. We are both happy with things so. Above all, all, my conscience is no longer wrung nor my sense of gallantry outraged by the sight of Dinga struggling to fetch water. For her part, despite the social anomaly of the caste difference, she treats him like a younger brother. Alas! it is dictated that she must treat P.B. like a brother-in-law.

Joyful Addendum

I rejoice to report that I have just heard that the peculiar Co-operative employee with indignation against whom I was still smarting even when I began writing this article has been actually sacked. He was back 'in his seat', to everybody's dismay, for several days. But now he is irrevocably (?) gone and a new man has replaced him. Moreover, it was Departmental action that brought this about. So there is balm in Gilead!

PRICES

Can anybody explain why the prices of fish, eggs and vegetables have risen to dizzy heights and seem to stay there? This week, per lb, tomatoes were Rs. 8; carrots Rs. 2.50; beans Rs. 2.00; brinjals Rs. 1.50; pumpkin 0.60 cts; etc. etc. seer Rs. 7.50; paraw Rs. 6.00; balaya Rs. 5.50; the lowly salaya Rs. 2.00; and eggs (hen's) 0.67 cts each. Has the value of the Sri Lanka Rupee taken a further and sudden drop?

K A Z I — 10

Galenbindunawewa — ii

By ANATORY BUKOBA

April 4.

A friend arrived not long before I would have set off from where I write this, and when he left hours later in the evening, I left, too. When I got to Anuradhapura, it was too late to catch the bus to Galenbindunawewa, and so I went to a town where I had been invited, a town with a direct bus service to Galenbindunawewa, where I could go on the next day. The friend in that town was away, and I slept at the *Pansala* after I was assured that there would be no bus or lorry to help me retrace my steps that night.

What happened the next morning is of no real interest, and I shall start at the point where I left off in the first article on this area, when I left the area, that is and retrace my steps to where I began it all; for that is just what I did. I met an artist, who earned his living by his art, and a young man was he. There were paint brushes in his shirt pocket, and paints wrapped up in a bundle. He even had a trade name. He had once shared rooms with a man who plied another trade under another trade name and he was a tailor. The artist told me that the level of the water in the minor tanks was down; it had been used on the paddy fields. Harvesting had just been done, an not all of it threshed yet. Paddy had been sown in one place that I saw. In other places the fields had been fallow awhile. The position as regards the Hurulle tank had not changed; it was right down, too low, I gathered, to provide any water at all. Not all the coupee cultivation had been successful; that around the homesteads had, for it was still agrowing as I saw. People were still going out to work; Government was providing three days of work a week, a half-day's work each day at Rs. 3/- for a man, Rs. 2/25 for a woman, and Rs. 2/10 a child, for each working day or half-day. At one place, the money due for February had not yet been paid, and a woman thought the check-roll had been lost. I saw that what

seemed like large numbers to me, were out at this work. Round these places, chilli and paddy were the only worthwhile cash crops, but tobacco for *beedi* is also grown, and looking very fine it was. Chilli is being harvested now, and much of it has been already done. The *allas* or canals that were full of water when I was there nearly two months ago, were bone dry, and so I did not have to hazard crossing them on the log bridges, narrow and high as they are, without railing.

Nearly rained, it did, on my way back. There were black clouds in sight, but there was no more than a very light drizzle for a short while, and I did not even bother to take shelter. We were in the middle of an irrigation scheme, a colonization area. It reminded me, later, what someone in the Kala Oya area had told me, that the Rajangane area, another big colonization scheme, or irrigation area, had remained bone dry while it had rained everywhere else. His theory was that the excessive felling of trees, leaving large tracts of land almost denuded of them, had caused hot air to rise from the bare earth, hot air which literally flew the moisture-laden clouds away, for the fact is that it did rain everywhere else. It needs a certain amount of cooling of the air to make the rain-clouds condense. This man is a priest, and he, at an earlier time, drew my attention to the fact that the words, like table, paper and hat, which were alike in Swahili and Sinhalese, had a common Portuguese or Latin origin, for neither races, he said, and he was speaking chiefly of the Sinhalese, being Sinhalese himself, used tables or paper, in the ordinary sense of the word, before the advent of the Portuguese.

On my way back I was hailed by a tractor driver, an old friend. He had relations here, but he had brought his tractor from miles away for just a few weeks, about two months, I think he said. He would soon be going back. I must say tractors were not much in evidence. This tractor may have been used for threshing. For this, the tractor is driven backwards, in circles, at speed, and it is done at night, either until all is threshed or dawn breaks.

One homestead, I visited, was well cultivated. New, it had no

trees. The owner was a young man. He also took advantage of the work provided by government, and his wife went too. Then I visited a chena, or rather, a number of chenas together, with a fair sprinkling of pallas or watch-huts. The one I went to, was built on a high earthen platform, as would be a good estate house. The roof was of rice straw, and there were eaves of cadjan. The space under the gables, at each end, also had cadjans. I do not think more than twenty-five cadjans went into the building of this watch-hut or house. It had every convenience, and shelves of all sizes, hanging on ropes of vine, the wild vine that grows in our jungles. Its occupants were a young man of twenty

eight, who looked twenty-two, and a man of eighty, born in 1895, who looked not a year more than sixty. This man told me that he had heard of the days before tea. The Chinese were the first to drink it, he said, and then the Europeans. When the Europeans were seen drinking tea in tumblers, the tradition handed down to him was that the Sinhalese used to say they were drinking blood. Some other time, I may be able to say something more about chenas. The young man agreed with me that it might have served him better if he had cultivated his homestead, some two miles away, instead of the chena, which would be abandoned in another year.

THERE WAS AN INTIMATE LINK between these plantations and other lines as can be seen in a firm like Baur & Co. A Baur & Co., a firm with headquarters in Switzerland, has been operating in the country for nearly 80 years. In 1897 they had the Ceylon Manure Works. They are fertilizer merchants, general merchants, estate owners, shipping and airline and exporters. Palugaswewa Coconut Estate with 1426 acres in Chilaw district, Chelsea Estate 591 acres Tea, Bandarawela Kinellan Estate 388 acres Tea, Ella and other estates were owned and managed by them. They had also a strong position in drugs being sole importers and distributors of Ciba Ltd., J. R. Geigy, Hoffmann-La Roche & Co., Sandoz Ltd., all pharmaceutical firms from Basle, Switzerland. They had also exclusive agencies for drugs from certain American, British and French firms as well as for Ovaltine and Ovaltine products.

BROWN SAHIBS—2

The Liberation Of Tea

—essential for economic emancipation—

TISSA BALASURIYA, O.M.I.

Director, Centre For Society and Religion

Continued from Vol. 20. No. 1.....

The maintenance of this system of exploitation requires the services of many business houses specially in the City of Colombo: viz Agency Houses, Banks, Insurance Companies, Shipping Lines, Accountancy Firms, Lawyers, Fertilizers and Engineering firms, Import-export businesses etc. A consideration of these firms too shows the extent of foreign control and local participation in them.

The city of Colombo too was developed as a port and a place of commerce mainly for the work of the plantations. Even the administrative work of the Government had much to do with the plantation economy; and its income too was derived from tea and rubber. Many of the main economic enterprises in Colombo are connected with the plantations.

THE AGENCY HOUSES such as Carson Cumberbatch and Leechman, George Steuart, Whittalls, Estates and Agencies, James Finlay, Harrison and Crossfield, Gordon Frazer, Consolidated Commercial Agencies, Shaw Wallace and Hedges, Mackwoods handle about 2/3 rds of the management of Tea Estates and sale of their products.

Brokering Firms: Forbes and Walker, John Keeli, Thompson White, Somerville, and Bartleet deal with most of the brokering in Tea. Banks such as National & Grindlays, Mercantile Bank, Chartered Bank, Hongkong & Shanghai Bank..even at present foreign Banks dominate banking in this country in regard to loans and advances given to the sector engaged in the production and export of tea; **Accounting Firms**

like Ford, Rhodes and Thornton, Shippers—P & O. Liners, Mackinnon, Mackenzie, Lloyd Triestino; **Engineering Firms:** Walkers, Harrison Lister, Browns.....

The supply of fertilizers, fungicides and insecticides too was in the hands of foreign companies such as A Baur & Co.; Carson Cumberbatch & Co. Acids, paints, dyes, fertilizers, plastics, pipes etc. were imported by Chemical Industries Ltd. from their parent company the British Imperial Chemical Industries and its many subsidiaries. These were all in the services of the plantations and derived substantial profits from them. They were also related to the big holding companies that controlled the tea industry such as Liptons, and Brooke Bond.

The Colombo Commercial Company had a number of lines such as: paints, pressure tea driers, tea rollers, dessicators, extractors, conveyors, rubber crepeing and sheeting mills, electric motors, boilers, air conditioners, cables, lathes, diesel engines, welding sets, water power units, pumps, forging plant, etc..

Many export import firms are connected with export of plantation products and import of foreign goods: e.g. E. B. Creasy; Delmege Forsyth; Darley Butler; English and Scottish Joint Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd., Ferguson (Ceylon) Ltd., Hayleys, Heath Hunter, A.F. Jones, Lewis Brown, Mackwood, J. L. Morisons.

Even the firms concerned with consumption goods often served the class that drew its income from tea and the professions. The big commercial firms in Colombo such as Cargills, Millers, Apothecaries Whiteaways, served the foreigners and the foreign oriented Ceylonese in the country. These firms were not interested in producing goods with our raw materials but only in finding markets for British goods among the more affluent westernised Ceylonese. They were helpful in destroying the native food habits and tastes in consumer goods substituting them with values in favour of imported goods such as cheese, strawberry jam, Australian apples and grapes. They were pace setters in consumption patterns.

An understanding of the role of the Estates in the overall economy of Sri Lanka is essential for an awareness of the problems connected with the economic liberation of our country. In recent years local enterprise and State ventures such as the State Trading, Fertilizer, Insurance and Shipping Corporation and the take over the British Ceylon Corporation (B.C.C.), have increased the local control over this field which is still largely foreign dominated. The local collaborators of these foreign firms too should understand their role in the exploitation of our country even if for purposes of employment and survival they have to serve them.

THE LOCAL COLLABORATORS of the system of exploitation have undoubtedly many skills of management and scientific techniques. They have also qualities of hard work, tact, resourcefulness, discipline and dedication. Many are also endowed with a sense of kindness and human concern that leads to a paternal interest in the lot of the workers. What they generally lack is an awareness of the operation of the overall system of exploitation, and where they are conscious of it, the courage to contest it. They contribute much to the growth of the national economy, and to efficiency of production in the plantation sector; but they lack action directed towards the ensuring of social justice to both the workers and the country. In fact social justice is hardly a field in which they are trained, except for minimizing labour discontent. Justice must be made a goal of the whole operation, if such wide activity is not to lead to increasing inequalities and injustices.

The *political system* in the country and the politicians, in so far as they safeguard the foreign interests and provide a climate for their continued exploitation, have also a major share in this local collaboration. It is significant that even the most radical land reforms carried out in 1972 did not touch directly the company properties to which category most foreign owned estates belong. But some company estates have been acquired by the state since 1970.

SUCH AN EXPLOITATIVE SYSTEM has a dehumanizing effect on those

who serve and benefit from it. They become immunized to the terrible contrasts between the affluence of the management and the misery of the workers. Thus in housing, the estate spends as much on the homes (Bungalows) of a Superintendent and an Assistant Rs. 300,000 as on housing over 1000 labourers and their dependents in single room "lines".

The higher echelons of management acquire a paternalistically authoritarian attitude towards the workers. They are satisfied with paying the very low minimum wages fixed by the Wages Boards. They satisfy their conscience with the giving of fringe benefits such as running a co-operative for workers or a medical clinic.

They seem to be unaware of the long line of exploitation of which the workers bear the burden. Their relaxation is in rather elitist clubs where they meet only persons of their level. Their children are educated in residential private or public high class schools. Their supplies of food and household requirements are from the main cities and from Colombo. The Churches honour them for their benevolence. Elitist schools look up to them as successful Old Boys who maintain the old school tie.

The sense of social justice is generally limited to paternal kindness, but does not get to an evaluation of the whole system. If it does so the planter finds himself in a difficulty as his employers are not interested in such issues to the detriment of their profits. Thus a whole way of life is evolved among the local collaborators be they on the estate or in the city offices in which the justice of the entire operation is forgotten in the day to day rush of work and the century old tradition of exploitative relationships.

In a certain sense the rest of the population, specially the Low Country Sinhalese, the Jaffna Tamils and the Muslims exploit the labourers of Indian origin. These plantation workers produce much of the foreign exchange with which we can buy our food, raw materials and capital equipment from foreign countries. But they get very little of this. The subsidized social services provi-

ded, specially for the other sections of the population, are obtained largely on the fruits of the labour of the plantations.

THE SINHALA, TAMIL AND MUSLIM LEADERS have been together in disenfranchising them. This was done in 1948 soon after the Independence by the Citizenship Act 18 of 1948 which came into operation on 15-11-1948. In the 1952 elections the number of voters in the Nuwara Eliya, Talawakelle, Nawalapitiya, Maskeliya, Haputale and Bandarawela electorates was drastically reduced by the exclusion of many labourers of Indian origin from the electoral lists at the revision of the voters lists in 1950.

Thus Talawakelle had 19,299 voters at the General Election 1947 and only 2,914 after the revision of voters lists in 1950. Of the latter only 244 were Tamils, Nuwara Eliya had 24,295 in 1947 and 9,279 in 1950 with only 319 Tamils, (cf. page 16 of the Memorandum on Discrimination submitted to the International Commission of Jurists by the Tamil United Front of Ceylon, Colombo 1973).

Therefore the Sinhalese and Tamil people along with Muslims benefit from the present arrangement and the subordinate position of the "Indian" Tamils. They are not averse to keeping them in this semi-slave situation. Hence the general population of Ceylon is also in the position of an exploiter. Within this category the English speaking, westernised middleclass is the worst offender. For, it collaborates more closely and assiduously in the exploitation.

AND THE BRITISH PUBLIC likewise obtains benefits of exploitation because they continue to draw advantages from their colonial policies and the hangover from it. Of course among the British public it is mainly a handful of company shareholders who are the principal beneficiaries of this whole system. The tea industry shows a wide network of exploitation in which it is the labourer who gets the worst deal and the foreign and local capitalist draws the main benefits.

It is indeed a pity that there is so little attention to this problem both abroad and within our country. The Christian Churches, which have tied

Guyana

themselves to the imperial and capitalistic system, have also been conveniently insensitive to this interconnected pattern of long terms exploitation.

The situation has in a sense been further expanded with the growth of industries and tourism. Foreign companies invest in local ventures, in hotels, travel agencies; they give handsome returns to local collaborators and ensure a fair surplus for themselves. This class of alienated Sinhalese and Tamil are among the main agents and collaborators of the continued exploitation of the poor, specially of the plantation labourers.

It is therefore not surprising that even 25 years after independence, the British can well continue to draw large sums from their properties in Ceylon and from the control and the international market in tea. There is a group of rich families within the country that has a vested interest in the maintenance of this system. Hence though political power has passed to the Ceylonese, a transfer of economic power to the people of this country is a much slower process due to the support given by these collaborators, both consciously and unconsciously, to this, exploiting system. JUST AS THE EXPLOITATION OF TEA is dependent on the subservient collaboration of the local elite, the liberation of Tea cannot take place without their co-operation. For the local elite controls political power. They derive benefits from the system. The liberation of Tea from this capitalistic stranglehold is bound to be a bitter and long struggle. In it we have to face the retaliation of the giant multinational companies such as Brooke Bond, Liptons, James Finlays. We may be deprived of the British controlled markets for the sale of our teas. Cuba faced a similar problem when it wanted to get a full control over its U.S. dominated sugar industry. The hardships of a liberation struggle will not be opted for by the elite unless its self interest or its sense of national dedication motivates it to do so. An immense task of consciousness awakening needs to be done among the Sri Lanka elite. They have been brought up for generations in subservience to the values of this exploitative system. Their whole way of life, incomes, status, cultural tastes, education,

religion, have all been attend to the imperatives of this system.

Anyone even suggesting the evil nature of their situation is regarded as a menace if not an eccentric or a Communist! Even the older Marxist leadership is wary of tackling this problem perhaps due to awareness of its gravity, or may be even due to a slight self-interest in the system.

One of the dilemmas of the post colonial Afro-Asian governments and elites is that they cannot work for the liberation of their peoples and countries without at the same time reducing their own economic power. Hence the tendency to compromise with the status quo. The same holds true for the British people of good will—their action for justice necessarily involves a self denial of the fruits of exploitation. Their own humanization, however, depends on their willingness to transcend self-interest for the sake of justice. If they do not transform themselves voluntarily it is likely that the social forces will compulsorily throw them out of these privileged positions.

GUYANA

Land of many waters and races

With acknowledgements to the Hindu we publish an article about Guyana which was one of the countries our Prime Minister visited during her recent foreign tour.

ALTHOUGH a part of distant South America, Guyana, has a majority of people of Indian origin. Guyana literally means the "land of many waters" and covers an area of 83,000 square miles. More than fifty per cent of the 700,000 people in the country are descendants of Indian indentured labourers. These labourers were taken to Guyana mostly from eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar. The Indians and the Negroes fought hand in hand for independence from the British and the Republic of Guyana today has as its President, Mr.

Arthur Chung, a person of Chinese origin.

Guyana became free from two centuries of colonial rule in 1966 and Mr. Forbes Burnham has been its Prime Minister for more than ten years. It declared itself a co-operative republic on February 23, 1970. Guyana is the first republic to be created on the South American mainland in more than 80 years. Guyana neighbours on Brazil.

The second largest group in Guyana, 35 per cent, is that of Negroes, descendants of the African slaves, who lead the present Government under Mr. Burnham. Along with Dr. Cheddie B. Jagan, he had fought for the independence of the country for more than 20 years before they became free in May, 1966.

The Chinese form about one per cent of the population. The Hindus are about 35 per cent of the population the Muslims, 10 per cent and the rest are Christians. The people of Indian origin, by and large, are doing extremely well as businessmen, rice-farmers, doctors, lawyers, engineers and teachers. Many of them work also on the sugar estates. The per-capita income is at least US \$ 200 a year.

But the most striking feature of the social life of the Indo-Guyanese is that the Hindus and Muslims both look upon India (and India alone in spite of partition) as their country of origin. Hindu-Muslim marriages are common. The President of the Hindu Maha Sabha and Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Sase Narain, married a Muslim girl. So also have many other Hindu leaders.

FESTIVALS of every religion are observed in common by all citizens and are State holidays. Holi and Diwali are national festivals in which everyone participates with abandon from the President downwards. Muslims dignitaries canvass for assistance to build Hindu temples. And the Hindus participate in Muslim and Christian festivals.

At every State function, prayers are invariably offered by the priests of all the three major religions. There is a recognised body of the Hindu priests, called the "Guyana Pandits Council", who perform Hindu

marriages and other Hindu rituals, according to Vedic rites, though hardly any of them have been to India, and very few know either Hindi or Sanskrit well. There is 100 per cent literacy in the country, but all religious, educational and State activities are conducted in English, which is the mother tongue of all Guyanese.

Indian films are popular, though they are dubbed in English. The social atmosphere is liberal and free, and the standard of living, even of the poorest, is of the level of the middle class in India. There are a large number of Indians who, rising from very humble beginnings, have educated their children in the West and who now occupy positions of great responsibility like those of the Chief Justice, the Speaker of Parliament, the Attorney General, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces.

India's trade with Guyana is looking up. Where two years ago, people had never seen an Indian machine in this region, India-made buses are replacing British-made buses all along the 200-mile coastal belt. Indian tea which used to be imported through England, is now imported directly from India. Many other consumer items manufactured in India are also finding their market in Guyana.

India is negotiating for the turn-key construction of a textile mill, a cement plant, a mini steel mill, a leather factory and a paper mill. The total cost of these will be about Rs. 50 crores. For the first time, an Indian ship will soon touch Georgetown, sailing directly from Calcutta.

Hindi has now been taught to more than 5,000 people, including teachers and religious leaders by opening special classes and through correspondence courses. The language will find a place in the University of Guyana from September 1975.—By a Special correspondent.

AIR CEYLON

Will Government please publish the number of free air tickets on all airlines used by Mr. Sam Silva, his family and his relations during his five-year tenure as Chairman? Also the number of such free tickets used by the new Chairman Siriwardene when he was a ordinary Director of Air Ceylon sometime ago?

A POINT OF VIEW

PESALAI

— A Warning —

by Pertinax

NEITHER BIG TALK ABOUT SECURITY nor anything else can justify the blanket of secrecy which has been cast upon certain events in the Pesalai area in close proximity to the place where drilling operations for oil are going on. It was common bazaar gossip in the Mannar and other Northern regions from the beginning of May that there had been "explosions and fires" in the Pesalai area. The first is said to have occurred on April 28th or 29th, and the second on May 1st. But not one word about this serious occurrence had appeared in any of the papers. And even now, after the news has "leaked out" into the daily press, the whole affair has been played down to the extent that the news has been virtually blacked out.

The first reference to this explosion and fire was in the *Observer* of May 7 in the form of a guarded news report. The *Aththa* had a distant and oblique reference to it, but the *Janadina* had made it a frontpage splash on May 9 suggesting that it was sabotage by reactionary elements. After that, apart from a reference in Acting Prime Minister Maithripala Senanayake's speech in Jaffna that the propaganda that Pesalai was being made a Sinhala colony was a mischievous lie, the press has been silent about the whole matter. *The ostrich hides its head in the sand and thinks that it is unseen by its enemies, and so also many UF politicians and Corporation chiefs seem to think that they can by-pass the communal problem in Sri Lanka by sticking their heads in a mere bucket of sand in a Colombo office and not even in the sand dunes of the arid Mannar region.*

It will be recalled that Minister Subasinghe and Chairman Coomaraswamy had staged a ceremonial opening on April 27 to initiate work on what they choose to call the first production well. Strirring speeches were made and a great

many things were promised. All this was well and good, but within 24 or 48 hours of this tamasha, the area where the living complex and some of the stores were sited was the scene of a fire, and maybe explosions. Within another 24 or 48 hours there was another fire and explosion. Petroleum Corporation sources, at first, denied that there had been any fire or explosions at all. They said that it was all a canard and that they were fantasies from the imagination of demented anti-government elements. When the story about the arson at Pesalai became universal, Corporation sources grudgingly admitted that there had been two minor fires. Corporation and other official circles seemed to think if they ostrich-like refused to see or admit glaring realities which everybody had heard of (and believed), they could succeed in hushing up the matter. But when the news spread on the gossip and-rumour wavelength and was heard all over Sri Lanka—that something serious had taken place in Pesalai—the *Observer* had a cautious piece in a not-so-prominent place on the front page on May 7. This is how the report read:

Strict security measures have been taken at the Pesalai oil drilling site and the Petroleum Corporation's Base Camp at Mannar, following two fires within two days. Police suspect sabotage in the second fire which occurred at the Pesalai housing complex. However, most of the houses were saved in the nick of time. One house was completely gutted. The damage caused as a result of the fire at the Mannar Base Camp is estimated to be around Rs. 810,000 according to the police. The fire destroyed the houses of employees as well as the corporation's stores. A Heavy guard has been mounted in the area by both the police and the army. Investigations are being carried out by the Mannar Police. The Petroleum Corporation, said today, that all cadjan houses in Pesalai and Mannar would be replaced by tiled ones.

Even this insignificantly displayed paragraph indicated that something very serious had taken place. Eight lakhs damage was not a small matter.

Murder Will Out

On May 9, the LSSP's *Sinha*'s daily *Janadina* in a front page lead had a rousing story about a Dangerous Plan to Damage National Wealth. It also stated that the Government had commenced to investigate the Mannar incidents. This is a rough translation of the *Janadina* story:

Today the *Janadina* is in a position to reveal the actions that are being taken by certain recently started newspapers and a fascist reactionary political party to sabotage the multi-million oil exploration project started by Government to make Sri Lanka prosperous. A recently started newspaper run by a group of ex-Dawasa journalists, who were stranded, has attempted to tell the masses that the Mannar oil project was a complete failure. At the same time a fascist reactionary political group has sent its henchmen to Pesalai and caused extensive damage at the work site. The paper has said that all claims by the Government of having found traces of oil in Pesalai are all false and that neither in the past nor at present were there signs of getting oil in Pesalai. Certain political leaders too had spread this story to the people. This is being done to bring discredit to the Government, but Soviet experts engaged in oil drilling have guaranteed that there was oil in Pesalai. Meanwhile a certain front has created a communal rift in the minds of the Tamils in Mannar and had tried to bring about fights between the villagers and the workers. But because of the vigilance of the workers such a calamity was prevented. Owing to the mischievous acts of the saboteurs the Government has incurred a loss of nearly ten (10) million rupees. The sabotage had been done after it was revealed on the 27th of last month (soon after the inauguration of the first production well) that there (most definitely) was oil in Mannar. After the quarters of the workers were set on fire they tried to live temporarily in a nearby temple. But the saboteurs set fire to a few rooms in this temple too. The employees are now living in temporary huts. The second act of destruction by these saboteurs on May 1st has also resulted in the

loss of a few lakhs of rupees to the Government. Of the things damaged by fire a lathe, explosives and chemicals used for drilling are valuable and difficult to come by otherwise.

The *Janadina* article is a most interesting document. It broke the curtain of secrecy that had been imposed on the whole episode in a big way. The *Observer* was the first daily paper which had briefly referred to this matter. For the rest, all other newspapers had been persuaded to impose a blackout or had been fooled by official denials to think that the whole story was a canard. The *Janadina* refers to the two fires, the first as being after April 27 and the second on May 1. The damage owing to the first fire was placed at Rs. 10 million and the second at a "few lakhs." Or did the Rs. 10 million include the loss caused by both fires. The *Observer* placed the damage at Rs. 810,000. Even if the *Janadina*'s Rs. 10 million was a misprint for Rs. 1 million, it is much higher than the cautious *Observer* report based "police sources". Top Corporation sources still continue to play down the matter and have asserted that the total damage would not amount to more than Rs. 2 lakhs. It is well to remember that the *Observer* is a government paper, and that the *Janadina* is the daily paper of one of the UF's partners.

The *Janadina* referred to a recently started paper by ex-Dawasa journalists. The paper in question was obviously the *Sinha Kodiya* a fortnightly written with punch and vigour. It is critical of the UF and has a pro-UNP tilt. In the *Sinha Kodiya* of May 1, there is an article, a signed article also by an ex-Dawasa journalist, that there was no oil in Pesalai. The writer based this claim on a report alleged to have been made by the French Seismic team which conducted the first survey in the area in the period of the UNP rule from 1965 to 1967—the French report had been submitted in 1968 but it has never been published. It will be recalled that the agreement with the French had been signed the SLFP government in the last phase of its rule in the 1960-65 period, but the actual survey was done during the UNP period. What the French had

said in their report has been kept a closely guarded secret just as the report of the subsequent Soviet survey has been also kept an even more closely guarded secret. This secrecy in regard to these reports is understandable, but unnecessary.

The *Sinha Kodiya* article on the Pesalai oil was a clever journalistic jumble consisting of sensation and agitation mixed with half truths. There is no need to get worked up about it and demand the closure of the *Sinha Kodiya* or insist that the Minister of Industries, whose EPMC doles out newspaper quotas, should deny this paper newsprint. Anyway, the *Sinha Kodiya* article is infused with so much anti-UF spleen and also a touch of anti-Soviet venom that any ordinary person in Sri Lanka would easily be able to evaluate its political and other merits for himself. But to those who make boasts that oil will be flowing overnight, this article will cause embarrassment because when the oil is delayed, for the most natural of reasons beyond the schedules predicted by local politicians, people will be tempted to think that there was something in what the *Sinha Kodiya* said. The fact is that Government propaganda about the oil drilling in Pesalai must be more realistic than it is today. People must be told that it takes time to tap the oil which is there and that it takes even longer to make it marketable. Those who know that the oil will take time coming will not take the *Sinha Kodiya* article seriously, but those who had made a political gimmick of promising oil round the corner will certainly be embarrassed by the journalistic gimmickry of paper like *Sinha Kodiya*.

The UNP still leaning on the West with its legacy of anti-sovietism has been carrying on propaganda to defuse any advantage the Government had sought to derive by promises that oil would be available by the last Sinhalese New Year. The *Janadina* takes the UNP to task for its no-oil propaganda. The *Janadina* was even more sharp when it accused a certain "front" for creating a communal rift in the minds of the Tamils in Mannar trying to bring about fights between villagers and the wor-

kers." According to the *Janadina* the vigilance of the workers had prevented a calamity.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that a ever-widening gulf has been created by the Petroleum Corporation between the local population and the workers recruited by the Corporation. The people of the area had hoped that at least the lower paid manual jobs would be given to the unemployed of the area, but the Corporation has imported the majority of the workers from the other end of the island to fill even the non-technical manual jobs. The local population also nurse grievances that Tamils were generally shut out from most of the higher technical jobs as a matter of definite policy. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake's assurances at a meeting in Jaffna on May 9 that most the jobs were held by the local Tamils and Muslims will not carry any conviction because the facts even, as admitted, by Corporation sources, are different. Reliable Corporation sources told have privately admitted that there were about 80 Tamils and Muslims to 120 odd Sinhalese and that it was the policy of the Corporation to keep the number of Tamils down for political reasons—especially with the Tamils demanding a separate state with the possibility of their wanting to stage a UDI sometime in the future. It was necessary to be "careful", they said. Furthermore it was hard for the Corporation to resist the pressures from MPs who wanted jobs for youths in their electorates.

This consequences of the Corporation's recruiting policy is well-known to all in the Northern region who state that the proportion of Tamils and Muslims to the Sinhalese is much smaller than what had been stated by the Corporation. It is argued that if the Corporation can pretend that there was no fire (until caught out), there was no reason why the Corporation cannot lie about the figures of those employed.

The question which is being asked all over the North is why in the North alone were jobs being given on an electoral quota basis for the whole island—that being the excuse which is trotted out by the Corporation! Are workers from Jaffna or Trincomalee given job opportunities on a

quota basis in factories in Galle, Dompe, Thulhiriya, Uda Walawe? Are the Tamils given a chance of employment in state farms in the South on an electoral quota basis, whereas the State Cadju plantations in the Mannar area have been filled to capacity with workers from a selected area in the South? Are Tamils given opportunities of getting land in the South whereas land, in areas predominantly Tamil for countless centuries, have been alienated to colonists from the South when there were landless Tamils of the area crying aloud for land?

It is the officially proclaimed policy of the Government that its policy is to give priority to local labour in the area where industries were sited. But this rule has certainly not been followed in Pesalai. Under various pretexts, a substantial majority of all labour, including the lowest-paid manual labour, have been imported from distant areas in the South whilst there is severe unemployment in the Pesalai and Mannar, leave alone areas in proximity to Mannar Island.

This policy of the Corporation (and the Government thereby) has laid the foundation for a communal gulf that cannot be bridged by mere speeches. What the UF government must realise, and realise pretty soon, is that action of this kind will impel the Tamils into separatism and a desire to stage a U.D.I. If the Tamils were given a quota in all state factories and state farms the South, there can be a valid excuse for what has been done in Pesalai. In these circumstances, can the TUF or communal organisations be prevented from making capital of the fact that the local Tamil population was deliberately denied job opportunities in Pesalai on the ground rules applicable to the Sinhalese in the South.

In this instance, the communalism has stemmed from the action of the Corporation in importing workers from outside on a communal basis and this has no doubt added fuel to the communal fires started by admittedly communal organisations—communal fires made possible only because of various administrative and legislative acts of communalism by the different governments from 1948. A climate for a

communal rift has, therefore, existed in the area for many years now. And in this situation the unimaginative and stupid policy of the Corporation in recruiting workers from the South has laid the fuse for a major conflagration long before any oil is discovered. An army can keep a population down for a time, but after five hundred years of army rule in northern Ireland (Ireland was England's first overseas colony), there was still an Ulster problem. The UF government is thus only continuing the policies of the earlier UNP governments in making an Ulster inevitable in the North of Ceylon—but in a totally different geopolitical situation from that of Ireland.

The *Janadina* has suggested that the explosions and fires were inspired by reactionary communal elements. Corporation chiefs confide that the TUF had held a series of meetings in the area the same weekend that the Minister and the Corporation's Chairman had gone there for their tamasha. The TUF, as a matter of policy, stages mini-confrontations every time there is a Ministerial visitation to the North. And in the context of current politics, it is only natural that the TUF or any other organisation which seeks to represent the Tamils will seek to capitalise demagogically on a communal situation presented to it on a silver platter by the foolish actions of the Corporation and the Government. Many of the Leftists in the TUF have been led to adopt communal logic under various pressures and excuses, and an objective observer can only conclude that the political adventurism of the TUF was only matched by the political purlindness of the UF.

The *Janadina*, in attributing the damage to "saboteurs" does not identify any specific party or group. It could have had the reactionary fascist UNP in mind. The UNP has been carrying on a senseless campaign that there was no oil in Pesalai in a foolish attempt to denigrate the prestige of the Government. When oil is discovered, as it will be, this propaganda will boomerang on the UNP. That UNP-minded saboteurs could have caused the arson cannot be ruled out, but such UNP supporters could not have got

into the place because of the recruiting policies of the Corporation. The *Janadina* may have also had the supporters of the TUF in mind. The TUF is also believed to have a militant wing which is suspected of being involved in underground work of an insurrectionary nature. There are also UNP-minded Muslims in the area.

BUT THERE IS THIRD POSSIBILITY to which neither the *Janadina* nor anybody else has chosen to make any reference. Could this arson in Pesalai have been caused by April 1971 elements? Among them are the finest local experts in insurrectionary action—and what was done in Pesalai was insurrectionary in concept and implementation. Those who have kept a weather eye open for insurrectionary trends in this country have noted that in recent months there has been a spate of anti-Tamil bus hold-ups and train derailments in the North and East. Unlike in 1971, the minor manifestations of insurgent activity (if they can be called that) in this area today bears the stamp of a definite anti-Tamil character. There is also a backdrop to the Pesalai incidents which many either tend to forget or have not taken the trouble to co-relate. On April 25, a policeman was shot dead in a bus-hold up in the Kebithagollawa area by persons now identified as insurgents. While the depleted Police Force in the area (the bulk of the Force had been withdrawn or were being withdrawn to Colombo for May Day) were busy combing the Kebithagollawa area or were attending the funeral of the dead colleague, the night mail train from Jaffna was derailed near Medawachchiya on the next day, April 26th. Pesalai followed on April 28th(?) and May 1. The incidents at Kebithagollawa and Medawachchiya may well have been diversionary incidents to draw police attention to the Medawachchiya-Kebithagollawa area especially at a time when the attention of the Police and Security forces were focussed on the May Day in Colombo about which certain persons and raised unnecessary fears and apprehensions. Anybody who knows anything about politics in Ceylon would know that the TUF would stage a demonstration whenever a Ministerial visit was made to the North. And on

this occasion too the TUF had announced a series of meetings in the Mannar area. This was a perfect setting for any group of saboteurs whoever they may be.

The *Janadina* said that "a fascist reactionary political group had sent its henchmen to Pesalai and caused extensive damage at the work site." Where do the ultra left-minded insurgent youth come in? Chou En-lai in May 1971 called the JVP insurgents as "reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries". The local Left parties had branded them "fascist" over the SLBC. Some of them had quoted the Lenin aphorism that if one went too far to the Left one would find oneself on the Right. Semantics apart, it is not easy to pin down who the "fascist reactionaries" are in the country. Are they to be found in the UNP and the TUF alone? Or are the romantics in the JVP underground to be classified in the same category?

Whether Police investigators will be able to pin down those responsible for the Pesalai sabotage is hard to say. It is an open question that would grip the interest any lover of detective thrillers. Three groups of persons can be said to have motives for indulging in such sabotage. Firstly, reactionary elements wanting to hinder the progress of the Government could well have thought that it would be a good gambit to blow up some installations at Pesalai so that the Government will not be able to use Pesalai as an election-winning slogan in the General Elections in 1977. Secondly, there are the disgruntled and frustrated Tamil youth and militants, who failed to get jobs in the operational site, and who might have been tempted to blow up some buildings in order to register their protest and focus attention on their plight. And, thirdly, there could well have been some secret JVP insurgent cells among the imported workers from the South inside Pesalai. They can, if they wish to attain the objective of disrupting governmental activities, operate both as agents provocateurs as well as saboteurs or both? Selection on MPs letters and on like political recommendations lends itself to such infiltration. Each of the three groups mentioned above may well have motives for turning saboteurs

and some of them may have an added motive with a touch of anti-Russianism.

If this government wants to make a success of Pesalai or any major undertaking in the North it has to go through a painful re-appraisal of its attitude to the local Tamil labour in the area. A political settlement of the Tamil question, not on a Kumarasuriyer platform, must be achieved for any real progress. The adventurist and communal politics of the TUF cannot be defeated by the present short-sighted policies of the UF government however sugar-coated with leftist idiom or enveloped in a widespread distribution of crumbs to favoured favourites. Anyone getting these crumbs from the UF table stands immediately alienated from the bulk of the population in the North.

Finally, the Government in its anxiety to avoid recruiting TUF-minded Tamil youth should not fall into the greater danger of providing opportunities for secret cells of insurgent saboteurs who operate under different smokescreens to entrench themselves in Pesalai. In the context of the economic conditions of the arid North, Tamil youth will always be anxious to hold the jobs they get, whereas to the daredevil youth from other areas, aiming to be political bosses, a job is only a means to an end.

IN INDIA

Distribution Of Govt. Advertisements

—PAC's Recommendations—

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE has said that there has been no marked increase in the percentage of advertisements given to medium and small newspapers in terms of revenue given to them. "It has stood at about 50 per cent for the last five years" the PAC said, adding that it was indicative of the fact that no serious effort had been made by the Government in this behalf in spite of the Government's avowed policy of entrusting these newspapers with a large share of advertisements.

The PAC's 173rd report presented to the Lok Sabha on Monday, noted that while the bigger newspapers had been permitted to raise their rates many times, the small newspapers were being paid even lower rates than those recommended by the Press Commission as far back as 1954.

The Committee found that more than 44.65 per cent of the total expenditure was incurred on advertisements in 1972-73 on papers brought out in the English medium. While this percentage had gone up for the English medium papers, the percentage for Hindi medium newspapers had come down from 20.8 in 1972-73 to 18.8 in 1973-74.

THE COMMITTEE considered that with the development of newspapers in national and regional languages a greater percentage of advertisements, both in terms of space and value, should be given to national and regional newspapers. It recommended that it should be possible for the Government to give an increased percentage of display advertisements to medium and small newspapers in terms of advertisement charges.

Recommending that the criteria for the distribution of advertisements should be spelt out in detail to provide a real guideline, the PAC stressed that these criteria should be free from any taint of partisanship or favouritism "to inspire confidence in all sections."

It suggested that the Government should have a suitable machinery to "critically and scientifically" conduct a comprehensive survey to apprise the type of readership covered by newspapers so that advertisements could be so placed as to get the best return for the outlay. THE GOVERNMENT should also examine the entire question of fixing the milli-rate keeping in view the size of newspapers or periodicals with reference to their circulation, language, place of publication and the impact they had on public mind. It should lay down uniform rates for newspapers or periodicals published from the same station in the same language and having more or less the same circulation.

The PAC suggested that in determining a rational rate for advertisement, the Government should also take into consideration the news coverage by the newspaper as compared to the space devoted to advertisements. The papers which carried more reading matter as compared to advertisements should receive more consideration while determining the release of and charges for Government advertisements. Such of those papers as did not conform to the expectations of the Government in this regard should not receive the usual quota of advertisements.

The Committee found that 15 per cent commission on classified advertisements was given up by the Government in November, 1966, but the PAC was given to understand that some newspapers continued to give commission to other private agencies. "If this is correct, the committee has de-

sired that the DAVP should pursue this matter earnestly to secure the commission of 15 per cent, if not more, particularly from bigger newspapers, as they provide them with sizable custom."

The Committee stressed that the Government should lay down objective criteria for determining the allocation of newsprint which should be published. In order to ensure that no newspaper was unfairly treated in the allocation of newsprint, it recommended that a standing committee should be appointed which should also review the position about allocation of newsprint from time to time.

IT RECOMMENDED that if a small or medium newspaper desired to have a certain proportion of newsprint of imported variety, it might not be denied to it. It was also necessary that NEPA newsprint was made available imme-

PM's STATEMENT

ON PL 480 FUNDS

IS IT NOT TRUE that the PM's statement on the Finance Minister's charges in regard to PL 480 funds in the National State Assembly on June 3 was not un-expected by those who had access to the files in the Central Bank and the Foreign Office? That all US Embassy withdrawals and transfers to the commercial banks had so far been approved by the Finance Minister? That the total amount asked for on the last occasion could not be released because of the shortage of cash in the Treasury? That it had been pointed out that if the Finance Minister had any doubts about these withdrawals he should have refused permission for the withdrawals and transfers? That it has been stressed that his refusal and his charges had come only when the Treasury cupboard was bare? That in the *Daily Mirror's* (29/5/75) story about CTB's applications for loans from the two State banks it was revealed that the Treasury was not in a position to release the grants voted to the CTB by the Assembly because of "the liquidity position" of the Treasury? That what this means is that the Treasury was broke (from time to time at least)? That the PM has now thrown the PL 480 Funds ball into the Finance Minister's court? That she has asked him to substantiate the charges he made? That whilst no country will attempt to use counterpart funds and funds similar to PL 480 funds for cloak and dagger activities—there are, of course, other well known methods of bringing in funds for such activities—there is no doubt that the Treasury can be subject to embarrassing pressures by the existence of such funds by legitimate requests for withdrawals? That this danger of building up huge rupee funds by foreign countries has been pointed out by the *Tribune* over the years? That *Tribune* has always been opposed to indiscriminate PL 480 purchases because, apart from political considerations, such imports have a depressing impact on agricultural development and production in the country? That the current internal cold war over PL 480 will enter a new phase? That it will be interesting to see what the Finance Minister and his supporters have to say about the PM's statement especially in the context of her forthcoming visit (private) to the USA?

diately for sale at all important towns against permit on "cash and carry basis." There should be no other condition imposed on the supply system especially for medium and small newspapers, whose requirements were smaller.

Expressing "surprise as well as distress" that no list was being maintained of newspapers black-listed, for indulging in malpractices, the Committee recommended that the Government should take steps to ensure that the black-listed newspapers were denied Government advertisement and newsprint quota.

While realising that the difficulties pointed out by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about broadcasting of recruitment advertisements were real, the Committee suggested that one way of overcoming them was to make an announcement on All India Radio giving only essential information about the vacancies and the office from where detailed information could be obtained by the interested candidates.

It further recommended that in the case of display advertisements, particularly those relating to development and social objectives, such as 'grow more food' and family planning, the medium of All India Radio may be more extensively utilised. The Committee also pointed out that the insertion of advertisements on subjects like 'grow more food' in bigger newspapers, primarily read by the urban population, was inappropriate. The Committee stressed that the DAVP should spare no efforts to upgrade its skill, to win the confidence of the public undertakings in the matter of display advertisements.

It recommended that in extending recognition to advertising agencies, the Government should go in detail into the ownership of the agency to see that it was truly Indian and not merely a cover for foreign interests.

The Committee observed that in the matter of recognition of R. K. Swamy Advertising Associates Pvt. Ltd., Advertising Consultants (India) Ltd., and Chitra Advertising Pvt. Ltd., the Government had waived the clear rules without any authority whatsoever and "these are clear cases of giving

patronage and showing favour to individual firms for reasons best known to them." It recommended that an enquiry should be instituted immediately into these cases for the purpose of fixing responsibility.

The Committee stressed that rules for recognition should be made more stringent and no exception should be allowed, except at the highest level for reasons which must be placed on record, so that advertising agencies of proven standing and merit and integrity were only accredited recognition.

In view of the fact that the classified advertisement budget of the DAVP was at present of the order of Rs. two crores and that the Committee recommended that the advertising and publicity work of public undertakings should also be entrusted to the DAVP, the Committee suggested that the Government should examine in detail the feasibility of converting DAVP into a commercial organisation.

Pending the examination suggested, it desired that a committee consisting of representatives of both the Houses should be constituted to give evidence in the matter of advertising and publicity, since a lot of criticism had been voiced in and outside Parliament.

BRITAIN'S NEED

AGRICULTURE MUST EXPAND

by Derk Payton-Smith

London,

Britain's farming industry should aim at a 2½ per cent annual increase in output over the next five years, says a Government White Paper published recently. The emphasis would be on dairy produce and sugar beet. This would maintain the average annual rate of increase which the industry has attained over the past decade. The likely levels of world and European Community prices for major foodstuffs between now and the early 1980s, and the risks of shortages and price fluctuations, make such an expansion economically worthwhile, the British Government believes. Remarking on the industry's excellent productivity record shown by continued ex-

pansion in face of an annual decline in the workforce (of three per cent down to 1970 and two per cent since), it says that despite the declining area of good quality land and increases in energy and fertiliser costs, such an expansion is not only possible but economically desirable.

On dairy farming, the Government says that the favourable climate for grass makes Britain particularly suited to milk production and there is scope for increased output with only a moderate increase in acreage. With an average herd size well above that in other countries in the European Community and a relatively high yield per cow, Britain's dairy farmers could supply more butter, cheese and skimmed milk powder, which, the White Paper points out, can be a valuable protein food for developing countries. UK producers can expect improvement in their returns relative to other Community producers as they move towards the common milk price with a tapering out of transitional arrangements.

On sugar beet the White Paper says that the first task is to raise the acreage under beet sufficiently to produce 1,040,000 tons of sugar a year (equivalent to Britain's 'A' production quota under the Community sugar regime) and then aim for 1,300,000 tons a year, which would make Britain about 50 per cent self-sufficient. An increase above 1,300,000 tons would probably require new beet processing capacity. Weighing the case for emphasising sugar beet rather than cereals production, the White Paper says that beet production gives Britain both a higher margin of output over inputs and a larger net import saving per acre. This would be so even if Britain were outside the European Community.

Since 1969 the proportion of homegrown wheat in all the wheat milled to produce flour had risen from a third to one half, but not much more could be substituted for imports without changes in baking technology and in the kind of bread eaten in Britain. Research, development and other practical measures to raise the proportion of home-grown wheat in the bread grist is to be pressed forward.

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Confidentially

The Private Empire Of The Two Ks?

IS IT NOT A FACT that there is a hue and cry in the Post and Telecommunications complex, known for sometime now as the private Empire of the Two Ks, about the goings-on in the upper echelons of its Establishment? That the *Times of Ceylon* on May 30 had reported that the anti-smuggling Hqs in the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs had demanded a probe into all phone connections given during 1974 in certain areas of the North where smugglers were known to thrive? That *Tribune* had spotlighted the instance of one such phone connection to which a reference had been made in the *Daily Mirror* on May 22? That in this instance the phone connection had been cut on 12.7.72 on the order of the Defence Ministry? That "Ministry" approval (Postal)—not necessarily the Minister's—was obtained on 24.4.74 to fix a new telephone in the same premises (and address) where the disconnected telephone had been sited—but in the name of the son of the old subscriber who was alive and kicking as one of the best known of his tribe? That on 29.8.74 the necessary orders were given to the Section which handles connections and installations to fix the line for an entirely new number? That a little bird whispers that if the orders in file AN/28279 are examined a great many details would come to light? That this was the No. under which the orders were conveyed to the local officers who fixed the installations? That *Tribune* had made a mistake in stating last week that the connection was given without an ITR's report? That the correct term is IPR? That in granting this phone, the usual practice of obtaining a report from the local postmaster and the IPR had been waived by persons in the "Ministry" who made the orders?

IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE that the only matter agitating The Empire of the TWO Ks is not merely the telephone connections given to suspected smugglers? That it is also

not confined to the high flying trapeze act by which a shooting star had hoped to reach the Caribbean without conforming to the elementary procedures laid down for ordinary mortals and public servants in Sri Lanka? That there is another even more serious matter pending under the (postal) counter for a long time? That a long, long, time ago, three officials had been sent on compulsory leave because of some anomalies in the Directory? (That the official telephones of these persons—of those who had them—had been cut the morning after whereas those now on compulsory leave continue to enjoy official telephone facilities uninterrupted?) That of the three sent on compulsory leave for the Directory hullabaloo, one had been re-instated without even an inquiry? That an inquiry was instituted against the other two? That that the inquiry had really been against the one who had the least to do with the Directory? That one of the two put on trial had chosen to retire voluntarily—probably because he had very nearly reached retiring age? That in the inquiry it is known that the Inquiring Officer had completely exonerated the officer concerned? That the Establishment in the Empire of the Two Ks did not accept the exoneration and had ordered some intermediary Board of Discipline to decide that the officer was guilty of some lapses that required him to be retired compulsorily? That this was done? That the matter, however, did not end there? That on appeal to the highest Executive Authority in the country, the whole matter was re-examined? That the proceedings of the inquiry and the findings were re-evaluated together with all the attendant circumstances? That it is known that the Highest Executive Authority had directed that this officer who had been unjustly retired compulsorily should be reinstated? That this order had been issued nearly three months ago? That the Establishment in The Empire of the Two Ks has, up to the time of writing, not done a thing about this order of reinstatement? That some hairsplitting quibbles about some legal procedures about "reinstatement" or "re-employment", have been made the excuse for not complying with the order for reinstatement? That whilst some legal pundits wonder whether the Highest Executive Authority can compel

Ministers to do what they do not want to do or to reverse what they had done, other legal lions think otherwise? That nearly everybody is agreed that it is only just that the officer should be re-instated and not re-employed? That everybody who knows anything about this matter knows that a great injustice had been perpetrated when the official concerned was sent on compulsory leave? That the injustice became more serious when the findings of the Board of Inquiry were superseded by the order of a Board of Discipline which was specially instructed to make a finding against the official? That the injustice became even more abhorrent when the order of reinstatement and not re-employment has been flouted? That one does not know whether the reinstatement has been made between the time of writing and the time this issue of *Tribune* is out? That all knowledgeable circles feel that if The Empire of the Two Ks is not to crack up sooner and more disastrously than the worst critics expect, such injustice, discrimination and victimisation should be remedied without delay? That the evil karma which stems from such inhuman acts of injustice is corrosive and pervasive? That though it is true that power corrupts, it is even truer that power corrodes? That at a time when Empires are crashing all over the world it would be foolish to continue efforts to prop up and maintain little Ministerial Empires in Sri Lanka? That injustice cries aloud to the high heavens for redress and neither shooting stars which disappear in a whiff nor meteors which generally crash land on desolate territory can resist the onslaught of karmic forces generated by the plaintive cries of the victimised? That many temporarily in the seats of power fail to draw the proper lessons from the number of meteors and shooting stars that have suddenly appeared and disappeared overnight in the political firmament of Sri Lanka ever since political independence in 1948?

NEXT WEEK

- THE SRI LANKA RUPEE
 - CAMPUS RAGGING
 - STATE TRADING
-

Handbook
for the
CEYLON
TRAVELLER



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In
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