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Letter From The Editor

THE CENTRAL BANK OF CEYLON in its Annual Report for 1979 has some very interesting and pertinent comments on the state of agriculture in this island. "The Sri Lanka economy recorded a growth rate of 6.2 percent in 1979, a rate unsurpassed during the last decade, except in 1978. This achievement, though lower than the impressive growth of 8.2 per cent in the previous year, was an indication that the growth impulses which were generated by the major economic reforms since 1977 have been sustained.....The relative moderation in the rate of economic expansion in 1979, when compared with the previous year, was largely due to a sluggishness observed in the agricultural sector, which grew by only 2 percent in 1979, as against a growth of 5 percent in the year before.... The agricultural sector which accounted for 18 percent of the economic growth achieved in 1978, contributed only 8 percent of the growth in 1979.....In 1979, agriculture suffered a partial setback on account of unfavourable weather. Nevertheless, the desired higher level of output in agriculture will require a further orientation of policies in favour of this sector.....Last year, the Annual Report spotlighted the long-standing conflict between the need to assure remunerative margins to the producer while ensuring what were deemed to be "reasonable" prices to the consumer, and stressed the urgent need for a trade-off between the conflicting interests of consumers and producers, in favour of the latter, if the country was to achieve the desired rate of economic growth. It is hardly necessary to emphasize that, in a free economy, where the private sector is expected to contribute the major share of economic growth, a positive response in the important areas of agriculture and industry will be difficult to achieve unless the deliberate subsidization of consumers at the expense of producers is eliminated.....the performance of the agriculture sector in 1979 was uneven, as it was in the previous year. Tea and paddy production has been estimated to have increased marginally.....Rubber production declined by 2 percent, despite a remarkable improvement in prices. Coconut production was higher by 8 per cent, compared with a 21 percent growth in the previous year.....Minor food crops continued to fare badly, probably on account of liberal supplies of subsidised wheat flour and other imports for buffer stocks, such as onions and chillies, with a view to keeping domestic prices stable. Cane sugar production dropped sharply, and so did milk production. Fish and egg production has been estimated to have improved. Generally speaking, this uneven performance of the agricultural sector as a whole appeared to be the result of the lack of adequate incentives for production on account of various policies adopted, primarily with a view to containing sharp increases in the cost of living.....". **Comment is unnecessary. The Central Bank report only confirms what TRIBUNE has advocated—that direct or indirect subsidisation of the consumer at the expense of the producer must end; and that producers must be encouraged by attractive prices and measures to regulate imports to increase and accelerate local production.**

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VARADACHARI

WE HAVE A PICTURE of happy smiling faces on our cover this week because we cannot think of a better way of reminding ourselves and our readers of the ever-smiling and the incurably genial PTI man in Colombo, Ramasamy Varadachari, "Chari" to everybody, who will soon be leaving us on promotion to be Regional Manager for South India. Behind the infectious laughter that constantly emanates from Chari is one of the shrewdest judges of men and matters I have known. He is nearly always thinking and talking aloud, speculating, arguing and debating, but when he puts pen to paper or gets on to his typewriter, he is different. All argumentation leaves him and he becomes an unruffled commentator, a journalist *par excellence*. He does not waste his words. He makes his points cautiously with a detachment and objectivity that is truly amazing.

Chari is much more than a spot-news agency man. He has an unparalleled capacity for interpretative analysis—on political, economic and cultural matters. He can also turn out a readable feature on any subject in which he is interested just as easily as he could reduce the outpourings of a cantakerous politician to few lines. Like all good journalists, he does a great deal of home work before he writes a story. Chari is one of the rare breed who combines a capacity for news-reporting with the ability to explain, analyse, interpret and comment. He also possesses that sixth sense to develop hunches to anticipate developments in the political arena.

I have known Chari from the time he came to Colombo way back in September 1969. We have been through two general elections and some of the most momentous events in Sri Lanka in the contemporary era—the exciting upsurge of the 1971 Insurgency, the stirring days of the adoption of the Republican Constitution of 1972, Land Reform, the communal holocaust of 1977, the Jayewardene Constitution of 1978 and the economic and politics of dharmista. We have argued and disagreed as often as we have agreed on many important matters but we have remained friends through all the strains

and stress of such debate. There was, and is an understanding and rapport between us that is hard to define or describe but it is there all the same, all the time.

I will miss Chari. Not many newemen can be depended on to separate the chaff of confused verbiage from the wheat of hard fact, but one can depend on Chari to do this. Moreover when Chari says that an item is "confirmed", it really is.

M. F. L. de Silva, long time Lake House top-notch but more widely known as the local AFP man for years, has paid well deserved and gracious tributes to Chari in a center-page piece in the *Ceylon Daily News* of May 9. I must endorse every word he has written. Rita Sebastian in the *Sunday Times* has drawn attention to his activities as a trade unionist who had fought and won better terms for PTI employees. He served a stint of nearly five years in Belgrade and has created a record with his ten and half years in Sri Lanka.

One thing about Chari is that he has no inhibitions, no prejudices and no bias in his professional work as a reporter or a commentator. But like all human beings, he has strong likes and dislikes, but he never lets them taint either his logic or presentation when he writes his reports or articles. He has deep faith based on a sturdy humanism to further the progress of man and make this world a better place to live in, but he never let his personal political beliefs colour his writings.

Chari also has the distinction of being in the mainstream not only of Sri Lankan journalism but also in the country's intellectual life as few other non-Sri Lankans have ever done. He has truly become part and parcel of this country. He will be missed by many.

To me Chari was more than a mere colleague in the field of journalism. He, his wife, Vijaya and his son Rajesh were—to use a Ceylonism—family friends.

My desire for travel has long disappeared but I will not be able to resist the temptation to renew contact with Chari from time to time. For years now, talking almost daily to Chari about Sri Lankan, Indian and World affairs has become almost a habit. This cannot be anymore. It will be a long time before microwave telecommunication can come to the rescue.

Partings in a life-time are many, but although this is only a separation by 600 miles—one hour by air, one day by train—it will create a void that cannot be replaced.

Chari is young and he has a long way to go—and he will go places. My best wishes for the future go with him.

S.P.A.

O O O

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Anamaduwa

May, 12,

Tribune had anticipated the results of the Anamaduwa by-election in this column three weeks ago. For the record, and for the benefit of our readers abroad, the relevant figures of the voting on May 7 are given below:

Asoka Wadigamangawa (UNP)	18,552
Saddhatissa Wadigamangawa (SLFP)	16,765
Upatissa Gamanayake (Ind-JVP)	857
H. S. Sudath Seneviratne (Ind.)	273
Simon Navagaththegama (Ind.)	81
M. A. L. Ravindra Francis (Ind.)	79
D. M. Karunaratne (Ind.)	40
G. K. Kusum Navaratne (Ind.)	29
H. M. Chandra Dhanasena (Ind.)	25
Votes rejected	81
Total polled	36,782
Majority	1,787

The number of registered voters were 43,416 and the percentage that polled is 80.98%

It will be noted that the only two parties mattered viz., the UNP and SLFP. The other recognized political parties—CPSL, LSSP, MEP etc—did not contest. The JVP candidate contested as an Independent but fared very badly with 857 votes. Other Independent candidates fared worse.

At the 1977 General elections, the voting was as follows:

Saddhatissa Wadigamangawa (SLFP)	16,497
M. M. Chandrasena (UNP)	15,414
H. H. Abhayaratne (LSSP)	513
H. K. Senanayake (Ind.)	181
R. A. H. M. Raja Kirimetiya (Ind.)	175
D. B. E. Ilangakoon (Ind.)	144
Votes rejected	79

Total polled	33,002
Majority	1,083

The number of registered voters then was 39,835 and the total polled was 33,002—and the percentage that voted was 84.93%.

Since 1977, the number of registered voters had increased by 4,581. Whilst the UNP had increased its vote by 3,138, the SLFP had increased it by only 268. Whether the UNP increase came from the new votes or there has been all-round shift is hard to say. It was a hardfought election and it was creditable for the UNP—even as the ruling party—to wrest this seat from the SLFP. Though Anamaduwa was a new electorate created by 1976/77 Delimitation Commission, the area was long regarded as a SLFP stronghold.

THE FACT that the UNP was able to win at all—in the face of high prices, inflation and uncontrollable corruption—is an indication that the Government has not lost ground in electoral popularity. This is partly due to the fact that neither the SLFP nor the Left Parties have put forward a credible, viable or acceptable alternative policy.

The UNP majority of 1787 must be regarded as a “comfortable” one. The percentage that polled in the by-election on May 7 was 80.98 whereas the percentage for the 1977 general election was 84.93. Statistically, the SLFP retained its 1977 vote, but it was not able to increase it except by the very small number of 268. The UNP not only made up the 1977 deficit of 1083, but also increased it with a majority of 1787.

From the point of view of electoral mathematics the swing must be regarded as substantial. Such a swing can cause a landslide in a general election under the old system of elections—but the Anamaduwa by election will be the last held under system. What it will be under the new system of proportional representation is hard to say.

There are several factors which helped the UNP. The defeated SLFP candidate, who had won the seat in 1977, probably pre-occupied with fighting the election petition (as a result of which he lost his seat but was not disqualified) and also because of this parliamentary inexperience did not attend to the needs of the electorate. He did not even spend the money allocated under the decentralised

budget scheme. He had over-simplistically, told his constituents that the UNP was not spending money on the (SLFP) electorate. When the by-election campaign began the UNP publicised the amount of money allotted to Anamaduwa since 1977 and how it was left unused (because of the indifference and inefficiency of the MP). The UNP also published facts and figures of other Opposition-held electorates—TULF and SLFP—and showed how the MPs had spent that money for development. This line of propaganda was effective. The UNP pushed this argument further and stated that if the electorate—poor and backward—wanted much needed amenities and development (roads, schools, post offices, dispensaries, subsidies etc.) they should vote UNP.

DURING THE CAMPAIGN, the UNP stuck to earthly matter-of-fact parochial issues of the Anamaduwa area and stressed that the SLFP candidate did not have the capacity to get things done. Compared to this realistic line of approach, SLFP propaganda was academic and remote. SLFP spokesman talked with emotional fervour about the dangers of the FTZ, IMF, World Bank loans, non-alignment, foreign investors, corruption, high prices, etc. etc.

But all these questions did not concern the voters of Anamaduwa very much. High prices except in the case of a few basics didn't matter—because they never had money to buy anything outside their daily needs.

Last week, *Tribune* had pointed out that the by-election should be called the Cowpea By-election. Early in the campaign, the UNP sensed that Anamaduwa peasants laboured under a major grievance that their agricultural produce did not get a fair price. The major cash crop in the area is cowpea (grown mostly chena style). Owing to government's policy of importing subsidiary foodstuffs, dhals etc., (to help urban consumers) large stocks of cowpea were lying unsold mainly because the price offered was meagre. The government had immediately fixed a floor price of Rs. 3/75 a lb.—almost doubling the market price—and bought up the entire stock and this cost the government over a million rupees.

This is no doubt one of the most important steps taken by Government and it is hoped that government will

in future stop importing food items that can easily be grown here and induce local farmers to grow more through reasonable floor prices and guaranteed purchases by state agencies of a sizeable proportion of the produce to activate the market and the private sector.

IT MUST BE NOTED however that in spite of SLFP's weak, ineffective, amateurish, rhetorical and unrealistic slogans coupled with the cowpea boananza, the UNP was not able to get a bigger landslide majority. *This is because the SLFP still has substantial support in the rural areas and there is an under-current of suspicion that the UNP is still a rich man's party (and current trends also showed that the rich were getting richer).*

A few other trends must be noted. The JVP was cut down to size. Its platform slogans and speeches were full of personal abuse and often vitriolic vulgarity—directed mainly at the SLFP and the Left—and rural voters have rejected them in no uncertain terms. Such abuse and violent language may attract semi-urban and (city) suburban lumpen elements, but certainly not the villagers. Moreover, dissension and splits in the JVP have weakened it.

The LSSP did not participate in the elections—reflecting the deep division in the LSSP in regard to its attitude and collaboration of the SLFP. The CPSL kept out of the by-election.

Anamaduwa has made it clear that the SLFP will find it difficult to fight the UNP unless it formulates practical, realistic and radical policy alternatives and also has allies from the Left even at least on loose electoral no-contest arrangements. The UNP is daily adding to its electoral allies though populist measures whilst the SLFP seems intent to cut itself from all possible allies by wanting to go it alone on every matter. SLFP propaganda is still emotional and rhetoric. The SLFP must do a great deal of homework before the general elections if it is to mobilise and capitalise on not only its basic support in the country but also to exploit the anti-government and anti-UNP sentiments which stem from the corruption, high prices, smuggling, inflation and the dominant power of a small coterie of unscrupulous operators.

In Jaffna

With a ditty oh to be Jaffna now that April is here and a long-felt need to stretch my limbs and get leave of my saturated mind, I took train to the North a few days ago—and the diffused tensions now prevailing there, contributed to a very enjoyable holiday. By sheer force of habit, I could not resist going around the cinemas in the central town, many of which lie cheek by jowl—at least six of them lying within a few yards of each other. The Jaffnese who bus to town and in the process add appreciably to the suffocation in the buses, do not return without seeing any show even if they are crowded out of the film they had come to see. It follows therefore that the overflow of one contributes to the coffers of the other. The biggest draw I noticed in town was for *Niram Maratha Pookal* which is absorbing 5 full houses a day and 75% of those flowing in being females of all age groups according to the management who are having

quite a time coping with the rush.

Kalyana Raman, the new release and the locally filmed *Rathathin Rathame* follow in popularity in that order. There is always a small selective audience that prefers English films, but it is a pity that Sinhalese films there are none. It would be good if someone would break the ice in this direction with appropriate and classy Sinhalese release like, *Sarungale*, stressing communal harmony, *Uthumaneni*, *Handaya*, *Deviyane*. *Obe Kohida* for a start, the results of which might be a surprising reflection of the friendliness that prevails to a large extent in the Peninsula—thanks to the present Police top administrators. So much for the main relaxation and the after dinner conversation “menu” of the Northerner.

To turn to the dim side of the picture however, none of these cinemas are adequately ventilated and hardly any are air-conditioned for that matter. In a leading cinema with a large daily turnover, I observed that even the balcony patrons have to seek their toilet needs on the ground floor. Tickets at black market rates are hawked about freely whenever new

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72, Ward Place,
Colombo 7.

Chairman

releases are on and the management besides being helpless, prefers to turn a blind eye to this inevitable situation. The State Film Corporation should keep a closer check on such matters, as I had an uneasy feeling that corruption is rampant, and these go hand in hand with new releases due to lack of vigilance by those concerned. I may not be too far off the mark if I add that the daily box office returns from the North, should be close on the heels of that registered in Colombo and the patrons therefore deserve a better deal when they risk the shoddy transport services from the outskirts of the town for the only entertainment they have perhaps—with TV being confined to the affluent yet, and out of the common reach.

RATHATHIN RATHAME (Blood of my Blood), Tamil. This film shot in eyecatching colour in Sri Lankan surroundings, packs all the ingredients that the new M.G.R. of the Indian screen Jai Shanker revels in. It is directed by Joe Dev Anand and projects as its story all the wiles of a play boy rapist (Jai Chander) on the rampage with a conquering repertoire consisting of a calculated and engaging smile and a "pill". The manner in which his victims succumb like ninepins—including the Sinhala actress Geetha Kumarasinghe, always ready to bare her charms—reminded me of a D.I.G. Police's observation that it would be normally much easier for a girl to run with her skirts held high than for a rapist with his pants lowered! The photography in the film is rich, the sound synchronisation is not quite there and the dialogue is rather risqué. There are fisticuffs galore, which mixed with the enchanting smile of Rathika and the light wizardry of comedian Nagesh, make it a film well worth a visit—leaving the children behind of course.

DR. SUSANTHA: Sinhala. It is the last 3 reels of the film that it carries the punch points about an amiable doctor who is prepared to forgive the infidelity of his wife while the wrath filled, rural folk are not willing to withhold their "first stones". The story that needles the film takes a long time surfacing, but the Sinhala picturegoer has quite rightly not had the patience to wait for it and a flop is what I witnessed at the box office. The direction leaves much to be desired, the story being excellent.

STARS WARS: English. An all time record breaker, this film is due to break in at the Majestic shortly. Book it in your diary as a must for the family.

James N. Benedict

LETTERS

● On Pollution

Sir,

From time to time articles appear in the Press accusing transnationals of making Third World countries dumping grounds for toxic wastes, exporting pollution and the like. *Tribune* of 3rd May carried such an article: "Transnationals—Export of Pollution."

As warnings to us in Sri Lanka, I consider these articles a little fanciful, far-fetched and unrealistic. When we complacently accept a Kelani Ganga polluted with cholera germs, swarms of disease-bearing mosquitoes and flies, dirty eating houses, unhygienic hospitals and a near omnipresent dirt and squalor which affect the lives of millions, speaking of the future dangers of sulphur and nitrogen oxides fine iron-ore powder from steel mills, organic mercury fungicides of whatever, is just a waste of time.

The Colombo Municipal Council recently noted that of 900 eating houses inspected, only about 50 maintained minimum standards of cleanliness. With the general public indifference there is to such problems, we can expect this state of affairs to continue, the filthiest places continuing to draw their clients. All over the city one can find food for sale, exposed to dirt and flies. Little wonder that we are told that 60% of the patients in our hospitals suffer from diseases that can be prevented by cleaner habits.

Looking at the conditions prevailing in our hospitals, one wonders whether they are places for curing diseases or for transmitting them. A senior surgeon, when he was working in the Kandy Hospital some years ago, told me that when he entered the operating theatre, he was never sure whether or not the instruments and dressings had been properly sterilized. At about the same time I accompanied a patient to the O.P.D. of this

hospital. There was an expanded metal window with a cardboard sign saying, in the three languages, "Spitting is Prohibited." An attendant, in full view of everybody, let, fly a mouthful of betel spit through the window, splattering the notice itself. I wish some enterprising newspaper reporter will visit the new University Hospital at Peradeniya on the opening day and again six months later, and share his observations with us.

It would be indelicate to describe the condition of our public toilets. Suffice it to say that a health-conscious person would hesitate to enter one without a gas mask and Wellington boots. We think it below our dignity to clean toilets so we live with dirty ones.

Beautiful new buildings come up—markets, railway stations, flats, office buildings—but in a few months time, grime and squalor take over. Whoever built the Nugegoda Supermarket hopefully built a cement trough at the entrance, evidently for flower or foliage plants. It has become a receptacle for refuse and a haven for flies. The beautiful grill separating the bar from the dining section of the Katunayake Airport Restaurant, is decorated with cob-webs. The parquet floor is often littered, even with cigarette stumps, though ash-trays as large as life are plentifully supplied.

It is a familiar sight, along our roads in the morning, to see school-children, washed bright and nice, in clean clothes, on their way to school. But more often than not, the school itself will be in a mess with dirty walls, litter all over and insanitary toilets. This illustrates one of our national failings. We are clean in our person but grossly careless about environmental hygiene.

There are however, some bright spots. Many of the larger private sector business establishments have well-maintained, clean buildings with pleasant surroundings. Ironically, the transnationals are the best of the bunch in this respect.

Fr. James Cooke O.M.I.

St. Joseph's o.m.i. Seminary,
26, Green Path,
Kohuwela, Nugegoda.
5th May '80

● Cattle Breeding And Aid

Sir,

It is gratifying to learn that your columns have from time to time, devoted much to the cause of development of various aspects in Sri Lanka. I have followed with interest the efforts of the then Dept. of Agriculture and now the Dept. of Animal Production, regarding the development of the country's animal resources.

It is common knowledge that even with the import of cattle on and off, our cattle population is on the decline. In other words, this unplanned importation has not made much contribution to either the realization of quantity or quality. Failure to achieve either of these two lies partly in the fact that we have had too much "sophisticated foreign aid", perhaps unsuitable to our country which falls into the category of an under-developed Third world country.

To illustrate what I mean by sophisticated aid, I wish to cite an example viz. the aid we received from Sweden several years ago in the form of petrol consuming Toyota cars. Quite understandably, the cost of an Artificial Insemination performed on a cow has increased by over 500%. And now with the energy crisis, this has caused us a set back. I seem to think that we must set out sights on two targets. In the first instance we should try to achieve quantity and alongside on a smaller scale—quality—and gradual expansion of quality over the years. I feel sure, cattle breeders experienced the problem of breeding imported cows in the 1970's due to inadequate maintenance and other connected problems, resulting in the loss of several cows due to death and in many instances—non-productivity.

One of the chief methods in trying to achieve target No 1 is *Artificial Insemination*. The basic facilities we should have in such a venture is semen from selected bulls and means to preserve this for use from time to time. If we can instal a refrigerator in a large village or in a group of small villages under the care of a technician, the problem could be solved to a large extent. What would next be necessary is to implement law under the Animal Act to compel cattle breeders not owning

TRIBUNE, May 17, 1980

stud bulls to avail themselves of the A.I. services. Where a breeder has one or more stud bulls, these animals should compulsorily be inspected by the veterinarian of the area to satisfy the owner that his animals are free from infectious disease.

If an incentive scheme is worked out, it would be an added encouragement to the technician. There may be many ways this can be done. One suggestion is that every cattle breeder is registered as a member of the Livestock Breeders' Association and a part of his monthly contribution could be utilized to setting up a fund for expenses in the field of A.I. A nominal payment for each calving could be paid to the technician—before which an A.I. follow up should be done by the dept.

A survey carried out in the mid-seventies revealed that a large number of cattle breeders preferred the technician to be from Govt. service on the grounds that there is a possibility of obtaining a fair degree of discipline—as an offending technician could be transferred or fined, as against a private technician trained from the village, who could be influenced by traditional village disputes, family feuds and caste distinction, and thus hamper his performance.

Getting back to quantity and quality breeding, it may perhaps be more practical if quality breeding is confined to departmental farms and established private dairies. I am emphasizing on quantity as it is cheaper maintaining cattle at village level on account of the problem of adequate pasture and fodder. Further, the utilization of dung as a substitute for energy would be most valuable in the near future. By-products such as blood meal, hides and skins bio-gas would also help us conserve our foreign exchange apart from sustaining the price of meat. I feel sure that methodical planning could help us avoid unnecessary expense on a venture of this nature—and whatever expense incurred could be considered as an investment.

I trust those interested in animal breeding would offer their opinion on this matter.

T. G. Edirimanna

1, Station Road,
Katugastota.
April 30, 1980

x x x

TRIBUNE, May 17, 1980

POEMS

THEIR DALY BREAD

"Give us this day our daily bread"
Is how the Christian prayer read.
But losing patience with his Maker
The priest importunes Mister Baker
To give him "Vegetarian Bread"
For hungry children must be fed,
Not on weevils, roaches, worms,
But flour free of pests and germs.
He thinks the Minister of Food
Controls the quality of goods.
So I suggest that Father Claude
Trusts not in bakers or in God,
But turn to him who must ensure
That food we get is wholesome, pure.
You ask for bread, you'll get a stone,
Demand your rights and claim your own.

Mervyn Casie Chetty

President, Sri Lanka Rationalist Association
3.5.80

x x x

FISHING

A grassy tank bund, blue skies
and sparkling
waters teeming with life—darting
ripples and
bubbles of air. The nip of a
sharp hook
and a frantic struggle to
be free.

Streaks of silver leaping on
chocolate-brown
mud—an opening of fins and
a rolling
of eyes; a stick thrust through,
oozing streams
of crimson and a last vain attempt
to survive.

Silent forms with glassy eyes
lie still,
strung up in a neat row
on the green
grass, as the sun bids adieu.
Triumph at
the catch diminishes at the sight
of this.

Vinodini Amarasingam

Col. Olcott And The Panadura Controversy

by James T. Rutnam

Today, May 17, is the hundredth anniversary of Colonel Olcott's arrival in Sri Lanka then Ceylon. This article throws light on what made Olcott to come to this Island. It also refers to some notable events and personalities of the final quarter of the last century.

The *Ceylon Standard*, a daily newspaper of the time, had the following in its issue of 20 March 1965: "It was the book published by Mr. Perera that brought to Ceylon Col. H. S. Olcott." The "Mr. Perera" referred to was Edward Francis Perera, father of E. W. Perera, fighter for political reforms, and of Arthur and Howard Perera, both leading members of the legal profession. E. F. Perera was a Proctor of the Supreme Court and a journalist. He reported the Panadura Controversy to the *Ceylon Times*, having been specially commissioned by the Editor, John Capper, for this purpose.

THE DEBATE took place at Panadura in August 1873 between two teams of Buddhists and Christians. The Buddhists were led by the Rev. Mohottiwatte Gunananda and supported by the Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Bulatgama Sri Sumanatissa, Weligama Sri Sumangala, Waskaduwe Sri Subhuti, Potuwila Sri Indajoti and others. The Christians were led by the Rev. David de Silva and Mr. F. S. Siri-mana, a catechist of the Church Missionary Society and supported by the Revs. S. Langdon, R. Tebb, S. Coles, C. Jayasinghe, O. J. Gunasekera, J. H. Abeysekera, Dr. Staples, Proctors Daniel, Alwis, and others.

E. F. Perera was a Sub-Editor of the *Ceylon Times*. Earlier, on leaving the Colombo Academy, he had joined the staff of the *Kandy Herald*, a bi-weekly journal printed in the *Ceylon Times* press at Colombo and published from Kandy. It had a short but tempestuous career during the days of the Ceylon League

when the redoubtable George Wall, Charles Lorenz and others opposed Richard Morgan and the Governor in spirited exchanges.

Although Perera had a successful career as a lawyer, he never forsook journalism, and the articles he wrote under the pseudonym "old Timer" are replete with bits and pieces of interesting historical lore. He was at an advantage in those times in knowing "short-hand." One of the earliest to use it was William Digby who was in Ceylon in 1871 as sub-editor of the *Colombo Observer* and who was responsible for the production of the first six volumes of the present series of *Hansard*.

IN REPORTING the Panadura Controversy Perera was largely assisted by the erudite Weligama Sri Sumangala. It is said Perera "rectified the errors and supplied the omissions" from the transcription of the Sinhalese proceedings by the Weligama Mahanayake. Upon Perera, fell the task of faithfully translating the abstruse discourses into English.

According to an account given in 1913 in the *Mahabodhi* journal by the late Proctor O. A. Jayasekera, Perera's report: "was printed and published in the form of a pamphlet, copies of which are now rare and difficult to obtain. The introduction is worthy of being read and re-read. He gives a graphic description of the gathering, the champions, the scene and the impression made in the mind of the assembly. His account of the controversy itself is faithful. It's a copy of this pamphlet that fell into the hands of Dr. Peebles when he first visited Ceylon..... It was published by Dr. Peebles in America and thousands of copies have gone into the hands of the reading public, and it led to the President Founders of the Theosophical Society, Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky to the study of Buddhism and to visit Ceylon and to be the promoters of Buddhism and Buddhist education in the island."

A manuscript copy of Perera's Report could be seen at the Evelyn Rutnam Library of the University of Jaffna.

IT IS NOT KNOWN whether Perera had any early contact with Olcott and Blavatsky before their arrival in Ceylon. The Rev. Mohottiwatte Gunananda and John Robert de Silva had of course corresponded with Olcott while he was in the States. Silva was the first

May F.T.S. (Fellow of the Theosophical Society) in Ceylon, having "joined by letter" before Olcott left New York for India which he reached in February 1870. Olcott arrived in Ceylon on 17 May 1880. E. F. Perera was made an F. T. S. by Olcott the following month.

Perera was installed as President of the Lanka Theosophical Society (Colombo when) it was established on June 17, 1880. Olcott refers to the event in his *Old Diary Leaves* as follows: "finally at 9 (p.m.), still without dinner, we organised the Lanka TS, a non-Buddhist branch composed of Free-thinkers and amateurs of Occult Research." The Institute was also called the Lanka Lodge for Occult Research.

H. J. C. Pereira, who was 19 years old, was appointed as Secretary. This Society is the spiritual father of the present Theosophical Society of Ceylon. The Colombo Theosophical Society which was inaugurated on 8 June 1880, of which Andrew Perera was the first President later evolved into the Buddhist Theosophical Society. In 1879, E. F. Perera was initiated as a Master Mason of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Ireland. We thus find Perera an earnest seeker after Truth, but his intellectual honesty forbade him from tailoring his faith to suit the current fashions. To the end he remained a Christian, as also did his son E. W. the politician.

THOUGH NOT A BUDDHIST E. F. Perera was a champion of Buddhist causes. He took part in the legal proceedings that immediately followed the riots at Kotahena over a dispute between Buddhists and Catholics on Easter Day 1882. He was the "leading Proctor for the Petitioner" in the Appeal made to the British Government on behalf of S. Aron Silva and the "joint Committee of the most Influential Buddhist priests and laity." This reminds us of the prominent part taken some decades later by his son E. W. on behalf of the Buddhists in a similar dispute between Buddhists and Muslims on Wesak day 1915.

Perera was personally subjected to harassment by his opponents sometime after the Kotahena Riots. His office was searched without a warrant and documents removed by the Superintendent of Police, Captain Hansard. For this intrusion Perera successfully sued Hansard in the District Court for damages. A Riot Commission that was appointed by the

Government published its report as Sessional Paper III of 1883. Dissatisfied with the actions of the Government the Buddhists summoned Olcott from India. He promptly responded and led the agitation for the redress of their grievances. Perera was very closely associated with Olcott in this movement.

The gaining of a holiday for Wesak was a direct result of this agitation. The Tamil member, Ponnambalam Ramanathan, was responsible for urging it successfully in the legislative Council against initial opposition from the Sinhalese Member. Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala was most gratified, as we find it stated in a communication addressed by him to Ramanathan and appearing in Hansard. Olcott wrote to Ramanathan commending his 'chivalrous help in the Legislative Council to the Buddhist community of Ceylon.' A letter to Perera from Olcott dated 10 February 1884 states that Olcott had seen the Governor who he said "had made up his mind to give the National Holiday I asked for. This is strictly confidential at present. He is to send me a copy of the despatch to Lord Derby about our case."

OLCOTT wielded influence over the Governor and the Secretary of State Lord Derby whom he personally approached after forwarding a long memorandum reciting the Buddhist grievances. Olcott had also published a booklet entitled: "The Government and the Buddhists of Ceylon" in which will be found a part of the "appeal" sent by Perera.

Perera was born on 15 July 1847. He died at his residence at Kotte on 4 February 1920. The writer had an opportunity of meeting

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

Official Exchange Rates of Commercial Banks to their customers for Telegraphic Transfers fixed on Tuesday this week were as follows:—

CURRENCY	PER 100 UNITS	
	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1598.50	Rs. 1601.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 3649.00	Rs. 3655.00
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 896.45	Rs. 898.05
French Franc	Rs. 382.55	Rs. 383.35
Japanese Yen	Rs. 7.0190	Rs. 7.0340
Indian Rupees	Rs. 203.45	Rs. 203.85

his last surviving son Arthur Augustus Perera some years back at Kotte. He was the doyen of the Kandy Bar. He showed me the originals of some nine letters of Olcott and one of Madame Blavatsky addressed to his father. I took copies of them. They are all deserving of publication. Here is one:—

E.F.P.

At 7 You'll see
If from home you don't go—
Your friend H.S.O.
I found Campbell all smiles.
Free from humbug and wiles
And tomorrow at 9
We're to meet, I opine
So I bid you good night
and hope you're all right.
Let me fold up this chit
For its bursting with wit.



POINT OF VIEW

Strictly For Cash

by Jayantha Somasundaram

THE HISTORY OF POST-INDEPENDENT SRI LANKA has one distinct thread running through it. This has been the deliberate attempt to tip the scales of economic opportunity in favour of the majority. For the purpose of this article we would identify the Sinhala-Buddhist-Goigama group as the majority.

The need for successive Governments to consciously do this, stems from a curiosity that was evident in our economic life. The curiosity was the poor showing of the majority in most of the crucial areas of economic activity. It is not the purpose of this essay to determine why this was so. All we attempt to do is substantiate the existence of this anomaly and then go on to trace the results on future events.

In the field of commerce, the arena was shared with almost embarrassing exclusiveness by the Moors, the Borahs, the Sindhis, the Chettians and the Nadars. Upto independence, the only Sinhalese families that had made any impact in commerce and industry, were Karawe businessmen.

Political history tells us that it was the ambitions of this limited Karawe group that provided both leadership and the structure for, the incipient nationalist movement. They at least were in competition with British Commerce and began to express their economic interests in nationalist terms. The absence of a movement of the stature of the Indian National Congress on this side of the Palk Strait, was proof of the absence of a confident national trading class which sought political power as a concomitant to their economic interests.

In the academic and professional field the protagonists were different. Here the Burghers and Sri Lanka Tamils tended to dominate the scene. Once again it was the Karawe, and to a lesser extent the Salagama and Durawe Sinhalese, who gave any serious competition to the minorities. Consequently, the prestigious professions like medicine, law, teaching, engineering and accountancy had a disproportionate number of Burghers and Sri Lanka Tamils. This was also the case in the civil service and the armed forces.

The poor competition of the majority in the field of labour has not been so prominent—but was none the less equally acute. The situation in the tea plantations brings this into stark relief. The Indian Tamils whom the British planter believed to be industrious, virtually monopolised the tea lines and in the cities, where in the Port Malyali and Indian Tamil workers were very evident and were to become the initiators of the trade union movement, existed a parallel.

GIVEN THIS OBJECTIVE SITUATION, the ink had barely dried on the Soulbury Constitution than the policy makers began to rig the system to place the economic levers in the hands of the majority.

Plantation labour was the scene of the first reversal. Parliament passed legislation to physically remove the competitor. India has agreed since, to accept six hundred thousand Tamils of recent Indian origin and their "natural increase." Parliament and the Indo-Sri Lanka agreements were supplemented by pogroms. The first was carried in the aftermath of the 1975 land reform when the SLFP activists in the up country terrorised and drove out some plantation Tamils. In 1977, in the aftermath of the UNP's stunning

victory, another round of violence was used to murder and drive out still more of them. This became an international scandal. And public demonstrations in India brought pressure on the New Delhi government to act in defence of the afflicted. Consequently, the Indian High Commissioner was taken around the up-country and reassured by the Government.

Although the Official Language Act is the high water mark in the process, the attempt to weigh academic and professional opportunities in favour of the majority has been a continuous operation. With regard to the Burghers, it was a stupendous success. Within a decade, the mean for which was 1956, a group with very superior skills migrated and thus ceased to be competition.

The Sri Lanka Tamils unable to disappear by migration due to the colour of their skin and their sheer numbers, could not cease to be competition even if they wanted to. The racial riots of 1956 and 1958 and the anti-Tamil pogroms of 1961 and 1977 notwithstanding, they remained in the fray.

When the 1956 Act failed to frighten them and the implementation of the Act after 1961 failed to neutralise them, the insidious gave way to the hilarious. From 1970 onwards the Minister of Education decided how many non majority students should enter the universities, and that was that. They used big phrases like 'standardisation' and 'district quota systems' and used sophisticated gadgets like computers—but the intentions were quite transparent.

The machinations of the governments were circumvented to some extent by moving into non-university courses, like law and accountancy, or by obtaining a university education abroad. But on the whole, this bipartisan campaign in favour of the majority has been a modest success.

The motivation behind all this effort was mercenary. It was an attempt to give jobs and opportunities, rupees and cents, to the majority. Strictly for cash.

In commerce and industry every attempt was made to ease out the non majority entrepreneurs. This was particularly effective in the 'restriction' days of the SLFP when bureaucrats could make a monkey out of

competition. The traditional trading group were soon giving way to Mudalalis who were satellites of important politicians. Consequently elections have become a means of deciding which group of mudalalis should have a field day. The Dasa-McCallum-Dany group or the Aloysius-Wijewardena group.

PAKISTAN—2

Nearing Flash-Point ?

by O. P. Sabherwal

A LOOK AT THE COMMENTS in the Pak press, muted though it may be because of censorship, shows similar trends yearning for taking Pakistan out of the orbit of the United States, and certainly away from the Super Power conflicts and strategic aims. Says an editorial of a reputed weekly *Pakistan Economist*: "The US has thus been told that self-respecting Pakistanis would not tie themselves to its apron strings.....Pakistan will stay non-aligned in letter and spirit and consistent with national honour, will seek good relations with both India and USSR."

All this, of course, does not mean that Zia's military regime has suddenly begun changing its colours. The latest stance *vis-a-vis* American aid is perhaps no more than a stratagem—one that a smart Agha Shahi could produce for the benefit of the military ruler. Thereby, it is hoped to gain a bit of popular applause while at the same time building a barrier of sorts against any medium-paced blow that men like Brzezinski might feel like aiming at Islamabad. The Zia regime is however, quite aware that a single sparrow does not make for spring and that the military junta is too tightly in the iron clasp of Washington to really strike an independent path of development—international or domestic.

Evidence of this comes from the visits of high-ranking American military chiefs to Rawalpindi where meetings with the military junta could be conducted in greater seclusion; one such recent visit has been that of the Chief of the US Seventh Fleet and a delegation of high-ranking US naval officers. Zia disclosed

these high-powered US arrivals himself, apparently to balance off the speech of Agha Shahi and remove any exaggerated conclusion that might be drawn from it.

TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE, the economic crisis to which Pakistan has been driven during the last three years has to be taken note of. Undoubtedly, the economic crisis faced by Pakistan has several points common to all developing countries—just as the rise in oil prices hits India's economy—but it is the magnitude of Pakistan's economic malaise that is important as also the strategy for meeting the economic goals. In this respect, the military junta has undone whatever achievements the Bhutto Government had registered. By the end of 1971, Pakistan's balance of payments position had reached the critical stage described as near-default. Special efforts were made during the Bhutto regime to stave off what threatened to be head-on drive towards bankruptcy. Now, stagnation in production, rising prices of consumer goods have hit the economy badly and its impact on popular sentiment has been inevitably felt. It would not be incorrect to say that the present state of Pakistan's economy provides little direction or prospects of activation and it continues to trudge along entirely through doles provided by the Islamic Fraternity and the West. Partly, this accounts for the recent row with the United States over the dimensions of aid, economic as well as military, which Washington is asked to shell out.

The new feature about the economic crisis is that it forms part of the multi-dimensional cataclysm that Pakistan presently faces. It is in this context that the events in Afghanistan following the American decision to provide high priority backing for the Islamabad military regime, as a counterblast to Moscow's advance was considered by some to be a bonanza for Zia, making him almost "indispensable" for the West as well as in tackling the domestic forces getting out of control of the military junta. But this evaluation has proved to be misplaced, and the shape of things ahead threatens to acquire once again a turbulent character.

IN ITS TOTALITY, the present crisis in Pakistan is acquiring a deeper, fundamental note. Not only is the institutional challenge reaching a dimension never faced before, but it is beset with a collapsing economy. What is

more, the concept of Pakistan—what has been propagated as "Pakistan's ideology"—based on the two-nation theory is in shambles. After Bangladesh, the Baluchi upsurge, reinforced by the Sindhi movement and the linguistic developments in Punjab, have diminished its vitality further. No doubt, among these developments, the upsurge for autonomy and ethnic rights in Baluchistan is the most potent factor which any regime in Islamabad has to reckon with.

The question—whither Pakistan?—that arises amidst these trials and tribulations of a nation and a system can be answered only with trepidation. Just as there are the forces of chaos and dis-integration coming atop, there are also the democratic and patriotic forces at work, strengthened to an extent by the limited attainments of the Bhutto regime, in the political and economic spheres. The new government in exile is symptomatic of these urges and forces. There are undoubtedly many more of these forces at work within Pakistan. Success or failure for them would depend on their capacity not only to get rid of the military junta but also to create a new edifice based on democratic concepts and values. The new order if it is to be a success, has to make a clean sweep with the past—most of it. A new international relationship, in which close Indo-Pakistan relationship has to be the fulcrum, and keeping out the Americans from fishing in the troubled waters of the sub-continent has to be a necessary part of this undertaking.

In this context, two elements which have a specific relevance to the Pakistan situation are the roles of Islamic revivalism and China. While the former has, since Pakistan's inception, been a barrier to modernisation of the country—its socio-political patterns as well as its urge for rapid economic growth—Peking's political overtures and special relationship with successive Islamabad regimes are meant to serve its own strategic interests in South Asia.

In the main, Chinese affinity with Pakistani regimes is aimed at setting Pakistan against India with the twin aim of weakening India, on the one hand, and gaining a foothold in the strategic underbelly of the Soviet Union—on Pakistan's northern and north-eastern areas

close to the Karakoram ranges, the Gilgit area right up to the borders of India in "Azad Kashmir". In these circumstances, the endeavour of the Pak democratic forces to free the country from the grip of the vicious past will remain incomplete unless and until this region is taken out of the range of Peking's machiaevillan moves.

EVEN MORE VITAL, and course problematic and difficult is the striving of Pakistani democratic forces to liberate Pak politics from the Mullah grip and the later-day Islamic revivalists, among whom Zia counts himself. It may however come as a surprise to many in India that the situation is far from gloomy in this respect. Observers have noted the striking awareness that has grown among the people of Pakistan against those who have been assiduously using Religion as a tool of vested interests and Islamic revivalism—an awareness that is bound to act as a lever for socio-political advance and modernistic ideas.

The new surging progressivism that has been developing in the subterranean sea of the people's lives has been particularly in evidence since the advent of the Zia military regime and its attempt to foist upon Pakistan an obscurantism that the Pakistanis, and certainly the Punjabis, Sindhis Baluchis, and Pakhtoons, will no longer accept. The floggings and hand chopping, the reigned talk of abolishing "interest on loans" which never materialised, the simultaneous kow-towing to Western diktats and stipulations—all these have hardened feelings of the people against the "Islam Pasands" as they are called. Bhutto's hanging has provided, in the minds of a large body of the people the link between the struggle for economic advance and socio-political democracy by putting the religious fanatics in their place.

In the backdrop of Pakistan's inheritance, it has also to be realised that these changes in the thinking of the people have gone side by side with a revision of concepts about the "two nation theory" and the attitude towards India. The striking feature of recent months, which displays extraordinary cordiality—bordering on kinship—for India and the Indians among growing segments of the people of Pakistan has to be seen in this light. As for the "two-nation theory", after the blows

it received in 1971 its survival has been made even more difficult as a result of the linguistic ethnic resurgence led by the Baluchi leaders. It is Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, the eminent Baluchi nationalist, who has struck the biggest blow against this theory. He has had the courage to lead a public debate against what he described as the "so-called Pakistani ideology", and has in the face of the regime, upheld the democratic concept of a Pakistan federation based on erratic concept of Pakistan based on linguistic rights of the Pakistani people.

The Pakistani democrats have to carry this struggle for modern, democratic and progressive ideas to their logical conclusion while building a new edifice for Pakistan. That alone can ensure a strong and viable Pakistan—a nation bound by kindred bonds with neighbouring India. —*Mainstream*

Concluded.

FROM THE "TIMES",

Michael Gurdus

by Christopher Walker

Tel Aviv, April 29,

Mr. Michael Gurdus is a shy unassuming Israeli journalist with a flair for electronics who rarely works outside the cramped confines of his flat in Tel Aviv. But at the age of 35, he can already boast of obtaining more world exclusives than most correspondents of twice his age and experience. His latest triumph came early last Friday when he was able reliably to inform listeners to Kol Israel, the country's Hebrew language radio service that the fleet of C130 transport aircraft involved in America's abortive mission to Iran had taken off from a military airfield on the outskirts of Cairo. Although the story was hastily dismissed by Mr. Mustapha Khalil, the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mr. Gurdus stood by his claim and was vindicated. "The denials never worried me", he said today. "In 1976, the Egyptians flatly denied my report that one of their planes had been hijacked but they soon had to admit it was true."

MUCH TO THE DISPLEASURE of the American Government his report on the C130 was just part of the detailed picture about the mission which the enterprising Mr. Gurdus was able to glean with the aid of his formidable array of monitoring equipment and the forest of aeriels on the roof of the apartment block where he lives. He also heard that the aircraft refuelled at Masira, off the coast of Oman, that Bahrain was used as an important communications centre and that the airborne command post (code named "catbird" by the Americans) took off from and landed at Izmir in Turkey.

By somehow managing to intercept the main operational channel, Mr. Gurdus became one of the first people in the world to know of the many disasters overtaking the attempt to rescue the American hostages, including the fact that four of the six original C130s lost contact with the airborne command post and that one was burnt out in an accident. "From all that I could discover, the operation was a tremendous mess", he said.

Mr. Gurdus, is fluent in Arabic, English, French, Polish and Russian. He first acquired the taste for his unusual style of reporting from his father, a crippled journalist who escaped from Warsaw in 1939 and later covered the Second World War by intercepting communications from his home in Tel Aviv. Mr. Gurdus is now employed by the Israel Broadcasting Authority and has tracked by radio most of the main hijacking dramas of recent years. He was first to report the seizure of the French aircraft that led to the raid at Entebbe and the storming of a Lufthansa jet in Somalia by German commandos. He still considers his biggest success to be the interception of please for help, broadcast by Archbishop Makarios from Paphos after he had been overthrown. The interception eventually led to the archbishop's rescue.

American complaint: The United States has complained to Israel about Mr. Gurdus reporting details of the Iran mission.

Times, London, April 30

x x x

FROM THE "BLITZ",

Operation Rescue

by Kunhanandan Nair

Bombay May, 3,

The US hawks were at their old game again. A long-planned triple operation to rescue the American hostages in the US Embassy in Tehran, kidnap Ayatollah Khomeini himself from Qom, and seize the Iranian oil-fields was thwarted by vigilant Iranian militia. About 3,000 US soldiers were under intense training for the blitzkrieg operation from land, air and sea and the plan had the full backing of Brzezinski and Defence Secretary Harold Brown. Among the few dissenters, who held the lives of the hostages more precious to the oil fields, was Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, who resigned when he found the balance was going against him and the green signal was given by President Carter himself.

OPERATIVES were already based in Iran close to Teheran, and refuelling and take-off sites prepared in Tabas and other sites in the desert region. The carrier "NIMITZ" and bases in some Arab States provided the jumping board for the operation which ultimately proved Carter's BAY OF PIGS. "Operation Rescue" was a prelude to the full-scale swoop with the commandos scheduled to attack 14 centres in Teheran, and also the home of Ayatollah Khomeini in Qom backed by 18 planes and 20 helicopters, the leading Iranian judge Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkali reported while displaying maps and machine guns of the US commandos. While one group was to attempt to rescue the hostages, another was poised to swoop down on the headquarters of the Ayatollah at Qom, which is hardly well protected and get away with Khomeini and his aides.

Six C-130 aircraft and eight helicopters were to land at Tabas, from where the commandos were to be transported by trucks to the Embassy. As the commandos were to scale the Embassy walls, helicopters would drop into the Embassy compound, disabling the guards with gas and scooping up the hostages back in the copters to safety. In this operation, the main task force was to be assisted by forces secretly stationed in the

Elburz mountains north of Teheran. They too were to zero in into the compound in helicopters hidden in the mountains.

The mission was scotched when one C-130 and three helicopters were shut down...the Americans claimed they were involved in collisions—forcing the commandoes to flee, leaving their dead behind. While the US reported only eight dead, Ayatollah Khalki said that at least 29 US servicemen died in the aborted attack. Americans and their European allies alike say that the Iran fiasco is the result of a “stupid decision of a weak and nervous President, who has erred all along in foreign policy. The mind of the man is now only set on how to win the renomination to stay on at the White House

THE AMERICANS were stunned. The US allies, including British Premier Margaret Thatcher and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, were shocked to hear the news of the abortive attempt on the electronic media on the morning of April 25. They are angry and irritated they were not consulted on such a fateful operation which could lead to a war. Bonn, Paris and Tokyo used their hotlines and diplomatic levers to prevail upon the US president to halt any further military action in Iran.

Many newspapers which supported the US against Iran and Afghanistan all these months, ridiculed Carter and his options as those of a “weak nervous and unlucky man, desperately trying to show his muscles.” The NATO allies who were slowly rallying to Carter’s economic boycott and diplomatic break with Iran, will now think twice about going along with the Pentagon’s military option. Iran’s Ayatollah has warned that a repetition of the military action will lead to a bloodbath and death of the hostages. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, addressing a press conference in Paris shortly after getting news of the US fiasco, strongly condemned the military action. An official Tass statement from Moscow warned that the US would have to bear “full responsibility” for the consequences of an aggression on Iran.

Protesting strongly against the adventure, INDIA asked the US to desist from taking military action which could have negative implications for peace and stability in the region. While sympathising with the US’s predicament over the continued detention of

the hostages, India’s External Affairs Ministry said it could not condone “military adventurism” of the type attempted by the US. The military action, called “rescue operation” was planned by the CIA last November exactly on the lines of the commando operations staged by the Israeli Secret Service “MOS-SAD”, in Entebbe (Uganda), in 1976 and West Germany in Somali, President Carter himself approved the plan.

A SPECIAL UNIT of about 3,000 men drawn from the three US services and the CIA’s Middle-East department was set up, and training began in the deserts of Egypt and California (USA), which have terrain similar to Iran’s. In the middle of April, President Carter conferred with his National Security Council and gave the green signal, encouraged by the support he received from the EEC Foreign Ministers’ meet on boycotting Iran. *The White House was deeply divided over the military option. Carter, Brzezinski, the hawk in the National Security Council and Defence Secretary Brown were reported to be for, and Secretary of State, Vance, Chief of the White House staff Hamilton Jordan and other White House advisers against a military action. Vance has since resigned. The day before the airborne action in Iran, a deliberate leak came from the White House on the split, giving sufficient indication that the Pentagon was going to strike.*

Carter’s chief speech writer, Hendrick Hertzberg, looking uneasy after a White House conference, said: “We are slipping down a slippery slope towards a military confrontation.” The US Naval Chief had earlier warned Carter that marine morale was poor and he would not be able to undertake a long-drawn out fleet operation in the Indian Ocean. At least, the ugly Americans in Langlee had the last word. The CIA had chosen the vast plain in the Salt Desert near Tabas, South East of Tehran, as the staging area of the “rescue” operation. Tabas is near the Soviet-Afghan border and shortest to reach from Pakistan. US agents had flown helicopters from Pakistan in secret missions to map out the desert and pinpoint a “firm and smooth ground” for landing of giant “Hercules-Transport jets and large-bodied military helicopters”. The date was decided in utmost secrecy.

The aircraft carrier “NIMITZ” (from whose deck the helicopters took off) was positioned

at the mouth of the Gulf, at a point North-West of Karachi. From a secret commando room at the Pentagon in Washington, US Chief of Staff General David Jones took command of the operations. He had direct communications with the chief of the "rescue" commandos, the base in Egypt and the aircraft carrier "NIMITZ" in the Indian Ocean. David Jones was linked with President Carter in the White House by a red telephone. Special codes were created for communication with the commandos and "NIMITZ".

British military experts report that once "rescue operation" got under way, the Russians jammed the communication links between the American high command and the leader of the rescue commandos. They pointed out that the Soviet Union kept Iran under close electronic surveillance because it is a sensitive area for Soviet defence. It was a war operation. At least six Hercules C-130s took off from a military airfield in Egypt, flew over Saudi Arabia, refuelled in Bahrain, crossed the Gulf and landed in the staging area chosen by the CIA. Eight "Chinook" type military helicopters took off from the "NIMITZ" and flew the shortest way over Pakistan to the staging area. THE COMMANDOS were to travel in trucks kept in readiness at the staging area in Tabas to converge on the Embassy in Teheran, where the second group involved in the operation already lay in waiting with helicopters. The commandos were to scale the Embassy's walls, spray a harmless gas to disable the captors and take the hostages in the helicopters already there, which would fly them to either the "NIMITZ" or to the C-130 planes for transportation to a West Asian country or to Germany.

THOUGH PAKISTAN HAS CONDEMNED THE US ACTION, IT IS SILENT ON REPORTS THAT PAK TERRITORY AS USED FOR THE MILITARY ACTION. IN ALL, ABOUT 100 TO 500 COMMANDOS AND 90 TO 100 AIRMEN HAD TAKEN PART IN THE DRAMATIC OPERATION, THE CIA'S PILOT HELICOPTERS LANDED FIRST IN PITCH DARKNESS AND SET UP SIGNALS IN THE SALT FIELD TO AID THE LANDING OF THE GIANT HERCULES.

According to Defence Secretary Brown's Pentagon press conference after the fiasco, two helicopters developed mechanical trouble and another helicopter, as it was dark collided with a Hercules, bursting into flames and killing eight soldiers, thus leaving only five helicopters intact. His version was that since there was a shortage of helicopters to fly the hostages (if freed or alive) quickly from Teheran the mission was abandoned and they quickly pulled out. The Americans, after landing in the Salt Desert, hijacked a busload of 50 Iranians from a nearby road and detained them at gunpoint for taking as hostages and flying to the US. When the mission flopped and as confusion prevailed the Iranians were set free.

THE PANIC of the American commandos was so great—burning jets and helicopters, screaming soldiers in pain and others running for cover—that they failed to retrieve and take home the bodies of the eight dead. The helicopters and the Hercules the fleeing commandos had left behind have been destroyed by the Iranian armymen who reached the scene hours after the pull out of the Americans. The Iranians have taken the eight dead Americans.

The military aggression on Iran, thinly disguised as "rescue", fully exposed the Americans who lamented on Afghanistan. It questioned Carter's morality. American "technical superiority", "the steel nerves" of the CIA thugs and the ability of Iran's Islamic regime to defend itself without a strong ally. It once again exposed the role of President Sadat who provided training facilities and bases to help launch aggression on another Islamic republic.

It shows how the Indian Ocean is being turned into an American lake to stage punitive action against free and sovereign littoral nations. It also reveals the dubious role of Pak Dictator, Zia and how freely and undetected the Americans can use Pak territory for military adventures on a neighbouring state. The role of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain as tools for an aggressor is an eye-opener to Arabs loving their free dom.

The West European allies are mocking at the "mighty USA". American ability to win a war and US credibility as a "strong ally" are in doubt. "The US that put men on the

moon and recovered them safely have failed on earth" to recover hostages in a military operation, thus chided a British Conservative daily. Israelis and West Germans are boasting that "MOSSAD" and "BND" are "far superior" to the CIA on airborne rescue operations and commando raids. The Vietnamese recall how an American military attempt with helicopters to take away US war prisoners from North Vietnam was foiled by the ever vigilant Communists during the height of the Indo-China war. And strategic study experts are now more convinced that US imperialism is like a "PAPER TIGER" after its defeat in the Vietnam war. Bay of Pigs and Iran, Afghanistan and Cambodia, Angola and Ethiopia.

In the US itself, Capitol Hill is also not going to pardon Carter who failed to consult Congress before action on a military option abroad. The 1973 "War Powers Act", which was enacted after learning the bitter lessons from the Vietnam war, specifically required the President to seek Congress's permission before sending US soldiers to attack another country. It was precisely this Act that prevented President Ford from sending US troops to Angola in 1975.

"CARTER SHOULD WITHDRAW HIS RENOMINATION"—this was the immediate reaction of a Senator when news of the Iran fiasco reached Capitol Hill. "Britain is in danger of being sucked into a world war over the Iran crisis", former Labour Cabinet Minister Anthony Wedgwood warned the British trade unions. From Tokyo to Paris, non-aligned as well as pro-West governments have condemned the American military option in Iran.

Ignoring the worldwide horror and condemnation, US Defence Secretary Brown is still for a military action, saying "we are not going to rule out any option" in Iran. The Military Chief said this after many sober men on the White House staff had alerted US allies that "President Carter is leading the United States on a course of military confrontation." This mad course of a nervous Carter carries enormous risks, including the wholesale murder of Americans in Iran, blocking of oil flow via the Gulf and Indian Ocean, bringing a threat to the security of nations like India and the Soviet Union and the danger of a Third World War.

FROM THE "PRAWDA",

Operation Blue Light.

by Yuri Zukov
Moscow, May 5,

All the US newspapers, radio broadcasts and TV programmes are these days full of sensational reports on the way the notorious Blue Light commando raid on Iran, undertaken by the Delta group of the US Task Force on orders coming directly from President Carter, was planned, launched and ended in a fiasco. As though from a boon of plenty, dates, figures and other details keep tumbling out about what happened on April 24. Even the cost of the abortive mission for the Pentagon has been counted up to a round sum of 150,000,000 dollars. The only unanswered question buried under this avalanche of sensations is; *why was all this done, for what sake did the Delta force invade Iran?* In his explanation to the Senate on April 28, President Carter cited Article 51 of the UN charter on the right of states to individual and collective self-defence. He claimed that this article justifies such incursions. Trying somehow to cover up the military nature of this action, the President unsubstantiatedly claimed that the "rescue(?) force" of about 90 men, armed for "combat (sic)," plus support personnel of various kinds, undertook their mission "for humanitarian reasons". Moreover, he claimed that the mission "had not been directed at Iran."

You don't say so! Against whom, then, were the commandos supposed to use their weapons, including poison gas? Even the very last simpleton in Texas or Oklahoma will not believe the cock-and-bull story, spread by the US propaganda agencies that these "humane" commandos who conducted 20 rehearsals of an assault on a Replica, specially built in the United States, of the US embassy building in Teheran, intended, as though fairies of fables, with a wave of a wand, to put practically the whole of the Iranian capital asleep and then carryaway, like sleeping beauties, the US embassy staff members held hostage. According to information leaked from Washington, the schemers of this operation believed that "acceptable casualties of the Iranians," guarding the US embassy seized by them in Teheran, would run into hundreds killed. So

it would have been better to keep quiet about the "humanitarian reasons" for the invasion.

BUT LET US GO BACK to the question: why, for what sake did Delta break inside Iran? Was it really to rescue the hostages? In this case, it is clear to every sober-minded person that these hostages—their seizure is regarded by many countries of the world including the Soviet Union, as an unlawful action—can and should be released only through peaceful negotiations, with all the well-known legitimate demands of the Iranian people being satisfied. *I believe that everyone remembers that the Iranians' seizure of the US embassy was provoked, by none other than Carter, when he not only harboured the criminal Shah, but also "froze" 8000 million dollars of Iranian money invested in US banks.*

It is perfectly clear to everyone that the armed attempt by the "human" stayers to attack the US embassy in Teheran would have inevitably meant death for the hostages. Why, then, after all, was this mission undertaken? The answer to this question is provided by the scanty information which is being leaked, drop by drop, from Washington these days. This information has given every ground for Ayatollah Khalkhali, investigating, on instructions by Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Revolution, the true aims of the US incursion, to declare on April 28 that the purpose of the large-scale plot which the United States planned to effect in Iran was not to rescue the hostages, but to destroy the Islamic Republic.

Indeed, irrefutable facts give full grounds to claim that the widely-publicised "rescue mission" was simply a cover for the true essence of operation *Blue Light*, namely, it was supposed to signal the start of a *coup d'etat*, with the involvement, of course, of not only the killers—either 90 of them or 180 or make your own guess—of the Delta group, incidentally, dressed up as "guards of the Iranian revolution", but also, as Khalkhali said, of several thousand agents, smuggled into Iran in advance, including the Shah's men, who fled abroad during the revolution, and were re-assembled there, trained, armed and sent back with orders to wait for the signal.

It has been learned that all this dirty work was done under the patronage of the Shah's notorious sister, Ashraf Pahlavi, who had settled

down in Israel for this purpose and generously provided money, from the fabulous wealth stolen by the Shah, for the training of strike forces of the counter-revolution, not trusting the Shah's servants fully, the architects of blue light, in addition to these men' also smuggled a large number of Persian-speaking US agents inside Iran. This was how a "fifth column" was formed, which was supposed to go into action immediately upon the Delta groups' arrival in Iran.

ALL THIS IS NOW BEGINNING to be hinted at, but rather hazily, in the US press. Here are a number of gleanings from the latest admissions (here and elsewhere in this article, quotations are retranslated from the Russian—Ed). (1) Senator John Glenn assumed that the 180 man rescue (?) force, possibly, expected help from the US-paid "fifth column" (New York Daily News, April 26); (2) specially trained commandos began to be transferred to Iran last November, speaking in Persian, they passed for Iranians and collected intelligence information (New York Daily News, April 27); (3) during the schemed raid on the US embassy, the commandos were supposed to cause "unrest or a rebellion" in Teheran that would divert attention from the main operation. But this raises the question: weren't more extensive tasks set before the "rebels" (New York Post, April 27).

One will come across many such half-admissions in the American press, but the most detailed account of what was schemed, probably, comes from Wilson of the *Washington Post*. Referring to information obtained by him from "official spokesmen of the administration", he frankly states in his article, published on April 28: "Secret collaboration with like-minded people inside Iran was the main (sic) reason, why, as the US military strategists believed, they would be able to take the hostages away from the embassy grounds in Teheran with little bloodshed or none at all.....friendly Iranians worked in two areas of the country with the object of helping the American rescue team consisting of men of the crack blue light force, the first place where it was planned to hide the commandos and helicopters was a mountain shelter about 100 miles away from Teheran. The second small group worked inside Teheran itself. Apparently, there were several people in the group, possibly Americans, who knew

how to use radio equipment for maintaining contact with the helicopters."

IT WAS ESTABLISHED by Ayatollah Khomeini, who studied the secret documents, discarded by the panic-stricken Delta assassins as they fled from the desert, that this force intended not only to seize the Amdjadia district of Tehoran, situated next to the US embassy, and the Kehrizek airfield, but also knock the capital's Mehrabad airport out of commission, and to crown the raid by taking Imam Khomeini hostage (sic). Evidently, there is also a reason why these last few days, the leaders in Washington claim that Iran is "disintegrating", that chaos and anarchy reign there, and that, as Brzezinski put it, the country is threatened with "disaster". All this is obvious propaganda preparations for another round of violence.

If anyone still has doubts on this score, they are dispelled by the President of the United States himself. At this White House press conference on April 30, he threatened Iran and its people with more punishment, and did not rule out a second armed attempt against Iran, he claimed that he was asked to do this by the members of the blue light raid whom he had met the day before, in all appearances, despite the first failure, a repeat operation is being mounted like the one carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1953, when its agents overthrew the lawful government of Mussadegh and put the fugitive Shah back on the throne.

Here is a characteristic detail: immediately after the operation *Blue Light* flop, those US agents, who up till then had been inactive in their underground, broke into frenzied action, as though appealing to their overseas masters: look here, we're waiting, come back quick, and we'll do our business in the course of a single day, there were several explosions in Teheran, killing two people and injuring 28.

Almost simultaneously two US F-14 fighters attacked an Iranian air force patrol plane, but were driven off by Iranian fighters, which hurried to the assistance of their aircraft. There is every reason to believe that the fiasco suffered by the men behind the reckless *Blue Light* mission has taught them nothing. According to the newspaper, *Newsday*, Brzezinski declared: "I'm proud (sic) of having

been involved in this matter. I'm proud of what we tried to do."

That is why the warning issued by the Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini that the people of his country should increase their vigilance and mobilize every effort in rebuffing the enemies, is so timely in these troubled days. He has instructed the army, police and the "corps of guards of the Islamic revolution" to be in combat readiness, and urged the entire population of the country to be prepared for defence. —APN

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BOOK REVIEW

Indispensable

ANCIENT LAND TENURE TO MODERN LAND REFORM IN SRI LANKA: Vol. 1—*Ancient Lanka to British Period*. Vol. 2—*Since Independence*. By Ariya Abeyesinghe. (Published by The Centre For Society and Religion; Quest Series 51, December 1978 and 56, August 1979).

THESE TWO VOLUMES have been a sequel to a study begun by Mr. Ariya Abeyesinghe in 1972 at the request of Father Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I. of the Centre for Society and Religion on a hurriedly prepared pamphlet on "Land Reform in Sri Lanka: 1505-1975—from oppression to liberation", published in January 1976, as No. 46 of the Quest Series of this Centre. It is stated that these volumes "trace the changes tenurial relationship between man and land from ancient times down to the present." Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, the then Director of the Plantation Industries paying a tribute to the author states: "Abeyesinghe conceives the traditional land tenurial system as being essentially democratic and just. He sees the superimposition on these systems of the commercially oriented plantation economy with its stress on individuals as a disruptive force resulting in great changes in the life-styles of the people, particularly the peasantry."

It may be mentioned that since the publication, forty years ago, of H. W. Codrington's

monograph on ANCIENT LAND TENURE AND REVENUE IN CEYLON (down to the year 1833) there appeared no publication on the subject now produced, in a most comprehensive manner, by Ariya Abeyasinghe. These two volumes cover a wide field of research not collected by any writer in the English language, so far. They throw light on many abstruse points relating to the ancient and modern land tenures and reforms, rights and customs and also analyses the growth of land ownership. If there had been any systematic attempt made since the appearance of Codrington's contribution on land tenure, I have no hesitation to state that Ariya Abeyasinghe's two volumes, the subject of this review, have filled the need. The author draws most extensively from all conceivable literature available on this subject and it is a matter for congratulation that this has been possible when a Public Officer's leisure time is so limited for this type of research.

The *First Volume* has been divided into three parts with nine chapters classified as follows: Chapters I-III—Land In the Economy of Sri Lanka; IV-VI—Land Tenure in Ancient & Medieval Sri Lanka; VII-IX—Land Tenure Under Colonial Rule. The *Second Volume* is confined to six parts with thirteen chapters under the following heads: Chapters X-XI—Land Policy—Independence to 1972; XII-XIV—Land Reforms; XV-XVI—Collective Forms of Land Use; XVII-XVIII, The Management of Plantations; XIX-XX, Mahaveli & Small Farmers and XXI-XXII, Conclusions and A Postscript.

A PERUSAL of his comprehensive footnotes numbering 335, should, without hesitation make the reader feel that the author has covered a wider field of bibliographical data not collected by any research scholar previously. He has thrown such light on many abstruse points relating to a historical survey of Ancient Land Tenure and Land Reform experience in Sri Lanka. As the author rightly puts it, this survey is undoubtedly "A historical study of land tenure, land use and land development in Sri Lanka. It reveals the saga of a hard working and intelligent people, whose entire civilization revolved round land and water. The remnants of the ancient glory of a hydraulic civilisation still remains. Even at present, Sri Lanka's salvation lies in Land

and water. As in the past and the present, in the future too, land status, land tenure and the power they exert, will constitute a significant determinant of the social, economic and political evolution of Sri Lanka."

This formidable task faced by Ariya Abeyasinghe all alone, burning his mid-night oil, sacrificing his week-ends while his companions slept, is most praiseworthy. He had no financial support or a "grant from any research institution nor a fellowship to undertake the survey."

Many readers will observe, by and large, that most of our country's past history and aspects of our culture has been written by foreigners except for a handful of our public servants such as Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Dr. Senarat Paranavitana, Dr. R. L. Brohier, Mr. Herbert A. J. Hulugalla, Mr. J. E. O. Paulusz and Mr. Edmund Reimers of the early twentieth century and Dr. Tennekoon Vimalananda, Dr. Nanda Dewa Wijesekera, Dr. Saddha Mangala Karunaratne, Dr. C. E. Godakumbura, and Dr. A. D. V. de S. Indraratne of the present generation, just to mention a few.

This study would have been all the more comprehensive if the author could have had the time to compile an Index-cum-Bibliography of the works consulted. Be it as it may this voluminous work will undoubtedly be not only a source book to any researcher interested in Sri Lanka's history and development but also a useful guide to agriculturists, planners, politicians and students interested in this particular field.

Mr. Abeyasinghe is to be congratulated on the very efficient manner in which he has performed his task, and particularly on the keen foresight he has displayed in not over-burdening the pages with useless and unnecessary references. The author who had to face the necessity of assembling data on all aspects of land, historical analysis, socio-economics aspects, political, social, cultural aspects of land reforms and land tenure, deserves a Doctorate for producing these two volumes. Those engaged in agricultural research in implementing Jayewardene Government's pledge to proceed with "a programme of development, maximising the proper use of land and providing irrigation facilities" should welcome it as a tool for their work,

I consider this publication to be an indispensable volume which must find a place on the shelves of every library, and in that of every Government Department and Corporation. In conclusion, I must appeal to the younger generation of our scholars, who, among them may be public servants to take an example from this author and contribute largely to promote inquiries into our Lanka's history Literature, and modern and former Social conditions of our people.

Wilfred M. Gunsekere

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TRANSNATIONALS

And Labour

By Prometheus

A RECENT ISSUE of *Tribune* carried a very perceptive article titled "Selling Lanka", which referred to the attraction of foreign investors to our FTZ, by the availability of cheap labour.

The exploitation of the newly independent states has resulted in particularly negative consequences for the emergent working class of these countries. The extent to which the working class in the Third World is oppressed can be illustrated only partly by the fact that the TNCs exploit two million workers directly in their own plants in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Taking advantage of their predominant position in the economies of these countries, they are also able to dictate the working and living conditions of other working people.

In the early '60s, TNCs, looking for the cheapest labour for raising their profits, canvassed many developing countries, plagued by unemployment, to establish "Free Trade Zones". This was supposed to mean the providing of foreign capital with an access to certain areas of these countries, where the investors would be free to set up their own works, import their raw materials duty free, operate the factories without control and export the profits reaped in the process without any restrictions. The developing countries sincerely expected the "free trade zones" to promote rapid industrialization, large foreign exchange earnings, improvement of vocational

training for labour and the easing of the unemployment problem. On their part, developing countries granted enormous privileges to the TNCs concerned: exemption from customs duties and import restrictions, unlimited transfer of currency and profits, tax holidays, credits on favourable terms, guaranteed establishment of the required infrastructure of roads and other means of communication, anti-strike laws and full transfer of the ownership right on the companies established to transnational concerns.

AT PRESENT, there are 80 such zones in the world, and 40 others are at the planning stage. Most of these are in South and South-east Asia. However, it has not taken long for these developing countries to realise that their hopes regarding the TNCs in these "zones" have been in vain. The hopes for receiving extra flows of currency have been frustrated. It is mostly cheap labour that has been attracting transnational electrotechnical, electronic, textile, clothes and toy manufacturers to "free trade zones". With the exception of Hong Kong and Singapore, women, aged upto 30, make up about 80 per cent of the labour force in these zones. This is mostly because they work faster and are ready to do monotonous and labour-consuming work, earning only half of what men do for the same work. It is also a fact that TNCs find it easier to employ women, since in these countries, they are rarely organised in the form of trade unions.

In **Malaya**, an official advertisement thus invites foreign investors to the country. "The craftsmanship of Asian women is famous all over the world. They have narrow palms, and work swiftly and carefully. Wages in Malaysia are among the lowest in the region, Women can be employed as factory workers for less than 1.5 US dollars per day."

In **Batan**, the largest FTZ in the Philippines, young women account for 80 per cent of the labour force. Many live in overcrowded sheds, according to the West German weekly *Vorwärts*. Married women are also compelled to make these sheds their quarters. The Minimum Wage in Batan amounts to 13 pesos. Nevertheless, TNCs such as Ford Motors are allowed to pay them only 6.7 pesos per day during the first six months when they learn the trade. This is why, following the

"probation term" which lasts 5 months, the companies dismiss the women workers, only to employ them back a little later for another 5 months, always paying them the "trader learner's" wages. There is no extra payment for overtime work. According to a jeans-making factory worker, one of 300 employed by an Australian owner, "when it is necessary to do extra work, the armed guards simply lock the doors and open them only after the work is done."

THE CRAFTSMANSHIP of Asian women is used above all by transnational electrical engineering and electronic companies: a better part of the 600,000 workers of the Asian "Free trade Zones" are employed in these industries. In export lists, these goods are rated as high quality industrial products. Their assembly requires only a few operations by trained men or women. Thus, the hope for training new specialists who could subsequently be used for developing "Third World" countries, remains an illusion. The available skilled workers and experts, on the other hand, are denied employment by these concerns.

Whenever the wages in the FTZs of this or that country are increased, the TNCs move to other, more labour-cheap countries—raw materials and semi-finished products are imported here, while the assembled finished goods are exported once again. In the majority of cases, the hopes of the developing countries that industrial production inside the FTZs would have a favourable effect on the industrialization of the rest of these countries, have not been met either. The FTZs remain enclaves with no favourable impact on the rest of the economy.

In many cases, TNCs have caused increased unemployment in the developing countries. Indonesia provides a classical example of this process. As a result of the penetration of the spinning industry by TNCs and the subsequent economic ruin of the local spinning-mills, employment nosedived, with 391,000 jobs disappearing between 1968 and 1973.

The TNCs are particularly hostile to trade union activities, and discrimination of all kinds is a permanent feature. In a number of countries such as Nigeria and Singapore, TNCs have managed to get trade union activities severely limited, and in Indonesia and

South Korea they have been virtually dissolved. A local trade union had this to say about the practices of BAYER INDUSTRIAL, in Lima, Peru:

"The sacred rights of the workers are being violated by the firms. These include the 8 hour day, the right to strike, the right to claim higher wages, the right to freedom of expression, the right to assemble, the right to hold general meetings and to organize ourselves politically."

A Brazilian worker interviewed by West German television on 27th April 1979, spoke thus of VOLKSWAGEN DO BRASIL:

"They forget that the workers are human beings.....one feels like a machine at VW. They don't threaten you directly, but the news spreads that one better not join the trade union, it could be perhaps to your disadvantage.....The guards are armed with pistols....."

Will this happen in Sri Lanka?

* * *

BATTICALOA

Overheard At The Fountain Club

by K. Kanapathi Pillai

NOT VERY FAR from the Old Court House in Batticaloa there stands a rusty old fountain patinous with age-old incrustations of layers and layers of a greenish paint. It must have been the gift of some great benefactor; perhaps a British Governor of old, some Macallum or some Barnes; and declared open to mark the great occasion of the crowning of the noblest of British Queens ever to adorn the throne of Great Britain and Ireland and to be the Empress of India. That was Queen Victoria.

And within walking distance of this fountain is another object of antiquity: the Freeman's *Taneer Pandal*—a public watering place erected in memory of Mr. Freeman, the greatest, the noblest, the best and kindest of English Civil Servants ever to adorn the distinguished and devoted and much-respected Civil Service in Sri Lanka. He was the Government Agent of Batticaloa in the first decade of this century. A very kind and generous-hearted gentleman

he was; and was assuredly one of the greatest and kindest of foreigners that ever trod the soil of this Island and most successfully and efficiently ruled the roost.

Incidentally it may not be out of place to mention here that he represented the benighted Anuradhapura Constituency in the Legislative and State Councils in those good old days when he had the honour of being returned uncontested at every election so long as he was alive. I have been credibly informed that having had an insatiable thirst for service to humanity, he went about from village to village, from threshold to threshold in the Anuradhapura District on foot, with a haversack of medicinal drugs and tit-bits slung on his back, listening with the utmost patience to what the villages had to say, and attending to their needs and grievances with the most sedulous care and deep concern. Here came service in flesh and blood. What the poet Rabindranath Tagore has said of the Man called Gandhi comes perfectly true of the Man called Freeman. "He stopped at the threshold of the huts of the thousands of dispossessed, dressed like one of their own. He spoke to them in their own language. Here was living faith at last, and not only quotations from books. When love came to the door of India, that door was opened wide. At Gandhi's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as before, when the Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow-feeling and compassion among all living creatures."

AND TODAY, in Sri Lanka, a son of the soil is wending his way from village to village, from hamlet to hamlet, from hut to hovel, from door to threshold, re-building and restructuring the 'puranic' villages sunk in the limbo of age-old, negligence and morass of ignorance, crippling illiteracy and grinding poverty, making an all out endeavour to restore them to their pristine grandeur, peace and glory, so that the "truth of fellow-feeling and compassion may find lodgement among all living creatures."

Many a rumour was bruited at the "Fountain Club" of Batticaloa that meets regularly on evenings on the carpet of sea-sand spread near the fountain. Here men past the prime of life, with greying hair and snow-white beards belonging to almost all walks of life—a typical cross-section of Batticaloa's society:

carpenters and masons, post-masters and teachers, business men and bakers, butchers and cadjan-weavers, fishermen and farmers, vegetable vendors and tinkers and black-smiths and jewellers and cobblers: all retired men though superannuated, yet crazy old cronies, often times very sensible men with sensible suggestions, governed by a fundamental community of interests, met for fellowship, warmth of fellow feeling and for the healthy and sober exchange of their matured views on men and current events that touched their life and the life of the Nation in more points than one.

And aired and over heard at one such concourse, were, a number of hotly debated subjects like: the village building Premier, the long forgotten Valayiravu Bridge, the slumbering UDA plan for the rebuilding of the Cyclone devastated town of Batticaloa which appeared to have gone into cold storage the casual workers and semi-skilled and unskilled labourers being deprived of their food stamps, the remarkable courage and fortitude of the President to face all heavy odds that proliferated in the wake of the price hike of petroleum, flour, bread and other commodities, which incidentally has provided ample opportunities to the traders and black-marketeers for making bumper profits, the necessity of a senate of wise men to guide the Parliament in governing the country reasonably and justly and in making the most adequate laws and decisions.

THESE ARE ASSUREDLY the views of matured citizens who had seen life pass before them as if projected from a cinematographic film; and, admittedly such views are worthy of being taken into consideration in all earnest by the powers that be. Since it is dusk, and faces cannot be seen, and expressions on them almost a blank in the gathering dusk, only the voices of these men could be heard sailing through the void, and the dots given here indicate the several disembodied voices as they darted and floated criss-cross in the deepening darkness.

I say, Mr. M. Haven't you read in the daily papers that our Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa, is visiting yet another village, Mallehewa by name in the Matale electorate for the purpose of initiating another model village building programme: the Alokagama village Awakening Programme.

*That's it. Another good start made; another attempt at the re-habilitation of the village community.

* He will, in all certainty, go down into the annals of Sri Lanka as a 'Great village builder.

*Yes, man, like our Parakrama Bahu of 'Tank-builder' fame.

* He, I suppose, he is doing his utmost and you know, it has been credibly rumoured that his family—mother, daughter and father and everyone else,—is steeped in this type of creative service to the community and that he most assiduously visits, and monitors every scheme that he has taken on hand and that is under way.

* Don't you think that this will, in years to come, be considered a golden era of village uplift; for our popular Premier like the good old Freeman of Anuradhapura, is going from door to door, 'Stopping at the thresholds of the huts with a fount of 'Maithri'—unbounded compassion—flowing in an unending stream into the lowliest of hovels?

*He is certainly determined to wipe out the social evils of poverty of food, poverty of shelter and nakedness, and even poverty of thought, so glaringly, patent in us.

*But don't you think that too much pampering does kill initiative?

* It does; but then, some initiative has to be given. Why hasn't he and our worthy President thought of paying a visit to some of our Cyclone battered villages which have all this long while, nearly an year and a half, been crying for rehabilitation and redress of their grievances?

* Don't be indecently hasty, man. They will; they will. The bullock-carter in you is always in an inordinate hurry. There are still three more years to go; our Premier has ample time. Rumour has it, that he will soon encamp in the midst of our cyclone devastated villages that are all a shambles, and attend to the people's most urgent needs; Restructuring their habitations, resolving their occupational, health and educational problems and even hazards. (Then there came a timely interruption from a Portuguese burgher gentleman, a black-smith by trade).

* Well, Thamby! What do you say of our Valayiravu Bridge? My son was working on this project for some time. How is it that

work on it appears to have been brought to a dead halt after this Government came into power?

* Why don't you alert your M.Ps in Parliament, and your Ministers, to rake up this issue? Aren't you enjoying "the perfection of a wise and regulated liberty?" You are at perfect liberty in a democratic State to ask from your representatives in Parliament. Why this very important project that will, on completion, help to bring well over 50000 acres of good paddy land under its service, has not been pursued in earnest.

*And why don't our representatives in Parliament meet more often the prominent citizens of the area and hold dialogues with them and get their views on the various aspects of Development of this district, and draw up a developmental programme and act in a manner that might prove to be of lasting benefit to the people?

* Why not? They should. They should even go to the extent of asking "the mother in the house, the children in the lanes and alley, the common man in the market" concerning their life's hazards, trials and tribulations.

* No man. You are talking bull-shit! Aren't our representatives, in a way, like the images in our Hindoo temples that represent the various Zodiacs on 'grahas'? They reign supreme in their own electorate and rule the roost. They seldom meet one another; to discuss their common problems.

* Well, the time, has now come for them to sink their differences and pool all their talent and ability and resources for promoting the well-being of the District and of the Island as an integrated whole.

* Yes, that's right. We are in need of an integrated society, with an integrated programme of development, say a 5 year plan or so, governed by the truth of the fundamental unanimity in all matters pertaining to the country's development.

* But may I interrupt you? How many foundation-stone laying ceremonies we have had in this region immediately after the cyclone? Pray, where are the buildings and other constructions?

*Don't talk nonsense. What will they say, when they hear you talk in such an 'open-mouthed—idiot fashion? What about our Railway station? Our post office? Our court House?

Our Police Quarters and Police Station? Our cyclone devastated school buildings? Our Hospital? Our Municipal buildings? Our Electricity supply? Our roads? Haven't these been attended to? And restructured and rehabilitated?

* They have been to a certain extent, we admit. But the progress of work is very slow, especially the work on the schools which is going on at snail's pace. Perhaps, it may be because they don't get the building materials and labour in time. Isn't that so?

* That may be so. But then why doesn't the Government with a little effort, with an ounce of generous prudence, with a smattering of sympathy, with an iota of a sense of sacrifice, and a large-hearted amiable forbearance give a special treatment to this cyclone affected, convalescing region, by making concessions in the prices of building materials such as cement, timber, construction steel etc. so that the cyclone battered houses and other buildings may be re-built and rehabilitated?

* That is a good suggestion. We hope that our welfare Government, our prudent and wise leadership will give heed to this genuine request.

* It is genuine. But you know, it stinks, for it is so stale a subject and so putrid.

* All this is good; but what troubles us is this: that three important issues appear to have gone into cold storage.

* Pray; what are they?

* Yes, in order of importance they are:—
1. The Valayiravu Bridge, already referred to where the progress is very slow.

2. the U.D.A. plan, and programme for the building up of the Town of Batticaloa; and

3. the cyclone Rehabilitation Programme.

* You are right. The last two should be disentangled and treated as separate departments with separate and adequate funds noted for each.

* Sure; our public spirited leaders and our representatives in Parliament should see to it that these cardinal issues are not lost sight of, and that the President and the Premier and the Cabinet of Ministers be so impressed and so informed as to see and feel

the utter indispensability and importance of these matters.

* Well, it is getting late. Shall we adjourn?

* The moon is up, the stars are bright. Let their reign fair charity and fair faith in our hearts, and in the hearts of our leaders! sang the poet of the group.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

April 28 — May — 5

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; SO—Sunday Observer; DM—Diramina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLDP—Sri Lanka-dipa; JD—Janadina; SU—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release.

MONDAY, APRIL 28: A Ministry of Plan Implementation study team which went into the problems of the tea smallholder has recommended a number of measures that should be taken to make tea small-holdings viable. There is speculation in tea trade circles that the damage to the tea crop in Darjeeling will bring new buyers to the Sri Lanka tea market. Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom said in Male on Saturday that there is growing evidence to prove that European mercenaries were recently involved in a plot to overthrow his government. Prime Minister R. Premadasa who opened the Jayodagama model village in the Beliatta electorate on Saturday said that the Government's endeavour was to provide all opportunities for people to live happy and prosperous lives through self-reliance—CDN. The customs fined two suspects Rs. 2.2 million in connection with last Tuesday's abortive attempt by a London bound Pakistani to smuggle Rs. 700,000 worth of top quality gems, gold jewellery and bejewelled ivory elephants

out of the country. The Defence Ministry decided to strengthen the security around all areas wherever foreign legations in Sri Lanka had their offices and residences in Colombo. Every family who had "squatted" on state land would be deeded the lands they were occupying, declared Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development at an election meeting at Koteuachchiya, in the Anamaduwa Electorate; he said this would be done by 1983—CDN. Sri Lanka may shortly face massive drug related problems similar to other affected countries such as Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines; this warning has been sounded by Police narcotics experts who point out that hard drugs such as cocaine, morphine and even heroin are among the narcotics now being marketed in Sri Lanka to both foreigners as well as locals. Bacteriological tests have revealed that only ten of the 50 suspected cholera patients admitted to the Kurunegala and Gokarella hospitals were positive cases of cholera. The Petroleum Corporation has drawn up a fuel rationing scheme to be put into operation if crude oil supplies are delayed due to the heightened tension in the Persian Gulf—SU. US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, has tendered his resignation, the British Broadcasting Corporation announced in a morning news cast; Mr. Vance has resigned over the decision that the US mounts an operation to free the 50 American hostages held in Teheran for the past several weeks—CO. The Youth Front of the TULF has issued an ultimatum to the party that unless the TULF turns itself into a liberation movement by June 30, the youth front will declare itself the Liberation Movement for Tamil Eelam; this was decided at a general body meeting yesterday—EN. President Jayewardene will directly supervise all the work of the Agricultural development schemes; this is a sequel to the discovery that work in these development schemes are not being carried out satisfactorily—DP. A large number of powerful trade unions have decided not to attend the May Day rally organised by the JTUAC—JD.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29: Chairman, Ports Authority, Wimal Amarasekera has ordered a crash program to repair all lighter craft to help clear the queue of ships at the Colombo Port; fourteen ships carrying general and

mixed cargo which are now anchored in the outer harbour for want of berths will be worked in the outer harbour; cargo will be unloaded into lighters which will be drawn up alongside the waiting vessels, at Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee. President J. R. Jayewardene approved last week a three-year crash program of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research to complete the work of rehabilitation of all minor and village tanks in the island. The Income Support Scheme under which an unemployed person is paid Rs. 50 a month will be discontinued from June 1, Dr. Wickrema Weerasooriya, Secretary, Ministry of Plan Implementation said yesterday—CDN. At the request of the Government the Minister of Foreign Affairs A. C. S. Hameed is compiling a report regarding the practices in other countries as regards gifts and presents made by individuals and institutions to Ministers, members of Boards of Public Corporations and Public officers. The University Grants Commission has decided to extend the special non-pensionable allowance approved by the Ministry of Public Administration for public officers to University staff as well—CDM. Development Councils may consist of the total number of Members of Parliament within the District plus a maximum of ten others; this and a series of other proposals on the establishment of these Councils have been spelt out in a memorandum President J. R. Jayewardene has submitted to the Cabinet. The Jaffna Police launched a massive manhunt yesterday for four youths, who allegedly stopped the vehicle in which a prominent North ern politico was travelling and attempted to assault him. The government proposes with the setting up of Development Councils to create advisory committees with the assistance of the people of the area to solve their day-to-day problems, President J. R. Jayewardene announced yesterday; the government also proposes to provide one million jobs for the unemployed youth before the completion of its term, he said after inaugurating the restoration of the Digawewa (Mahakandiawewa) at Uhana, a colonisation scheme 15 miles from Amparai—SU. President Jayewardene has advised local government authorities and health organisations to take action against heads of government corporations and boards who do not take adequate health protection measures—DV. The government is

to launch a program to accelerate the repair of all small tanks and small irrigation projects before the end of one year; this programme is expected to cost Rs. 20 million—LD.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30: Thousands of people held demonstrations in the Ma'divian capital of Male today burning effigies of ex-President Nasir one of whose relatives was named in Parliament for hiring mercenaries to assassinate President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; one of the biggest demonstrations against Mr. Nasir and to express support for the President was held at a boat-yard. Trade Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali returned home yesterday from the United States with good news for Sri Lanka's garment industry. The UNP will select a person to be the 2nd MP for Pottuvil in succession to the late Mr. M. Canagaratnam after the Anamadawa by-election on May 7 is over. Mr. N. G. P. Panditharatne, Chairman of the UNP said yesterday. Over 3000 policemen will be on duty on May Day in one of the biggest security operations to be undertaken by the City Police—CDN. Hard bargaining by Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmudali in Washington last week clinched an advantageous deal under which Sri Lanka's garment exports to the United States will remain on a better footing than most other Asian countries—CDM. Ahmed Naseem, a brother-in-law of lix-President Ibrahim Nasir, has confessed that he attempted and financed an attempt to overthrow the legally constituted Government of the Republic of Maldives with the help of mercenaries, the country's President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom told the Citizen's Majlis (Parliament) on Monday night—SU. A section of the LSSP provincial secretaries who condemned the joint LSSP SLFP May Day rally have decided not to participate in the May Day rally—DV. In a joint May Day communique issued by a SLFP, LSSP and the MEP states that the UNP government has withdrawn rights of the poor people and is creating more difficulties for them and the working people must organise themselves to fight against the government in the future—JD. The Dharmishta government is to launch an island wide family planning campaign; their main slogan is 2 children per family; more benefits are to be given to small families—DK.

THURSDAY, MAY 1: Police expect

thousands of people to flock to Colombo to participate in the May Day rallies but they are confident it will be a peaceful May Day. "I am happy that an occasion has arisen to send a message of good wishes and felicitations to the working people of the country on May Day—a day dedicated to show gratitude to working people," says President J. R. Jayewardene in his May Day message. The government has sought the assistance of a reputed Malaysian narcotics expert to conduct a survey and report on the use of "hard drugs" by Sri Lankans, Defence Ministry sources said yesterday. A special team of detectives from Maldives is due in Colombo shortly to investigate the Sri Lanka connection with the unsuccessful coup in the Maldives, police sources said. An armed gang held the general manager and 15 clerks working at the Thunukai multi-purpose co-operative society in the Mankulam police area, at pistol point and got away with over Rs. 20,000 in a daring daylight robbery on Monday—CDN. President J. R. Jayewardene in his May Day message has stressed the importance of strengthening the trade union movement to create a satisfied working class so that the workers could actively participate in the democratic socialist development programme launched by the Government. Over a million people are expected in the city today to witness and participate in the May Day rallies; thousands of persons were pourings into the city from the outstations from last night in order to be present in time for the demonstrations and the rallies. The inimitable and ageless singer from India, Mohammed Rafi, will honour the people of Sri Lanka when he sings in Sinhala at the May Day rally of the United National Party this evening at the Galle Face Green—CDM. New political alliances will be the noteworthy feature at the workers of Sri Lanka today commemorate May Day with mass demonstrations, processions and meetings to express their solidarity with the international working class. The Maldives government today ordered the temporary closure of two tourist resorts in the string of Indian Ocean Coral Islands following disclosure in Parliament on Monday of a foiled coup—SU. A study has revealed that 30 percent of women graduates are unemployed and most of them are from rural areas—VK. The government's hope to get foreign loans has diminished as the IMF has decided to con-

sider the assets of a country before giving loans in the future—ATH.

FRIDAY, MAY 2: President J. R. Jayewardene who presided at the UNP May Day rally at the Galle Face Green yesterday, said the UNP was celebrating the day as a political party which supported the farmers and the workers of the country; the sprawling green was a sea of heads; it was one of the biggest gatherings that ever assembled there. Police yesterday said there were no May Day incidents. President J. R. Jayewardene will ceremonially inaugurate the Open University of Sri Lanka on June 19, at the BMICH. Colombo was transformed into a colourful city of green red and blue flags and buntings yesterday as thousands of workers and their families participated in May Day rallies organised by the various political parties. With the rapid increase in production that was now taking place, the government would effect a wage increase to enable people to meet the increased cost of living declared the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene addressing the mammoth crowd at the May Day rally of the United National Party at Galle Face Green. The main opposition at the next general election for the UNP will not be the SLFP, LSSP and MEP combination but the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, declared JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera, yesterday at the JVP May Day rally at the Town Hall grounds—CDM. SLFP leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike yesterday launched a strong attack on the government saying that our children and grand-children would have to repay the enormous amounts of money being borrowed by this government—SU.

SATURDAY, MAY 3: Government yesterday decided to give teaching appointments to science undergraduates to ease the serious shortage of science and mathematics teachers in schools; Minister of State and Cabinet Spokesman, Anandatissa de Alwis said that the Minister of Education Ranil Wickremasinghe proposed that this step be taken as there was a serious shortage of science and mathematics graduate teachers; four hundred and thirty government schools teach science at the GCE (AL) Additional Schools and classes will be needed every year to meet the increasing demands. Sri Lanka's economy recorded a growth rate of 6.2 per cent last year, a rate unsurpassed in the last decade except in 1978,

the Central Bank said in its report released yesterday. Some one thousand school children and several youths will take part in a conservation march next Saturday to focus attention on the need to conserve nature—by saving trees, animals and preventing the pollution of waterways—CDN. President J. R. Jayewardene, yesterday told the Cabinet the projects approved for the Investment Promotion Zone would provide direct employment to as many as 38,400 persons; the indirect employment created has been estimated at over 75,000—CDM. The Sri Lanka government will collaborate with leading European concern in a multi-million rupee tourist project in the South coast; Cabinet yesterday approved the project proposed by Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali. A record haul of wrist watches, watch straps and other items valued at over three million rupees was made by the Beruwela Police following a dawn swoop on a smuggling operation on Monday—SU. An attempt by the Ministry of Agriculture to pay Rs. 80 million to Mr. Upali Wijewardene as compensation for land taken over under the Land Reform Act has raised suspicion as Mr. Wijewardene has earlier signed an agreement with the government to accept Rs. 20 million for his land—ATH. It has been revealed that all attempts at spreading family planning in the North have failed—DV.

SUNDAY, MAY 4: Sri Lanka has negotiated an export quota of 17.5 million pieces of manufactured garments to the lucrative US market during the 12 months beginning May 1, authoritative governmental sources revealed yesterday; this is considered a substantial volume which would permit the country's garments industry, which has grown spectacularly in recent years, to continue production without disruption or cut-back in employment—SO. The President Mr. J. R. Jayewardene has described the practice of transferring public officers against whom complaints have been made as a general malaise in the whole public service; Mr. Jayewardene has called for an end to this practice—ST. Ahmed Naseem, ex-Maldivian President Ibrahim Nasir's brother-in-law, whose request for political asylum in Sri Lanka last year was turned down by President J. R. Jayewardene, had several meetings in Colombo with a Swiss national, who has been identified as the brains behind the

plot to assassinate President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and other political leaders in this Republic. Two Sri Lankan fishermen who had been drifting in the high seas in an open boat for 111 days were rescued near the island of Sumatra off Indonesia by Indian fishermen on Friday. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike former Prime Minister and leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party will appear before the special Presidential Commission on Wednesday May 7. Stringent security measures are to be adopted at Anamaduwa in a bid to ensure the elections are devoid of incidents—WK. Arrangements will be made to grant loans to private sector enterprises from the Employees Trust Fund to be introduced shortly—CM. The TULF leadership has decided to support the government's policies aimed at Development projects according to well informed sources; the TULF is also expected to stop the call for a separate state. 82 Engines and 150 compartments of the railway department have disappeared into thin air—RR.

MONDAY, MAY 5: President Josip Broz Tito, Yugoslavia's Communist ruler since World War II, died today aged 87, the National News Agency Tanjug announced. The Education Department has imposed new requirements for admission to GCE (AL) classes 1980 without sufficient notice to schools and students, a spokesman for the All-Ceylon Union of Teachers said yesterday. Over two hundred members of the SLFP from Andigama, Periyamaduwa, Serukelle and Nagawila in the Anamaduwa electorate renounced their party membership and joined the UNP when Prime Minister R. Premadasa addressed an election meeting in support of the UNP candidate Asoka Wadigamangawa at Serukelle on Saturday. The Working Committee of the Tamil United Liberation Front at its monthly meeting at Batticaloa on Saturday decided to suspend two of its extremist members Mr. S. Kanagendran known as Eelaventhan a Working Committee member and Mr. Kovai Mahesan the Editor of "Suthanthiran" for publicly criticising the policies followed by the leadership, a TULF spokesman said yesterday. An 11-member trade mission from the Association of Indian Engineering Industry led by Shri Gurpreet Singh, Chairman, AIEL, arrives in Colombo today on a six-day visit—CDN. The Ceylon State Mortgage and Investment Bank will short-

ly start purchasing buildable land for development for building sites; these sites will be given on long term credit to house builders. The customs are on the look out for the kingpin behind the recent massive off-shore smuggling of luxury goods—CDM. All friendship associations in Sri Lanka will be required to obtain licences from a competent authority to carry on their activities, in terms of a Friendship Associations Act the Government is to introduce in Parliament shortly—SU. Government is proposing to set up a Board to supervise the work of dealers in gold who carry on the sale of gold at prices determined by them; the proposed Board will have powers to take top level action against violators—DP. Title Deeds of lands will be given free of charge to all those engaged in cultivation in the principal colonisation schemes; about 5 lakhs of acres of land in which 85,000 families live will come under this—EN. The High Command of the TULF has told the Youth Wing of the party that they should not make Tamil affairs into something ridiculous at which people can laugh; it was necessary to think deeply before acting otherwise it will pave the way for destruction; this comes in the wake of the recent behaviour of the Tamil youth—VK. A team of World Bank specialists will arrive in the island today to find out the economic development of the country—DV.

TUESDAY, MAY 6: One of the new leaders who have inherited power from the late President Tito vowed today that Yugoslavia will continue on Tito's path and foil any plots against the country. Vast crowds paid a last, deeply emotional homage to President Tito today when his body returned by train to Belgrade to lie in State; with the country plunged into mourning since the death of the 87-year-old President yesterday, Yugoslavia's new political leaders reaffirming pledges to follow his policies of non-alignment and unique socialist system of workers' self-management in the economy and politics. Arising from President Tito's death the following arrangements have been made: Mr. A. C. S. Hameed, Minister of Foreign Affairs who is now in New York will proceed to Belgrade as special envoy of President J. R. Jayewardene to represent Sri Lanka at the funeral; May 8, the day of President Tito's funeral, declared a day of national mourning. A 1000-member hand picked

security service is being set up in the Port of Colombo, Chairman Ports Authority Wimal Amarasekera said yesterday—*CDN*. Prospective investors (local and foreign) in tourist hotel development projects in Sri Lanka will enjoy a ten year tax holiday; the proposed 10 year tax concession will be given to new investors as well as hoteliers planning expansion of existing hotel projects. Sri Lanka expects about Rs. 13,000 million from the World Bank sponsored "Aid Sri Lanka Club" for 1980/81; this amount includes funds for the accelerated Mahaweli project—*CDM*. A mini-Immigration and Emigration office which made perfect alterations of passports was found operating in Pettah by detectives of the CID on Saturday. The first major United States investment mission, due in Sri Lanka on May 10, is interested in projects and joint ventures in electronics, ceramics, seafoods, port facilities and air cargo services among other fields. There will be a marginal increase in the intake of students to the Colombo University in October this year—*SU*. The floor price of chillies have been fixed at Rs. 10/50 by the government—*VK*.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7: Police have launched an island-wide anti-pickpocket drive as part of their crime prevention work in order to protect Vesak sightseers; on Monday they arrested four persons in the Jampettah police area in Colombo; police said they were members of the "razor blade pickpockets" gang. Results of the Anamaduwa by-election are expected to be announced at midnight today. Three hundred motorcycles are on an average being registered every day at the Registrar of Motor Vehicles in Colombo and in the seven kachcheries, a spokesman for the RMV said yesterday. The TULF leadership is giving favourable consideration to the concept of District Development Councils enunciated by the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene; the Front's Parliamentary Group is expected to join these Councils in order to make them workable on an island-wide basis. Medical authorities have traced the recent outbreak of cholera to the water used in the preparation of mixtures at the Gokarella dispensary. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party is losing a fair portion of its members to the New Sama Samaja Party led by Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara—*CDM*. A large number of teachers in the state sector

are to be taken off their teaching assignments; the Minister of Education has found that they do not possess the requisite qualifications to hold the posts which they have been given. Several areas in the city yesterday suffered a severe water shortage when a cable at the Ambatale reservoir broke down and a pump turned defective—*SU*. The Minister of Rural Industrial Development S. Thondaman has entered into talks with President J. R. Jayewardene to expedite the settlement of the problems of the "Stateless" under the Sirimavo Sastri Pact—*VK*. A number of corporations under the Ministry of Industries which were running at a loss for years have recorded profits in the previous year—*LD*.

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POEM

WESAK IN LANKA

On every Poya full moon day,
 Many a devotee winds his way,
 To the temple on the hill,
 Where he observes Ata Sil.
 And clad in white he will sit and pray,
 Till the day doth wear away.
 And then, with incense and flowers,
 To the Buddha his thanks he showers,
 For the great doctrine which he gave,
 A way of life for us to pave.
 That the life we lead is clean and pure,
 The path to happiness to ensure,
 And so reach the goal of eternal bliss
 Upon an earthly world as this.

And a Poya special is Wesak Day,
 It always comes in the month of May,
 When nature holds forth in bounteous sway,
 And loads its trees with flowers gay.
 And we mortals try to match her might
 With coloured bulbs and lamps at night,
 To celebrate in a special way,
 The Birth, Enlightenment, and Passing away,
 Of Lord Buddha, the exalted One.
 For none to equal him yet has come.
 Such noble truth, such a mind profound,
 Upon this earth has since not been found.
 That's why the Lankans hold Wesak so dear,
 Their greatest Day in all the year.

Sita Selvadurai

x x x

Confidentially

Railways Again

IS THERE ANY TRUTH in the story now going the rounds in the jet-set and gem circles that a Colombo Tourist Operator has contrived to put up a permanent three-storey building on a railway reservation to house a tourist and gem business in the City's Hotel Triangle? That the site in question is a small strip of land lying by the side of Galle Road overhead bridge (over the railway line) at Colpetty opposite the American Embassy? That the surprising thing is how the Urban Development Authority, which is so conscious about parking space etc., etc. for office buildings in Colombo city, and the Colombo Municipal Council—which recently under the Honourable Prime Minister's directions, caused many undesirable buildings to be pulled down—has given their sanction to a three-storey building to be precariously perched on the ledge of a railway reservation? That what is even more surprising is how the Railway Authorities, even if they had changed their existing policy by allowing permanent buildings on railway reservations, dispensed with the usual public advertising procedure in this instance? That it is understood that the Railways is presently considering a costly program to electrify Colombo's suburban rail system and it is impossible to comprehend how such a modernisation scheme could permit a three-storey building to stand at one of the most critical points of the railway line at Colpetty which presently serves as the embankment that protects the line? That the one conclusion that is being drawn is that some monkey business has taken place to enable the Tour Operator to get a foothold in a prime site in Colombo City by violating a major railway reservation? That people will naturally ask whether this is the way Dharma works?

IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE that Superintendent of Railway Stores called for quotations for 4 items in respect of *points rodding* for the Signal Engineers Department by his letter No. SRS (C) DJ 3519/78 of 5.11.78? That after the tenders were opened the order was not

placed? The gossip in CGR circles is that the tender was dropped because the offer of the correct person was not the lowest? That again on 7.12.1979—one year later with replacements in the signals becoming more and more alarmingly overdue—the Supdt. of Railway Stores called for quotations under the same indent and especially for something called "points rodding"? That this time fortunately the offer of the correct person was lower than that of the Crown Agents for points rodding? That at this stage there is an element of mystery in the happenings? That whilst a large part of the order in regard to other items was placed through the Crown Agents, *points-rodding* were purchased from a local supplier, presumably the one who had quoted the lowest? That soon there was a furore because some one had discovered that what was being supplied were old *points rodding* which had been condemned and sold by the CGR itself? That there is gossip that the quantity of such "old" *points-rodding* bought from this supplier is likely to be doubled soon? That some people seem to be able to sell old as new? That it is alleged that those who operated the racket earlier—a matter now being investigated by the Police—are in a position to do it over again? That the CGR is full of stories about collusion between "engineers" who examine and recommend acceptance and the persons in charge of local purchases? That these stories may be false or malicious, but many feel that it is a matter that needs investigation? That the racket was first bared, it is reported, by some Railway Unions and the Railway Security? That the matter was then handed over to the Fraud Bureau of the Police? That the first fall-out it is reported, was that a key official in the CGR was not given the extension he had expected and was compelled to retire? That investigations are said to be going on for filing a case against certain persons? That reports indicate that this racket of supplying "condemned and auctioned" *points-rodding* to be resold to the CGR as new seems to be an on-going fraud? That certain dealers outside buy old *points-rodding* at CGR auctions and sell them back to the Railway as new? That this, it is alleged, has become a lucrative trade where the poor taxpayer is called up to foot the bill of millions of rupees for substandard goods?

* * *



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TRADE INQUIRIES INVITED

Sri Lanka

Voluntary Family Planning Services

Since Independence our population has doubled from 7 million in 1948 to 14 million in 1978 and is increasing at 1.8% per year.

Compared to the death rate which is 6.6 per thousand today the birth rate is 28 per thousand (one of the highest in the world). Our population density which was 95 persons per square mile in 1871 is 572 persons per square mile today. Our age structure is top heavy with a dependent population of 49.6% under 18 yrs, and 6.4% over 60 yrs, which has to be maintained by a work force of only 44% of which 9.2% is unemployed. Our natural resources are getting depleted rapidly. Arable land has diminished from 4.5 acres per person in 1901 to 1.1 acre per person in 1979. But the most serious effect of rapid population growth is the severe increase in unemployment. To generate new jobs we need adequate capital formation. But capital formation cannot improve when the basic needs of an increasing population have to be met first.

To solve this problem the government is taking all meaningful steps to curb unplanned growth of population and:

- 1) will provide enhanced family planning services and incentives both by way of money and leave to individuals both male and female who practice family planning
- 2) will emphasize service oriented programmes to enable motivated couples and individuals to receive family planning services and to undergo sterilization voluntarily
- 3) will pay a minimum of Rs. 100/—to all employees of public sector institutions and state organizations who voluntarily undergo sterilization (both male and female)
- 4) will give 3 days full pay leave for male sterilization and 7 days full pay leave for female sterilization to employees of public sector institutions and state organizations. This leave is in addition to the normal leave
- 5) will ensure that the Private Sector Organizations too would provide such incentives to their employees who undergo sterilizations.

(Excerpts from the opening address of His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene to the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in August 1979)

RELEASED BY THE MINISTRY OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION