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BRAIN DRAIN AND THE NEW BRAHMINS

EVERY COUNTRY TODAY has its paradoxes, but Sri Lanka seems to be riddled with some of most obtuse paradoxes of the contemporary world. The dialectician will say that paradoxes are only one aspect of the continuing conflict

of opposites inevitable in a dynamic society motivated by class struggle; and that therefore this country must have its due share of paradoxes. It is not the purpose of this note to investigate the nature of the class struggle in this country nor the

peculiarities of the paradoxes that have surfaced in recent times, but to draw attention to one matter, obviously inconsistent and absurd yet really true, and which has become one of the sad realities of present-day Ceylon.

Ourselves

WHY THE 'CHRONICLE': THE MYSTERY OF LEMURIA

Many readers in Colombo keep asking us why we persist in publishing the feature, CHRONICLE: that it was only a digest of the English daily papers and that a paper like *Tribune*, which specialised in interpretative articles, should not "waste" so much valuable newsprint space on this item. Our answer is simple. Readers outstations (out of Colombo) and Ceylonese living abroad want the *Chronicle* and want more and more of it. It helps them, they say, to keep abreast of the news without being involved in the cost and trouble of reading all the daily papers. *Tribune* readers in Colombo, who have opportunities of reading of one or more of the dailies, naturally find the feature CHRONICLE redundant, but a good percentage of our readership is out of Colombo. We have also a sizable readership abroad and such readers find the *Chronicle* a useful compendium of record about Ceylon affairs and events.

Tribune will shortly publish a series entitled THE MYSTERY OF LEMURIA. It is by a Soviet historian of ancient Asia, A Kondratov. This series will interest readers in Sri Lanka because this series revolves around the ancient history of the Tamils, "a dark Dravidian people, whose origin still remains unknown. The Tamils, a Dravidian people, possessing a unique culture, have given rise to a great number of speculative discussions about their origin and history..." The series deals with problems that have baffled historians about *Tamilaham*, about *Navalam*, and about *Lemuria*, "the lost continent and the cradle of civilisation. Tamil scientists consider *Lemuria* to be the northern projection of *Gondwana*, the giant continent submerged at present in the Indian Ocean... Geologists, zoologists and palaeontologists are quite positive that there had once been a unity of South America, Australia, India, Africa and even the Antarctica, for all of them had been part of *Gondwana*. Moreover, scientific data make it possible to determine the date of the destruction of *Gondwana* and its parts. The disintegration of *Gondwana* started about 150—180 million years ago after it had existed for three thousand million years as an integral whole. And still many things remain unclear in the history of this extremely ancient continent.... The splitting of *Gondwana* went on for millions of years...." Read this fascinating story in the *Tribune* and to ensure your copy it would be best to be become a regular subscriber.

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Many actions of this Government since 1970 had caused a brain drain of talent and skill of gigantic proportions. This outflow was not confined to those who can be said to be hostile to the social revolution induced by the Bandaranaike policies or even by the policies of the Common Programme (some of which viciously misused by political misanthropes). A large number of people who had hoped for a socialist millennium and had supported the United Front against the UNP have also quit the country—no sooner they were able to get jobs abroad and were in a position to break loose from bonds here. If there is a referendum today among those who have the skills to get jobs abroad, an overwhelming majority of them will vote for quitting this country. And even among those who do not have skills there will be a large number who will want to go out—if only they can learn enough of the English language to live and work abroad. It is not only the Burghers and the Bambalawatte folks who want to quit. It is not only those who are in the grip of UNP ideology—if there is such a thing as a UNP ideology—who want to leave the island. Many Sinhalese of SLFP and even UF vintage have quit and many more are on the verge of quitting. Nearly all Tamils who can get jobs abroad have gone and are still going—and many of them were not followers of the FP or the TC but

were people nurtured in LSSP-CF bombast about language parity and other "socialist" slogans of the forties and the fifties.

A good proportion of the best talent has already left the island. A large number of those left behind are only waiting for opportunities to go. And anyone, aware of the mood of the non-English educated graduates of the Sinhala and Tamil university streams, will know that their greatest desire today is to be able to pick up enough English here or at some relatives' place abroad (if that could be managed) to get jobs in other countries. In the rural areas today, the greatest urge among youth is to want to learn English—and if you ask them why, they will tell you that want to know what is going on in the outside world, to get expertise on ordinary skills (because Sinhala translations cannot ever hope to keep up with the fast moving developments in the modern world), and also to enable them to travel abroad and if possible to get jobs at least for temporary periods.

And there is not the slightest doubt that some leaders of the UF are aware of this demanding mood among the youth of this country. The Minister of Education has recently been doing what he could to extend the teaching of English and also improve the quality of such teaching. Assistance has been obtained from Britain in the form of VSOs to help bring English to the rural areas of Sri Lanka. The Secretary to the Minister of Education has bemoaned in public speeches the deterioration of standards in English in the Kandyan areas—(why the Kandyan areas alone and why only English?).

WHEN THE BRAIN DRAIN first began shortly after May 1970, the bigwigs of the UF were jubilant that the reactionary rats were quitting before the place became too hot for them. When the brain drain went beyond the limits of those, who could be described as "reactionaries, UNPers, FPers, and the petite bourgeois backwash", there was a little re-thinking among FU leaders.

But what did they do?

They were not able to do anything to keep the tide of those wanting to quit: so they decided to be "smart". They decided that Sri

Lanka passports should be made renewable every year and that the passports of those abroad would be renewed only if a levy of about 10% of their earnings abroad were remitted to Sri Lanka. Pundits in the Treasury produced hopeful estimates of the amount of foreign exchange that would be brought in by this passport-taxation of Ceylonese employed abroad. No UF leader or bureaucrat talks about this today—because this stupid move (which *Tribune* had condemned at that time) only succeeded in compelling many Ceylonese to seek other nationality. Only those Ceylonese who had hostages in Sri Lanka, and also those who could not break with the links here, have remitted the levy—a piddlingly small sum of money compared to what the country has lost in talent.

United Front pundits and leaders no longer talk derisively of those who have quit the country and those who still want to quit the country. Even from public platforms they no longer dare to repeat the familiar hue-any-cry that those who quit are reactionaries disappearing before the onrush of the social revolution. By the middle of 1973, the problem had become so serious—it is no doubt a problem in many developing countries, but in Sri Lanka it had assumed cancerous proportions because of the acts of commission and omission of the Government—that the Cabinet appointed a *Brain Drain Committee* of politicians and officials to devise ways and means of stopping this flight of talent. In the meantime, even the hard core ideologists in the UF, preaching extreme class-struggle tactics, stopped denouncing the intellectuals who want to quit and even those who had already left the island.

The Sectoral Committee appointed by the Cabinet to investigate the problem of the brain drain had set up a sub-committee of officials (from the "Ministries most affected by the exodus") to make recommendations on how the brain drain could be ended. The *Daily News* of September 2nd reported that this subcommittee had drawn up list of recommendations to be studied by the Sectoral Committee.

For the record, it would be worthwhile quoting extracts from this report: "The officials, drawn from Ministries most affected by the

exodus of technical personnel and the Treasury, have recommended incentive schemes to induce the 'brains' to serve their own country. The *'Daily News'* understands that the sub-committee of officials has recommended against further regulatory measures. The sub-committee accepts the right of individuals to freedom of employment but recognises also the nation's needs and the investment made by the state on higher education.

"In a lengthy report, the officials have however, warned that the incentive scheme should not become the basis for the creation of a new privileged class, but should be conceived within the framework of socialist objectives. The sub-committee's recommendations are based on memoranda submitted by associations of doctors, engineers and accountants who were summoned to give evidence by the National Planning Council's sectoral committee on Social Overheads, Mass Media, Housing and Transport (chairman: Mr. Pieter Keuneman) which was asked by the Cabinet to investigate the 'brain drain'.

"According to Government sources, the exodus of technically qualified personnel in search of jobs abroad was considered to be a problem of serious proportions. During the last, three years more than 1,500 skilled personnel have left the country for employment abroad. They included more than 450 doctors, over 200 engineers and about 130 accountants. The proportions in relation to those staying behind are one to five, one to six and one to three. After full and frank discussions between representatives of organisations of professionally qualified state employees and members of the sectoral committee, a sub-committee of officials was instructed to report on the financial and allied implications of the memoranda submitted by the professional bodies".

It is not known what the Sectoral Committee will submit to the Cabinet as its recommendations, but if the blinkers which had befuddled UF leadership even on elementary matters are still where they were, not much can be expected. The highly trained and talented who have quit are said to be in the region of 1500 to 2000, but what about the semi-skilled and those who had the basic knowledge and skills to be

trained further who have quit the country? The latter cannot be counted in hundreds but in thousands and soon it will be in tens of thousands. In Britain, these Ceylonese who had gone in search of pastures new (many of them in the disguise of students) before Whitehall had tightened its immigration laws, are now found in large numbers on the verge of desperate straits, and they have been nicknamed LANKEES (to rhyme with YANKEES).

From the *Daily News* report, it would appear that the subcommittee of officials was keen about not making a "privileged class" of our intellectuals who have talent and expertise.

But is this something to worry about in regard to a Government which has happily created a new privileged class of Corporation chiefs and officials and even smugglers and blackmarketeers (after being baptised in special Tax Indemnity laws)—and all of them have now become part of the new compradore bourgeoisie known as CRA capitalists? Does the sub-committee not know that one of the biggest grievances of the brains who have quit the country was that whilst the talented were humiliated and discriminated against in many ways—(many of them were undoubtedly treated like pariahs by the United Front politicalised bureaucrats), longtime gem smugglers, blackmarketeers, UNP stooges and financiers, and reactionaries of the blackest hue were enabled to turn their black money into white through Amnesty laws and were later glorified into a new class of socialist-slogan-shouting parvenu rich of tourist entrepreneurs (with 15 year tax holiday and other privileges) and exporters of non-traditional goods—all of them earning CRA money to make them the most privileged elite this country has known for a long time. If the financial underground and the blackmarketeers have been given opportunities of making good through amnesty laws to become a privileged class of CRA capitalists, the intellectuals have good reason to complain about the way they have been treated.

Gem smugglers, now turned (partly no doubt) into non-traditional exporters, under the auspices

of the state-owned Gem Corporation, have many tax benefits (for investing in tourism) and also concessions in regard to foreign exchange on gems exported, but intellectuals and experts have been taxed on their employment abroad—and they were also taxed viciously in Sri Lanka without having any of the loopholes through which CRA capitalists and former gem smugglers continue to make money.

It is only when the Government realise the impact that these CRA capitalists have brought on the body politic of Sri Lanka that they will wake up to the dangers in which they have placed the country. Behind the majority of the thousand-odd CRA account holders stand an army of smugglers and others from the financial underground. These take cover behind the few CRA accounts in respect of a large part of the goods now smuggled into and out of the country and also for the black money in circulation. What causes deep resentment in ordinary intellectuals (and very soon it will be among workers and peasants) is that these CRA capitalists and UF baptised gem smugglers are closest to the political establishment basking in all the glory of frontpage newspaper publicity and what not.

TO MAKE MATTERS, the Government has announced a fantastic scheme aimed of inducing rich foreigners to reside in Sri Lanka. Last week, the daily press which lap up governmental handouts without any discriminating comment, published the glad tidings under stirring headlines—FOREIGNERS OF GOODWILL CAN SETTLE DOWN HERE, etc. etc. Once again we publish for the record, the full report of the press conference in which this scheme was announced: (*Vide Daily News, 12/9*) :

"The Finance Ministry yesterday announced that it had received Cabinet approval for Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera's scheme to invite "foreigners of goodwill" to settle in Sri Lanka. The scheme, the Ministry said, is now being implemented. At a press conference held yesterday, Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry Mr. L. O. de Silva said that already 150 foreign citizens distinguished in various walks of life had

indicated the wish to spend their retirement in Sri Lanka. A majority of them were from Scandinavian countries. Writers and artists from the British Isles, USA and Western Europe had also applied he said.

"The famed science fiction writer, Mr. Arthur C. Clarke who was also associated at yesterday's press conference said that he had personally received over a dozen applications from literary friends. Some of them were retired planters who 'had



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found that the winter at Nottingham Hill and lost its charm', Mr. Clarke said. He said that the second edition of his book 'Treasures of the Great Reef' would carry a paragraph on the scheme. Mr. Clarke said that on September 24 he would be addressing a PATA conference in London at which he would give it more publicity.

"Details of the scheme released by the Finance Ministry are as follows. The settlers will be granted visas for a period of five years at a time. They will be exempted from the payment of Residence Visa tax. They would be permitted to bring with them their wives and dependants as well as employees such as secretary, a housekeeper or nurse if the circumstances so required. Settlers should be in a position to maintain themselves and their dependants and employees comfortably. For this purpose they must make arrangements for the remittance from abroad of a minimum amount of £ 75 per single person, £ 125 per couple £ 50 for each dependant and £ 50 for each employee per month. Such remittances should be effected in advance annually bi-annually or quarterly FEECs would be payable on these remittances.

"In addition, a minimum sum of £1,500 per person would have to be placed in deposit in a bank in Sri Lanka to cover costs of outward passage of each settler and his dependants and employees when he decides to terminate his stay here. This amount would also be used as a safeguard against any non-receipt of maintenance expenditure or place a minimum lump sum of £ 9,000 per single person or £ 12,000 per couple £15,000 for three persons (i.e. couple plus dependants or employee) and £ 3,000 extra for each additional member of the family in deposit in a bank together with FEECs. Deposits placed in banks cannot be drawn during the settler's stay in this country and can be repatriated less the amounts expended on return passages—on payment of FEECs if and when he leaves Sri Lanka.

"Settlers would not be permitted to engage actively or otherwise in any political, cultural, religious or other activity which is not in the public interest or which might affect the security of the State. It will be a condition of the visa that the person

will not engage himself in any form of employment, trade or business, paid or unpaid.

"Settlers would be permitted to bring with them on first entry a reasonable quantity of goods for their personal use or consumption exempt from Customs duty.

"A controlling body which would handle all matters pertaining to the settlers has already been set up. Representatives from the Department of Immigration and Emigration, Customs, Import and Export Control, Inland Revenue, Exchange Control will be members of the controlling body which would provide advice and assistance to the settlers.

"The Tourist Board will regard these 'resident guests' as permanent tourists and render whatever assistance required. The Board has already begun giving world publicity to the scheme, a Board spokesman said.

"Mr. C. Cumararatunga, Principal Collector of Customs, Mr. Newton Samarasinghe, Deputy Controller of Immigration and Emigration Mr. M.L. Wijeyesekera, Deputy Director (Economic Division) Finance Ministry; Mr. Lucien Rajakarunanayaka, Editor (Publications); Tourist Board and officials from the Exchange Control Import and Export Control and Treasury were present at the press conference."

WHAT DOES all this amount to ?

The Government wants to invite a group of foreign persons, allegedly distinguished in some field of human endeavour, to spend their days (some perhaps their last in retirement) in Sri Lanka—so long as they brought foreign exchange which would be paid for with FEECs. It was revealed at the press conference that about 100 to 150 persons from Scandinavian countries, the UK, USA and Western Europe had already indicated their desire to live in Sri Lanka—tax free and with all the privileges of a new caste of Brahmins.

The total amount of foreign exchange which Sri Lanka can earn on this count will be as piddlingly small as the amount they have realised by levying a tax on Ceylonese employed abroad. But the cost in the denigration of moral values in Sri Lanka will be great and will ultimately affect the popularity of the UF government. The migrant and the two-week tourists in the island, now being hailed as the

economic saviours, will soon prove a blight on the economy as well as on the social fabric of the country—whatever be the current proclamations to the contrary by agencies of the Government which have mesmerised themselves and others into the belief that tourism will bring prosperity to the nation. The new class of permanent tourists, (resident guests, if you please), will become a perpetual canker in the socio-economic and political fabric of this country.

These resident guests, or permanent tourists, will constitute a new class of Brahmins who will be permitted to indulge in cultural, social and other activities—as long as such activities are not interpreted by the government in power as begin something against "the public interest or which might affect the security of the state". If such guests are to come to Ceylon, to live in retirement, what is the need to permit them to indulge in any of the activities contemplated. To every one Arthur Clarke coming to Sri Lanka there will be a hundred rotters or even Mafia-men who may want to take advantage of this offer of socio-economic asylum for nefarious activities? Will not international syndicates of smugglers and other underworld elements not send in their representatives to help the vice, narcotics and other underworld trades which are centred in Sri Lanka according to Interpol?

FERTILIZING THE POCKET

One would have thought the bureaucrats in the Thieu administration had tried every trick by now to line their pockets. However, recently they came up with one more novelty. It appears that a large group of local VIPs grabbed \$120 million worth of mineral fertilizer imported last year and black-marketed it at twice to thrice the Official price. Implicated are ten provincial governors and mayors, nine National Assembly deputies, sixty-businessmen and practically the entire executive staff of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Is this swindle the last to expect in Saigon under Thieu, we wonder?

Will the new brahmins called Resident Guests (RG) or Permanent Tourists (PT) become an adjunct of the vicious breed of CRAs we have spawned in our midst? Does a country which is struggling to go towards socialism need to have local CRAs and foreign RGs (and PTs)? Will they not set up and operate new pressure lobbies to fashion the future of this country to fit an image of their making?

Some of the paradoxes in Sri Lanka today are understandable and ordinary people will be willing to put up with the hardships and inconveniences which stem from such dialectical conflicts. But the kind of paradox centring around the actions of the government which triggered the brain drain and human outflow out of the island, on the one hand, and dangers inherent in the creation and strengthening of CRAs and RGs, on the other, offend the susceptibilities of ordinary people in this country.

This government has liquidated many brahminic castes in our midst of the recent past, and why should the government now insist on creating new groups of brahmins to eat into body politic and the social fabric of this country. The excuse of earning foreign exchange by these means is not an answer—when more foreign exchange can be earned if local private enterprise were given the same opportunities, the same tax holidays and CRA concessions to develop agriculture on a ten or fifteen year basis the same way as gem exporters, tourist entrepreneurs have been given.

The United Front government has done many things which redound to its credit, but the CRAs and RGs will tend to bring discredit to the Establishment—sooner than later.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?

One Dover customs official sensing something fishy about an incoming van, walked up and asked loudly: "Are you all right in there?" Hearing somebody say "Yes," he had the van opened and discovered 22 illegal immigrants.

Tribunania

The Press in Sri Lanka

DURING THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION conference, which concluded its sessions last Saturday, there was a great deal of discussion in the lobbies regarding the state of the press in Sri Lanka. The ban on the *Davasa* group newspapers and the take over of *Lake House* were highlighted by some people to stress that press freedom was virtually non-existent in this country. The Press Council Law was also cited as the main instrument of curbing the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the press in a free democratic society.

Tribune has pointed out, on more than one occasion, that since Independence, (and even before that for some time), there was no free press as understood in democratic society in this island. Ever since the Wijewardenas and *Lake House* had attained a dominant position by swallowing up or liquidating various independent newspapers, i.e. the *Morning Leader*, *The Ceylonese*, the *Observer* and the like, the press in Ceylon had become submerged in monopoly ownership and press freedom became a fiction. Only the owners of *Lake House*, the owners of the *Times* group and to a limited extent the owners of the *Virakesari* were in a position to give expression to their views and to make it appear that what they thought was the best for the country as a whole. More than that, these monopoly papers were also in a position to deny the freedom of expression to everybody they did not like. They did this by blacking out news, by slanting news and by managing the news.

There was really no freedom of the press in the period of the monopoly ownership of the press—the big daily press. Even after the emergence of the Gunasena family-owned *Davasa* group of papers the right of expression was only extended to a newly resurgent section of vested interests. The aim of these monopoly newspaper organisations was

to induce people to elect governments vested interests wanted, and if they failed in this objective in the general elections, they sought to bring such pressure on the elected governments—through the bait of publicity, through intimidation, character assassination and blackmail—to go the way they wanted. For a long time the newspapers had succeeded in having their way, but this abuse of press freedom had evoked deep resentment and indignation among the political circles these newspapers had tried to blacken and to isolate.

To meet this deplorable state of affairs, different political parties which were at the wrong end of the stick so far as the monopoly papers were concerned started their party daily papers, weeklies and other periodicals to offset and neutralise the impact of the slanted news purveyed by the monopoly papers. But such avowedly partisan party journals, even if they were dailies, were not able to effect a breakthrough to make press freedom a reality for the underdog and the underprivileged. The owners of the monopoly papers, in conjunction with the syndicate of big advertisers from the private sector, not only made a mockery of press freedom but also made it impossible for party journals and even independent papers like the *Tribune* to become a sizable sector of the mass media.

It was in this situation that a demand arose among those who were perpetually discriminated against by the monopoly press to either the liquidate the monopoly press or at least bring the monopoly under control. In 1964 was the first attempt to bring the biggest monopoly of all press enterprises under some kind of control, and this attempt had failed miserably.

Ever since 1970 there were various suggestions about how the monopoly press could be transformed into a free press, or at least controlled, to prevent the continuous outflow of incorrect and slanted news. Finally, the Press Council Law was passed, but in the effort to curb the predatory tendencies of the monopoly press, the law also curtailed the freedoms of even non-monopoly papers particularly those which were critical of the government in power. Shortly after that, the *Lake House* group was taken over in order to

diffuse its ownership. To make matters worse, there were serious squabbles and dog fights between different groups of shareholders in the *Times* and the *Virakesari*, and the resultant position was that those who controlled these newspapers were compelled to toe the government line for sheer survival. The *Davasa* group had tried to put up a fight for its version of freedom to publish slanted news to suit its narrow objectives—and it had lost with the ban imposed on its publication.

THE CONSEQUENCE of all this is that the press in Ceylon today gives the impression, and rightly too, that it is a servile press (to the government in power), and that press has also nothing to say. The Lake House publications are today only the purveyors of government handouts and there is little else in these papers. Even the features are selected to suit the governmental palate. Critical articles are taboo. The *Times* group is worse. It does everything to out-Herod Herod.

The press in Ceylon today has reached down to the lowest depths of degradation. The newsprint shortage no doubt compels the reduction in the number of pages, but the malady which afflicts our daily press (not taking into account party journals like the *Aththa* and the *Janadina*) is not newsprint shortage but a total inability to stand up to the government and the Establishment. Nearly eighty percent of the available advertising is controlled by government and the big daily papers run for profit depend on advertisement revenue for profitable existence. This makes the press even more servile to government than otherwise.

The resultant position therefore is that we have a daily press which only publishes what it thinks the government and the establishment would like to read. Everything else is suppressed or is slanted out into non-existence. The Government and the Press Council Law are cited as the causes for this sad decline.

The Government is no doubt to blame. It hands out advertisements only to papers it approves of and the Government also directs Lake House to toe the line in abject servility and to also create a good image of

the government and its policies and actions—thereby reducing credibility to nil.

THE GOVERNMENT has now become, it is obvious, aware of this unbecoming state of affairs and in an effort to improve the situation has appointed a Sectoral Committee of the Cabinet to bridge the communication gap and bring greater credibility to the propaganda the government wants to take to the mass of the people.

It is not the purpose of this article to preach a sermon on how things can be improved. As far as we are concerned the amount of press freedom we enjoyed in 1954 is no more or no less than we have in 1974. If one takes the trouble to go through the back files of the *Tribune* during this entire period, it will be seen that this paper has consistently maintained that the press in this country was not "free" all the way from 1954 to 1974. Before 1970, vested interests, monopoly owners and their stooges in politics, the big advertisers in the private sector—all combined to make a mockery of press freedom. After 1970, governmental intervention, legislation like the Press Council Law, the takeover of Lake House, the ban imposed on the *Davasa* group and the virtual monopoly of all advertising in governmental hands—have also combined to make an even greater mockery of press freedom than before.

Before 1970, the mass of the people had little or no faith in the press. Today, there is not the slightest doubt that the press is not taken seriously. People today buy newspapers to keep up with the obituary notices and other items of spot news not retailed by the SLBC which has already lost all credibility.

The Sectoral Committee wants to remedy this state of affairs. A questionnaire has been sent out to editors and others in a bid to find out what is wrong and what could be done to set matters right. Most people are reluctant to spend time on long answers not knowing whether any proposals or suggestions made would find acceptance even for discussion. Individual opinions however valuable or constructive, are likely in the current context to find their way into the waste paper basket.

The only hope is that the memoranda from tradeunions of journalists will find ready acceptance as a basis for discussion. In this connection, the revitalisation of the Press Association of Sri Lanka is to be welcomed. All other trade unions of journalists should also activate their members with a view to bringing pressure upon the Sectoral Committee to pay some heed to people who are in the trade and also to people who are in a position to say something worthwhile on this subject—through the trade unions.

But even before the Press Association has got a move on, the *Sri Lanka Foreign Correspondents Association* has come into the picture in a big way. At the end of August, at after the inaugural meeting reviving the Association which had subsided into dormancy for some time, the following news release was issued: "With the appointment of the high-level Keuneman committee the government has indicated a serious desire to close a so-called 'communication gap' between the administration and the mass media. In the questionnaire sent out by the National Planning Council committee special emphasis has been placed on the need 'to present a correct picture' of Sri Lanka in the foreign press. As Ceylonese journalists contributing to international news agencies, newspaper, press and radio we welcome this initiative," states a press release issued by Mr. M. F. L. de Silva, General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Foreign Correspondents' Association inaugurated yesterday.

"The interest of responsible journalism and the projection of a fair image of our country abroad are by no means contradictory. In fact any journalist

NOT BY PRAYER ALONE

The burgling of churches in Britain is so frequent now that special services were held for several days in succession at a Bolton church in this connection. The burglaries stopped, but as the local vicar, the Reverend Johnston, said: "We've also put up a six-foot wooden fence round the church, so I would imagine that helped too."

who wilfully falsifies news or consistently distorts facts not only risks his own-credibility but his assignment with a reputed news agency, newspaper or radio. As Ceylonese citizens we are equally concerned in the presentation of a fair and accurate picture of public events and issues in our country as the Government, the statement adds.

"In most countries professional journalists, particularly those contributing to international media, are actively helped and encouraged and provided with all necessary facilities. Unfortunately successive administrations have failed to establish such a liaison. It is our intention to help establish such a liaison with the government specially the Foreign Ministry. We are therefore happy at the initiative taken by the National Planning Council and also in the interest taken by the Sri Lanka Press Council on this same question. In order to support these initiatives with concrete and practical proposals, Ceylonese journalists contributing to foreign mass media have formed a professional association despite the unhappy failure of such a project earlier. Membership is open to Ceylonese only but associate membership will be granted to non-Ceylonese foreign correspondents based in Colombo. We also hope to invite as associate members foreign correspondents based in Delhi, Karachchi and Singapore whose 'beat' includes Sri Lanka.

"The membership of the new Association includes contributors to international news agencies, newspapers and journals with worldwide circulation and national press, radio and TV in India, Pakistan UK, US, West Germans, France, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Iraq, Hongkong and Thailand."

This press release sets out very succinctly the crux of the problem which confronts the foreign correspondent operating in this country. There is no doubt a communication gap, but the primary responsibility for the gap rests on the different Governments which have isolated themselves from the foreign press. Solving the problems confronting the press in Sri Lanka is a complex and delicate matter involving many sensitive fields of activity but it would not be difficult to establish a dialogue with the Foreign Correspondents who function in Sri Lanka so that the communication gap complained about is eliminated. This cannot be done by straight-jacketing the correspondents or by imposing a

ensorship on outgoing copy. Such draconian measures will not serve any purpose—they will boomerang on the government and tend to isolate the government from the world press and the world public opinion. A small country like Sri Lanka cannot afford to wage war on the world press, nor can it ignore the world press or isolate the country from the rest of the world.

And the government cannot expect foreign correspondents, even if they be Sri Lanka citizens to tell the contemporary story of the island in the style and language required by politicians and bureaucrats of the ruling Establishment. The absence of dialogue and communication between foreign Correspondents and government spokesman often tend to drive journalists to find refuge and copy in Opposition circles, but it is the Government that must take the blame for this embarrassing situation.

It would be foolish on the part of the Government to expect Foreign Correspondents to paint a rosy picture of any current situation or to sell the the indefensible actions of the Government to the world press with suitable sugar coating. Correspondents who fall for this kind of governmental pressure will soon lose their jobs. Foreign papers want correct appraisals based on interpretative analyses, and the more objective the reports are, the more credibility the reports will have.

There are, no doubt, foreign papers which have a reputation for publishing slanted stories, but if the correct analysis appears in the more responsible papers in the world the incorrect and mischievous stories will fall by the wayside. If there is proper dialogue, communication and liaison between the Government and the body of foreign correspondents, tendentious and mischievous stories will disappear or will lose their sting.

NEXT ISSUE

- BANDARANAIKE
- BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—2
- MYSTERY OF LEMURIA
- PM's VISIT

The manner in which the Sectoral Committee sets about its business will be testimony to its *bona fides* and as to whether it means business or whether it is only a smokescreen for pushing some pre-conceived bureaucratic notions which seem to be already floating around in Colombo as to how the foreign press and foreign correspondents should be dragooned into the service of the government of Sri Lanka to say how the millenium of the socialist Utopia was already around the corner.

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INTERNATIONAL-AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

• CHILE • SIKKIM

EVEN THE DAILY PAPERS in Sri Lanka gave an unexpectedly large coverage for the worldwide protests against the actions of the military junta which had overthrown the Allende government in Chile one year ago. Protests had come from the *Solidarity with Chile Committees* in all socialist and many Third World countries. But something which was unusual with protests of this kind was that protests had also come this time from developed western and other countries, and also many International Organisations which had so far tended to be silent when right-wing governments and dictatorships had to be condemned.

But the hangover from the cold war days of John Foster Dulles, which had prevented many international organisations from condemning any rightwing government which persecuted the left, had taken a long time to disappear. But in recent years, organisations like the International Commission of Jurists, the Human Rights Organisation, the Amnesty International and other similar organisations have ventured to denounce rightwing governments for violations of civil liberties and human rights whereas earlier they had confined their criticisms to left and socialist governments.

In the case of Chile, ever since the Junta indulged in its bloodbath to wipe out the communists, socialists and the pinkish supporters of Allende, every wellknown civil liberties and human rights organisation has regularly and persistently lodged protests against the new Chilean government. The last fortnight, culminating with the *Solidarity Day with Chile*, marking the first anniversary of the assumption of power by the Junta, reached an all-time peak for such protests. Amnesty International released an 86-page report detailing the work of the organisation on behalf of political prisoners against torture and capital punishment in some 100 countries in the last year. In regard to Chile the report called for the

appointment of United Nations Commissioner of Human Rights with effective powers of investigation to look into such matters—on the basis of a resolution which had been adopted by the UN General Assembly last November calling for a ban on torture. This resolution, according to the Amnesty International, marked "a new awareness and willingness by the United Nations to recognise that international responsibility extends to human rights as well as to war and peace."

The report referred to "the tragedy of Chile," with a succession of death penalties, the prevalence of torture and an apparently limitless number of persons detained. The International Commission, set up in Stockholm, to investigate the Chilean military Junta's crimes, has demanded the immediate release of Luis Corvalan and other political prisoners. "The Commission's secretariat circulated a document describing the terror and lawlessness perpetrated by the military fascist junta. Prominent lawyers and representatives of the Chilean resistance movement took part in the commission's work. This indicting document was presented at a press conference by the Commission's Secretary General, the prominent Swedish lawyer Hans-Goeran Frank. He stressed that the junta should be held responsible for mass murder and torture.

"Sergie Insunsa, the former Minister of Justice in the Allende government, spoke at the press conference about the importance of international solidarity with the Chilean people's liberation struggle. Tens of thousands of people were killed or tortured to death without trial and investigation in Chile during the year after the coup against the lawful Allende government, it was noted at the press conference. The junta is continuing to make mass arrests in an attempt to suppress the people's resistance and to create a permanent atmosphere of uncertainty and fear in the country. Over 21,000 arrests were made in July-August alone. On separate days, the junta's agents made over fifteen-hundred arrests. The detainees are held for months without investigation and trial and no charges are made against them. They cannot count on any legal aid."

While protests were mounted in all countries, in the USA the news that the CIA had played a major role in overthrowing the Allende government had sparked a fresh round of protests. A Reuter report from Washington on 11.9.74 had stated: "Senate officials are studying testimony by administration officials in preparation for possible hearings into whether the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) spent millions of dollars to oppose the late President Salvador Allende of Chile. The work is being conducted by the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on Multi-National Corporations, which last year probed an offer of funds by International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) officials to help finance CIA activities against the Marxist President."

"A decision on whether hearings will be held awaits talks later this week among members of the Sub-Committee headed by Senator Frank Church. The issue was touched off by a letter written by House of Representatives member Michael Harrington who said CIA Director William Colby told a Congressional Sub-Committee that the National Security Council had authorised spending more than eight million dollars in Chile between 1970 and 1973 to oppose the government of Mr. Allende."

Another agency from Washington had reported: "Senator Edward Kennedy said on Monday that the facts about CIA financing subversive actions against Salvador Allende's government in Chile were evidence of scandalous violations of the policy proclaimed by the USA, of non-intervention into Chilean affairs. Official spokesman of the United States administration, the Senator recalled, more than once asserted that there was no intervention in Chilean affairs and this was refuted by the testimony, made public, of CIA Director William Colby at a private sitting in Congress in April. Senator Kennedy urged Congress to hold the USA role in Chilean events.

"Donald Fraser, the Chairman of the sub-committee on international organisations and movements of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, said that the USA Administration had deceived Congress and the American people, denying its participation in the overthrow of the

Allende government. Congressman Michael Harrington also called for a thorough inquiry into the role of the CIA in Chile."

After the storm had burst about CIA intervention, Colby in a fresh statement sought to wriggle out of an embarrassing position by stating that the CIA had not spent money to promote the coup or the military overthrow of Allende—but that it had spent money to undermine Allende's position *vis a vis* the next elections. This explanation only made matters worse and with all the earlier statements about CIA's non intervention in Chile, the credibility attached to statements made by chiefs of agencies like the CIA have touched a new low.

This uproar in the USA, in the wake of Watergate and Nixon's resignation, is likely to bring a new dawn of democratic awareness that it was unsafe to play a Jekyll and Hyde role in international affairs in an open democratic society.

Another report from Washington indicated that there was serious re-thinking on a number of matters inside the USA. "The head of the US Central Intelligence Agency was reported today to have acknowledged that millions of dollars were authorised for use in undercover activities against the Government of the late Chilean President Salvador Allende. CIA Director William Colby told Congressmen the aim was to destabilise President Allende's left-wing regime, according to reports in both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. Both papers quoted a confidential seven-page letter from Democratic representatives Michael Harrington to House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Chairman, Thomas Morgan."

Many commentators in Europe have predicted that the same fate that befell the Greek junta would soon overtake the Chilean junta.

IN SRI LANKA the once conservatively staid (under private ownership) *Daily News* (now under government sponsorship) came out on September 13th with a strident editorial appeal for support to the scattered leftwing forces of Allende now under persecution by the Junta.

"Today the JCTUO, the country's largest trade union federation, holds a rally to express solidarity with the people of Chile and to denounce the fascist junta which ousted the democratically elected government

of Salvador Allende just one year ago. Earlier this week the youth leagues of the UF triumvirate marked the same occasion as part of an international effort by civilised opinion everywhere to focus attention on the brutal repression that is still going on in Chile. The *Daily News* joins this worldwide campaign of protest and solidarity quite readily for two reasons. First, the brutal suppression of human liberties anywhere is a matter of moral concern. But some situations have a more direct bearing on our own struggles and strivings than others. Since September 19th 1970 when we published in these columns, a week after Dr. Allende's election victory, an article entitled 'A faraway parallel' this newspaper has sustained a continuing interest in Chilean affairs and invited the same from our readers.... We join civilised opinion in all countries in its condemnation of these actions of the Chilean government as a brutal assault on human dignity...."

Whilst the *furor* in Washington about CIA's involvement in overthrowing Allende reached a crescendo, in Peking the main target of attack was directed against India for what it had done in regard to Sikkim. China has not been particularly worried about the developments in Chile, and it will be recalled was one of the first governments to recognise the Junta as the government of Chile. China, therefore, did not indulge in any criticism of the Junta. But India was under fire in a big way. On September 11, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China issued a statement the full text of which was released by *Hsinhua*. It read: "

"Recently, in disregard of the resolute opposition of the people of Sikkim and world public opinion, the Indian Parliament brazenly adopted a Constitutional Amendment making Sikkim an 'Associate State' of India, thus annexing the Kingdom of Sikkim in a colonialist way. This is another act of outright expansionism committed by the Indian Government after dis-membering Pakistan with the backing of the Soviet Union. The Chinese Government and people express great indignation at this act and strongly condemn it.

"Inheriting the mantle of imperialism, India has since independence

pursued a colonialist policy towards Sikkim. She sent troops to invade and occupy Sikkim, turned Sikkim into her 'protectorate' and seized control of Sikkim's national defence and internal and external affairs. The Indian Government probably felt its hand strengthened after its first nuclear test in May this year, allegedly for peaceful purposes, and thought it could do whatever it pleased with its neighbours. So in June it imposed on the people of Sikkim a so-called 'the Government of Sikkim Bill' entirely of its own making. India's colonial rule over Sikkim aroused the strong resistance of the Sikkimese people. They staged many demonstrations, demanding the annulment of the India-Sikkim treaty and the ouster of Indian troops. The Chogyal of Sikkim repeatedly wrote to the Indian Prime Minister, protesting against the Indian Government's incorporation of Sikkim into India and demanding the maintenance of Sikkim's 'separate identity and international personality'. Now, the Indian Government has flagrantly annexed Sikkim. This is a provocation to the justice-upholding peoples of the world and a challenge to the historical trend of national independence. The Chinese Government solemnly states that it absolutely does not recognize India's illegal annexation of Sikkim and that it firmly supports the people of Sikkim

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in their just struggle for national independence and sovereignty and against Indian expansionism.

"The Indian Government's shameful act of annexing Sikkim has been strongly condemned by all countries and people that uphold justice. The Soviet Union alone, however, has blatantly cheered India and expressed support for Indira Gandhi's Government. This is another proof that Soviet revisionist social-imperialism is the boss behind the scenes as well as the abettor of Indian expansionism.

"Expansionists never come to a good end. The Indian Government will be no exception. It must not think that it can enslave a nation and annex a state without getting due punishment. The crime of the Government's annexation of Sikkim is bound to arouse the Sikkimese people and the people of the whole world, including the Indian people, to even stronger resistance. It can be said with certainty that the Indian Government, which starts with injuring others, will end up by ruining itself."

The Chinese government has insisted that all peoples and governments that uphold justice have denounced this action of India. But, up to the time of writing, the government of Sri Lanka has been silent about the events in Sikkim. It is unlikely that it will indulge in any criticism of the Indian action, and even if it "regrets" such action it will be couched in cautious diplomatic language. The Government of Nepal has not said anything, although elements in Nepal who had dreamed about a Himalayan Federation (of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim) under Nepalese hegemony have staged some protests and demonstrations. Pakistan has sought to utilise its condemnation of the Indian action in Sikkim to squeeze arms from the US. Opinion in Britain has been cynically pragmatic and no surprise has been expressed in the USA.

Politicians in Sri Lanka and other countries with multi-racial populations will think twice before making an unequivocal stand for Sikkim. If the Sikkimese have a right to a separate identity and statehood, the Tamils in Sri Lanka have an even greater claim for such self-determination. When the Portu-

guese colonialists came to Ceylon, the Tamils had a separate kingdom, a separate king and a separate territory—and if history consists in going back to the *status quo ante* the colonialists the Tamils in Sri Lanka have every right to expect support to establish a separate kingdom.

Once again, as was pointed out in this column last week, Peking has fallen back to karmic retribution to punish "expansionists". They will "never come to a good endwithout getting due punishment". Peking is certain that if "the Indian government which starts with injuring others, will end by ruining itself" The only concrete suggestion of evil overtaking India is that "resistance" will grow in India and in Sikkim against the government. Does this portend increased guerilla and naxalite activity in India in the near future?

All that is said in this connection in this column is not a defence of India or its actions. This is only a comment, with touch of cynical and pragmatic eclecticism about the state of the world. In the contemporary world of geopolitics, India will naturally seek to establish hegemony in the subcontinent south of the Himalayan ridge and watershed. Every country which is strong enough to assert itself seeks to establish its hegemony over a particular territory. Every country seeks to secure its hegemony within certain territorial limits to the extent of its strength.

To view history in any other way, in the present context, will land a person into a cul-de-sac of unreality and consistency. India's anxiety to secure its natural northern frontier must be recognised in realistic terms, and if this were done it will not be difficult for others to co-exist with India. The northern frontier of India has always been the most vulnerable (indeed the only vulnerable) boundary. All invasions of India have come from the North through the passes in the Himalayas, and modern India, growing in power and strength, desires to secure this frontier. Unless this simple fact is understood and recognised, it will be difficult to know the realities of South Asian geopolitics.

WHILST CHILE stole the headline in most parts of the world last week, attention on Sikkim was focussed by China. In the meantime, Emperor Haile Selassie has been deposed,

and though his son has been invited to succeed him, political power in Ethiopia has moved into the hands of a military junta. What changes they will bring and in what direction they will move is not clear as yet. In Portugal, the military-cum-civil government in power has wisely decided to divest itself of its colonial empire. Guinea-Bissau has become an independent country from September 10 under the leadership of Cabral. In Mozambique an attempt by the white settlers to do "Rhodesia" and establish a white regime by unilateral action was crushed by the Portuguese army with the help of the local black guerilla forces. The actual transfer of power in Angola and Mozambique is likely to prove difficult, but once the decision has been taken it is only a matter of time before new governments emerge in these territories. How stable they will be and how efficient they will be is problematic, but history is not a smooth progression from slavery to freedom because there are so many zig-zags in the dialectical process that it is difficult to make any predictions.

In the USA, President Ford seems to have stirred up a hornet's nest, with the unconditional pardon he has given to President Nixon. But opinion in the USA will ultimately resist the temptation to pick on the Nixon "carcass" now that he is fallen man.

SINNERS ALL

Cardinal Danielou, well known in France for his advocacy of the celibacy of the clergy, died suddenly in the home of a stripper named Mimi Santoni. She met clergy and police at the door dressed—undressed?—as at her nightclub performances. The Paris *Le Canard Enchaîné* acridly observed that the late 69-year-old prelate had come to confess her. However, when it transpired that this prince of the church had been a regular visitor, all the Catholic paper *La Croix* could say was: "We, Christians, know that each of us is a sinner".

CHRONICLE

SEPTEMBER 5 — SEPTEMBER 12

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
 COMPILED FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES
 PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5: At the commencement of yesterday's sittings of the National State Assembly, Mr. I. A. Cader, Deputy Speaker, said that the Constitutional Court has informed the Speaker of the NSA that the Bill amending the Interpretation Ordinance referred to it on Tuesday was consistent with the provisions of the Constitution: standing Orders will be suspended to debate the Bill to a finish in the Assembly today. According to the *Daily News*, Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, was yesterday given a rousing reception when she arrived at Islamabad on the first day of her five-day official visit to Pakistan: Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mrs Bhutto were the first to greet the Premier at the airport. The Sri Lanka delegation to the 20th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference beginning at the BMICH tomorrow will be led by the Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera. Sri Lanka yesterday signed a contract with the Government of India for the purchase of 11,000 tons of sugar: the sugar will be delivered in the first week of October. The Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, addressing a seminar at the Petroleum Corporation said that by April next year Sri Lanka expects to use its own oil from Pesalai. The three-member Committee appointed by the Council of Legal Education to inquire into and report on an agreement entered into between the International Legal Centre, New York and the Principal of the Sri Lanka Law College has noted in its report that the Principal has appeared to have violated the terms of the contract of employment: the report of the Committee was tabled in the National State Assembly by Justice Minister Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike. Libyan leader, Co'onel Muammar Gaddafi, reaffirmed his faith in the Arab oil weapon and in his cherished dream of Arab unity. An official inquiry has re-affirmed that Indian revolutionary Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose— leader of the pro-Japanese Indian National Army—died in an air crash in August 1945. Former President Richard Nixon's chief Watergate accuser, John Dean, yesterday began a prison term of one to four years for his role in the affair.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6: The 20th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conferences will be ceremonially declared open by the President, Mr. William Gopallawa, this morning at the BMICH hall: about 250 delegates from 90 parliaments from Commonwealth nations have arrived in Colombo for this 20th meeting of the CPA: they include Speakers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Parliamentarians. The Interpretation Ordinance (Amendment) Bill passed its second reading in the National State Assembly last night by 86 votes to 15. No more off ration sugar will be available to consumers for purchase over the counter with immediate effect: the quota of sugar supplied on the ration will

be reduced to 3/4th pound per ration book holder from October: the price at which the ration sugar will be made available will be decided on later. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, paid a tribute to Sri Lanka's foreign policy and its contribution to strengthening the principles of sovereign equality of states non-interference and non-use of force on which alone they could build a durable structure of peace in the region and in the world at large: Mr. Bhutto paid this compliment in his speech of welcome at the banquet in honour of Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike at Rawalpindi: the two Premiers had a three hour round of discussions at Rawalpindi: international issues, energy crisis in relation to developing countries in the South Asian region and the great powers and the general world situation were the subjects of their discussions. A pair of hand-crafted brass temple lamps was presented to the John F Kennedy Centre for the performing arts by the Sri Lanka Ambassador in the US. According to the *Daily News*, the US dollar has gone up steadily in relation to the rupee: the sterling pound in contrast has started losing its value due to an unexpected drop in the London share-market. The United States and East Germany formally established diplomatic relations to end more than two decades of estrangement and cold war enmity: the two sides signed an agreement on Wednesday at the State Department in Washington and pledged to exchange Ambassadors soon. Portuguese Foreign Minister Mario Soares indicated he hoped to sign an independence agreement for Mozambique by Saturday.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7: The Twentieth Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference opened at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall yesterday with magnificent show of pomp and pageantry: the President Mr. William Gopallawa remarked in his address that the basic problem before the Commonwealth today is that its member nations are broadly divided into "developing" and "developed" nations: Mr. Gopallawa called for a fair deal from the advanced nations. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, the Acting Prime Minister, stressed the need to expand "collective freedoms" while safeguarding personal liberty and individual rights. The Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing a special joint session of the Senate and the National Assembly of Pakistan on Thursday said that Sri Lanka had steadfastly pursued a policy of non alignment with military alliances and to free herself from the pressures of great power rivalries. According to the *Daily Mirror*, forty one estates totalling 53,000 acres in extent are to be handed over to the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation by the Land Reforms Commission: yesterday deeds were signed for the handing over of five estates to the Plantations Corporation by the Land Reforms Commission. According to the *Daily Mirror*, revenue from rubber exports bounced to a new high during the first five months of 1974: the actual amount of foreign exchange earned on the exports of rubber during the period January to May this year amounted to Rs. 339.8 million and this was 144.3 million higher than the export earning during the same period in 1973. An American radio network said that it had learned from a US Congressional delegation now in Peking that ailing Chinese Premier Chou En Lai had "taken a turn for the worse": the Mutual Broadcasting system said it had telephoned

Senator Hubert Humphrey, a member of the Group in Peking and he had reported "the Vice Premier told us Chou's condition was worse": Senator Humphrey told the network that two members of the Chinese Central Committee abruptly left a dinner given by the American delegation. The plight of the 160,000 refugees in Cyprus and other pressing humanitarian issues will be discussed by the Greek-Cypriot President Glafkos Clerides and Turkish Leader Rauf Denktaş when their delayed talks gets underway.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: According to the *Sunday Observer*, when the Prime Minister was accorded a civic reception by the Lahore Municipal Corporation she called for the establishment and consolidation of an Asian identity to promote the interests of all Asian peoples: the Premier has told that closer contact between Pakistan and Sri Lanka would help forge their identity. According to the *Sunday Times*, the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, has told a mass meeting in Minuwangoda yesterday that the United Front Government does not fear to face a general election and the Government is sure of victory again and there is no need to fight shy of another polls. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Justice, Public Administration and Local Government, addressing the second Plenary Session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference at the BMICH yesterday said that he would stretch his hand to invite the friends in the Tamil United Front to come to the South, just as he went to the North and talk to him in whatever language they can, and discuss all their problems. The Security division of the Ceylon Transport Board has busted a forged season ticket racket estimated to have cost the Board between one two lakhs of ruppes during the past year: this estimation was made on a single detection made at the Mahara Depot of the Board. Justice Minister, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike leaves for West Asia Today at the head of a delegation to promote economic co-operation between Sri Lanka and the oil-rich states: the delegation will also visit Iran, where too, they will continue the discussions they had during the previous visit: the team will also visit Saudi Arabia. Mozambique won its independence on Saturday after 5000 years of Portuguese domination and a bloody ten year guerilla war waged by the front for the Liberation of Mozambique. China has accused the Kremlin leaders of having invoked the old Tsars spirits in a bid to "found a big Soviet revisionist empire embracing Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America:" the charge came in an article in the latest issue of the party journal *Red Flag*, which the New China News Agency claims "unmasks the Soviet revisionists who claim to be the ally of the third world."

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9: Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, and the Pakistan Premier, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto have expressed gratification over the progress so far achieved towards the proposal to establish the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace: the joint communique issued at the end of Mrs Bandaranaike's five day state visit to Pakistan also noted that the Pakistan Premier had complimented Mrs Bandaranaike on the success of her policies vis a vis India: Mr. Bhutto, the communique said, informed Mrs Bandaranaike that despite the set back caused by the Indian nuclear explosion, the process of normalisation between Pakistan and India was being resumed: The Prime

Minister is scheduled to leave for West Germany today at the end of her five-day state visit to Pakistan. According to the *Daily News* a committee has been appointed by the Government which will report on the retiring age of public servants and corporation employees, including the University of Sri Lanka: the committee has been asked to submit its report at the end of this month. According to the *Daily Mirror*, a delegation of Nursing Service Trade Union Federation which met the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr B. Y. Tudawe, has requested that University courses should be conducted to the nursing staff in keeping with such facilities in other countries. According to the *Daily News*, the Ministry of Justice has been instructed by the Government to draft legislation to prohibit any unauthorised persons from carrying firearms to any public meetings or in processions or demonstrations. Mr. Pieter Keuneman returned from Moscow yesterday after a three-week visit. President Gerald Ford granted a full pardon to former President Mr. Richard Nixon for any offensive which he may have committed while in office. The Indian Parliament yesterday completed passage of a constitutional amendment which turns the Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim into an associated state of India: Mr. Swaran Singh, the Foreign Minister, rejected charges that India was annexing Sikkim, levelled by the Marxist Communist Party. Greek Foreign Minister, George Mavros, completed about eight hours of talks with deposed Cyprus President Archbishop Makarios and said they had agreed on a common stand for putting the Cyprus problem before the United Nations.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10: According to *Daily Mirror*, the Government last week gave its approval to a scheme under which foreigners will be issued visas for a period of five years during which they will be exempted from payment of Temporary Residence Tax: such persons, who will be known as Resident Guests, will be required to bring into the country a stipulated amount of foreign exchange during a stipulated period for the maintenance of himself and his family: one of the conditions for the issue of visas to such persons will be that they will not engage in any form of employment, trade or business, paid or unpaid. The Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, at a press conference in Karachchi yesterday said that the people of Sri Lanka are meeting the challenge of inflation and turning back the tide: the Prime Minister arrived in Bonn yesterday to begin the eight-day tour of West Germany. According to the *Daily News*, fifty two more estate schools will be taken over by the government before the end of this year: this follows discussion between the Education Minister Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud and the Minister of Plantation Industries, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva. Mr. Ranbanda Ratnamalala, SLFP MP for Kalawewa died on Sunday: he had been ailing for some time. According to the *Daily News*, around 4.9 million school and higher educational text books required for next year, will be available for sale by the end of November this year: the estimated cost of printing these text books is around Rs. 18 million. Three girls and three men yesterday pleaded not guilty before the Criminal Justice Commission (Insurgency) when they were produced and charged with conspiracy to abduct the Prime Minister from her Rosmead Place residence on the night of April 5, 1971: in all nine suspects were produced and three

of them have pleaded guilty: the Director of Public Prosecution called for deterrent punishment for those who pleaded guilty. President Ford's decision to grant Richard Nixon a full pardon for any offences committed while in office has provoked a storm of controversy which some Senators say could end the "honeymoon" between the White House and Congress: Democratic Congressmen said the pardon was too soon and unwise. The head of the US Central Intelligence Agency was reported yesterday to have acknowledged that millions of dollars were authorised for use in undercover activities against the government of the late Chilean President Salvador Allende.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11: The Prime Minister, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, told at the lunch given in her honour in Bonn yesterday by the Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany that the people of Sri Lanka and she were deeply conscious of the magnanimous measures of economic aid and technical assistance which continued to flow to Sri Lanka: two agreements of substantial benefit to Sri Lanka were signed yesterday in Bonn: under one agreement Sri Lanka will get 23,000 metric tons of fertilised worth nearly Rs. 15 million: under the second agreement there will be an extension of the farm mechanisation program in Anuradhapura. According to the *Daily News*, the Cabinet has appointed a Committee consisting of representatives from three Ministries to formulate and revise Sri Lanka's aviation policy, including the granting of landing rights to airlines. At the 20th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference now being held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, several delegates put forward the view that aid for developing countries was welcome and the developed countries should help the developing countries by providing better terms of trade. According to the *Daily Mirror*, there was a thirty per cent drop in the coconut crop in 1973: while 2,900 million nuts were plucked in 1972, the 1973 crop was only 2,000 million nuts. The Ministry of Education, in a official note entitled *University Admissions*, states that the standardisation of marks and the media-wise admissions to the University had become necessary because there were variations in marking from one language to another. Mr. Susil de Zoysa, President of the London Branch of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, died in a car accident. Regulations have been gazetted under the Public Security Ordinance prohibiting any person while being present at any public meeting or on the occasion of any procession or demonstration, carrying or displaying any firearm. Indian External Affairs Minister, Swaran Singh, had talks in Moscow with Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, in international problems and bilateral relations. Portugal formally recognised Guinea-Bissau, formerly Portuguese Guinea.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12: West German Chancellor accepted an invitation by the Sri Lanka Prime Minister to visit the island: but no date for the visit has yet been fixed: Mrs Bandaranaike currently touring West Germany had two hours of talks with Chancellor Schmidt on bilateral relations and problems facing developing countries as a result of the energy crisis. Funds in accounts lying unused for a period of more than ten years at commercial banks can be transferred to a special account in the Central Bank: this

is one of the many amendments to the Monetary Law Act which has been gazetted in a Amending Bill on the orders of the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera. The Minister of Finance leaves for Mauritius tomorrow to explore the possibility of obtaining sugar at reduced prices: from Mauritius he will leave for Washington to attend the International Monetary Fund talks. At the Panel discussion of "World Population Year" at the 20th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference it was told that family planning is not the only answer to contain the present rate of population growth in several countries: a solution to this could be found only, with the raising of the living standards of the people. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Government yesterday decided to suspend the recoveries of loans from public servants until the implementation of the proposed Credit Council Scheme: the recoveries of loans include recoveries from Lady Lochore Loan Fund, distress loans etc. According to the *Daily News*, arrangements will be made to enable members of the nursing profession to continue their education in the universities: the Junior Minister of Education, Mr. B. Y. Tudawe, said that the details are now being worked out with the Ministry of Health. According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka nationals can now purchase rupee air tickets for travel to Bangkok from the national carrier, Air Ceylon: travellers will, however, have to pay 65 per cent FEECs in addition to the air fare: passengers must furnish documentary evidence to the Controller of Exchange that they would be looked after by friends or relatives during their stay abroad. Government's top level 'braindrain' committee meets today to discuss the recommendations of a sub committee, of officials on methods of stopping the flight of talent. The Athens coroner ruled out the possibility of sabotage in the crash last Sunday of a Trans World Airlines Boeing 707 in which 88 people died. Chilean Chief of State General Augusto Pinochet announced the release of all political prisoners held under the current State of Siege "with the sole exception of some exceptionally serious cases". The Chogyal (ruler) of the Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim will meet Indian Foreign Minister and if possible the Prime Minister: the ruler of Sikkim has been pressing for a meeting with Mrs Gandhi ever since the Indian Government drew up legislation to change his country from a protectorate to an associate state of India.

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BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE-I

THE SOWING OF A SEED

By Herbert Keuneman

THIS IS THE STORY of the building, in a village in the southern Vanni, of a house which its author hoped should neither clash with the norms of local architectural tradition nor sacrifice too many amenities from the consuetudes of more urbanized living. But the metatheses imposed upon the prospective dweller in such a house in such an environment call for no less adaptation. So, **THIS IS ALSO THE STORY** of village men and events and attitudes, and of the still too slowly closing gap between two poles of Sri Lanka's people.

I shall never forget the first time I saw Ehetuwewa, more than fifteen years ago.

I was writing a series of articles on THE RESTHOUSES OF CEYLON and I had to get from Hiripitiya to Galgamuwa. There was, of course, the main road (joining the Kurunegala Puttalam Route at Wariyapola and then, at Padeniya, striking directly north for Anuradhapura) on which Galgamuwa lay. But there is always a Main Road, overrun and over-familiar, wherever one wants to go; whereas it is the byways that open out the view, offer one the insights, get to the heart of a countryside. There seemed to be just such a road as we desired, only a thin red line on the Motor Map of the period, but it was the names it strung together that decided us: Kumbukgete, Rambe, Polpitigama, Ehetuwewa....

We had been running for several miles through rather drab and scrubby jungle when the road suddenly turned a bend and ventured out onto the narrow bund of a village tank.

(It is a pity the English word 'tank' has none of the lovelier associations of the Portuguese '*tanque*', a lake, whence it derives: 'tank' suggests riveted iron, and probably rusty, at that! 'lake' suggests blue water and greensward and trees, and sunlit clouds diapering the seamless azure silk of the sky. Actually, a tank is Sri Lanka adds even more: floating water-flowers pink, white or cold ashy-violet; birdlife in profusion, stalking the shallows, swimming the surface, hovering or soaring above it or stringing the sky with windblown skeins; wandering cattle graze the verges and, if water-buffalo, heave themselves from their wallows shining like wet slate; there is a continual human traffic from the village and it is thrice as colourful as other village traffic, because water takes the most faded cloths and dyes them vivid, thrice as red or purple or saffron as they are dry; and finally there are always the fields stretched to the distance below the tank, green with grain or silvery-yellow with stubble or rich with dark earth awaiting the seed.) You will forgive me, will you not? Tanks tend to get me like this and I go into a spasm of languishing prose; but I promise it shall not happen too often.

ANYWAY, Ehetuwewa had all this stipendiary loveliness and bonuses beside. One of the latter was immediately presented: just beyond the water swelled the splendid half-rocky half-forested ridge of Galgiriya-kanda, 1,500 feet above its mirror-like surface, supplying just what the landscape needed of physical diversity. The other bonus we had later the same day.

That afternoon my wife and I spoke at the same moment, each suggesting we drive back the 8 miles from Galgamuwa and gaze again at

the view that had so attracted us, under a softer light.

We drew up this time at the northern end of the bund—though the view was not as good as from the farther corner—to watch an old man an old man who, using no tool but a simple pen-knife, was most skilfully carving a walking-stick. (I wrote an article devoted to him, later, and he became a collector's vogue for some while. But alas! his fame turned him into something of a bore, and he took to presenting walking-sticks to visiting dignitaries

in Colombo, journeying all the way to make the presentation and return perhaps with a *quid pro quo*. He presented a walking-stick to Gargarin, and Gargarin gave him a celluloid button with his picture on it.)

It was while we were talking to Carolis Appuhamy that Ehetuwewa offered us the second bonus: its children.

Both teachers, my wife and I liked children, even *en masse*: which is a fair test! But the children of Ehetuwewa were quite pre-eminently likeable. There was about them a delightful grave dignity. They were not in the least solemn, or even reserved; but they were not forward nor fatuously boisterous. Least of all were they rapacious the way we had seen the less sophisticated and self-conscious among their urban counterparts grow during the famous Period of Transition. These were just friendly—neighbourly—as between equals. We had never before felt the generation gap so narrow.

We walked to the far end of the bund for the view, and about forty children walked with us! We said we wished we lived in such a place, and they said well, why didn't we? We asked—half-hoping—was there a house we might rent to live in? and they said there was a *tanayama*, now disused, and they would take us to see it.

The *tanayama* lay a hundred yards beyond where we had parked the car and about as far off the road, overlooking a high-water arm of the tank. It was in no great disrepair, though cattle had slept in it and bats even now hung from the roof; it was shaded over by large trees, noblest of which were two magnificent Rain Trees amongst the flowers of which a large flock of Little Minivets, strangely matching them, cheeped and fluttered, and while we watched a pair Black-backed Yellow Woodpeckers flew to one of them and began pecking into the bark; Galgiriya-kanda faced the house, so placed that the morning sun when it topped the crest would shine straight into the half-walled porch that should do us duty for a living-room. (For we had already begun to think in such terms.)

IT IS EXTRAORDINARY how diverse influences will sometimes shape events toward an unexpected end.

We were footloose, it was true, having both recently retired. But we had just built ourselves a very pleasant house near Colombo and were, we thought, firmly set to enjoy it; and a day earlier nothing would have seemed less probable than that we should leave the home we had so thoughtfully planned and furnished and commit ourselves if not literally to the jungle, at least to the edge of the jungle. Yet Ehetuwewa, did we but know it, already had us in thrall: by various inducements she lured us to her.

In those years, 'with the world so new-and-all', with the first Bandaranaike Government offering the common man what looked like the augury of a fair deal, even those (like us) not politically gifted felt within them the ferment of a new social order in the making, and none that was not entirely indurated could avoid the prick of conscience urging whatever contribution he was fit to make toward that long-looked for future. From each according to his ability....

I must confess that politics repel me: they have become the art not of the possible but of the personally expedient. They repelled us then; though a few men of vision and integrity still engaged in them. But we did remember what even the best politicians tend to forget: that nothing politically won makes the least difference to society until the *individuals* of society can lay hold on what it is claimed has been won for them. There is, of course, administrative machinery for mediating such gains. But oh! the—*er—lubrication* that machinery demands!

(I here digress; but only to provide an example of the kind of thing I mean. Even as I now write, sixteen years later and despite the political assumption that there exists an established People's Government, I have watched for nearly a year and with increasing depression and skepticism the struggle of a man—his name is Pinhamy, of Galkadawala, should you wish to check—to obtain so much as a *ruling* upon a perfectly legitimate request. Some day perhaps I shall tell you his story. I shall certainly tell it if the Government vindicates itself. But for the Administration to rule for Pinhamy might be to abjure possibly useful and profitable, though reactionary, agencies; while to rule against him might call a political bluff. The

'art of the possible' as it is currently interpreted would seem to be therefore not to rule at all until circumstances can be created that will materially alter the case!)

HERE, THEN, it seemed to us, was one kind of service we could render. We had many friends, in reasonably high places, whose impartiality and whose faith in the held-out future we could not doubt. If we could liaison between someone reaching for theoretically available pie-in-the-sky and some other who could put it legitimately in his hands—short-circuiting, where necessary, those in the 'normal channels' who might carve off in the passage a slice of pie for themselves—should we, too, not be contributing according to our ability? (This is, of course, scoffed at as the typical a-political do-gooder approach. But is a 'good' done altruistically—even if nothing nobler than a bad conscience lies beneath the doing of it—any less good than the same benefit conferred merely upon a political stooge?) Ehetuwewa seemed a good place to begin.

To be sure, we could have indulged this sort of thing in Colombo just as well and a great deal more conveniently. But the simple fact is we liked the peasant better than the worker: even the children were different, as I have said.

In point of fact there was another consideration to weigh the scales (for us) in Ehetuwewa's favour. For a long time now I had been planning a study in some depth of 'Ceylon Drums and Drummers'. When we learnt on a subsequent visit—we were soon making frequent ones—that the village at the far end of the bund was of the Drummer Caste. What this was in fact worth to my 'researches' we were soon to discover, but we did not then know. It seemed the die was cast (e) so to speak!

The final fillip to our move came when we received from excellent prospective tenants a most attractive offer for a few-year lease of our house, furnished. We closed.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE - 2

"Home is where.... they will not turn you away,"

—in next week's issue of *Tribune*.

SHAMBA

A FRESH START?

by

ANATORY BUKOBA

September 2,

Three-Thirty *ante meridiem* was about the time I got here where I write this. So I was up at seven and slept during the day more than I would have done. My colleague was at the *Shamba*. The friend, at whose place I am, has been held up by more work, but I think I have found a man to start work with at the *Shamba*. It was mid-day when I met him, and he had already hired himself out for the day. He has relations here, and he will be fed there. I may eat for the most part where I am now, just shifting for myself for the mid-day meal. I am shy of eating with our family on the *shamba*, as it is such a drain on my pocket; after all, my colleague had said he would feed his family, and its numbers is down by two now. A day's hire, I hear, has gone up from the Rs. 5 to Rs. 6. And a short while ago, it went up to Rs. 7, and at one place not far from here to Rs. 10 p; a woman told me so. It is up by a couple of rupees anyway. If this lad joins me, we shall work on equal terms.

An interesting book, I have just started, is a *History of the English People*, by Elie Halevy. This volume of it is the Epilogue; 1895—1905, Book 3 on the Decline of the Unionist Party. What I have read up to now is on Protectionism versus Free Trade; Cartels and trusts, Export, Prices, Industry and Agriculture. All I can say is what I have long felt, that we must have a form of society, a socio-economic way of doing things, where inflation and deflation will no longer exist, nor rising prices, nor the fetters of trade union and government legislation, but where all will be able to live well, and with the liberty and the dignity that is each man's right. No man can do this on his own; hence the need for a new society. Socialism, to me, is the antithesis of liberty. Capitalism does not take care of dignity. Communism, to me, is just a more horrible

offshoot of socialism, with all respects to communists, among whom I have at least one good friend.

Very dark it is now, and I am writing this early. Life where there are estates, especially coconut estates, is not like life in a pioneering place such as is all the Dry Zone. I much prefer this life in the Dry Zone, to that, but I think that life will change to this, and that the change has started. This Government must get a little credit for that. When I speak of life, I do not refer to pioneering spirit, but to social relationships.

September 3,

The other man, I had relied on, could not come today; he was committed to some agricultural work for the relations he is with, and it will be some days before it is finished. The knife, I had prized and left in a *kadday* for safety, has been stolen. I felt its loss badly when I was told today: The people in the *kadday* had built a house, a one-room open affair, with a verandah, almost out of sight of the *kadday* at the back of it, and the family have been leaving this house unattended. So they lost both my knife and some of their clothes. I thought they might have taken more care of my knife: I had picked up a piece of brake-lining, as we call it, on the road many months ago, and I took this round to a blacksmith's today and asked him to make it into a knife by tomorrow. Both yesterday and today I did a little weeding of *podisingho-marran* by hand. The roots came out easily in spite of the hard and the dry soil. A scratch by the weed is said not to heal easily; I hope I am not contradicting here whatever I may have written before about this.

A woman has died around here who is said to have been one hundred and thirteen years old. She will be buried tomorrow. A lad told me today that his great-grandmother also died at 113, and that until a month before her death she walked the roads alone, unattended, and that she had perfect eyesight. He was very proud of the fact that during her illness he had had to do everything for her himself, including the most personal or private matters that had to be attended to. Her sister is still alive at 102; she gets around, and she can be quite formidable, he said.

The last thing I did before leaving the *Shamba* this evening, as dusk was falling, was to sketch my ideas for the *Shamba* to a young man who is helping his friend with the new adjoining property. I shall hear tomorrow if they both decide to join me and work the *Shamba* according to my ideas. There have been great changes just beyond the *Shamba* where their allotted land is. Except for the woodapple trees, the land is all open now, but this cannot be seen from the *Shamba*, or rather the part which has been opened out. From the path which runs along the new farm-to-be, one can see right across now to the land which is being cultivated on the other side of the wood or forest. The land is shaded because of woodapple trees. Under the old policy of clearing, even these would have been cut down. The old path, I refer to, is the one that leads to my bathing place.

The spirit that prevails around here now seems to be one of comradeship. Perhaps it is just that it is on a bigger scale now than it was.

September 4,

As good as got two partners have I, they will be working on the adjoining land for a few days to finish what they are doing now, before actually starting on mine. Meanwhile, one of them, whom I shall be regarding as my right-hand man, will be keeping an eye on the acre when I am not here. His companion is the son of the owner of the adjoining farm. They have, both of them, been using my house, where the family is, to keep their clothes safe while they are at work clearing next door, as it were. They come to us for water when they want it. My colleague was working with them a few days, but he no longer does so. Our family got one meal a day while he was working with them.

My colleague has told me he wants to shift his family from here. His wife says it will be not just yet. I have told him to hand over whatever he decides to leave behind, as well as the house, to my right-hand, as I am calling my new colleague; to hand over, that is, when he does go. I am hoping they will change their mind and not go, but I have already decided it would be best not to try to stop them, and by that I mean dissuade them. I will, of course, work here when I am here,

and I hope still other will join me. The Colonization Officer spoke to me today about clearing the land and growing something. He reckons the rains will start about the 15th. If that is so, we shall have to do something about the house, too. It will keep no water out as it is now.

An honoured guest we have had has been our housewife's mother. She was very forthright in her opinions. She has been here before, but I have always missed her. Other visitors we have had have been people from Asokapura and Prithipura, Dr. Bryan de Kretser's two places. I may be wrong, but I think they were surprised that I was living so primitively; or rather, we, the family and I. Cadjans are Rs. 30/- a hundred now. Seven years ago, they were less than half that price.

Spreading rumours is not something I want to be had up for, but I have been told that the government has lost a case against the *Davasa* group of newspapers, which may be resuming publication tomorrow. I did not even know that there had been a case on these days, although I seem to have a vague recollection now that the *Davasa* had brought some such action. If it is true, it just shows how, what people consider really important news, gets around even without newspapers. (This is only a case of wishful thinking because hundreds of thousands want an opposition paper—if *Davasa* can be called one.—Ed.)

This reminds me that when I passed by a wireless this evening, I heard a voice that I thought as first might be the Prime Minister's voice; but it was too masculine. I asked who it was who was holding forth in such a forthright manner, and I was told it was Hector Kobekaduwa. A little later, someone else seemed to be holding forth as if he was presiding over the guil-lotining of many people and I asked who that was. Pat came the reply and again it was: That is Hector Kobekaduwa's. Surely it could not be?

September 5,

First let me scotch something I have said. Of all people, I met two men from *Davasa*, and they told me that the fact about the *Davasa* group are not what I have said above; they are not starting up again just now.

Well, I really did get to work with two lads who are brothers. We started by the road where the culvert is and worked along and down the bank, and on the flat, too, towards where our old neighbours have cleared some of the *Shamba* land. The general direction we worked was towards our house. Perhaps it was not altogether a tidy job, but it was cleared as I would have wished it. We had to leave some clumps to be felled later, and all we cut was piled into large heaps. Some trees will get scorched when these piles are set alright, but it cannot be helped. I used a knife, the elder brother used a kind of *vici katta* that looks more like an ordinary one, but with a sickle-shaped blade, and his brother used a stick, I have, to pile what we cut into heaps. We had to help him with this as there was so much cut. We had to deal with thorn and fully grown *Podi-singho-maran*, like small trees, but these last, when they are dry, are brittle.

The knife, I used, I had got back from the blacksmith's yesterday. I had given him a piece of brake-lining, I had found on the road, to make into a long-handled knife, like the one that was lost. All who handle the knife today, after I used it, feel that it is not made of the brake-lining at all. They say that brake-lining would not be dented as the edges of this knife is. The knife is lighter altogether than my other knife, but that is the way I would have it, for it makes for easier carrying.

Both brothers, it appears, lost some sleep because of the bereavement in the village, for they slept at the funeral house, if I may call it that; and the youngest said he was very sleepy after we had worked most of the morning. So I sent him off to the house, and his brother and I rushed through the work that was left, for I wanted the area we had cleared by the road to be seen from the house, or early morning risers might have used it for a purpose we would not have liked, so near the house. That is the way we have in the jungle. The view is not clear, but it will serve. We three had lunch far away in the brothers' own house. Before we left I introduced them to the two who are already committed to working on the *Shamba*.

INANIA *Of This, That and The Other*

NORTON, I COME

By INNA

"Let there be light"—said one government and behold Norton Bridge came into being with its torrents channelled in the right manner, its electrons pouring out in prisms of light, heat, and energy into homes and hearths. Heads held high, we greeted even the remark that came out at the time of Norton Bridge: "We'll now have enough electricity to give even South India!"

A FEW WEEKS AGO, on a rainy, sleety, foggy two day, I stayed at Norton Bridge just enough to see how once again the Western province seems to be the only one, and the capital city seems to be the only big TOWN, while other towns and villages languish, in the main. True there's a lot being done by the official and by the private sectors, slowly the villages are being *sarvodaised* and the townships too are being looked after and improved.

But I'd like to know if the Batticaloa bus-stand gets waterlogged as yet, with only two inches of rain. Then, of course, Batticaloa is far from the centre of things, you know.

Take NB. NB is for Norton Bridge: There is no one to give information regarding buses. One out of two-hundred tourists go that way, and they are from hydrel and even nuclear countries with bigger barrages and bigger dams, and so why should they go that way, some people might think, but some foreigners do like to go that way. I took one of them. I was horrified.

BASKING in the sunshine of its artificial electrical glow, NB seems to have no cares, its pylons carrying heavy power into the countryside over hill and dale. The wires run away not seeing the dilapidated bus-stand now at a rakish angle, minus benches. Of course there is no Political but an Electrical Authority here!

You can't blame him if he does not count the number of petromax lamps here in the very heart and source of our country's light. Queues would wait of a rainy day (rainfall is like at Watawala, almost, said a knowledgeable young man) without benches. Of course, the idea is that these are not men, at least not so much as in Colombo.

One by one, the apparently strong men sat down after a wait of two and a half-hours. Not so long ago, reader, it was 15th August.

Someone's wisecrack said of our good old CTB: "There are so many buses going everywhere that you really get nowhere", implying that when you really want a bus to Maskeliya, you get three for Hatton, if you know what I mean. Rigid bureaucracy must go; lack of concern for people must go; more sincere invitations to the car-owning officials of the departments and Boards and Corporations must go out to come and see for themselves on a bus-trip what a great deal of improvement could still be done to our bus-system, fairly good as it is. Go up-country in the rain, and see far yourselves.

Build bus-stands, and the zinc-sheets are removed by a poor people, who have not realized that to take the country's goods is robbery, for it is meant for all people, for the common good. The Hindu *poosari*, an excellent person, was not concerned about this angle of having an impact with his people on the common good. He was worried about obtaining his sacrifices from the people. Good for him.

The Buddhist monks, one old, one young, were very careful to see that the people did the *gilanpasa* and other offerings rightly. May be the Islamic prayer-leader has his own plans for the betterment of these people. Or has he? Probably there is a christian group there and they are studying out the place while reading "I am the Light of the World". And cars and jeeps roam around the roads, busy, busy, busy. What do they care as long as the right people have light?

POLITICAL FLASHBACK-I

SRI LANKA AND THE
COMMONWEALTH

BY SPARTACUS

Dr. N. M. Perera is reported to have said at a dinner given in honour of the delegates attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference that "he believed that the Commonwealth had a most useful role in the world." (*Times*, 10/9)

Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike too, addressing an informal pre-session gathering of the delegates, had referred to the fact that when a motion to declare ourselves a Republic outside the Commonwealth was introduced in the Constituent Assembly it failed to get even a seconder.

All of which goes to show that the Commonwealth idea has taken deep roots here and is to all intents and purposes supported by all political parties today.

THIS was not always so. In fact the LSSP and the CP had, since their inception, campaigned for a sovereign independent Republic outside the Commonwealth. The first manifesto of the LSSP issued with the formation of the party as far back as 1935 listed "the attainment of national independence" as one of its three fundamental objectives. But it did not specifically say whether it was outside the Commonwealth. However, the speeches inside the second State Council by Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera left little doubt about the matter. What the LSSP then envisaged was national independence outside the Commonwealth.

This was made clear by the "Programme of Action" issued by the party in 1950 when the Trotskyists who had been split between the LSSP and the BLP (Bolshevik Leninist Party) came together in June 1950. That Programme specifically stated "the achievement of real national independence" and "the severance of all political ties with the British Empire" as one of their fundamental aims.

Their fourteen points put forward a year later and which became their election manifesto for the 1952 general election listed as the very first point "Withdrawal from the British Commonwealth and establishment of an independent Republic."

THE COMMUNIST PARTY, in its very first proclamation, stated that the "fundamental aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a socialist Ceylon" and that in pursuance of this it sought "to build a united national front of the patriotic sections of the people of Ceylon to defend the country from fascist aggression

and win its liberation from imperialist enslavement". But it did not specifically define its attitude towards the commonwealth.

Soon after Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe was returned to the second State Council at a by-election in 1947, he introduced a motion demanding that "the British Government should withdraw its armed forces from Ceylon" and "make a declaration recognising the sovereign independence of Ceylon." Moreover, according to that motion, "a free and sovereign constituent Assembly should be elected on universal adult franchise to determine the future constitution of Ceylon and our subsequent relations with Great Britain."

In 1951 when the Communist Party entered into a United Front with the LSSP led by Philip Gunawardena, the programme on which this agreement was concluded stated that the government that they envisaged will "secure the withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Ceylon and the cancellation of the defence agreement leasing bases to foreign imperialist powers."

THE FIRST MANIFESTO of the SLFP issued in 1951 stated: "We declare that the Government of Ceylon must be a Free Republic independent of the British Commonwealth and all external control."

It went on to add: "Our foreign policy must be governed by the paramount need in the interests of our people of preserving peace. The object is best achieved by our country steering clear of involvement with power blocs and by the establishment of friendly relations with all countries. Therefore no bases

can be permitted in our country to any foreign power and all foreign troops must be immediately withdrawn from our country."

It was on the basis of this manifesto that the SLFP went to the polls in 1952 just a year after its formation.

In 1956, the SLFP went to the polls in alliance with three other minor groups under the banner of the "Mahajana Eksath Peramuna". The Joint Programme issued by the MEP said: "The present constitution was framed while we were still under colonial government in 1946, and was amended in 1947 to extend what amounted to Dominion Status without due consideration of the constitutional needs of a free people. Therefore, the constitution needs amendment in various respects, some of which are: a reconsideration of the position of the Senate, the abolition of Appointed Members, the definition of democratic and economic rights, and the establishment of a democratic Republic."

Thus, from the categorical "free Republic independent of the British Commonwealth" of 1952, the SLFP by 1956 had veered around to "a democratic republic" whose relations *vis-a-vis* the Commonwealth were left nebulously vague.

1960 was the last occasion when the SLFP, LSSP and CP issued separate manifestoes for general elections when these three parties fought separately in the March elections that year.

ON THAT OCCASION, the SLFP reiterated what they said earlier about the Soulbury constitution and promised to set up "a democratic republic as envisaged by Mr. Bandaranaike."

RECORD

French sportsman Alain Colas has broken the record set in 1966-67 by the famous British yachtsman Francis Chichester, who sailed from England alone in his Gipsy Moth and circled the world via Sydney in 225 days. Colas, who sailed from Saint-Malo, covered 55,000 kilometres along the same route in 168 days. On one of the days his yacht Manureva covered a distance of 604 kilometres in 24 hours.

The LSSP promised the "establishment of a Republic outside the British Commonwealth," while the CP manifesto said that "the present constitution should be amended to declare Ceylon an Independent Republic."

In 1965 the SLFP election manifesto stated: "A republic will be established to preserve the independence of the people and promote their resurgence and steps will be taken to revise the constitution to suit the needs of the country."

The LSSP and the CP did not issue separate manifestoes for that election. But carrying on the slogans of the original Left, the LSSP(R) which had splintered from the main LSSP threatened the "immediate withdrawal of Ceylon from the British imperialist-dominated Commonwealth."

When the SLFP, LSSP and CP came together to form the United Front in 1968, their Common Programme stated: "A Constituent Assembly will be established and a new Constitution will be introduced. This Constitution will declare Ceylon to be a free, sovereign and independent Republic pledged to realise our objective of socialist democracy; and will also secure fundamental rights and freedoms to all citizens." It was this that was incorporated in the UF's election manifesto too for the 1970 general election.

SOON AFTER ITS ELECTION to power the UF Government started the work of the Constituent Assembly drafting the new constitution. The very first basic resolution introduced read: "Sri Lanka shall be a Free, Sovereign and Independent Republic."

It was Mr. W. Dahanayake who sought to amend that basic resolution by introducing the words "outside the Commonwealth" after the word "Republic". But it was held that his attempt violated a Standing Order of the Constituent Assembly which said that an amendment could not raise any question which, by the rules of the Assembly, could only be raised by a substantive motion after notice. Since due notice had not been given, it lapsed.

An that is how Sri Lanka continues to be a member of the Commonwealth till this day, notwithstanding the new Republican constitution.

(To be continued)

LETTERS

• Arrogant Economists • Campus in the South

Sir,

If we are not going to succumb to World Bank dictation and its pressures then we must also act independently, and revalue the rupee for economic advantage.

For the last seven years we have been misdirected into making our products unnecessarily cheap and foreign products too expensive.

Our arrogant economists who masquerade as experts with their airs of infallibility have lugged Ceylon into an unwanted situation, but still the position is not irretrievable. If the people are told the truth they will rally round not only to produce food but also to make the country financially sound.

A. E. GUNAWARDENA.

44, Dharmapala Mawata,
Colombo 7.
27.8.74.

Sir,

*Pax multe in calla foris autem
plurima bella*

It is desirable that a campus should be neither in the midst of nor remote from the madding crowd. In any case it goes without saying that a campus should be sited where there is sufficient space and an abundance of fresh air and sunshine.

Fresh air is that magical "something" which makes all the difference between life and death. There is the wonderful tonic air of the hill tops as at Peradeniya. There is the salt sea air of our lovely sunny beaches as at Vaddukoddai and one is indeed fortunate if one resides within easy reach of either. If a site that is better than either of the aforementioned is available it would be better than ideal, that is to say sublime.

In the deep south there are innumerable such places, eg. Tangalle, Hambantota, Wellawaya etc. but they are remote from densely populated areas and city.

Totagamuwa is situated in an area dolted with coral and lime kilns

where air is charged with carbon monoxide.

There is in the entire Island only one government farm that could be easily converted into a campus and that is Maha Illuppallama in the northern dry zone.

But there is one site in the south which fulfils all the above-mentioned conditions and that is KOGGALA which is within easy access of the southern capital. It is spacious and is flanked on opposite sides by the ocean wave and natural inland lake. Koggala is the coastal counterpart of Shangrila in the mountain plateau, Tibet, described in James Hilton's "Lost Horizon".

But for the recently established fisheries harbour and cement factory Buona Vista promontory which flanks Galle harbour with adjacent Unawatuna would have been as sublime as Koggala.

Incidentally Koggala is not an obscure place. It was known during pre-historic times as a monolith inscribed with Brahmini characters unearthed a few years ago revealed. Nearby Unawatuna (Onna Watuna) is where the legendary Hanuman unable to identify the required herb sped through the air bearing a cliff torn from a Himalayan range was dropped. During World War II Koggala was used as a sea-plane base.

Even before man came on the scene Koggala's sun kissed foam loved and windswept beach and palin and lake provided a haven for arctic birds which migrated thither to hibernate and revitalise themselves.

It will take some years to build a campus at Koggala. In the meantime Mahinda or Richmond stamped with the personalities of the great Woodward, Darrel and Small can make do for an early and flying start.

R. W. W.

Mt. Lavinia,
9.9.74.

FOR NEWS
BEHIND THE NEWS

read

TRIBUNE

regularly

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

CPA CONFERENCE

IS IT NOT A FACT that many CPA delegates were surprised that the increase in price of milk foods and the drastic cut in the sugar ration (whilst completely stopping all off-ration sugar) did not lead to popular demonstrations? That one foreign delegate had mentioned to *Tribune* that on governmental action, far less "provocative" than what took place in Ceylon, demonstrations would have been out, spontaneously and otherwise, in the streets of many cities in his country? That he was surprised that there was no public reactions to events of great historic significance in Sri Lanka? That he felt that this was probably because the press in Sri Lanka had become an adjunct of the government and that critical views never seemed to appear in the columns of any daily paper he had read during his stay? That democratic freedoms, he said, had assumed a shape and form which seemed alien to the kind of democracy which he and many other delegates knew? That he felt that the press in Sri Lanka seemed to have anything of vitality and dynamism? That all the papers, which were not party organs, merely echoed the innermost wishes of the Establishment? That these daily papers did not carry any conviction or exude credibility? That party journals (he had a number of them translated to them during his stay) assumed critical stances only in their in-fighting within each coalition or in intra-party polemical squabbling? That except for the *Tribune* (he made some flattering remarks about this paper) there was no other paper which carried any interpretative analyses? That in the diplomatic and even political circuit he had found that *Tribune* was read widely but he said that some politicians and bureaucrats, speaking for the Establishment, had pretended that the *Tribune* just did not exist? That this ostrich-like conduct did not impress foreign CPA delegates who had gone out of their way to

get copies of *Tribune*? That many of them had asked how long *Tribune* would be allowed to continue?

That, in the ultimate analysis, though all CPA delegates who attended the Conference praised the "hospitality" of Sri Lanka, they were not impressed with the state of democracy in this country? That most of them did not show their feelings but asked questions which indicated the kind of doubts that tormented them? Why was the press in Sri Lanka so dumb? Why was it so slavishly trailing behind the governmental establishment? Why was the SLBC conducting its newsbroadcasts in such a "peculiar" manner? That another delegate mentioned to *Tribune* that one SLBC news broadcast, no doubt to sugar-coat the cut in the sugar ration and the increase of the price of sugar to hotels to Rs. 7.50 a lb, had stressed that India had increased the price of sugar in a marked manner? That this delegate stated that this tended to create a wrong impression about real situation in India? That India, which was surplus in sugar and was a big exporter, had restricted its domestic releases? That in spite of this in all areas, except a few, as much sugar as one needed could be bought for Rs. 4.50 a kilogram (i.e. 2.2 lbs)? That this kind of news reporting by SLBC did not bring credibility, they said, to its reports even about other matters? That foreign CPA delegates who had occasionally tuned in SLBC news broadcasts were greatly disappointed with its quality and content?

That there is no doubt that Sri Lanka had impressed the delegates about its scenic beauty and its excellent beaches? That these delegates were impressed by the hospitality of the socialites and others who had turned somersaults in wanting to entertain these delegates or attend parties where they were guests? That most delegates felt that the most of the persons they

met (outside the governmental and establishment circles) had openly expressed a desire to emigrate to Commonwealth countries where their children could get a decent (English) education and also where democratic rights of free expression prevailed through an independent press? That the delegates were also impressed by the Chinese-built and Chinese-gifted Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall? That they all said that it was a wonderful complex of buildings for the holding of big international conferences?

That most of them felt that what Sri Lanka most lacked was a free press where news was reported without an obvious slant? That governmental spokesmen and apologists had tended to put all the blame on newsprint shortage? That a number of delegates had come from countries where the newsprint shortage was just as acute or even worse? That they said that in spite of the difficulties of newsprint, the papers had maintained robust independence and critical vitality? That all CPA delegates publicly proclaimed that Ceylon arrack was a "wonderful" drink? That most of them thereafter repaired to other hosteleries where they consumed enough Scotch, with their foreign exchange, to drown the taste of some of the arrack that had gone the rounds in different places where they were hosted? That a great many of the local varieties of booze have to attain greater refinement and mellowness to be palatable to foreign consumers? That our daily papers had made much of the local brews that were supplied to delegates? That it would have far better to have taken no-liquor stand than to supply some of the stuff which delegates had to drink? That in a Buddhist country it would have been okay to say that liquor was officially taboo at official parties and delegates could then have bought the liquor they wanted—and which could have been made available to them duty-free? That the higher echelons of the establishment will not be happy when they know (if ever they able to discover) the private views of the delegates about the state of Sri Lanka? That the memorandum of the Tamil United Front and the views of Opposition MPs about civil liberties and fundamental rights seemed to have impressed most of the delegates much more than the laboured apology tendered by official spokesmen?