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SRI LANKA - SOVIET RELATIONS - PM'S VISIT -

PRIME MINISTER SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE'S VISIT to the Soviet Union marks another significant landmark in her efforts to extend and stabilise the frontiers of the diplomatic activities of this country. In September, she had gone on official visits to Pakistan, West Germany, Romania and Yugoslavia. In October she had gone to Iran. And in November, she paid a visit to the Soviet Union.

Apart from the economic assistance she has got from each country

she has visited, the more important aspect of these visits was to strengthen the bonds of friendship between Sri Lanka and these countries on the basis of the non-aligned policies followed by her and the United Front Government. On her first trip, the only country which belonged to the non-aligned group was Yugoslavia; the other three countries were openly aligned to blocs, causes and policies which could not be described as being non-aligned. In fact, some of them

had been bitterly opposed to non-alignment sometime ago but had only begun in recent times to realise the need to co-exist with countries of different ideological persuasions including the amorphous variations of non-alignment. Neither Iran nor the Soviet Union belong to the non-aligned world, and whilst the USSR has shown great interest in the welfare of the non-aligned and had sought to cultivate friendly relations with them, Iran had been hostile to the concept of non-alignment until very recently when she has attempted to reach out from the depths of the now shattered CENTO to establish not only co-existential relations with non-aligned countries in the South and Southeast Asia regions but also lay the foundations for an economic union in the same area under her leadership on the basis of the oil billions which are now accumulating in her coffers.

To Mrs. Bandaranaike's credit, it must be said, that she has acquired the skill and diplomatic tact to be able to deal with a wide variety of governments and countries. Sri Lanka is a small and tiny island, but her non-alignment in the backdrop of the strategic position she occupies in the Indian Ocean has given a diplomatic importance far in excess of her size or importance in terms of her economic resources in a world where economic strength is the prelude to military and political strength. This unique position has no doubt been achieved by Sri Lanka by pursuing the policies of dynamic non-alignment adumbrated by the late Mr. S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike and which have been implemented and extended with great diplomatic

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History

CURFEW

POLITICAL HISTORY in Sri Lanka in the 1970s can be written around the many curfews which have become significant landmarks in contemporary history. The curfew, which heralded the cutbreak of the insurgency on April 5/6, 1971, is still fresh in the minds of many people. Thereafter, the curfew was continued every day, the length diminishing each time there was an improvement in the insurgency situation. Coming to 1974, we had the curfew of April 21, 1974, which marked one phase of UNP politics in which Mr. J. R. Jayewardena had come up a blank wall in regard to his strategy of satyagraha cum civil disobedience. When this curfew was imposed and other restrictions were placed on the UNP in regard to meetings there was much rejoicing in United Front circles that "reactionaries and fascists" had been thwarted—without realising that these restrictions were imposed on a Party which was functioning as the democratic Opposition in the parliamentary democracy which is said to prevail in Sri Lanka. It is one thing to take such action against a proscribed Party, like the JVP, but it is a totally different thing when such restrictions are placed on a Party, like the UNP, which is still legal. *Tribune* had, at that time, pointed out the dangers inherent in such action. And the rules which the Government had framed in regard to processions and meetings, primarily intended to curb the UNP, have now boomeranged on one of the constituent members of the United Front. According to these rules the LSSP and CFL could not hold the kind of demonstration they wanted on November 16 and for some reason the Prime Minister had declined to waive the rules as the LSSP and CFL had wanted. This led to the 16-hour curfew of November 16, 1974, which was imposed to prevent the CFL and the LSSP from breaking a legal ban. Whether this curfew and its aftermath will lead to another landmark of the political history of this country or whether it will be another storm in a tea cup—a veritable damp squib as many melodramatised events in Sri Lanka turn out to be—is yet too early to say.

finesse by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE issued in Moscow and in Colombo at the conclusion of Mrs. Bandaranaike's visit to the Soviet Union is testimony to the diplomatic success she has scored on the visit. For the record, we publish the communique as set out in the Observer, 17/11/74.

The communique issued simultaneously in Moscow and Colombo last night said that Mrs. Bandaranaike's visit was extremely useful "and will constitute a major contribution to the further development of friendly relations between the Republic of Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union."

The joint communique said that Premier Kosygin had accepted with pleasure Mrs. Bandaranaike invitation to visit Sri Lanka.

Dealing with the South Asian situation, the constructive approach by India, Bangladesh and Pakistan towards settling a number of controversial issues in the region was noted by Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union.

The Soviets had particularly welcomed the understanding reached by Sri Lanka and India on the demarcation of the maritime borders between the two countries and on other issues.

Sri Lanka had presented her view on the Indian Ocean peace zone proposal. The Soviet Union had expressed its support of this concept which was aimed at the consolidation of national sovereignty, the strengthening of independence of states and the dismantling of foreign military bases in the area.

The joint communique stated:

"In the course of the discussions and talks held in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding consideration was given to the questions of bilateral Sri Lanka-Soviet relations as well as to international problems of mutual interest.

"The sides noted with satisfaction that the relations of friendship and co-operation have come into being and are successfully developing between Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union, a solid foundation for which was laid during the life of the outstanding statesman and political figure of Sri Lanka, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, and recognised the existence of good prospects for the further fruitful

development of Sri Lanka-Soviet relations in various fields.

"Both sides confirmed their mutual desire to expand and deepen, proceeding from the interests of the two states, mutually beneficial economic and technical co-operation and scientific and cultural contacts.

"Both sides noted the favourable results of the development of Sri Lanka-Soviet trade relations based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit. They expressed the desire to further develop trade between the two countries and with this aim in view agreed that representatives of both sides would conduct negotiations in the nearest future and conclude a Protocol on Trade turn-over between Sri Lanka and the USSR for 1975 which will provide for the further expansion of mutual supplies of goods.

"In the course of the discussions and talks, identity or proximity of the positions of Sri Lanka and the USSR on a number of important questions of present-day international relations was reaffirmed, and mutual desire was expressed to contribute to the strengthening of peace through, out the world on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence and friendly co-operation among states.

"The sides noted with satisfaction that the process of detente continues to develop in the world, which leads to the consolidation of international security and the development, on the basis of equality, of mutually beneficial co-operation between states.

"They noted the development of positive processes in Asia which attest to the growing trend towards the consolidation of peace and stability in this region of the globe. Of important significance was the achievement of the Paris Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam: tangible steps have been taken to consolidate peace and national accord in Laos. It was emphasized that the problems of Indo-China should be solved by the peoples of the countries of the region on the basis of respect for their legitimate rights, without any foreign interference. It was also emphasized that the Paris Agreement should be observed completely by all the signatories.

"In the course of the discussions, the successes in achieving a settlement on the South-Asian subcontinent was noted. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan have displayed a construc-

tive approach to the solution, by negotiation, of a number of controversial issues existing in the region. The Soviet side welcomed the understanding reached between Sri Lanka and India on the maritime border between the two states in the Palk Strait and on other issues.

"Sri Lanka, and the Soviet Union consider that joint actions by all countries aimed at the establishment among them of relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and good neighbourly co-operation, primarily the renunciation of the use of force in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in internal affairs, broad and equal development of economic and other co-operation, would contribute to the ensuring of stable peace and stability throughout the whole world.

"The Sri Lanka side presented its views with regard to the proposal to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. It was noted from the Soviet side that the Soviet Union supports this idea aimed at the consolidation of national sovereignty, the strengthening of independence of States and the dismantling of foreign military bases in the area. Both sides reiterated their readiness to participate together with all states concerned, on the basis of equality, in a search for a favourable solution to the question of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace in accordance with the principles of international law.

"Recognizing the positive factors in the development of the situation in Asia, Sri Lanka and the USSR call for still more active efforts by all peace-loving states in the interests of consolidating the prospects favourable for the cause of peace which have become discernable in Asia.

"Both sides consider that the important agreements reached between the USSR and the USA will continue to serve the general improvement of the international situation and the relaxation of tension.

"It was noted with satisfaction that there are further tangible shifts towards establishing a foundation for stable peace, security and co-operation on the European continent. Welcoming the substantial contribution made to the process by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the sides expressed the hope that it will be successfully concluded at an early date by the adoption at the

PM's Visit

highest level of documents of great international significance.

"The sides particularly emphasized the need for active action by all peace-loving states towards eliminating sources of the danger of war. They expressed serious concern over the situation which has taken shape in Cyprus and pronounced themselves, in favour of an early and just solution of the Cyprus question in accordance with the UN decisions.

"Favouring a political settlement of the Middle East conflict, both sides are deeply convinced that the establishment of a stable and just peace in the Middle East which would meet the interests of security and independent development of all states and peoples of the region can only be achieved on the basis of the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions with complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories seized by them in 1967 and the ensurance of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. The sides came out in favour of an early resumption of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union deplore the brutal actions of the Chilean authorities against the progressive and democratic forces in Chile.

"In actively coming out in favour of the eradication of colonialism, racism and apartheid. Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union have closely co-operated and will co-operate in the international arena in rendering assistance to the countries and peoples still under the colonial yoke in their just struggle for liberation. The sides consider it to be an event of historic significance that the Portuguese colonial empire has disintegrated as a result of the national liberation struggles in Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola and by the anti-fascist movement of the Portuguese people. They regard this event as an important stage on the road to the final elimination of colonialism in Africa.

"Highly appreciating the policy of non-alignment pursued by the Government of the Republic of Sri Lanka in international affairs, the Soviet side expressed the hope that the next conference of the heads of state and government of non-aligned countries to be held in Colombo in 1976 will make its contribution to the further consolidation

of international detente and co-operation and to the uprooting of colonialism, racism and apartheid.

"Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union confirmed their support for the United Nations as an important instrument of strengthening peace and international security. The sides believe that the UN should play a positive role in invigorating efforts aimed at consolidating and spreading international detente throughout the world.

"The Sri Lanka and Soviet sides reiterated their readiness to continue efforts in the international arena, including the UN, aimed at achieving progress in the field of limiting the arms race, at general and complete disarmament under strict international control, and carrying out effective measures which could contribute to reducing the danger of the outlook of war.

"The sides believe that a World Disarmament Conference the holding of which would meet the interests of strengthening peace and security of people can play an important role in solving urgent disarmament problems.

"Both sides consider that the implementation of the proposal with regard to the reduction of military expenditures of state would be conducive to relieving humanity of the burden of immense expenditures on arms and to ensuring free and independent development of peoples, including those in developing countries.

"The sides emphasized that it is important to conclude a convention on prohibiting action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes which are incompatible with the interests of ensuring international security, human well-being and health.

"The Sri Lanka and Soviet sides are deeply convinced that the discussions and talks which took place during the visit by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike to the Soviet Union were very useful and will constitute a major contribution to the further development of the friendly relations between the Republic of Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union.

"The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka extended an invitation to A. N. Kosygin, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers to pay an official visit to Sri Lanka. The invitation was accepted with pleasure."

The Joint Communique does not set out any details of the economic

assistance the USSR will extend to Sri Lanka. There is only a reference in general terms to the "increased trade" between the two countries. When Mrs. Bandaranaike was in the Soviet Union the only report about any economic or other assistance that reached Sri Lanka was that the USSR had made a gift of a naval training vessel valued at about Rs. 80 million. (The Observer on 18/11/74 says that it will be a vessel to curb the smugglers, and many wonder whether the



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Observer report is correct or the report originally flashed by the SLBC).

The only meaty report which has become available to us about this visit was the *PTI* and *Reuter*, despatch, from Moscow datelined November 15, which makes a preliminary attempt to present an interpretative analysis. The report is published below: "The Soviet Union will extend 'substantial' economic assistance to Sri Lanka towards the fulfilment of the island's development plans including credits for a new major power plant. This is said to be among the results achieved by the Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who reached the Georgian capital of Tbilisi in the Caucasus yesterday after ending three days of talks with the Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Alexi Kosygin, in Moscow.

"The talks were wide-ranging but special emphasis was on broadening and strengthening bilateral economic co-operation. According to Sri Lanka sources, the talks were held in an atmosphere of utmost cordiality and full understanding and Mrs. Bandaranaike was happy with the results. Mrs. Bandaranaike obtained Soviet assurances for more expeditious flow of spare parts to Soviet-aided steel, tyre and flour mill projects now operating in Sri Lanka.

"Trade is to get a big boost with the Soviet Union agreeing to buy more tea and non-traditional items including bananas and pineapples. A mission of experts will visit Sri Lanka in January to advise on long-term and perspective planning. This will be a precursor to a joint commission which may be set up to handle Soviet-Sri Lanka economic co-operation. During the visit Mrs. Bandaranaike was told of the positive preliminary findings of the Soviet team which is carrying out in collaboration with Sri Lanka specialists off-shore investigations in the island for oil deposits.

"On the political plane, the talks covered topical world issues, the situation in Asia and the process of normalisation in South Asia over which both sides expressed satisfaction. There was general agreement on the need to extend detente to Asia and to promote peace and stability in the Continent. Against this background, the Soviet Union expressed its appreciation of Sri

Lanka's call for making Indian Ocean a zone of peace. However, it would appear that the Soviet proposal for a system of Asian collective security as such may not figure in the joint communique which the two Prime Ministers signed on Wednesday and which is due to be published on November 17 after the Sri Lanka Prime Minister has returned home.

"The Soviet side was highly appreciative of the activities of the non-aligned world and Sri Lanka's role in them. It was said to have shown interest in the non-aligned summit to be held in Colombo in 1975. The Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Kosygin accepted an invitation to visit Sri Lanka. No dates were mentioned but it was generally thought the visit would take place in 1975. The Soviet Union is to give Sri Lanka an 80 million rupee ship for training Navy personnel, the State-run Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation announced yesterday."

The outright gift of a naval vessel (whether for naval training or catching smugglers) valued at Rs. 80 million is a substantial gift. The Chinese gift of five naval patrol boats was totally valued only at Rs. 30 million. There are no indications in the communique about the other economic matters which were discussed and on which agreement was reached. The *PTI* report indicates that a wide range of matters had been discussed.

The *Observer* 18/11/74, had stressed that the Soviet Union had agreed to participate in the Rs. 623 million Samanala Wewa Scheme with economic assistance and credits. What the *Observer* stressed was that the agreement reached was "on our terms". The *Times of Ceylon*, also of 18/11/74, had banner-headlined the reports that Russia would buy more tea from Sri Lanka under new agreements. The *Daily News* of 19/11/74 did not give its readers anything more by way of information regarding trade and economic assistance promised by the USSR but had published reports about the memorable welcome extended to Prime Minister Bandaranaike in the Soviet Union. It was reported that the Soviet PM Kosygin had stated that she was a "tough negotiator."

But what must be remembered is that what was crucial is that the

Soviet Union was at this time inclined to extend the frontiers of its aid, trade, and assistance to Sri Lanka much farther than they had done ever before.

INCREASED TRADE AND GREATER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE from the Soviet Union will no doubt go a long way in helping Sri Lanka on the path to economic development. N. M. Perera's fifth budget will take forward steps towards socialism and the Budget will be balanced by soaking the rich some more. The trade unions now want more and more nationalisation.

But none of this can help to meet the calamity which the failure (so far) of the Northeast Monsoon will bring to this country. Ever since 1970 there have been partial failures of the Northeast Monsoon, either in total volume, or in territorial sub-divisions, but this year the Northeast Monsoon has threatened to fail completely. As it is, the Monsoon is over six weeks behind schedule (the schedules as farmers had known traditionally and gone by in the Wannai areas) and even if it breaks at this late stage the damage done can only be partially corrected. Rain-fed paddy can already be written off now. And, without water in the tanks (they should normally be full by this time) even irrigated paddy crops will be only partial even if the rains come after this.

Altogether a bleak outlook faces the paddy production prospects for this Maha in the

Biomass as Fuel

Fuel shortage is compelling scientists to search for economically acceptable substitutes for mineral fuels. Researchers at the Stanford Institute (U.S.) suggest the use of biomass, or plant tissue, for this purpose. They have worked out an economical method for the accelerated cultivation of plants such as sunflower, sugar cane, eucalyptus and sycamore, the tissue of which can be burned directly as fuel or converted to synthetic fuel gas or oil for use by the petrochemical industry. Some types of synthetic fuels obtained from biomass will cost no more than synthetic fuels obtained from coal.

rice-growing Wanni regions. The absence of deep wells and tube wells will be brought home to the Government this year. The only way in which monsoon failures (and the changing patterns of rainfall which have come upon the world in recent years) is to tap the groundwater available—and this should be done only after a scientific hydrological survey to determine the total volume of water available and which can be pumped out safely each year. A hydrological survey will also indicate the points where tube and deep wells can be usefully sunk.

For years now, *Tribune* has been advocating the need to tap groundwater resources not only to increase agricultural production but also to meet the vagaries of the weather which climatologists believe is the result of new and still un-

known forces affecting the world's climate. Unfortunately, our pundits and bureaucrats who advise our politicians (who wield power) have so far not been willing to pay anything more lip service to the utilisation of ground water resources. They have not even gone all out to help peasants and cultivators to sink surface wells for subsidiary food crops—leave alone deep wells and tube wells for paddy production.

With the grim prospects of a domestic famine (however partial) next year in Sri Lanka, the pundits and bureaucrats will no doubt have to think a new of seeking assistance from countries like the USSR and India to help us with hydrological surveys and sink deep wells and tube wells, and also set up factories to manufacture pumps and other equipment for lifting groundwater.

But, what are the positive features of the Budget? One has looked in vain, so far, in the columns of all the daily papers to get an in-depth analysis and study (from whatever angle) of the political, economic and financial aspects of the budget. It is to be hoped that such studies will appear in the coming weeks whilst the Budget Debate—second reading and the committee stage—goes on in the National State Assembly.

Tribune will as usual make its own analysis of this Budget as it has done of all earlier Budgets—not only of the budgets since 1970 but all budgets since 1954. Some of the budgets were analysed in greater detail and greater depth than some others, but this year it has become necessary to pay even greater attention to the Budget than ever before.

WHAT ARE THE ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS on which this Budget, which is said to take this country towards socialism, without tarrying at halting places, is based? What are the economic principles which underline the logic inherent in the Budget?

It is no doubt a Budget of the United Front which is committed in its Common Programme to a mixed economy. And this fact must constantly be kept in mind when any analysis of the Budget is made or read.

The first and most significant economic aspect of the Budget is that it is framed within the context of the capitalist system. The economic analysis which is accepted as the basis for formulating the Budget is the one acceptable to the World Bank (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and though there is no public admission, the methodology and mechanics of the financial management (and balancing) of the Budget is on lines which will applauded by the IBRD and the IMF.

For some time now, the leaders of this Government have derived comfort from the praise bestowed on them by IMF chieftains. On October 24, 1974, the *Daily News* drew fresh attention to an IBRD-sponsored study on the redistribution of wealth and income in Sri Lanka. "Sri Lanka stands out as one of the countries that have taken positive steps to redistribute

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Fifth Budget—Economic Assumptions

ONCE AGAIN, the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, had stressed, as he has done in every Budget since the United Front had come to power in 1970, that this latest Budget was another step forward in the road to socialism. He also had made it clear in the course of his remarks that this reaching out to socialism was one continuous process of going forward without pausing at halting places.

The *Daily News*, 7/11/74, emphasised this aspect of the Finance Minister's speech by formulating the main headline thus: NO HALTING PLACES ON ROAD TO SOCIALISM. The *Daily News* also drew attention in a striking sub-heading to NM PILLORIES ECONOMIC POWER GROUPS: 11 FAMILIES OWN 51 pc OF ALL PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT—without mentioning that Dr. Perera had felt guilty that it was the United Front's policy of tax-holidays and other concessions like the CRA which had led to a further accentuation of the economic power of the few.

The *Daily News* and all other daily papers, published by Lake House and also the *Times* underlined the fact that the Minister of Finance had wanted to stress that this Budget was yet another Budget to soak-the-rich and protect-the-poor-man in order to take the masses towards socialism. The headlines revealed the image that was intended to be created: CONSUMER ITEMS UNTOUCHED.... BIGGER EARNED INCOME RELIEF.... INCOME CEILING RAISED... NO TAX HOLIDAYS ON DIVIDENDS..COMPULSORY SAV-

INGS BELONG CEILINGS OUT.. TRAVEL, ENTERTAINMENT TAX RELIEF OUT..NM PRESENTS BUDGETS SANS SURPRISES.. GOVT. WILL TAKE STEPS TO EASE THE BURDENS OF THE MASSES.. BUDGET: MAN-IN STREET UNSCATHED ..COMMON MAN RELIEVED.. BUDGET BRINGS NO HARDSHIPS....

These headings are no doubt highly elevating and convey one aspect of the Budget very correctly. This is however the negative aspect, that, is what the Budget has not done to the common man.

income. Elsewhere in India, Argentine, Mexico and Puerto Rico for example, the poor have grown poorer and relative inequality persists. This point is made by a study entitled 'Redistribution with Growth' undertaken by the World Bank Development Research Centre in association with Institute of Development Studies, Sussex. Sri Lanka is mentioned in the company of countries like Yugoslavia, Taiwan, Korea, Costa Rica, and Tanzania where the report says, policies have been pursued for equitable sharing of income growth.

"Referring to the need for concerted international action for transferring resources to poorer countries to meet challenges like the recent increase in price of oil—which in one year has doubled the money value of all third world exports—the study says: 'Recent changes of this magnitude pose the challenges as to what changes are desirable and feasible to move the world system of trade, technology and transfers to new forms in which rich and poor countries alike will be freer to adopt policies that would eliminate poverty from within their borders.'

"The study makes several recommendations. Small farmers to be guaranteed a return for adopting new technology: a minimum wage for rural labourers; encouragement to small producers. There is need for international action to move towards a more rational system of orderly financial transfers within some form of world income tax, the study states. The whole structure of world production could be rationalised by the world economy accelerating industrial development within the poorer countries and enabling them to obtain by agreement or take over a larger share of the benefits.

"India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka with 55 per cent of the total population in the developing countries covered by the study account for about 75 per cent of the popular on living below an income of 50 dollars a year according to the study."

The authors of the study are Hollis C. Chenery, an adviser to the president of the world Bank, who has visited Sri Lanka, Mr. Montak S. Ahluwalia of the World Bank's Development Research Centre, Mr. C. L. Bell, of the Institute of Development, Studies University

of Sussex, Mr. Richard Jolly, director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex and John Duloy, director of the World Bank's Development Research Centre.

Prof. Hollis Chenery, who was Professor of Economics at Harvard University, says in a section of the study running to over 300 pages: In many countries of the third world the rhetoric of income redistribution has been used as a political substitute for the design of policies that might help to bring it about."

"Whilst this no doubt provides a certain degree of solace (often vicariously sadistic) to the underprivileged in Sri Lanka, it is well to remember that to theorists of western capitalism, the redistribution of wealth and incomes in under-developed third world countries is the greatest safeguard against a violent revolution for Marxist socialism and that only this kind of redistribution provided the essential climate to ensure the success of the policies of the IBRD and IMF to keep Third World countries within the orbit of capitalism at least until the present crisis and instability in western capitalism passed away. The IBRD and IMF naturally do want more and more countries to go over fully to the socialist bloc and all their efforts are directed understandably, towards this end

The question whether the redistribution of wealth and income in stages would pave the way for socialism or give international capitalism a breathing space to catch up with the times is a moot question. It is also problematic whether this redistribution of wealth and incomes will not pave the way for new centrist ideologies and mixed economy fallacies which will act as a deterrent to bringing in a socialist economy. The experiments now going in Sri Lanka will no doubt provide students of current affairs with a great wealth of material and information in regard to the potentialities of development in third world developing countries.

THE FIFTH BUDGET of the UF Government is based on an eco-

nomical analysis acceptable by western economists. This is what Dr. Perera stated:

"You will recall the Budget last year was presented in an atmosphere of unprecedented economic malaise that enveloped the whole world. Unmitigated inflation, floating currencies, spiralling prices and scarcity of essential foodstuffs, these were our afflictions. Now twelve months later the picture is as sombre and unpredictable as in 1973.

"In 1973, I presented to this House some telling figures disclosing the extraordinary escalation of prices of essential goods like flour, rice, sugar etc. There is no appreciable change in this situation. Indeed, on the contrary prices of sugar and fertilizer have escalated even further and there are no visible indications of supply being adequate to meet the demand of the consumer countries. All the expert forecasts predict no change in this situation for the next few years....."

This analysis is in logic and idiom no different from what McNamara or Gerald Ford would say. Economists and marxists from socialist countries, whilst accepting and basing themselves on the identical facts, paint a different picture of the world economic situation and the reasons for the oncoming recession and trade slump.

But, apart from a general statement that socialist countries have had not been affected domestically by the world economic recession, Dr. N. M. Perera makes no attempt to analyse the economic situation from a Marxism angle or use

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Marxist logic to find solutions—if Marxism (revised by Bandaranaike) socialism was the aim and objective of the United Front.

Dr. Perera found comfort that rich hundred percent capitalist countries were also badly and adversely affected by the same economic conditions:

"The only consolation, if consolation it be, is that other countries big and small are also biting the dust of despair. They are no less dismayed by the ineffectiveness of the remedies that traditional thinking presents. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom proclaims unhesitatingly that his country is facing the gravest economic crisis since the last war. The President of the United States has voiced his profound concern at the ever-widening social repercussions of the inflation that is baffling his administration."

Then, he went on to set out how the recent annual conferences of the world's leading capitalist financial agencies had viewed the economic difficulties of the world and the remedies they had considered for bringing some measure of relief to the countries most seriously affected by the recession.

"The governing theme of the annual conferences of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank was inflation and the impending disaster that hangs over the world if the perilous course of inflation is allowed to continue unchecked. No country outside the socialist world would go unscathed.

"Quite naturally while the prognosis was similar, dissimilarities surfaced in the remedies suggested. Though some of the remedies were conflicting and even contradictory about the need for the recycling of the vast new resources of the oil-producing export countries, there was a consensus of opinion. Thirty per cent of the new accretion of resources, variously estimated to be between 60 to 80 billion dollars, would come from the developing countries; a process that would virtually deplete the foreign exchange resources of the already fragile economies of these countries. The oil-importing developed countries can always find accommodating rich neighbours. Rescue operations for them will never be lagging behind.

"The hardest hit would be the poor oil-importing countries. Fortunately there is a greater awareness of this among the oil-exporting developing countries. What they resent most is the gun-boat mentality of the rich and powerful nations that have not yet learnt the lessons of Vietnam and would force a confrontation to compel a reduction of oil prices. This would be a disaster more complete than the economic collapse of a recession-cum-inflation.

"A modest re-cycling process, designated as the Oil Facility, has begun through the efforts of the International Monetary Fund. This does not however touch even the fringe of the problem. Resources releases of greater dimensions will have to be forthcoming if small countries are to weather the economic blizzard that is threatening to engulf millions in dire distress...."

After thus referring to the various devices the IMF and IBRD had adopted to stabilise the capitalist system, Dr. N. M. Perera went on to state how the international organisations had approved certain measures taken by the Government. The UF government had, no doubt, adopted these measures in the belief that they would pave the way to socialism, but the IMF and the IBRD obviously saw the same measures in a different light—for these international capitalist organisations to praise Sri Lanka for such efforts.

But Dr. Perera, however, claims that his criticisms of the IBRD and IMF policies after 1970 had compelled these organisations to look at all these matters differently. If Dr. N. M. Perera is to be believed, the IMF and the IBRD now approve policies which would lead the country to socialism (and destroy capitalism). This is how Dr. Perera made the proud claim that the IMF-IBRD were now "different".

"Mr. Speaker, I have already referred to the recognition by world bodies of the achievements of Sri Lanka under the present government in the area of social justice, that is to say, in the redistribution of income and wealth. I have during the last four and a half years challenged conservative and academic concepts of development which are based on GDP criteria alone, ignoring the redistributive aspect.

"Today our way of looking at questions of economic growth has gained acceptance in the highest international forums charged with the responsibility for promoting such growth. Hon. Members will also recall that when we were in the Opposition between 1965 and 1970 our criticism of the strategy adopted by the UNP regime was precisely on these grounds.."

IN FACT, according to Dr. Perera, the policies and attitudes he had adopted during the days the UF was in the Opposition to criticise the UNP, had become the ruling guidelines of the IMF today. (But, it is a fact that the UNP had failed to carry out the behests of the IMF regarding imports and subsidies which the UF quietly and indirectly carried out after 1971).

The IMF and had no IBRD doubt changed many of its guidelines in the seventies, but whether these were due to sermons by Sri Lanka's UF government or due to compulsions from international economic factors is hard to say. But what is important is to know whether the IMF and the IBRD have "changed" to help the world towards socialism or to stabilise capitalism. If it were the former, then Dr. Perera is justified in deriving consolation from the activities and policies of these two organisations, but if the latter were the case, Dr. Perera should sit back and think how dangerous these IMF policies really are in the attempt to bring about a socialist millenium.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that Dr. Perera's basic economic assumptions in framing this Budget are based on the logic of the IBRD-IMF.

"In a volatile international economic situation, I have perforce to be cautious. A world recession leading to massive unemployment can upset all our hopeful calculations. The Government is only too conscious of the hardships the masses are enduring. We hope in the coming year, as and when circumstances permit, to provide some ameliorative measures to ease these harsh burdens."

(After outlining the achievements of this Government over nearly 4½ years, the Finance Minister said):

"This sketch would be incomplete were I to ignore where we

have fallen short. We have fallen short in our endeavour to bring down the cost of living and in solving the problem of unemployment.

"Inflation is a global phenomenon or as Irving Friedman says, 'a world-wide disaster'. No country, outside the socialist countries, has been able to escape the damage it has wrought in the lives of the ordinary people. A quotation from Mr. McNamara, the President of the World Bank, in his recent address to the IMF and World Bank Conferences will bring home with greater clarity and incisiveness what I have consistently urged during the last 3 years. "The rising prices of imported petroleum, fertilizer and cereals; the slack demand for their exports to developed countries, and the erosion by inflation of the real value of development assistance, all have dealt severe blows to the growth aspirations of the poorest members of the Bank. These nations, with a population of one billion, and incomes averaging less than 200 dollars per capital on the most likely set of assumptions regarding commodity prices, capital flows and growth rates in the OECD countries, would suffer an actual decline in their per capita incomes. The effect of this on the already marginal conditions of life of the poorest 40 per cent within these countries is an appalling prospect."

(More specifically drew attention to the plight of Sri Lanka) "Despite large cuts in food rations in 1974 cereal grain import costs will rise by 100 million dollars, fertilizer by 40 million dollars, and petroleum by 100 million dollars. And stagnating world prices of tea—Sri Lanka's major export—have in effect locked the country into a long-term deterioration in its terms of trade."

"Nobody will accuse Mr. McNamara of being biased. His objectivity cannot be questioned. The stark naked fact has to be faced. We have no hand in determining world prices. World prices determine our economic conduct. The Government therefore, fell back on the only solution available to it: raise the income levels of the working population. To the extent our resources permitted we have also cushioned the harshness of high prices by subsidies. A time

lag in these adjustments is inescapable. It is to be hoped that the masses would bear with us while we steer the country through this orders.

"On the problem of unemployment, we have made a substantial dent. Through the recruitment of over 25,000 teachers, through co-operative ventures, and through new industries and a total of very nearly two lakhs have found employment over and above the normal intake. Unemployed young men in rural areas have found a new outlet in agricultural enterprises consequent on the favourable atmosphere generated by land reform. Even the unemployed youth of the cities are wending their way to surplus land areas fired by a new enthusiasm for the economic regeneration of the country.

Dr. Perera cites with approval the analysis of the leading capitalist economists and the president of the World Bank McNamara. As far as analysis of the capitalist world go, they provide conformation that things are bad, but it is strange that the Finance Minister of a country which claims to have taken mighty strides towards socialism should rely on them for guidelines. And the solutions he says that he has adopted are no different from what many capitalist countries (which want to remain capitalist) adopt even today (including land reform and various form of nationalised state capitalism—which obtains in Sri Lanka today.)

Dr. Perera also referred to two institutional devices which had been adopted by the Government to cope with the economic crisis,

"I have on previous occasions adverted to the hapless position of a small country like Sri Lanka, the victim of every whim and fancy, and of every selfish move of the big countries. Never has this been more pronounced than now. Oil is only one of our head aches. There are other more unbearable ones like sugar where prices have jumped ten times over the last two years and that for the purely selfish reason of earning scarcity values. So also flour and milk food.

"Our efforts to counteract and lighten the burdens we are thus called upon to carry have been

outstandingly successful. I referred last year to the progress we made in the field of subsidiary foodstuffs at considerable risk to our political good name. Today we can proudly claim to have taken this agricultural expansion a stage further.

"Two institutional innovations have played a significant role in the advance on the food front. Productivity Centres have helped mobilise all cultivators in the village in the supreme task of optimum utilisation of land in the village. They stimulated a new interest in agricultural enterprise.

"Equally significant was the innovation setting up the political authority. He was not merely a new co-ordinating factor. He provided the drive and broke through official inertia. Admittedly in a new institution there was bound to be unevenness in the performance. Teething problems were not unknown. But by and large the political authority has justified its creation. A man of the people can inspire confidence in a manner no official can."

It will thus been seen that basic economic method of meeting the crisis was to "fall back on the only solution available to it: raise the income levels of the working population" and further "to the extent our resources permitted we have also cushioned the harshness of high prices by subsidies...."

One of the main economic assumptions underlining this Budget is that solutions adopted by the Finance Minister and the Government are no different from fiscal devices adopted by finance ministers in the contemporary capitalist world.

ANOTHER BASIC ASSUMPTION revealed in the Budget was that in spite of depressing situation in Sri Lanka, conditions were better than the statistics provided by the Central Bank. Some of the remarks of the Finance Minister on this matter indicate differences of opinion between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank.

Before venturing to criticise the Central Bank's statistics, Dr. Perera referred to the statistics to show how much better the country has done under the present government than under the previous UNP regime.

"Mr. Speaker, in my last Budget Speech, the growth of real GNP in 1973 was estimated to be in the region of 5 per cent. This was calculated on the mid-year estimate of growth projection and economic performance made by the Central Bank last year. I am still of the opinion that the growth in 1973 was not far away from my estimates notwithstanding the Central Bank, suggested figure of 3.5 per cent.

"1974 has been a year of intense activity, more particularly in the agricultural sector. With rare single-mindedness Government has concentrated on a food production drive to the exclusion of much other essential work like schools and roads.

"Despite delayed rains in the North Central Province, the Maha harvest piled on a record 52.8 million bushels. The more conservative estimate for Yala 1974 is 26 million bushels. In combination the year will present a proud record of nearly 79 million bushels of paddy. This contrasts with the performance of the previous year, 42 in Maha and 20.9 in Yala making a total of 62.9 million bushels. A number of factors contributed to this favourable outcome. Apart from the generosity of the weather gods, cultivators themselves showed a commendable response to governmental propaganda and the higher subsidy offered. A more intensive effort was forthcoming to obtain the maximum yields from the plots they sowed. The new and better strains played their part helped by the satisfactory application of fertilizer.

"This intensity was not absent in other fields of agricultural activity notably in subsidiary food crops: chillies, onions, green grams, manioc, sorghum, kurakkan, maize ground nut, potatoes and soya bean. The acreage devoted to these crops was bigger and spread out over the Island so that bad seasons in one area found compensation in the more favourable weather in other areas. The increased production of these subsidiaries from the enhanced acreage helped in no small measure to ease the hardships of reduced rations in rice and flour issued by Government. World food shortage had forced prices of these commodities to a prohibitive level and Government was compelled to restrict the quantum purchased.

"The food front was not a narrow salient. It spread-eagled to cover the whole Island, and it became a total war in which all, men and women, young and old, participated with a dedication unparalleled in our history during peace-time. Never has this country witnessed such a concentrated onslaught on the impending calamity of hunger which had ravaged so many lands in Africa and Asia and decimated their populations. It was not merely enheartening, it was exhilarating to witness the spectacle of every inch of land burgeoning with one crop or another.

"Export agriculture has displayed a buoyancy which did not obtain in 1973. Though tea prices did not advance in proportion to the rise in other world commodity prices, export earnings from tea are anticipated to show an improvement of Rs. 201 million over 1973. Rubber on the other hand enjoyed the vicarious benefit of the oil price hike. Export earnings from rubber are confidently expected to exceed Rs. 176 million over 1973 and attain the figure of Rs. 768 million. Coconut products though still not recovered from the drought effects of 1972—are expected to realise an export value of Rs. 361 million, an increase of Rs. 216 million over 1973."

After setting out the economic measures taken to cope with the crisis, Dr. Perera went to discuss the damage done by the statistics provided by the Central Bank because these statistics were "incorrect". He seemed to imply that the Central Bank statistics were motivated by ideas contrary to the larger interests of the country.

"In the light of the above consideration it is difficult to understand and appreciate the modest growth figure of about 4 per cent of the GNP ascribed by the Central Bank in its mid-year projections. This is all the more peculiar when we realise that it is well known that every increase of 10 million bushels of paddy enhances the growth rate of the National Product by one per cent; so substantial is the weightage attached to paddy production in particular and food production in general.

"It is not as if the other sectors of the economy have shown a negative growth. In the Central

Bank's own table all other sectors have registered a positive growth to a substantial degree. The only exceptions are mining and quarrying which show a decrease of 8.8 and manufacturing which stands at a negligible 0.7 plus. This again is curious because non-traditional exports have bounced to Rs. 975 million, an increase of Rs. 356 million over 1973. Mining and quarrying comprises gems and plumbago. Both have maintained their position. The production of gems has not been less than last year and the export earnings up to September 1974 has exceeded Rs. 110 million. Plumbago has also earned much more through its exports.

"One is constrained to hark back to 1967 and 1968 when the UNP Government regaled us with its bogus production targets and the 'Govi Rajas'.

"Total paddy production in 1968 was 64.6 million bushels compared to 55.1 million bushels in 1967. The difference was only 9.5 million bushels compared to the nearly 18 million bushels in 1974 over 1973. Subsidiary foodstuffs were almost entirely imported. The three main exports in 1974 will fetch approximately Rs. 2600 million as against Rs. 1824 million in 1968. Yet based on a so-called implicit price index the Central Bank projected a growth rate of 8.3 per cent in 1968. 1974 is credited with only 3.8 per cent growth. This implicit price index was never employed before 1968, nor after 1968. It seems to have been buried with 1968."

Dr. Perera does not mince his words in suggesting that the Central Bank was guilty of "gerrymandering" and states that this kind of tendentious statistics created a false image of the country abroad.

"This kind of tendentious statistical gerrymandering need not perturb us if their effects are confined to our shores; and we can leave these highly theoretical economists to their delectable pastime. Unfortunately foreigners are apt to take these statistics at their face value and measure our credit-worthiness on this basis. It is a pity that those indulging in these interesting statistical exercises have become oblivious to their larger interests of the country."

WHAT SEEMS TO WORRY, Dr. Perera most is that "foreigners"

tended to accept these statistics "at their face value." The "foreigners" are no doubt the officials and others connected with the IBRD and IMF, on the one hand, and the Finance Ministers of countries from whom Sri Lanka was seeking to obtain loans, credits and aid, on the other.

Dr. Perera also seems to suggest that "highly theoretical economists" should not indulge in these "statistical exercises" in the "larger interests of the country". Does it mean that our economists should be tongue-tied and that free discussion should be banned in the "larger interests of the country"—allowing an uniformed (and often misdirected and misguided) bureaucracy to experiment with policies that bring the country to the verge of disaster? Does it mean that truth must be suppressed in "the larger interests of the country" so that "foreigners" can be persuaded to accept and to believe what certain persons chose to tell them. One of the greatest virtues of Sri Lanka is that the Central Bank provides a continuous flow of statistics.

Is this to be stopped?

After commenting adversely on Central Bank statistics which did not reflect well on the outcome of governmental activities, Dr. N. M. Perera indulged in a little demagogic flourish to make people feel that there was not only a silver lining on the horizon but also that 1975 will find Sri Lanka an oil power. This is what Dr. Perera said:

"What the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs my esteemed colleague, holds out for us in 1975 is more important and vital than his industrial achievements. The prospect of oil in Sri Lanka is a wonderful pick-me-up in an atmosphere of gloomy forebodings. While we may not leap in rapturous delight, we have reason to be optimistic from the preliminary reports emanating from the Pesalai area of operations. Soviet experts have assured the Minister that they are reasonably satisfied of the existence of low-sulphur crude oil in commercially exploitable quantities. Mr. Minister for Industries, you will I hope be the 'man of the year' for 1975.

"The prospects for the year 1975 appear at least as good as in 1974; more likely they would be better unless a world recession

overtakes us all due to the myopic selfishness of the big powers. Recession or no recession we have to maintain the pressure on our drive for self-sufficiency in food."

There is certainly oil in the North of Ceylon, but whether this oil will be available for commercial use in 1975 or even in 1977 is problematic. If one examines the history of oil exploration and exploitation in the world, it will be seen that it takes a few years after the first drilling before the oil can be marketed. It is demagoguery to tell the people that by the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year of 1975 (as Minister Subasinghe—the man of the year 1975, had said recently) that Pesalai oil will be available for local consumption.

IT WILL THUS BE SEEN that the basic economic assumption in this Fifth Budget that it is still within the ambit of a capitalist framework adopting capitalist devices to resolve basic problems. In an article, next week, the concrete fiscal and monetary measures will be examined when the financial implications of the Budget are examined. But it would be correct to say that though this is a soak-the-rich budget in which the axe comes down heavily on over-five-lakh-rich people in the form of wealth and other taxes, the basic structure will remain capitalist in spite of the expansion of state-owned undertakings—and this expansion only increases state capitalism, even though the euphemistic term "nationalisation" is used. And nationalisation is a device, bourgeois in concept, motivation and execution.

An attempt has also been made in this Budget to lean more heavily on labour-intensive activity (and at the same time cut down the incentives to capitalists in the form of development rebates), but this and all other budgetary measures are derived from strictly capitalist logic. The main objective is a balanced budget in the manner and style approved by the IMF, and though this objective has not been attained in the Budget proposals already outlined, Dr. Perera has declared that he would be able to achieve this through various devices from time to time.

This Fifth Budget reflects the contradictions and dilemmas of a mixed economy. And the more Sri Lanka relies on a

mixed economy, the greater will be the difficulties in propelling an economic breakthrough away from the stagnation which now pervades the economy. This Budget is one more demonstration that that the country should either opt completely for a capitalist ideology to secure economic development, or adopt a fully socialist methodology to increase production and thus be able to increase real wealth, goods and services that have to be shared by the people.

The half way house of a mixed economy, in which the best that can be achieved is a zig-zag movement that will take everybody in circles all the time, will amount to nothing more than chasing mirages. To think that this kind of budget and the "radical reforms" (like land reform) on which the budget centres will take this country to economic development and better standards of living is a delusion. It will take this country neither to capitalist accomplishment nor socialist fulfilment.

Attempts to better the lives of working people by increasing wages has only led to the diminution of the value of the rupee. The amount of money that has been pumped into the economy by various (capitalist) devices in the last four years, and even before, has not kept pace with the increase of prices either internationally or domestically. It is not that goods are scarce on a world level, but the prices have jumped to levels at which the money supply is not able to cope with the situation. The inflation, which is destroying the economy of the world, (and in the process the economy of countries like Sri Lanka), stems from the inability of the money supply to increase its volume in a way so as to catch up with the process. Every country in the capitalist world is increasing its money supply in the hope of covering this gap. At the same time, efforts are made to cut down down consumption and credit to check old time inflation (where goods were scarce and the money supply was more abundant) in the hope that this will bring down prices.

CHRONICLE

OCTOBER 15 — OCTOBER 19

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15: According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera's has called upon the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to jettison obsolete economic theories, to treat human lives as more important than statistics and to bring a new approach to the solution of human problems so that the current crisis might yet see the dawn of a new era of hope for the poverty stricken masses: this the Minister has said when he addressed the annual conference of the IMF and the World Bank held recently. According to the *Daily News*, the stipulation that world wide tenders should be called and that a credit line of six months at least be obtained on purchases of sugar and flour are among difficulties experienced by the Food Purchasing Board in maintaining a regular supply of these commodities. According to the *Daily News*, the Government is now taking steps to increase exports of rubber-based manufactured goods which can earn more foreign exchange than rubber sold as raw material: a committee consisting of representatives of Ministries of Industries, Plantation Industry and Foreign Trade and the Export Promotion Secretariat, Industrial Development Board, State Engineering Corporation, Rubber Research Institute and the National Institute of Management is now looking into this question. A committee headed by Mr. T. B. Tennakoon, Minister of Social Services, and consisting of Dr. N. M. Perera, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike and Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle are studying the question of banning begging and to provide food, clothing, shelter and other needs to bonafide beggars. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, has sent a message of felicitations to the Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. Harold Wilson, on his victory at the General Election. The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., have decided that due to bad weather conditions in the area of operation that Rameswaram-Talaيمانar ferry service will remain suspended during November and December this year: the last service before suspension will be on October 28 from Rameswaram and October 29 from Talaيمانar. The Canadian Government according to a *Reuter* report is contemplating restrictions on entry into Canada owing to growing unemployment there and even before a Task Force which was appointed to consider the question published its green paper.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16: According to the *Daily Mirror*, Sri Lanka is expected to get a further sum of 24 million dollars from the International Monetary Fund under the oil facility scheme that has been extended to developing countries hard-hit by the recent oil price hike: the Executive Board or the IMF was discussing the Government's request and the money is expected to be released at the end of this month: the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, according to the *Daily Mirror*, told the annual conference of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers held in Ottawa that in solving

most political problems time was the great healer but in solving current economic problems time could be the greatest destroyer. According to the *Daily News*, there has been a sudden run on infant milk food in Colombo and its outskirts. Colombo's Mayor Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie who had already announced his resignation from the United National Party said at a public meeting held at the Maligawatte Housing Scheme on Sunday that he would be joining the Sri Lanka Freedom Party as from that date. According to the *Daily News*, the Eastern Paper Mills Corporation is making arrangements to distribute 5 million exercise books among school children in November. The Joint Council of Trade Union Organisations (JCTUO) will present to the Prime Minister its proposal for a seventy-five rupee wage increase to all categories of workers drawing a monthly pay packet of less than Rs. 800: the General Council of the JCTUO took this decision after it ratified the wage demand proposed by the JCTUO Secretariat early this month. India expects to import from seven to ten million tons of grain to avert widespread famine, according to economic and diplomatic experts in New Delhi: the government is reluctant to discuss the amount required, claiming that it could send prices soaring even higher in the world market. Chinese Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping said that a third world war was possible and if it happened it would result from the policies of domination of the two super powers. Prime Minister Harold Wilson, in an appeal for national unity to fight Britain's economic crisis, warned trade unions not to ask for too much and promised aid for the private sector industry.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17: According to the *Daily News*, an expert group from Commonwealth countries has recommended the setting up of a Commonwealth Investment Bank (CIB) with an initial paid up capital of £ 6 million: the Group's report was considered at the September meeting of Finance Ministers of the Commonwealth at Ottawa and it was decided to study the proposal further. The Katubedde Campus of the University of Sri Lanka was closed suddenly yesterday following the detection of handbombs on the Campus premises: the Campus was to be in its normal inter-term vacation on Friday. Member of Parliament for Kopay and the General Secretary of the Federal Party, Mr. S. Kathiravelpillai, has told the *Daily Mirror*, that as far as the Tamil United Front was concerned the door to dialogue was always open and dialogue was essential not only to reach agreement but also to agree to disagree. Ministers of Health from 18 countries and 150 delegates from 33 countries will participate in the Fourth Commonwealth Medical Conference which will commence on November 19 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall. The Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike who yesterday declared open a building block housing the new surgical and dental ward at the Army Hospital paid a compliment to the Sri Lanka Army for undertaking development projects of national significance. According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka has contracted to buy 6000 tons of brown sugar from Bulgaria: the deal was concluded recently in order to ensure continuity of supplies on the ration till the end of the year: the sugar will be shipped through a Bulgarian Agency in Singapore. A four-member delegation from the Komsomol, the largest youth organisation of USSR,

arrives in Colombo on Sunday on an invitation extended by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of Sri Lanka Freedom Party Youth League during his visit to Moscow early this year. The ICTUO meets on October 29 to decide on further action on its proposal for a seventyfive rupee wage increase to all workers drawing less than Rs. 800 a month. An Indian nuclear scientist was charged in Bombay with stealing platinum and gold and other precious metals worth Rs. 110,000 from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18: According to the *Daily News*, the Prime Minister is expected to pay an official visit to Iran at the end of this month: it will be a three day visit, but the precise dates have yet to be confirmed: the Premier is expected to meet the Shah of Iran and the talks will be mainly economic and an agreement is likely to be signed by the two countries. The price of Lakspray the full cream milk powder distributed by the Milk Board will be reduced from Monday: the Government decided on this after several trade unions and other organisations protested to the Government about the price increase. Mr. D. W. Wanigasekera, a former Director of the Bank of Ceylon, was indicted by the Attorney General with having acquired money and properties which he could not have acquired with his known income. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, yesterday lashed out at those trade unions which advocated nationalisation of ventures overnight: "let us first put our own house in order", said the Premier when she spoke at a Working Committee meeting of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party held last morning: at this meeting Mr. S. K. K. Suriarachchi, Deputy Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, was elected General Secretary of the SLFP. According to the *Daily News*, the prices of fertiliser are to be reduced by about one third. The Industrial Development Board has decided to test all machinery produced by it on the field for performance before they are sold to the public. The Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations has now officially presented to the Government its demand for a seventy five rupee wage increase for all employees below Rs. 800 a month. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka, Mr. L. H. Sumanadasa, has told the *Daily Mirror* that strict vigilance will be maintained by security men at all campuses of the University following the alleged discovery of handbombs in the Katubedde Campus on Wednesday. The National Planning Council's Sectoral Committee on Mass Media with Mr. Pieter Keuneman as Chairman has invited a delegation of the Press Association of Ceylon to discuss the problems of working journalists and the press in Sri Lanka. More than 10 million people in the 24 million strong state of Orissa in Western India face starvation conditions and epidemics. President Ford of America decided to veto for the second time a congressional measure seeking to cut off military aid to Turkey.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19: The Minister of Public Administration, Local Government, Home Affairs and Justice, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, stated in the National State Assembly yesterday that the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Bill is another weapon the Government is adding to the armoury of the Bribery Commissioners, Department to clean up public life and deal with people who get rich by resorting to corrupt

practices. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, presiding at the distribution of Prizes to the winners of the 1974 Bandaranaike Commemoration drama, film scripts and school essay competition at the BMICH yesterday said that neither the use of arms nor bloodshed was necessary to implement the Bandaranaike policies. According to the *Daily News*, the Prime Minister will leave Sri Lanka for Iran on a goodwill visit towards the end of next week: the Premier will visit Soviet Russia too on a separate visit but the exact dates for these trips have not yet been fixed. Justice Minister, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, in a circular to all Members of Parliament has requested them to inform him of the activities of the Sarvodaya Movement led by Mr. A. T. Ariyaratne, in their respective electorates: according to the Minister recent events have raised certain doubts in his mind about the manner in which the Sarvodaya Movement is in fact operated and the Minister is looking into the whole question of their activities. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. Bernard Soysa, MP and Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, in opening a conference of the National Taxpayers Society has said that the Convertible Rupee Account was a tremendous breach in the ceiling on income, exchange control procedures and the whole structure of taxation itself: Mr. Soysa has further told that while it was devised as an incentive for the promotion of non-traditional exports he was not quite certain whether it was bringing the expected results and a proper study of the scheme was being made. Britain will pull out from its Royal Air Force base at Gan in the Indian Ocean as part of the new Labour Government's defence cuts. Left-winger Norman Buchan, a Deputy Minister, resigned from the new British Labour Government citing serious disagreement about policy matters. American Congress approved a compromise plan to cut off military aid to Turkey if it breaks the Cyprus ceasefire.

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THE MYSTERY OF LEMURIA—8

THE TANTRAS

— Buryatia, Dravida, Australia —

By A. Kondratov

The proto-Indian texts that have reached us furnish meagre information. Even if scholars succeed in deciphering and reading them, they will hardly get any valuable data that may throw light on the origin of the proto-Indian civilisation. It is quite possible however that many proto-Indian mysteries will be solved by studying other written sources, such as the tantras (ritualistic Hindu and Buddhist cults).

The tantric symbols and drawings discovered in India relate to the palaeolithic period of history. It is highly probable that the tantric doctrine had been developed and perfected into a system by the proto-Indian priests.

MANY OF THE PROTO-INDIAN SIGNS AND SYMBOLS are identical with the tantric ones. Shiva and his consort, "the Great Goddess", are regarded as supreme deities by the adherents of the tantric cult in the same way as they had probably been worshipped by the proto-Indians. The texts of the tantras are considered to be older than the Vedas, for, according to the tantras, they had come out of the "main" mouth of the great Shiva and are therefore "the Fifth Veda". The Brahmans, Aryan priests, are idolised in all the four Vedas.

"The Fifth Veda" is proto-Indian rather than Aryan in its origin.

It is to be regretted that not all the tantric texts which had existed in India have reached us. Some of them have been lost, of others have remained only extracts. The Moslem invasion in North and Central India also damaged the "tantric library." And though it may seem paradoxical, the key to Indian tantrism (and possibly to the proto-Indian riddles too) should be sought outside India—in the Himalayas, in Tibet and in Central Asia, for there, among the Buddhists, one can find a large number of works of Indian Tantrists translated into the Tibetan language.

We have been able to read dozens of texts of the tantras written in Sanskrit, while the *Tanjur*, a Buddhist canon, written in Sanskrit and translated into Tibetan, contains many tantric texts whose authorship is ascribed to the Buddha. The number of texts commenting on the teaching

of the Buddha and included in the *Tanjur* exceeds 3,000, the majority of the authors being Indian Buddhist tantrists.

Scholars are offered the opportunity to study the tantric traditions and doctrines in such secluded regions as the two small principalities of Sikkim and Bhutan in the Himalayas. As far back as the 8th century Padma-Sambhava brought the teachings of Buddhism in its tantric form to the Himalayas. However, up to the middle of the '60s no one in the world had any idea of the wonderful works of art, sculpture and philosophy connected with tantrism and kept in remote, almost inaccessible places.

Not long back a book entitled *Himalayan Art* by Madanjit Singh, an art historian, was brought out in the UNESCO series. Mr. Singh was able to visit the monasteries in the remotest corners to acquaint the world with the masterpieces of art whose reproductions were strictly forbidden before. Now it is the turn of philologists, historians and philosophers to have their say, for the texts of the tantras provide a vast field for research.

And who knows, perhaps with their help the mystery of Lemuria will be solved at long last, supposing that the tantric doctrine had been born there, to be developed by the proto-Indians and carried later to the heights of the Himalayas.

IN ORDER TO STUDY TANTRIC TEXTS there is no need for Soviet scholars to become mountaineers: for the tantric form of Buddhism

has its many followers in Buryatia, in the territory of the Soviet Union. At present a good many tantric texts, whose analysis has produced wonderful results, are kept in the libraries of science in Leningrad and Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia.

In 1968 the Buryat Department of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR brought out the third issue of *Materials on the History and Philology of Central Asia*. One of the articles in the issue is devoted to the Buddhist cosmology. Apart from the traditional theory of the structure of the world, Buddhism, and particularly the tantric Buddhism, gives quite a different idea of the structure of the world.

The tantric *Kalachakra* system maintained that our planet had the shape of a sphere, that it rotated around its axis, etc. One cannot help agreeing with R. E. Pubayev, the writer of the article, who says that all this is of great scientific importance. Thus one can hope that not only the study of the bottom of the Indian Ocean, but even as remote a thing from oceanography as the translation and interpretation of the tantric texts, may throw light upon the mystery of Lemuria.

As one can see the Lemurian problem is connected with a whole complex of sciences, from the deciphering of ancient writing to submarine geology. It also embraces different territories ranging from the sunken land lying at the bottom of the Indian Ocean to the Himalayas and Buryatian steppes. It is quite possible that another continent, Australia, and yet another science—Australiology, are connected with it, too.

Already the first investigators of the problem had been struck by the similarity between the Australian aborigines and the dark skinned Dravidians. But how could it be explained? It was hardly possible that the ancestors of the Australians having left their native India could have crossed the ocean in frail boats or on rafts.

THE SIMILARITY between Dravidians and Australians still continues to give rise to heated discussions among anthropologists and ethno-

graphers. Some think this similarity to be only superficial, while others see in Australians "pre-Dravidians." Still others, on the contrary, consider India to be the Australians' native land.

The problem of the relationship between the Dravidian and Australian languages is also a moot point. As far back as 1847, J. Prichard, a British researcher, published a book in which he tried to prove the existence of a relationship between Australian languages and the languages of the Tamils inhabiting South India. About 100 years ago, W. Blick, also a Briton, proved that there existed a similarity in the structures of the Australian and Dravidian languages. During the last 100 years a large number of books had come out on the subject. Thus in 1963 a monograph by N. M. Holmer, entitled *The History and Structure of Australian Languages* was published in which the author cited facts of grammatical and phonetical coincidence in Dravidian languages and the languages spoken by the aborigines of Australia.

But these data are not sufficient to enable one to speak with confidence of a kinship between these languages, as such coincidences may be of an accidental, superficial character. Thus one can see that the data obtained by linguistics and anthropology are not enough to support, but on the contrary, reject the existence of a relationship between Australian and Dravidians.

And what has archaeology got to say on the subject? Excavations of recent years conducted in Australia, India, Pakistan and Ceylon have enabled scientists to study a great variety of archaeological cultures relating to the Stone Age. The similarity between Australian and Indian stone implements is beyond doubt.

Here again we are faced with the same problem: whether this similarity is a proof of a relationship, or merely the result of some accidental coincidence. But now archaeology is assisted by ethnography.

Every schoolboy knows what a boomerang is. It is one of the most typical objects of Australian culture. However only ethnographers know that the boomerang was discovered at the end of the last century among some South-

Indian tribes who spoke languages related to the Dravidian group. "It is quite possible that both the Indian and Australian boomerangs can be traced back to a common ancient prototype used by the proto-Australoid late-Palaeolithic ancestors of the peoples of India and Australia," writes Soviet scientist V. R. Kabo in this connection.

But where was this ancestral land of the Dravidians and the Australians situated?

Though the data of each separate science are still not sufficient to enable one to speak with confidence of the relationship between these peoples, facts obtained by ethnography, archaeology, linguistics and anthropology speak in its favour. Thus, a fairly convincing picture is formed by the combination of certain facts provided by different sciences that testifies to the ancient relationship between the peoples separated by the Indian Ocean. **Therefore, the problem of the ancestral country, of the common "cradle" of the inhabitants of South India, Ceylon and Australia, is quite natural.**

VERY FEW MEN OF SCIENCE are inclined nowadays to regard the fifth continent as the ancient motherland of the Dravidians or of the whole of mankind, as some anthropologists at the beginning of the present century supposed. Many contemporary investigators believe that the Old World, to be more exact, Asia, and even the countries of South Asia situated in the south of the Himalayas, had been the ancestral land of the Australians, for since the palaeolithic Period these countries were, according to V. R. Kabo, centres of human culture from which its waves travelled in different directions: to the north, to the Central and North Asia; to the south-east, to the South-East Asia; and further to Australia. The earliest Australian civilisations were also connected with the cultural and historical world of South and South-East Asia.

Maybe this "South-Asian centre" had in its turn as even earlier "precentre", situated somewhere in the Indian Ocean?

In 1931 A. M. Zolotaryov, a prominent Soviet ethnographer,

attempted to solve the "Australian riddle" by means of geological and oceanographic data. He explained the similarity between the inhabitants of South India and Australia by the fact that at one time India and the fifth continent had been situated closer to one another and then, later, under the influence of continent drifting, they moved apart, and the water expanses of the Indian Ocean separated the Australians from the Dravidians. Zolotaryov based himself on Vegener's theory which was very popular in those days.

It is not ruled out that quite a different hypothesis, though also of an oceanographical and ethnical nature, may prove correct. According to it, upto the end of the last glacial period there existed "bridges" of dry land between India and Australia that made it easier for primitive men to maintain contacts with one another. These bridges may explain the propinquity of the Dravidian and Australian languages, as well as other similar features discovered by anthropology, ethnography and archaeology. Maybe oceanography and submarine geology will contribute to the solution of these problems, for it is the Indian Ocean that mostly draws their attention nowadays.

So who is right after all in the discussions on the "Lemurian problem"?

The only thing we can again say is "we do not know."

There can be only more or less convincing hypotheses, for it is impossible to prove at the present stage of archaeological, ethnographical, anthropological and other knowledge the correctness of any of them.

Only after the bottom of the Indian Ocean in the area of the supposed location of Lemuria has been examined very carefully, will it be possible to say with confidence whether the Lemurian hypothesis is right or wrong, and to try with its help to deal with a number of problems concerning the origin of the proto-Indian civilisation, the origin of men, and many other problems that have remained unsolved so far.

Concluded

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—9

FORESHADOWING A SHADOW

By Herbert Keuneman

I ARRIVED in Ehetuwewa to stay, for the second (and, I suppose, for the final) time on the 22nd of April 1972.

It was not a happy homecoming. It seemed I could not turn my mind away from that first arrival 12 years ago when my wife had been with me and we came to a new place of colour and vivid life and friends to be made and unfamiliar experiences to seek and almost complete ease of body, mind, and spirit. I had reassured myself that amongst those who for so long had known us both and the scenes which had grown so familiar to the pair of us there would be some consolation for her loss. But the loss was still too new and each encounter from which I had looked for a lenitive was a fresh excoriation.

My physical circumstances offered nothing to help. The brief April rains, which should by custom have served no more than to restore the land and refill the tanks ready for the second Sowing, the *yala* crop, were this time phenomenal: as prolonged and violent as ever I had known any North-east Monsoon in Ehetuwewa to be (which is the district's proper wet season). Faillessly, for more than three weeks for more than four hours a day, from 18 April to 12 May, from 1.0 p.m. or earlier to 5.0 or 5.30, the rain roared down; and it was no comfort to recognize the pattern as that of mere convectional showers if the fury was going to be that of cyclones!

And the roof leaked. I have lived before under leaking roofs—who, in Ceylon, has not—and learned to put up with them. But here was leaking on a new scale. Fortunately it did no-leak in the corner where I had placed my bed. But there were no less than eight major leaks elsewhere, just one of which yielded 6 gallons of water (measured) in a single briefer-than-usual shower. I remember all this, and can state it, because I was so impressed as to note it in a diary!

ANOTHER PHYSICALLY depressing factor was food. Rum, our Ehetuwewa half-daughter who had spent 12 of her 22 years with my wife and me and was now about to be married, had agreed to supply me and I had thought myself well off. I had taught her to cook, myself, and I felt sure of tasty meals—even though they were bound to be cold ones by the time they had been carried the nearly half-mile distance between her house

and mine—but I had not reckoned on how soon and how firmly the village would reimpose its influence even on well-trained Rum's kitchen methods.

(When I speak of the 'village' influence I must make clear that what I speak of is the modern village: not the traditional village where you grew your own chillies and ground your own curry-stuffs fresh every day but the village betrayed into uncharacteristic traps of so called labour saving, where all the curry stuffs are bought as 'sarakku powder' consisting of goodness knows what substitutes and adulteratives and tastes like nothing known in any self-respecting kitchen. Nevertheless, every village kitchen now uses it—the grindstone is left for sambol-making alone—and the same nauseous nauseating mixture in, only, varying quantities is used in all curries; and no other variation ever takes place.)

By the time these uniformly (not to complain of offensively) flavoured messes had reached me disposed round a mound of rice that had cooled to the consistency of small shot, with the gravies slopped over and congealing even on the outside of the plate—for Kiri, Rum's factotum who brought me my meals often forgot to carry the plate level—I had to be very hungry to eat. In desperation I gave up lunch—as a priest I had many years given up breakfast; for, after mass and one's morning parish duties, it was invariably too late to enjoy that meal—in the hope that sheer hunger might induce an appetite by the end of a day. But not even this was always successful. It has proved, however,

a useful regime to get accustomed to: in these days when one meal a day is as much as one can afford I find myself at a considerable advantage!

NO DOUBT many will find it pusillanimous to dwell at such length on hardships that some might consider negligible. My friend and fellow-recluse Anatory Bukoba in his *shamba* has daily accepted far worse ones but seldom paused to comment on them. But I had not his motivation, nor perhaps his fortitude; and, anyway, I recount these things because under all of them together I was heading for a kind of breakdown: an experience without which I might never have adjusted to the village in the manner in which I now needed to.

But the breakdown was not yet. Nor have I yet mentioned, not by a long way, all that contributed to it. And the story must, I think, be allowed to emerge at its own pace, long-winded though this may be. So, perhaps I ought to add also, as germane to my account, the fact that I was ill: not merely physically ill, with a heart 'condition' which brought on occasional disconcerting anginal attacks, but also with a kind of nervous and moral exhaustion which made me on the one hand less than usually resilient to ordinary changes and chances and on the other hand more than usually self-centred and unable to judge from an adversary's point of view. In fact, I began to see adversaries where there were only those maintaining their own interests as devotedly as I maintained mine. I began to distrust those I had got used to count on; I became unable to make a disinterested evaluation; I judged everything and everyone by their advantage or damage to me. I am not going to be so hypocritical as to deny that I met—frequently—with bad faith. But I lost for a time the faculty to distinguish impersonal dealings from deliberately directed malice. Why, I even came to suspect Rum of poisoning me! And when I have explained that I shall have given you some idea of the kind of crisis I was heading for and I can get on with telling the story in order. As it happened.

WHEN WE FIRST decided to move to Ehetuwewa, my wife and I,

friend asked us: 'Why on earth have you chosen that place? It is the most notorious haunt of poisoners in the island!'

Notwithstanding our friend was a lawyer with a large practice in Kurunegala and therefore familiar, no doubt, with an Ehetuwewa clientele, it was difficult to take his warning seriously. The idea of a sort of village of Borgias—and such charming Borgias, at that—seemed a little *outré*. And the nature of the poison peculiar to it (when we finally got reluctant villagers to talk about it) was such as scarcely to foster a more credulous attitude. Apparently, the poison is a substance called *tittan-kuda*; of which the main ingredient, though surely not the active principle is *tittayo*, the tiny fingerling fish from the village tank. When these and the other elements of the prescription are made up and dried and fed to the victim mixed, tasteless it would appear, with his rice and curry nothing happens. But that is its virtue. Nothing immediately happens. But the next time his meal includes *tittayo*, he perishes in great pain and beyond the possibility of cure. So the description went; although every villager who could be persuaded to admit even the tradition of such a thing swore no-one now lived who knew its secrets. This, at least, seemed true, for though there were not a few murders and suspected-murders in Ehetuwewa while we lived there, poison did not figure in any of them; and in the few sudden deaths that took place 'from natural causes' the coroner never seemed to consider *tittan-kuda* poisoning as an alternative!

Yet now, with those horrible meals with their nagging persistent uniform flavour of something unwholesome, I found myself—to my present and future shame—seriously entertaining or, at all events, not repelling the doubt that Rum, the sooner to collect the trifling legacy we had promised her, might actually be attempting to do away with me! It was only when (out of sheer disgust for the food, not out of any fear of death which at that time I should have welcomed) I changed to another caterer only to receive meals that were indistinguishable that I realized that the present standards of village cuisine and not Rum's faithfulness was at fault.

You must judge from this confession *nothing* but the extent of my eventual demoralization. It is not to be a gauge of anything else.

HOWEVER, bear the demoralization in mind, especially in the next few parts of this narrative in which I shall have to have much to say of disloyalty and dishonesty and turpitude; but also, perhaps, throughout the narrative; for maybe that ghastly Dark Night of the Soul that I was now to go through has left a permanent shadow in my personality, a permanent opacity in my understanding, a lack in my charity that you, dear reader, can probably allow for more justly than I. I shall relate events as they took place, describe feelings as I experienced them, state conclusion as I came to them; for it would be hypocritical to pause every now and then to remind you that I may have been mistaken, that I might have judged more charitably; and you must do the weighing and considering that will yield the truth about village ways and values.

While I cannot guarantee a disinterested and dispassionate account of the experiences I was now to undergo, there is one sense in which I am now nearer to knowing the truth about the village than ever I was as the *suddha mahattaya* (not just a *sudu mahattaya*) in it. As my wife and I first lived here, with our greatly superior incomes, our greater influence and more useful contacts than most villagers enjoy, we were not only to some extent protected—though we did not know it—from communication with our neighbours sufficiently close to affect the roots of our values or shake the foundations of our sense of well-being. We were egalitarians but not equals! We were sources of benefit, dispensers of favours; geese that laid rolled-gold eggs, and no villager is so little a realist as to kill even so second-rate a bird! But now I found myself in the village wholly on the villagers' footing: financially no better off than many, and bound to accept the village on its own terms: needing to adopt village customs, accept its values, ask its advice, seek its favours. I was no longer a more-or-less respected outsider: I was a candidate for membership, therefore less than any member.

SHAMBA

Looking For a Colleague

ANATORY BUKOBA

October 2,

My new colleague, I have been told, has got himself a job. Another lad, who said he would join me, has to put an examination in December first. Another lot of people, who are carpenters first, cannot come yet. Meanwhile, the rain has held off, but it may rain at any time. The monsoon should start in a fortnight.

My old colleague has had work. He has not yet returned from today's spell of it. As it is the beginning of the month, I should be all right for money, but I find the money goes fastest in the first week. As I pay my way as I go, debts do not account for that. One-pound packets of *Kurakkan* at Rs. 2/50 a packet, alone have accounted for Rs. 5, a packet for each family with whom I eat. This did not save me from having to disburse some cash. A good-sized coconut costs eighty cents, but it was a good one. The housewife mixed the *Kurakkan* flour with ordinary flour. Her daughter is becoming quite a little woman in her talk.

Yesterday, I was too tired to write much. There was an *ambawila* tree growing in our major town in the *wanni*. I asked for a cutting, and I was given three from one branch. The tree was quite laden with fruit, black and juicy. Two boys up that tree had attracted me to it. The owner described the fruit as mulberry and it may well be.

Is it not from mulberry that one gets silk? There is also the nursery rhyme, *Round and Round the Mulberry Bush*. My hostess here recognized the cuttings without prompting, but her husband, to whom I gave the cuttings to plant, was stumped. He planted them this morning close together to facilitate watering. When they have struck root, they will be put where they are to grow. Next to the *ambawila* were *dhelun* bushes, each with red, apple-like fruit on them

The One Acre Farm

looking good to eat. The *dhelun* is about the size of an apple, possibly slightly smaller with a small protuberance or outgrowth that gives it a slightly different shape.

The kittens in this place are running about. There are two of the four left. Our own puppy died. While I was away, it was bitten at 5.30 a.m., I was told, by a serpent, when the puppy left the house, and it died in the afternoon. No one can see the snake in the dark.

A child of one of my nearest neighbour's had died, a small lad he was. Taken ill at 5 p.m., he died at 7 a.m. We had no idea his death at the time.

Clearing small thorn bushes with my heavy knife is what I have doing a part of this morning, on what may one day be a small games field. Some of our vegetables, a year ago, used to grow on a part of this. I could not borrow a mamoty to do this job; all my close friends were using theirs. Quickly short of money as I am getting, I still feel inclined to invest in a new mamoty. Our family soon lost the one I gave them when they first came here, and more recently they have also lost the big bucket. With the rain coming on, and with everybody using their mamoties, I think I shall just have to have one. On what we might have regarded as our front lawn, if there had been any grass on it, for it has all been burnt up under the hot sun, and where the murunga and some of the plantain trees used to grow, there are cracks in the soil about nine inches deep, at a rough estimate. It is a fine time for digging up the thorny *nitti-kumba*, for their stalks can be seen clearly as there is no grass. It is *nithi-kumba* which can make rough grass agonizing to walk on.

Francis Thompson's "Life of Ignatius of Loyola" is what I read last. What makes the book so interesting is that it is a life on one of the world's great successes by one of the world's worst failures. In other respects it is like the life of a saint by a saint. Ignatius, the founder and leader of the Jesuits, has been canonized; it is unlikely that Francis Thompson ever will be canonized. In this respect, too, he was a failure. That other great failure in inverted commas, Benedict Joseph Labre, was canonized. Nobleman turned beggar, he died

as such, that is, a beggar covered with lice. Thompson's vice was not lice but landanum, and although cleanliness is said to rank next to godliness, drunkenness, or addiction to drugs, ranks even lower than plain dirt, it would seem in the hierarchy of values.

Two interesting ideas I have picked up from Malcolm Muggeridge's *Tread Softly For You Tread On My Jokes*. One is about judges and it will not bear repeating here. The other is about Stalin. He advances the interesting, and, now that I have seen it fairly obvious, theory, that Stalin, by his purges and executions, got rid of the revolutionary riffraff. The consequence is that we have been left with a bureaucracy undefiled in Soviet Russia.

Reverting back to the Jesuits, we celebrate today the memory of Francis Borgia, a Spanish duke who had to identify the body of the Queen of Spain. He was so shocked at its decomposition that he realized the futility of all earthly glory and became a Jesuit priest. He was the second General, as they are called, after Ignatius. He was a married man with children. All this seems a far cry from *shamba*, but I have been partly Jesuit-trained.

As usual the afternoon went by too quickly. I tried to save a little time by wading the river. I was well over my thighs in water at one place. Nothing got wet except the outside of my pack, and only the outside, cloth, though it is. As I got deeper in the water, I was more steady on my feet. It is too dark to write.

October 4,

The mamoty has been bought. Someone told me to make sure it was a heavy one, and so I weighed a number in my hand, and I did not bother about the angle of the blade in relation to the neck of the shaft, or about the shape of the blade itself, slightly concave as I was told it should be. The first mamoty I handed seemed to be the heaviest, and everything else seemed to be wrong as regards the angle and the shape but it was that I took. The price, Rs. 19/55, and Ceylone-made. On my way here to the house, I stopped at the Boundary of our acre, where it has been encroached, but which I still hoep to get back,

and I cut there a young *halamba* tree just about thick enough to serve as a mamoty shaft. I got two lengths from it, and it was the smaller one I used. When the wood dries out, I may have to turn to the other piece I cut, the thicker length. *Halamba*, young, looks not very different from *halmilla*. The shaft length I used was a little narrow for the mamoty socket, and so I split the larger end and drove a wedge into it, also of *Halamba*, and cut from a smaller length left over. The wood is quite heavy now, but I have been told it will dry out in a few days.

The bark had to be taken off the tree I cut. A young lad helped me with peeling off the bark; we had two knives; and later I shared my lunch with him. He has been looking round for some fowls to start some poultry farming.

Sorry am I to leave this place with so much to be done, and in the mood to do it as I am. I feel that if I am to visit places, now is the time to do it, while I am still alone. We heard jackals last night, or so I was told. Coming here one morning from where I sleep, I saw two snakes, *garandias*, as I was told, right on the path and having a sort of game with each other. They both lay the same way, and at one stage were entwined as if they were one snake. They seemed to take not the slightest notice of me, and they were making a lot of noise, I thought at first they might be *polongas*, but their movements were too quick, and yet, large though they were, they seemed shorter than the *garandias* I have seen.

October 11,

Surprise was my lot today. First, let me say that I think I have tackled this *shamba* in the wrong way. I was out to build a community round the *shamba*. That was my mistake. I should have tackled the community first.

Up to now we have built a sort of community around projects. The single employer, or partners, or the public company; their relationship with their employees is centred on the wage or salary, and it is rather impersonnel. A corporation or a co-operative does the same. A community as I visualize it, let us call it a *corporate*, is a group of people who come

together without this wage-salary-fee relationship. It is not even a community of interest that draws them together, but one of friendship. They want to live and work together, and they find a way, or ways, of doing this, and this is their project or projects.

The system that has been worked, this salary-wage-fee relationship, has not worked. That is why there was a general election in Britain yesterday. The economists admit that they are stumped. What has chiefly brought down successive governments has been inflation. Tribalism is a corporate on a massive scale. Let not anybody think I am advocating a community on that massive scale. I only mention it to quote one example.

The masai are regarded as primitive; I have found them to be among the most intelligent in the world, and the fastest-thinking, if their speech is anything to go by, and by their tribalism, their corporate life, they have solved their sugar problem; you may even say that they have solved it so successfully that they have never had a problem about it. I hope I am not talking through my hat. I believe that communities can solve most of their problems; put them as a wage-free-salary basis and they will solve nothing. Do not for a moment think that I am writing about doing away with money. The corporates or communities will for the most part deal with each other in money, or perhaps I should say with money. Nor am I advocating a sort of communism. There is nothing to prevent the communities disbursing some of this money among their people.

Now, I am not advocating the formation of communities by legislation. I do not think you can legislate about such a thing; it has to be a natural, voluntary growth. There can be no fixed pattern, but it is one way of solving the problems caused by rising wages, strikes, inflation; arbitrary dismissal, E.P.F., and socialism. Above all it will to a large extent solve the question of funds. For on a basis of friendship, it should be possible for a community of people to find these funds themselves. This is what happened to me more or less, today; but, of this more anon.

Before I even knew of my surprise today, I had a chance of dis-

cussing this question of community versus project, a sort of which, comes first the chicken or the egg, with some people very experienced in these matters. They agreed that this might be a solution to our problems but, they said, would not this formation of communities be very hard to accomplish. Perhaps nothing could be harder, but I see no other way. You cannot solve anything by aggravating situations and I think this is what happens by concentrating on projects. It is a question largely, of where you put the emphasis.

So let us come back to our *shamba*, I was wondering what I was going to say today before I aware that my hopes for starting up again had failed, as it were. My new colleagues was not forthcoming, and he had even disappeared with the sorghum seed. Short of carrying the whole burden myself, I would not get started. So when I came to the *shamba*, who should I find but a man. He had arrived ten minutes before, and he had come to see me. I had arrived a day early by the purest of chances. I might easily not have come and so have missed him. He wants to join me, and if he is as true as his word, he has funds. He is even prepared to feed me as mine do not stretch far. I have had people join me before, but they all failed. Not one of them had resources anyway. In those days I was tied to living constantly on the *shamba*, and when one young man wanted to go out to work, I would not let him. His chief asset was an uncanny ability about climbing trees, and he was also a good cook.

This young man is the first to come along who says he can support himself. Some of the investments he wants to make seem too good to be true. I had to spend my time discouraging him, Sir Andrew Coldecott's, *Hemim, Hemim*.

Anyway, I set to work with a will, and I started at the point where I hope we may have a paddy field. Both my hands, the mammoth and the knives came into play. That means there was handweeding as well as work with tools. I worked alone. The young man moved around freely. After all, he had not come dressed for work, and he was in longs. At one time

I thought he would never accept my slow, painstaking way of working and I offered to let him run the *shamba* his way. No, he said, he would do it my way. So we agreed to meet, and on a day which will upset my own plans. When I have done this in the past for similar reasons, I found it had never paid: I had put myself out all in vain and would have done better to have adhered to my own plans or schedule for the day. We can only wait and see what does materialize. It is the life here which is appealing to my new friend. He has been quite successful in business up to now. It all seems too good to be true, in more senses than one, and so you can imagine my surprise.

The old *massa* bed in the home, which stood on the left as you came in has been taken down, and what looks like a treble *massa* bed has been put up at the back. It does not give us more sitting room, but it makes it easier for the family to sleep. I had come across a large mat for Rs. 4/50, made of *thal* leaves, and I was unable to buy it. I have also seen tail oil lamps for Rs. 1.50, I was told, grand affairs compared with the little ones sold here for seventy five cents.

This I learnt about sugar. It takes a year for the cane to grow. Forty-five tons of cane can be got from an acre, or under four and a half tons of sugar.

Some of the old heaps of vegetation I set fire to today. One man said it would start raining on the 20th, and that the wind has not changed yet. The land everywhere, except on my own acre, and next-door, is ready for the rains. Without terracing, there will be much soil lost with the first rain, which are usually torrential.

My new friend is a school champion boxer and cricket captain. I shall be sorry through overmuch activity to lose some of the time I have had for reading. A book I am reading now is Jacques Maritain's *Dream of Descartes*. It would seem that Descartes crystallized in his thought all that has gone wrong in the world these last three hundred years. Science was enthroned as queen, science which has no real wisdom at all.

Hence the self defeating acts of science, sowing disorder in what was called progress. Anything was good enough if it was thought of. It is an exhiarating book but very difficult to read.

My hosts have been asleep a while now, and I would have thought it was twelve if I had not a watch. It is only 10.15 P.M.

REVIEW

Tamil Writing

WRITING IN SRI LANKA by K. S. Sivakumaran (printed at Kumaran Press 201, Dam Street, Colombo; distributed by Vijayaletchumi book depot, 248 Galle Road, Colombo 6. Price Rs. 5.75)

Here is a book by K. S. Sivakumaran on Tamil writing in Sri Lanka. The author's concerted and devoted pursuit in the field of research in Tamil writing has given the Tamil public a succinct review of some of the Tamil works which have appeared in the recent past.

Sivakumaran's book is a collection of reviews which appeared in the daily papers and periodicals during the last few years and as such lacks coherence and contains a certain amount of overlapping. But every page reveals the author's earnestness, diligence, meticulous care and an honest endeavour to understand the medium and the message.

REVIEWS in daily papers are conditioned by the exigencies of editorial stewardship; and also to a great extent by the cross section of the anticipated readership. Therefore one cannot expect an original inductive thesis on the merits of writing but only the resultant of the impact of the writing on the author. And in the case of Sivakumaran the impact is on a conditioned yet receptive mind; conditioned by the aesthetic past and the ideological future, the time present only satisfying the immediate necessity.

The author's script on 'Towards, Sinhala-Tamil Understanding' as a question of dialogue is a befitting introduction to the book and worthy of praise. We need not look at the surface for this dialogue. It has been there for centuries on solid foundation, from the times

of Buddhist logic and metaphysics; but it has not been explored and expressed. But taking into consideration the period under review the Tamil-Sinhala Dictionary by Mr. N. D. Peries comes to the surface and stands as a first step towards integration.

LITERARY HISTORY: As regards Tamil writing in Sri Lanka it is very difficult to define and demarcate its boundaries. Because, before the introduction of the passport and the visa system Tamil writing has been an integrated whole between South India and Sri Lanka. But if we restrict the scope of writing to fiction then Sivakumaran's explorations are within safe limits and scope.

There is no doubt that the message of the book under review is socially relevant at this juncture of our history. Still the question arises whether the novels and stories under review do carry the message in a literary vehicle so as to implant a lasting motivation. I feel that the majority of them do not. Their partisan attitude is deliberately directed towards a social change and is progress oriented; there is no doubt in it. They do elaborate vigorously the dialectical contradictions in the society; that is also true. But do they have the literary stamp in them to stand an artistic even a scientifically committed analysis. I do not think they have.

Majority of them depict deep rooted social disabilities, caste prejudices and class oppression. As far as motive is concerned they are commendable and relevant. But the force of character, the action milieu, the literary expressiveness are of such level that they will have an impact only on the surface and that too only on those who are already afflicted. They lack persuasion and conviction to convert those who are susceptible and neutral. The virtue of writing depends not on what it says but on its expressiveness and the impulse to motivation. Even in cases which have been highly praised by Sivakumaran, I see no rational nor a consciously dynamic commitment, but anger under degradation, impatience, adolescent adventure and ridicule of the elite without proper comprehension of historical factors.

THE AUTHOR'S NOTE on Indian Tamil Magazines and journals is a literary solution to normalise balance of payments. Furthermore in matters of writing and literature (and even in ultimate marxist-leninism) the concept of a nation state and national writing is a historical relict which cannot be revived and sustained by dialectical legardemain. A cultural milieu is more powerful than geographical constraints.

I am of the opinion, that in the analysis and evaluation of any undertaking the tools and standards applied should be relevant to the subject and should not mistake the nature with the objective. The primary function of literature is to explore and widen the conscious area of the human beings, to bring in and create a new awareness of the self and the milieu and in that process to enrich and refine the expressiveness of the language. True literature should tap and push open the unconscious, widen the frontiers of human understanding, and conscious power so that any committed motivation can leave its permanent imprint on men. Having fulfilled this prerequisite it can pursue any ideology without endangering the social good of the human family.

Most of the books chosen and elaborated by Sivakumaran are praiseworthy as far as their ideological pursuit is concerned. But excepting a few, many of them fail in their first test of literary virtue. Perhaps the first test I have mentioned may be dubbed as reactionary and bourgeois; but literature, whatever its origin or orientation may be, has to pass down ultimately as common property of the people and when it reaches that stage the first test is the acid test.

Judging from the constraints self imposed on the one hand and the perspicacity evidenced in the evaluation of some writings on the other, I feel Sivakumaran's ideas will outgrow the temporal limitations imposed by the prevailing politico-literary environs; and will attain full maturity in due course and the Tamil writing in Sri Lanka will have an able and mature appraiser.

E. RATNAM

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

• THE CURFEW

IS IT NOT TRUE that the two main talking points in political, diplomatic, trade union and other wide-awake circles today centre around the implications of the unexpected curfew of Saturday, November 16, and secondly about the eye-brow raising revelations which have surfaced in the Farook Sally CJC case coupled with the unexpected arrest and detention of gem merchant now CRA tycoon Nalim Hadjar (vide *Tribune*, September 5, 1974) and one of his side-kicks Raaji? That whilst the Farook Sally case and the Nalim Hadjar matter are *sub judice* and comments and discussions about them, even in the lobbies of parliament, are in subdued whispers, the polemical reverberations of the curfew are beginning to reach out to the heavens? That this is the first time that a curfew (to prevent the violation of a ban) has been imposed to restrain the activities of one of the constituent parties of the United Front? That it is admitted that differences between LSSP and the SLFP had been simmering for sometime? That *Tribune* has made references to early warning signals of this embryonic confrontation in several issues in recent months? That all the differences had lately been polarised and politicalised over the extent, scope and speed of further nationalisation by the Government? That many other matters of difference of a less political nature had also been containerised in this nationalisation issue? (That cynical observers of the political scene have commented that this hullabaloo about nationalisation was only a smokescreen for more sordid behind-the-scenes problems which seem to trouble many politicians?) That since even the Devil himself cannot know the mind of man it would be futile to speculate on

the hidden and subteranean motivations which have led to the present mini-confrontation which some have described as an impasse?

IS IT NOT A FACT that the differences over nationalisation had surfaced when all the LSSP, CP and pro-left SLFP papers (like the *Janavegaya*) had for some months been pressing for more and more nationalisation? That it was known that the Prime Minister and a number of SLFP Ministers had been opposed to this? That the Prime Minister had given expression to this centrist *cum* rightist SLFP sentiment when she addressed the SLFP Unions in mid October when she had stated that whilst the SLFP had been in the forefront of the nationalisation programme the time had come for a slow down to enable the undertakings already nationalised to make themselves efficient and profitable? That this *hemin, hemin* (slowly, slowly) policy on nationalisation had stirred up a hornet's nest uproar among the leftwing partners of the UF? That this led to the CP issuing and 18-point programme to help the UF along to push ahead towards socialism at this stage by emphasising the need for more and more nationalisation? That next shot in the battle had come in Dr. N. M. Perera's (LSSP's) reply to the PM in the Budget Speech when he said that there were no halting places on the road to socialism? (That cynics comment that CTB bus drivers, under LSSP management, also do not recognise halting places even if the buses were only half full and there were many ordinary folk standing in queues at the bus stops?) That this was followed up with an LSSP mini-programme which adumbrated a tougher policy than that formulated by the CP? That, the LSSP and CFL

had wanted to stage a demonstration and rally on Saturday November 16? That the authorities, acting in pursuance of an earlier order based on a joint agreement of the three UF parties regarding such rallies and demonstration, had banned the procession and rally? That the LSSP-CFL leadership thought that the rule should be waived in their case? That when this waiver was not forthcoming, the LSSP-CFL had threatened to defy the ban? That it was at this stage that the curfew was imposed!

IS IT NOT A FACT that the aftermath of the curfew had brought the polemical attack on the PM, Anura and the SLFP ministers identified as centrists and rightists by the LSSP and CFL papers had mounted in intensity? That it was alleged that this onslaught on the working class and the curfew on the LSSP was because of the nefarious activities of the "mudalali group" in the SLFP which had been badly and adversely affected by NM's budgetary proposals? That immediately after the remarks made by the Finance Minister in his Budget speech about "halting places", it was reported that the PM (or the SLFP) had wanted a summit meeting of the leaders of the three UF parties to arrive at a common agreement on questions like nationalisation? That up to the time of writing the first SLFP-LSSP summit has been held? That it will be sometime before the outcome of these summit talks will be known? That in the meantime it can be stated that all three UF parties still want to remain united? That whilst the so-called "mudalali"—inspired group in the SLFP want the LSSP thrown out of the UF and the ultra-left in the LSSP want to quit the coalition, it is clear that the top leadership do not want a break? That the CP are doing their best to be the honest brokers trying to resolve difficulties and reconcile the opposing factions? That though it appears that the present "quarrel" will be patched up and "unity" established on a kind of "do-nothing" basis (leaving "what-has-been-done already" alone), the November 16 curfew will leave a scar on UF politics?