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KALAWEWA

— and the current political situation —

THE KALAWEWA BY-ELECTION of November 27, 1974 marked the culmination of one phase of contemporary politics. It also ushers in the next phase where the currents, cross-currents, under-currents and hidden currents of intra-party, inter-party and extra-party relations, which had surfaced in so dramatic a manner in Kalawewa, will set in motion qualitative changes in the attitudes of various groups within the leading political

Parties, and this is likely to bring about fundamental changes in the political life of this country in the course of 1975 or 1976.

What the ultimate outcome of these changes will be is hard to say, but a realistic awareness of the developing trends, (many of them still embryonic, will help all interested in the current political scene to better understand the significance of the actions, confrontations, somersaults, retreats and

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DIALOGUE?

When the *Tribune* had suggested at the time of the PM's visit to Jaffna that it was necessary for the Government to start a dialogue with the TUF, certain papers (claiming unique progressivism and exclusive UF affiliations) had chastised *Tribune* for wanting a progressive Government to have a dialogue with reactionary communalists. Other left-minded persons had also adopted a similar logic to criticise the *Tribune* (and we had published what they had to say in our columns)—forgetting that at the appropriate time Stalin had entered into a dialogue with Hitler and more recently Brezhnev with Nixon. We had felt and still feel that the Government must have a dialogue with the TUF primarily to wean them away from the rank reactionaries in whose camp alone they now find asylum and refuge. In the NSA last week, Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, answering FP's Mr. Dharmalingam, had stated that the TUF demand to have the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution was not unreasonable, but had pleaded that a "proper political climate" should be created to enable the Government to do this. *This is a welcome and frank appraisal and can well be the starting off point for a dialogue.* To FRDB's credit, it must be said, that he has mastered enough of the Tamil language to enable him to make a speech and hold a dialogue on a personal level, and he also sent goodwill delegations from Dompe to Jaffna which have invited counterpart delegations from the North to visit Dompe. This is an example which can well be multiplied *ad infinitum* and can well be the basis for a mass dialogue between the two communities. This attitude is a far cry from the stand taken by Mr. Basil Perera in his criticism of *Tribune* when he said that all the grievances of the Tamils had been met and that if they had any more they should go before the Government (on bended knees no doubt) with them. The point we had made about Constitutional guarantees was ignored by Mr. Basil Perera, but Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike does not see anything "unreasonable" in such a request.

also the seemingly conflicting postures of political personalities who presently dominate politics in Sri Lanka. The limits of freedom allowed to the Press in the matter of unravelling the inner intricacies of political developments centred around leading personalities are far more limited than in many countries—but certainly, still, far greater than in a large number of other countries—and, keen students of history will not only have to read between the lines of what appears in all periodicals (and newspapers) including the *Tribune* but also fortify themselves with information gathered with discriminative perspicacity from the whispering galleries that abound in this country.

At the moment, as events in Kalawewa have revealed, mini-confrontations within the SLFP, the UNP and the LSSP have assumed proportions of serious dialectical potentialities with one or more groups within each party seeking to bring about a new polarisation of political forces within each party as well on a national level. The CP alone seems to be free of such conflicts at present having survived the traumatic experiences which had stemmed from the conflicts of the hardliners and the softliners in 1972 and 1973. Kalawewa also revealed that the CP has emerged as a new force in the NCP where teachers (in their guru sangamayas) were able to mobilise and lead rural youth including ex-insurgent elements.

THE UNP CANDIDATE, A. M. S. Adhikari, polled 13,799 votes and won the seat with a majority of 2,857 votes. The SLFP candidate,

D. B. Ratnamalala was the runner-up with 10,942 votes. The much talked-about M. Y. Herath, who ran his campaign as an Independent, under the auspices of Red and Blue flags (and photographs of the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike) came a poor third with 2,760 votes. The other two Independents polled only 200 and 108 votes respectively. All three Independents lost their deposits. Spoilt votes had numbered 89, and out of a total of 31,741 registered voters, 27,898 had voted.

At the last general elections, in May, 1970, it was a straight fight, with only any Independents, and whilst R. B. Ratnamalala, SLFP (the father of present candidate), had polled 12,883, A. M. S. Adhikari, UNP, had polled 9050. Spoilt votes were 111, the majority 3,833, and the total polled was 22,044 in an electorate of 25,629 registered voters. R. B. Ratnamalala had held this seat from March 1960, and the SLFP has held this continuously from the general elections of 1952. The percentage of polling this time was a wee bit less than what it was in 1970, but the difference being so small that it does not merit comment.

On the face of the 1970 and 1974 results, the SLFP has dropped 1,891 votes, in an electorate where the number of registered voters has gone up by 6112. The UNP candidate has this time polled 4,749 votes more than he did in 1970. If the votes polled by Herath were added to Ratnamalala's votes, the UNP candidate would still be leading by 97 votes, but such arithmetical additions and subtractions will not portray the real truth because if all SLFP and UF forces had been united it would have generated an additional force with a high degree of electioneering morale that would have brought out more voters (a sizable number were apathetically confined to their houses) and also kept a certain number of the floating voters who had strayed into the UNP fold in the UF camp where their sympathies and interests really lay.

MOST OBSERVERS had not expected Ratnamalala to poll as many votes as he did. They had also expected Herath, allegedly the hero of the local militant (and insurgent) youth and who was said to have the blessings of section of the SLFP and the LSSP,

to poll much more than he did: in fact, many had expected him to be the runner up. *The fact that Ratnamalala polled nearly four times what Herath did was no doubt due to the prestige and charismatic impact of the electioneering work done by Maithripala Senanayake. All observers are agreed that he had to do this practically single-handed.* The SLFP headquarters support was weak, divided and disjointed. The Prime Minister had gone there only for the last three days and she could not turn defeat into victory, although she helped to increase the SLFP vote considerably.

In addition to this, SLFPers in the area were disappointed that the Party Command has not been able to restrain Anura Bandaranaike from indulging in divisive anti-Ratnamalala and pro-Herath activities which many felt helped the UNP candidate to win. The Sinhala weekly *Ada*, associated with Anura Bandaranaike and allegedly backed by certain sections of the SLFP mudalali group, had stated that Ratnamalala was a "bad" and weak candidate, and that if the SLFP had wanted a strong local candidate, (with the unsaid implication that if a super-star candidate from outside like Anura had not been acceptable to the vested interest of old timers in the SLFP), the only choice was M. Y. Herath. The *Ada* had in one issue declared that Kesbewa would be repeated in Kalawewa meaning that the official SLFP candidate would run third. The last issue of the *Ada* before polling day was widely distributed in the Kalawewa electorate—and this issue, according to many SLFP loyalists, was largely responsible for the UNP victory. The first page had an over-sized photographic head of Dr. N. M. Perera, the LSSP leader, with the defiant words that the LSSP would not be cowed by police action (etc. etc.) in bold types with an ensuing story that he would not quit the Government. This was a hit at Anura's bete noir—the LSSP—with the comment that NM and the LSSP would not quit the Government. Having said this to appease SLFP opinion that NM and the LSSP had "climbed down" after the mighty crescendo of open defiance following the curfew of November 16, the *Ada* had a centre-page feature centred on the

little giant of Kalawewa living in Tambuttigama. The article addressed the voters that they should not follow the old buffalos, meaning the old-time leaders of the SLFP. Everybody, rightly or wrongly, took the article to mean that it was another attempt to dethrone Maithripala Senanayake who was regarded as the uncrowned King of Raja Rata—having won every seat for the UF in the last General Elections.

By one means or another the impression had been created in the electorate that Herath was the nominee Anura Bandaranaike, and though at the very last minute Anura is reported to have made efforts to persuade Herath to withdraw it was too late to make good the divisive impact Herath had already made on the SLFP vote.

It was also ironic that though the candidature of Herath had at first been mooted by the *Janavegaya* group—primarily no doubt to strengthen SLFP radicalism but also incidentally to denigrate Maithripala—the moment the SLFP Working Committee after bypassing Anura Bandaranaike had chosen Ratnamalala as the party candidate, the *Janavegaya* group had worked with earnestness for the official SLFP candidate in the electorate. It was about this time that *Ada* and Anura Bandaranaike had started favouring Herath who had entered the lists as an Independent. In the net result, the *Janavegaya* group which had earlier been accused of anti-SLFP postures has emerged after Kalawewa as a solid and integral part of the SLFP and the UF. To the credit of Kumar Rupasinghe, it must be said, that many of his former critics are now willing to admit that he did his best for the SLFP and the UF by campaigning with vigour among the militant and ex-insurgent youth in that area and that he helped to bring in a sizable number of voters to the SLFP who might otherwise have gone to the Herath or even to the UNP (or kept away from the polls). In this effort Kumar Rupasinghe was aided by the CP activists in the area whilst many of the LSSP cadres in the electorate had worked openly for Herath.

IT IS ADMITTED that Ratnamalala was not the best of candidates

but Maithripala adherents assert that his position in the NCP would have become untenable if he had favoured an "outsider" to "parachute" into Kalawewa as a candidate—even if that candidate was Anura Bandaranaike, the son of the late revered leader SWRD. From the SLFP point of view, on a broad NCP (Raja Rata) spectrum, it was better that the seat was lost with a local Wannu man than be won with a "parachuter"—and there was also no guarantee that the parachuter could win even with official (JR) UNP connivance. And this brings us to the most intriguing part of the Kalawewa episode.

At the time when it was rumoured that JR (and the UNP) would not field a candidate against Anura Bandaranaike (if he was the official SLFP candidate), two groups of UNPERS, one based in Colombo and the other from among the Kalawewa UNPERS had everything ready to run well-known UNPERS as unofficial candidates. If the JR plan had worked with Anura as the official SLFP nominee, influential sections of the UNP would have had at least one candidate in the field formally as an Independent, but really as an unofficial (anti-JR) UNP candidate. At the same time, the local SLFP groups had also been geared to putting forward a local Wannu man as the unofficial SLFP candidate if Anura had been chosen and is Ratnamalala had succumbed to pressures not to come forward as an Independent. It was in this setting that Maithripala Senanayake had insisted that the only possible candidate the SLFP could field was Ratnamalala.

And this more than anything else has punctured, temporarily at least, the J. R. Jayawardene plan to bring about a new polarisation of political forces and thereby lay the foundation for a right-leaning coalition of centrists and rightists from the SLFP and the UNP—something which he has been after since 1970. It is significant that Maithripala Senanayake, who was to be an integral part of the JR-conceived right-leaning coalition, was chiefly instrumental in buckling the scheme, unconsciously and unwittingly, because he was not at this time party to JR's strategy. It was believed that Maithripala was so much of the centre that it was taken for granted by the strategists behind JR that

Maithripala would fall into line, but they did not take into consideration Maithripala's basic grassroots Wannu affinities and loyalties. It was thought that the possibilities, of thrusting the Left, (the LSSP and the CP), into the Opposition would appeal so much to Maithripala that he would willingly accept the honoured positions that would be held out to him in the new Coalition. However, Maithripala with his rustic horse sense intuitively kept clear of the city-conceived intrigue to bring about, a qualitative change in the coalition politics in this country.

Just as the SLFP entered the hustings tormented by divisive forces, the UNP too was a camp divided—with this difference, that the anti-JR forces did not field a Herath in the same way that the anti-Maithri forces within the SLFP and UF had done. And this is why the UNP candidate won the by-election.

By a party fiat all anti-JR forces had been kept out of the Kalawewa campaign. Many notable UNP leaders, especially from the younger elements, were conspicuous by their absence. Many active UNP organisers had been "suspended" by the Party President (JR) for having made statements against him (when he was out of the island and when it was believed that he was not fielding a candidate against Anura). The main burden of the UNP campaign was borne by Premadasa, and JR had only gone to the electorate during the last lap.

It is also necessary to recall that Kalawewa had come at a time when the LSSP had been itching to bring about a new polarisation of political forces both within the United Front as well as in the country.

From August 1974, especially from the time of the LSSP Youth Rally, ultra radical slogans (ultra by the UF's Common Programme yardstick) had been proclaimed and a campaign had also been launched, at first insidiously and indirectly but later more openly, demanding the elimination of the rightwingers and reactionaries from the leadership of the United Front (and this could only mean the so-called rightwing leaders of the SLFP). The ultra-left youth wing of the LSSP had been wanting for some time to bring about a new left-

leaning coalition of all the radical and militant socialist forces within the UF, and from August this year this attempt had assumed serious proportions. By the pressure tactics they adopted, the LSSP had evidently hoped to push the SLFP and the UF into a "socialism tomorrow" programme.

The Prime Minister had issued several warning signals that she was not for further immediate or indiscriminate nationalisation nor the total elimination of



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the private sector, but the LSSP, feebly backed by the CP, seemed to think that this was an appropriate time to push its demands to the hilt. The CP, however, did not join the LSSP in its tactical manoeuvres, tantamount to brinkmanship, to push the SLFP and the UF to adopt a new programme which had been conceived and formulated by the ultra-leftwing section of the LSSP as something which reflected the needs of the hour and the mood of the people.

Unmindful of the hints and warnings dropped by the Prime Minister, the LSSP went rushing headlong on its way, on a seemingly go-it-alone basis, and in the Budget Speech Dr. N. M. Perera had stated that the path to socialism was not littered with halting places ("ambalams") where one could tarry indefinitely under the pretext of consolidating what had been done. This was no doubt a reply courteous to the PM who had wanted a slow-down in nationalisation. About a week after the Budget Speech, and when the debate on the second reading had begun, Dr. Perera at a meeting in the New Town Hall had made a speech in which he had invited those who were not willing to go straight to socialism to part company with those who were desirous of doing so. (The Daily Mirror report of what Dr. Perera had said was corrected by him, but whatever the exact translation of Sinhala words, the meaning was clear that a parting of the ways had come—if the LSSP programme were not accepted). To lend strength to the LSSP line, the CFL (the LSSP trade union centre) issued an even more "revolutionary" programme, demanding also the right to strike and the right to hold an independent procession and rally for its annual sessions and the LSSP's 39th anniversary on November 16. The LSSP-CFL threat to violate the ban led to the historic curfew of November 16—when a constituent party of the ruling coalition had to be put under restraint.

The immediate LSSP reaction to the curfew was loud and vehement protest. The LSSP press demanded the scalps of the "SLFP mudalalis" who were said to have

pressurised certain SLFP Ministers to impose the curfew whilst the PM was in Russia (she has now made it clear that she had herself given the order for the curfew from Georgia and that the mudalalis had nothing to do with it). The LSSP campaign of brinkmanship reached the precipice on November 18 when the CFL newsheet *Aramuna* went to town against SLFP reactionaries and mudalalis. The Daily Mirror, 19/11/74, in a cautious sort of way set out what Dr. N. M. Perera is purported to have said in the *Aramuna*:

"Meanwhile 'Aramuna', a two-page newsheet which sold like hot cakes throughout the city of Colombo yesterday, announced in the boldest possible type that nothing could be achieved by curfew.

"This newspaper which bears the imprint of the Star Press of No. 47, Jayantha Weerasakera Mawatha, (Driehberg's Avenue), Maradana, attributes to the leader of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Dr. N. M. Perera, the following statements.

"Some people say that nationalisation should stop now. This is evidently the limits of their socialism.

"We have to state quite categorically that this is not our socialism.

"We will not stop until we wipe out the capitalist structure.

"If anyone thinks that the United Front has come to a halt, he is sadly mistaken.

"We should very clearly stress that we did not join the United Front to deprive ourselves of our democratic rights.

"It is not our concern if those who cannot proceed further quit. We have no animosity towards them. We say goodbye to them and will proceed until we achieve our objectives.

"We are not afraid of struggle. We are accustomed to struggles. The police do not scare us. It was not just yesterday that we have had confrontations with the police.

"We will not betray the trust reposed in us by the people.

"We are always ready to do anything in the future to make this country a socialist state."

THIS WAS BRAVE TALK, but after the summit meeting of the Prime Minister with the LSSP leaders, on 19/11/74, in the presence of a few SLFP Ministers this kind

of rhetoric disappeared from LSSP propaganda. It is not known what had transpired at this meeting, but what is known is that the LSSP thereafter staged a strategic retreat. It was a noticeable climb-down which made it quite clear to everybody that the LSSP did not want to quit the Government—even if its new programme was not accepted. The first to break the silence, which had descended upon the LSSP, was Dr. Colvin R. de Silva who melodramatically stated that no power on earth could break the United Front of the SLFP, LSSP and the CP—no doubt forgetting that it was the LSSP that had wanted half-baked socialists (translations may vary but the meaning of what was intended was unambiguous), those who disagreed with the LSSP thesis in the UF, to part company.

This statement of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva was followed by Dr. N. M. Perera's speech, when he wound up the second reading of the Budget debate, and he said that he did not want "socialism overnight" and that he envisaged an appropriate place for the private sector in his scheme of things (in terms of the Five Year Plan). This was a completely new tune although he subtly tried to imply that people had misunderstood what he said earlier.

After making peace in this way, Dr. N. M. Perera and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva went over for the final round of meetings at Kalawewa (but not any of the other top LSSP leaders). In Kalawewa, observers report that the local LSSP units were working right to the end for Herath and the local LSSP propaganda continued to gun for Maithripala although the Colombo headquarters had stopped this after the SLFP-LSSP Summit. Most neutral observers feel that the LSSP had staged a major climb-down from the brink, but it is of course possible for LSSP adherents to argue that what had been said earlier had been "misunderstood" and that Dr. N. M. Perera and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva had only clarified what had been misunderstood. This kind of casuistry does not seem to have convinced many people. The (UNP) Journal went to town with this discomfiture suffered by the LSSP; it said that the LSSP

was "now licking its wounds"—something which the UNP has done often in the recent past.

Many political observers had, during the last fortnight, believed that the end of the UF had come into arena of real possibility, but Tribune's Investigator Sherlock Holmes had summed up the situation thus:

"That in the meantime it can be stated that all three UF parties will 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 was doing its best to be the honest broker 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?"

THE PATCHING-UP has now indeed taken place with the LSSP retracing many steps. But in revolutionary logic it is often thought necessary to retreat one step back in order to be able to take two steps forward. The much-vaunted UF "unity" has been re-established on a new basis (it will be claimed that it was never technically broken). It is also obvious that the LSSP will not press its nationalisation demands immediately, and there is equally no doubt that some sops will also be offered to the private sector—and even foreign investments from abroad will be brought in without LSSP opposition.

Knowledgeable political observers with a keen sense of the realities inside the UF believe that the LSSP had timed this climax because LSSP top brass had believed that about 35 to 40 of the SLFP backbenchers would openly support the LSSP stand in the Parliamentary Group in defiance of the Prime Minister's known views and wishes. It was one thing for the SLFP Working Committee to by-pass Anura for the Kalawewa by-election by taking cover under Maithri-

pala Senanayake's promise to the Ratnamalalas, but it is a totally different thing to expect SLFP backbenchers to cofalesce with the LSSP in respect of political demands which the PM would not accept (and to which she was opposed).

The PM, in principle may not be opposed to more nationalisation, but what she felt was that this was not an opportune moment for ultra-radical nationalisation measures to be pushed forward. The forty odd SLFP backbenchers, who were expected to back the LSSP demands did not openly come forward to support the LSSP. What they had said in private nobody knows, but with the patronage the LSSP Ministers and Corporation chiefs wield many MPs could be tempted to pretend to be secret LSSP sympathisers. It was this let-down by SLFP back benchers, it is whispered in political circles, which has caused the LSSP to climb down so quickly and so abruptly, apart from the firm stand taken by the PM.

Whether there is any truth in these surmises and speculations it is hard to say, but after the precipitate events around Budget time this year and the Great Curfew of November 16, political conjecturing cannot be avoided.

IN RETROSPECT, students of political history will be tempted to record that in the second half of 1974, there were concerted attempts from the Right as well as the Left to transform the United Front coalition into either a right-leaning coalition under SLFP-UNP centrist-rightist leadership or a leftwing coalition where the LSSP will play the dominant role. Both attempts failed.

Like the LSSP, the UNP (JR) too had believed that its strategy would cause a split inside the SLFP and that the overwhelming majority would go with Anura Bandaranaike, Mrs. Bandaranaike, Maithripala Senanayake, Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, etc., leaving a handful of SLFP radicals to go with the LSSP and CP into the wilderness. JR's strategists had presumably, mechanically and stupidly, applied their own superficial analysis about "class divisions" in Sri Lanka's political elite to think that a division on "class lines" could be brought about within the SLFP through a JR "we-stoop-to-conquer" strategy by declining to put forward a candidate against Anura.

History cannot be made by manoeuvres based on oversimplifications even if they savour of pseudo-Marxian logic. The UNP (JR) cannot today stage a parliamentary coup, as it did in 1964, to divide the SLFP on the basis of a superficial "class"

FRELIMO GOVERNMENT IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Mozambique provisional government formed in accordance with the Lusaka agreement on the granting of independence to this former Portuguese colony was sworn in in Lourenco Marques on September 20 at a ceremony attended by an official Portuguese government delegation. It will administer the country until June 25 next year when Mozambique is to become fully independent.

The government is headed by Joaquim Chissano, 35, one of the founders of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), who directed the Front's military operations, and includes six other representatives of FRELIMO. They hold the posts of ministers of the interior, justice, economic co-ordination, information, education and culture, and labour. Portuguese representatives head three ministries—transport and communications, health and welfare, public works and housing construction.

A message from FRELIMO Chairman Samora Machel, describing Mozambique as a revolutionary base in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism in Africa, was made public on the same day.

Following the restoration of order after the abortive uprising in Lourenco Marques, the situation in the country has generally returned to normal. Prime Minister Chissano has issued an appeal to the white population to join in the building of an independent Mozambique. "There is room for everybody in Mozambique," he said.

divisions of MPs into radicals, centrists and rightists. On a UNP assessment (by JR's golden brains trust) there are about 65 to 75 centrists and rightists in the SLFP parliamentary group—whilst the LSSP seemed to have counted upon 40 radicals. This mechanical (and not dialectical) approach based on an oversimplified understanding of the situation, can only bring disappointment and failure

It is in this background that the Kalawewa by-election took place. From the results a number of significant conclusions can be tentatively drawn.

First, the fact that Herath, who had many plus factors to his credit as a candidate, came a very poor third (losing his deposit) is clear indication that Independents have no place in contemporary politics in Sri Lanka. This country has now slipped into the era of Coalitions led by the two major Sinhala parties

Second, Kalawewa has made it clear that the UNP is still a force to contend with in spite of its present poor parliamentary strength in the NSA. The UNP has not been wiped out as a socio-political force—as many UF propagandists have tried to make everybody believe—in spite of land reforms, income ceilings and other radical measures. If the UNP did not still enjoy grass roots mass support then the Independents at Kalawewa would have attracted the bulk of the former UNP and the present anti-UF voters.

Third, the SLFP is still a strong and positive force in the rural areas—in spite of the many acts of commission and omission of the Government which has caused the cost of living to double in four years with shortages and the total lack of many essentials becoming a permanent feature of Sri Lanka's life style. (The Minister of Finance may take the Central Bank to task for presenting statistics which portray a gloomy picture, but the ordinary man feels that even these Central Bank statistics have been twisted to make the picture look rosier than the true reality). Everybody grumbles about the state of the nation, about the queues, about the corruption—but the SLFP man votes SLFP just as the UNP man votes UNP. No Water-

gate has yet taken place in Sri Lanka to bring a major break. Only a small fraction of the customary SLFP or UNP voters swing from one party to the other at different elections, but it is the sizable floating vote, which is not committed to any particular party, that regularly swings from side to side, and it is this vote which determines the fate of elections. In Kalawewa, the bulk of the floating vote had obviously gone UNP, together with a section of the older people who had formerly voted SLFP. This is the evaluation of neutral observers who were in the area during the elections.

Fourth, (and this is important), the youth vote has not gone on a one-way run. Kalawewa is an electorate where the militant youth had played an important role in the 1970 elections. It is an electorate where the insurgents had held sway for three weeks in April 1971. A very large number of released detainees are from this area and have come back to it. It is probably this fact that had prompted Herath to risk his future vis a vis the SLFP and the UF to enter the fray as an Independent after he failed to get SLFP nomination (radical pressure from within the SLFP and UF had been very strong in his favour, and when Anura was dropped the general belief was that Herath would be SLFP nominee). Herath had believed he would come second and there by ensure SLFP nomination for the future.

Herath, does not seem to have got many of the youth votes. (Herath had a family and clan vote of about 1500, just as Ratnamalala had about 6000 and Adhikari about 4500—rough estimates but nevertheless valid). The UNP and the SLFP seemed to have shared the bulk of the youth vote, but discerning observers who were in the area believe that most of the militant youth (after systematic leftwing political education whilst in the detention camps) have consciously tended to vote with the UF. The observers also say that if any of the established UF parties now have any "influence" on the youth it was the CP which seems to be doing systematic work in the area.

Kalawewa is a hundred percent rural electorate in the heartland of the Wannu. It is very nearly an all-Sinhalese electorate. Of the

total population of 64,393 (registered voters being only 31,741), the Low country Sinhalese are 14,193 and the Kandyanans 45,067; there are only 872 Ceylon Tamils, 302 Indian Tamils, 3836 Ceylon Moors, 46 Indian Moors, 6 Burghers, 13 Malays an 58 others. The Buddhists numbered 59,101, the Hindus 464, the Muslims 4113, 549 Roman Catholics, 132 other Christians and 34 others. Observers say that the Ceylon Tamils and the Indian Tamils tended to vote with the SLFP and the UF, whilst the overwhelming majority of the Muslims openly supported the UNP. (The voting strength of the Muslims was around 1500 to 2000.)

IT IS FUTILE to indulge in fanciful speculations of what might have been if Herath had been the SLFP candidate, or if Herath had kept out altogether, or if Anura Bandaranaike had been had been the SLFP nominee and JR had not put forward an official UNP candidate against him. **Could Anura have really won the election with the pro-SLFP and pro-UNP Independents with strong local backing in the field? Would it not have triggered the biggest divisive trends within the SLFP and the UNP—without a new coalition on the lines envisaged by JR ever coming into being?**

For the moment, the UF will go along as presently constituted

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Colombo-2.
Sri Lanka.

on the strength of its parliamentary majority. The loss of the Kalawewa seat will not undermine its parliamentary majority. Not even the loss of the Katana seat at the forthcoming by-election. It is not unlikely that the KKS by-election will be held in the near future although SLFP forces in the North have not yet succeeded in grooming a candidate to defeat Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam.

Whilst everybody waits for the General Elections in 1977, the JR wing of the UNP (as the residuary inheritor of vested interests) on the one hand, and the ultra-wing of the LSSP (as the avowed spearhead of the movement for immediate socialism) on the other hand, will continue their efforts to bring about a new polarisation of political forces to bring about a right-leaning or a left-leaning coalition.

Without popular consensus and support, such efforts will not get off the ground as it has been demonstrated recently.

Kalawewa has made it abundantly clear that if the United Front wants to retain its popularity and win the support of the people at elections it must be united and stay united without hidden, secret and subterranean in-fighting to weaken its dynamism.

The UNP, if it wants to remain as a major political force, must eschew adventurism — satyagraha and now parliamentary coupism to bring about a right-rightleaning UNP-SLFP coalition—and set out to win parliamentary power as an alternative leading political party in normal democratic ways if the UNP had not put forward

a candidate at Kalawewa even against Anura it would have ceased to exist a major political force and whatever coalition JR sought to forge on the basis of not contesting Anura would not have had a take-off point.

Kalawewa is no doubt a setback for Maithripala Senanayake, but it is a defeat he will not find difficult to survive. He has strengthened his bonafides with the Wannu people by standing by them and he had worked almost single-handed to help Ratnamalala to poll an impressive 10,942 votes. SLFP, and even UF grass roots sympathies, in the area, according to all observers, are with him, and even his opponents in the UF (and in the UNP) concede that he is still a power to contend with in the NCP.

CHRONICLE

OCTOBER 28 — NOVEMBER 6

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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28: The Prime Minister left Sri Lanka for Teheran yesterday afternoon: according to the *Daily News*, she will begin talks with the Shah of Iran and the talks are expected to centre round on economic co-operation and assistance, the Indian Ocean peace zone proposal and the Shah's recent declarations on regional co-operation and defence: the Premier made a 45-minute stopover at Karachi on the way to Teheran. The first batch of 125 undergraduates (45 Tamil medium and 80 Sinhala medium) begin lectures today at the new Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka. According to the *Daily Mirror* nearly one million students will next year sit for two public examinations to be held simultaneously—the National Certificate of General Education and the General Certificate of Education (O level). According to the *Daily Mirror*, a number of employees unions in Air Ceylon have appealed to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, to intervene in the current dispute between the management of Air Ceylon and the Pilot's guild: they have called for ministerial intervention in order to maintain industrial peace and because the present position was unacceptable to them. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Kalawewa by-election is likely to be a three cornered contest: the Sri Lanka Vimukthi Balavegaya—a newly formed political party—is expected to field a candidate: the nominees already picked are Mr. R. B. Ratnamalala (SLFP) and Mr. A. M. S. Adikari (UNP). The Moratuwa police have produced three suspects before the Panadura magistrate in connection with the detection of explosive in a store-room of the Katubedde Campus of the University. According

to the *Daily News*, the Industries Ministry has lifted its ban on the export of unprocessed soft wood temporarily: this will enable exporters, who had nearly 100,000 cubic feet of timber unsaleable in Sri Lanka on their hands, to get rid of their stocks. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in an interview to the pro-government *National Herald*, said that when India needed something she had no hesitation in asking for it and this was not begging although America uses this word in regard to India: the Indian Premier had stated this a few hours before the arrival of US Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger for a four-day visit.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29: According to the *Daily Mirror*, glass panes and windows in the office of the Indian High Commissioner's Office in Tamil Nadu were broken following an explosion: a Tamil United Front flag was found tucked on the name board of the office: the explosion is reported to have taken place in the yard near the office building: Mr. G. A. Fernando Deputy High Commissioner, had said that a similar flag along with another Black flag was found planted in the garden on May 22nd last year, the first anniversary of the Republic Day of Sri Lanka. According to the *Daily News*, the Budget estimates for 1975 will be tabled in the National State Assembly this afternoon by Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera: the fifth Budget of the United Front Government will be tabled in the Assembly on November 6. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party Working Committee has decided to suspend from membership any party man who is being investigated by the Bribery Commissioner's Department for alleged offences under the Bribery Act: a resolution to this effect was passed unanimously at a recent meeting of the Working Committee presided over by the Prime Minister. The Chairman of the Petroleum Corporation, Mr. E. R. S. R. Coomaraswamy, in an address to the Third Seminar of Workers' Council of the Corporation said that the oil exploration had now reached a crucial stage as the presence of oil at Pesalai had been well established. According to the *Daily News*, the Minister of Transport,

Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, yesterday appointed Mr. V. C. Goonetilleke, Acting Deputy Solicitor General, to inquire into all matters in dispute between trade unions and the management of Air Ceylon following the recent disruption of Air Ceylon services. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, leaves for Bangkok today to participate in the second conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, arrived in Tehran yesterday and the Premier's visit to Iran will forge closer links between the two countries with the establishment of full diplomatic relations according to the Iranian Government owned News Agency reports. United States Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger described the meeting he had with the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, as very friendly: Dr. Kissinger said after the hour-long meeting that the aim was to improve relations between the two countries. King Hussein of Jordan yesterday made some concessions which could lead to a settlement in his dispute with the Palestinian Commandos at the Arab Summit Conference now being held in Rabat. The Libyan News Agency (ARNA) accused the Moroccan authorities of arresting members of the Libyan press team accompanying Libya's delegation to the Arab Summit Conference in Rabat.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30: The gap between revenue and expenditure for the financial year 1975 is Rs. 2,816 million, according to the estimates of revenue and expenditure tabled in the National State Assembly yesterday by the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera: this gap will have to be bridged by the Minister by means of additional taxation, borrowings, under expenditure and other measures which will be announced on budget day, November, 6: according to the new estimates for 1975, the food subsidies has been almost doubled. The Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, yesterday announced an all-round reduction in the price of cotton yarn: following this reduction the maximum retail price of a yard of cotton cloth has been fixed at Rs. 7.50. According to the *Daily News*, the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, has ordered immediate action against hoarders of chillies who he believes are responsible for the current shortage of chillies and the price hike. According to the *Daily News*, the Colombo Municipal Council yesterday debated a Motion of Confidence in the Mayor, Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie, moved by an LSSP MMC and seconded by a UNP MMC. According to the *Daily Mirror*, trade between Sri Lanka and the Federal Republic of Germany rose steeply in 1973: the increase of trade in 1973 over that of 1972 is 19.3 per cent. Youth leaders of the three constituent parties of the United Front headed by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party youth organisations, have asked the Government to take 39 immediate measures in view of the economic situation prevailing in the country: the youth leaders have said that the United Front Government should once again consider the economic crisis that had beset Sri Lanka as a result of the deteriorating capitalist economies. Doctors yesterday operated on former President Richard Nixon of America to block off clots of blood in his leg that could threaten his life. United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, yesterday urged India, the world's sixth

nuclear power, to co-operate in an international effort to curb the spread of nuclear weapons: Dr. Kissinger visits Bangladesh today at the end of his four-day Indian tour during which he had discussions with the Indian Prime Minister and other key Ministers. King Hussein of Jordan and the Palestinian commandos yesterday reached agreement in a dispute that has dominated the work of the Arab Summit Conference in Rabat: Israel opposed the decision reached at the Arab Summit Conference and the Information Minister Aharan Yariv said that decisions effectively meant the approval of Palestinian state on the occupied West Bank of Jordan. President Ford has accepted an invitation to visit India and a formal announcement is expected shortly.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31: According to the *Daily News*, the Prime Minister will definitely pay an official visit to the Soviet Union next month: Mrs. Bandaranaike is expected to leave for Moscow in the second week of November and be away for seven days during which period she will meet the Soviet Premier Alexi Kossygin and Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev: the Prime Minister's visit is in response to a long-standing invitation extended by the Soviet Premier. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Moscow wing) has suggested in a resolution adopted that discussions at both United Front and state levels to update, concretise, and expand the proposals in the United Front's Common Program, as well as the policies and the targets of the Government's national economic plan in the light of the political developments over the past four years and the new realities of the deepening economic crisis. The Colombo Municipal Council approved a motion of confidence in the Mayor, Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie, by a majority of five votes: seven UNP councillors voted for the motion. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Joint Council of Trade Union Organisations has decided to seek a top-level meeting with leaders of the three parties constituting the United Front to discuss their demand for a wage increase of Rs. 75 for all employees drawing below Rs. 800 a month: According to the *Daily News*, major teachers trade unions yesterday warned that the new campus in the South should be set up only after careful planning: they suggested the appointment of a committee comprising of politicians and educationists from the South to pick a suitable site for its establishment. According to the *Daily News*, the United National Party will contest both Kalawewa and Katana and will ask the Government to hold elections in 1975: this has been told by Mr. J. R. Jayewardene to party supporters at Sri Kotha yesterday. President Ford of America voiced cautious optimism about U.S.-Soviet negotiations, saying differences have been narrowed in talks between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Communist Party Leader Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow last week. Arab leaders at the Rabat Summit Conference agreed to contribute 2,350 million dollars a year to build up the military forces of the frontline Arab States facing Israel.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1: According to the *Daily News*, the World Bank is expected to give assistance next year for development in Sri Lanka's agricultural and plantation sectors: a World Bank team headed by Mr. R... Christensen is now in the country preparing

a project report that will pave the way for assistance: the Bank is expected to provide facilities in the way of agricultural inputs, particularly fertiliser. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, is expected to return today after her visit to Iran where she had discussions with the Shah of Iran on international issues and matters of economic interest to Sri Lanka: according to *Reuter* the Premier was expected to review bilateral and international affairs with Mrs. Indira Gandhi of India during a 24-hour stopover in New Delhi enroute to Sri Lanka. The Chairman of the Petroleum Corporation has told the *Daily News*, that more land and marine surveys and the sinking of an exploratory production well has been planned by the Petroleum Corporation as the next stage in its oil exploration effort in the country's north western and northern regions: work on the production well is due to begin in November as soon as an appropriate site has been located. Five candidates handed in their nomination papers for the Kalawewa by-election to be held November 27. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the profit earned by the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment in 1973 dropped by 18.2 million compared to a profit of Rs. 46.4 million recorded in 1972. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the leader of the United National Party, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, told the members of the party's Working Committee that he was elected President at the UNP sessions and that he could be removed only by the sessions. According to the *Daily Mirror* only 3700 out of the 15,000 students who have the minimum qualification to gain admission to the University will be admitted. According to the *Daily News*, a subsidy of Rs. 56 million has been provided for, in vote of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands in 1975 for the National Milk Board which is currently being probed by a Parliamentary Committee headed by the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake. The first-ever triple veto cast in the Security Council last night saved South Africa from expulsion from the United Nations after 10 members, one more than the required majority voted to eject the racially segregated republic.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2: According to the *Daily News*, the Prime Minister's four-day visit to Iran has proved fruitful: the Iranian Government has agreed financial aid to tide over Sri Lanka's economic difficulties, especially the balance of payments aggravated by the mounting prices of food and fuel: assistance from Iran will be in the form of both commodity and project aid: although the total amount of aid is not immediately known diplomatic circles expect it to be "quite substantial". According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister had wide-ranging talks with the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, when she met her for eighty minutes yesterday: after the meeting Mrs. Bandaranaike told reporters that she was happy to have an opportunity again to discuss various matters of bilateral interests with her Indian counterpart. According to the *Daily Mirror*, house owners will be given loans to repair their houses: the Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, has established a Housing Repairs Fund, from which loans will be provided to house owners to repair their houses. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Food Commissioner's Department has taken stern measures to ensure that there are no leakages from the country's rice supply stations: this includes heavy surcharges on

those officials found responsible for losses of rice stocks. According to the *Daily News* import allocations for 1975 will be strictly on a basis of priorities now being worked out and in accordance with the availability of foreign exchange. A loud explosion rocked the Maha Bodhi building in Madras yesterday night smashing glass window panes and uprooting the huge wooden doors of the prayer hall: no one was injured or hurt: the Director of the Society Rev. Nandeeswara Thero said that the explosion had created a six-inch crater inside the hall: police investigations have revealed that a bomb had been planted: a similar explosion by bomb took place in the Ceylonese High Commission office in Madras last week: Following the explosion the Chief Minister of Tamilnad, Mr. Karunanidhi warned that the Government would take stern action against those indulging in violent activities of this nature.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3: Iran granted a 67-million dollar credit to Sri Lanka according to a note of understanding which was signed between the two countries on Thursday: part of the credit would be used for production of chemical fertilizers in Sri Lanka and the rest as down payment for the goods that Iran would purchase from Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Economy and Finance announced: a joint communique, issued yesterday after Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's return from Iran, said that on the Middle East issues, the two sides agreed that a just and overall settlement of the problem could be achieved on the basis of full implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories and the restoration of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people. According to the *Observer*, one of the most important international conferences of the post-war era will be held in Rome from November 5 to 16: the UN World Food Conference is being held at a most critical time for the developing countries when their food supplies essential to the very survival of increasing populations is at stake: the Sri Lanka delegation for the conference is expected to leave for Rome tonight. Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike is expected to make an official visit to the Soviet Union later this month. According to the *Times*, fourteen MLW locomotives will arrive in early 1975 which are being provided to the Government of Sri Lanka under the Canadian development assistance programme. The Sri Lanka Deputy High Commission building in Madras has been placed under guard following an explosion at the premises and at the Ceylonese Buddhist Society: guards have also been posted at other Sri Lanka institutions including the Maha Bodhi Society building where the blast occurred. Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin appealed to China to co-operate in establishing a peace program for Asia based on a collective security system in the region. President Ford yesterday visited ex-President Nixon in his hospital room in California for 15 minutes and said later he found him 'very alert'.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4: According to an interview the Editor of *Daily News* had with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, the Premier has told that she was 'fully satisfied' with her visit to Iran and its outcome: the Premier has also told that the accent in her talks with the Shah of Iran and Prime

Minister Hoveyda was 'economic to a great extent'. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Government Medical Officer's Association and Statutory Board's and Corporations Engineer's Union have congratulated the Government on the steps taken to solve the problem of the 'brain drain': the GMOA says in a press statement that it is happy to note the positive change in the manner of tackling this problem from one of increasing restrictions to one of liberalisation. The President on the advice of the Prime Minister has amended Regulations 26 of the Emergency Regulations by which it becomes not an offence to affix or distribute posters, handbills or leaflets or for the purpose of promoting the election of any candidate at the forthcoming Kalawewa by-election. According to the *Daily News*, sixty more schools will open their doors to blind children by next year, bringing the total now available to them to 258. Thirty seven West German Doctors are now in Sri Lanka to study the medical services here during their stay the team is expected to have discussions with officials of the various Medical Organisations and also visit the Colombo General Hospital. The Fertiliser Corporation used three concrete breaking vibrators to clear a consignment of 7,590 tons of fertiliser on board a Yugoslavian ship: the fertiliser which should have been in powder form got hardened in the holds of the ship and it took 30 days for the port employees to clear the consignment: the demurrage involved was in the region of \$ 75,000 according to the charter agreement with the vessel. According to *Daily Mirror* a new building of the American Mission Girl's School at Uduppdy which was under construction was damaged a few days back by dynamite explosion. Cuban Premier Fidel Castro has said that it is "very possible" that local elections will be held throughout Cuba in 1976: it would be the first nationwide vote since Castro came into power in 1959. The Shah of Iran has said that Iran will again press for a single price structure for oil at the next meeting in Vienna of the OPEC.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5: According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka will urge the setting up of a world food reserve to help nations seriously affected by the current food shortage to tide over their difficulties: she will also ask that food stocks be made available to these nations as grants or at reasonable prices: constraints such as financial difficulties will not then hamper these states from making use of such a food reserve: this appeal will be made by the Minister of Agriculture and Land, Mr. Hector Kobbakaduwa, at the opening of the UN sponsored World Food Conference in Rome today The Head of the Sanchi Vihara, India, Ven. Hedigalle Pannatissa Maha Nayake Thera, yesterday expressed satisfaction at the warning by the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, over the bomb explosion at the Sri Lanka Embassy and the Mahabodhi Society in Madras last week. According to the *Daily Mirror* co-operative employees have been warned again by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade of possible dismissal in the event of their being detected selling goods shortweight: the warning follows a spate of detections made by the Price Control Officers in many co-operative stores of goods being sold shortweight or being weighed and measured with faulty weights and measures. Mr. Tyrell Goonetilleke, Director Criminal Investigations Department, said yesterday before the Criminal Justice Commissions (Exchange

Frauds) that he investigated the case against Mr. Farook Sally on the instructions of the Prime Minister: the Premier summoned him in July 1971 and told him that proceeds of illegal gem transactions were being channeled into insurgent activities and she wanted him to investigate the matter with reference to Mr. Farook Sally and Mr. John Shelton Price. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Board of Governors of the University of Sri Lanka, may allow former teachers and physicians of the General Hospital, Colombo, now in the private sector, to conduct Ward Classes and Tutorials, for medical students at the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo Campus. According to the *Daily News*, Soviet assistance for development programs in Sri Lanka will be one of the subjects that the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike will discuss with Soviet leaders during her visit to the Soviet Union this month.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 6: The fifth budget of the United Front Government will be presented in the National State Assembly today by the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera: Dr. Perera's budgetary proposals will reveal how he proposes to bridge a gap of Rs. 2,816 million between revenue and expenditure. According to the *Daily News*, another political party was formed in Colombo on Monday: named the Sri Lanka Socialists Party it will represent persons of Indian Origin (mainly in the hill country) who are now or hope to be Ceylonese citizens: announcing the formation of the new party, its organiser, Mr. V. P. Ganeshan, said the party would primarily devote itself to the promotion of equality, welfare and advancement of the people of Indian origin for whom the Republic of Sri Lanka is the only motherland: Mr. Ganeshan is also the general secretary of the pro-government Democratic Workers' Congress. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Sri Lanka's gross external assets decreased by Rs. 74.7 million during July 1974 and stood at 777.3 million at the end of the month: the decline during July was attributed to the decrease in the assets of the Central Bank and to a lesser extent to the decrease in the assets of the Commercial banks and of the Government respectively. According to the *Daily News*, a law to set up a Pricing Commission which will fix prices for specified commodities is now being drafted: according to official sources the Legal Draftman's Department is now putting the finishing touches to the new law. Zgricultural and Lands Minister Mr. Hector Kobbakaduwa yesterday urged the World Food Conference in Rome to launch immediate schemes of assistance to relieve the situation in the most seriously affected countries of which Sri Lanka is one: speaking on the opening day the Minister said that the world food situation had been gravely aggravated by an equally serious shortage of the inputs required to produce the food. Dr. Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State, addressing the UN Food Conference in Rome put forward an urgent five-point program to save the world's hungry millions from famine: he listed the points as increasing the production of food exporting nations, accelerating production in developing countries, improving means of food distribution, financing and enhancing food quality and providing security against food emergencies.

LETTERS

• Interest-Receiving

• Astrology

Dear N. M.,

First of all please forgive me for calling you N. M. To everyone, these two letters mean you, only you. We need not say anything else. N. M. is yourself. No other name is necessary.

Second, let me beg for mercy. How wonderful that it is yours to grant, that it is in your power, and that we come to you for this precious act of compassion and sympathy in our suffering.

Your Budget is very clever. It has bridged a deficit of hundreds of millions, but at what a cost. I am sure you do not realize what it means to several thousands of us who do not belong to the Rich, to the Born Rich, or to the Acquired Rich, or to the New Rich. If you did, mercy would have flowed from you who have power to grant to us suffering ones, the milk of human kindness.

Let me explain. Many of us have managed to save, often with hardship, a few thousand or hundred rupees. It wasn't easy, but the thought of a "Rainy Day", maybe through illness, or old age, or some misfortune like a loss of our jobs, made us save, putting away with difficulty a few rupees at a time. Instead of allowing our hard-earned savings to lie fallow, we invested all we could scrap, so that we could exist on the interest received, when necessary, when old age or illness overtook us. Many of us were afraid to give it out to individuals because of the fear of not receiving the interest regularly. So, we went to the Finance Companies that we trusted. Our trust was not misplaced. The interest came regularly and honestly, and we were thankful, because it was our livelihood. It was all we had to depend on. It is not everyone who is paid a pension who could depend on that, in old age which always strikes every creature. But now, we who invested our little monies, as we thought safely, are faced with dire trouble. In the new Budget all incomes from Finance

companies, and even the Commercial Banks, all interest, is taxed to the hilt, at the rate of 33 1/3 per cent. Think what that signifies to us! It means a deficit so great that we do not know how to exist. We thought we were "Husbanding the Golden Grain, instead of flinging it to the wind like rain", as so many thousands have done, and continue to do, living for the day only and saying "Let the Future look after itself," a theory not only damaging to themselves, but the country they live in.

N. M. won't you have pity on us? This terribly high tax affects various categories of the middle class. Some may have invested no more than Rs. 5000/-. It was all they could afford. They are now paid 12% of this and receive Rs. 50/- a month. What can they expect in the near future? A paltry Rs. 30/-! How far does that take them in this present day struggle for existence? Others who were in the higher brackets and had invested enough to be paid Rs. 800/- a month by a Finance Company, will have to face the blackness of future years with Rs. 500/- a month. This our all. As I said before, many of us are not blessed with pensions, not even a few rupees. With the interest from the Finance Company, we have to pay for the house, however small, or room, or annexe in which we live. We have to eat, to clothe ourselves. We have many of the expenses that those have who were not so foolish as to invest all we could possess in a Finance Company, imagining it was safe. How an earth, this terrible, mad Earth are we to meet the various expenses, every expense risen to the heavens? Even to live as sparingly as possible is almost an unsolvable problem these days. I need not go into prices and expenses here, except to say that we cannot afford to buy even the tiny bits of jaggery sold at 25 cts a piece, a little bit about the size of a 50 cts or even smaller to help us drink a cup of tea. Sugar is beyond us—now Rs. 9/50 a lb!!! As for coffee, over Rs. 10/- a lb.! Completely beyond us! We cannot even entertain a friend in our homes, with a glass of Ginger Beer. The cost is too great! Rs. 1/25 a bottle. We do not own a car. We cannot even afford a taxi for some special occasion like a wedding or a funeral.

You have hit us vitally, desperately, not below our stomachs, but on our stomachs, at our hearts. We "the common man" as we are called, will be, very soon the greatest sufferers of all. We have not amassed wealth; we have only tried not to be a burden to the land we live in by being in want and thus dissatisfied and rebellious over all that is taking place at the present day. We are only the middle class, all of us law-abiding citizens who wouldn't hurt a flea, who have no desire for Power and all it means—many of us are teachers, dress makers, or office workers, such as clerks, secretaries, typists; perhaps if luck has blessed us, we have risen to be an executive in a firm. We have tried to be a credit to our Government, not a burden, by living recklessly, and spending foolishly.

Is it right to punish us for this? We haven't deprived a single soul of anything. Our little savings are not vast. They are meagre, probably scoffed at by big magnates and Bureaucrats and such like—why, oh why are we penalized for trying to live free of debt if possible, and to keep our heads above the raging water of modern life, which threatens to engulf and drown us. We have nothing else to manage for the present and to face the blackness of the future except this interest from our Finance Company investment. It is our all. Perhaps just Rs. 50/- or Rs. 100/- a month, or even Rs. 800/- a month if we are that lucky.

Our plight, please believe me N. M., is terrifying. We cannot find peace even in sleep at night. Only a Sinhalese word expresses our feelings—"Eve(r)segena Innawa" (bearing up with suffering). Oh, why, are we so punished, we who have not been reprobates, or traitors, or lawbreakers we are all peaceful, law-abiding citizens, the common man.

Should we get ill. Like all human creatures who is there to foot our bills? Doctors, medicines, hospital charges and everything else connected with sickness, all so impossibly expensive now.

We live in fear—fear of the present, fear of the future! Daily, minute -ly fear! unfortunately most of us

haven't the courage to take our lives, and so we carry on "Eve(r) sagenna Innawa".

Please have mercy on us! It is in your power to grant relief. How wonderful, how blessed to be granted that authority!

Yours

A Four Hundred Rupee
A Month Interest Earner

Sir,

All sorts of people, mostly old friends of all communities, call on me or phone to me, after my recent serious illness which necessitated treatment at the Intensive Care Unit of the General Hospital, Colombo. They are aware that I have already observed my 80th Birthday with a solemn prayer, and that I am likely to have my transition soon.

Two recent communications from me have caused an increase in the number of callers. One is the long message I wrote for the Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Railway Union of which I was the founder, as a pioneer in Trade Union movement in Ceylon. In this message I made mention of two speeches by the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, one at Kandy in December 1925 and the other at Nawalpetiya in January 1926. At the concluding part of my message, I made reference to a speech by our present Prime Minister at Minneriya on 17.8.74. The second communication is the letter I wrote to you on 27.10.74 on Astrology as Astro-Metaphysics, which you were good enough to publish in your issue of 9.11.74.

Some intimate friends question me whether I have retired from my Spiritual activities of the past two decades and gone back to politics and Astrology. In fact one friend said that my letter to you has a pessimistic approach. I replied to him quite frankly that the Western World, particularly U.S.A., is really heading towards doom inspite of warnings by many great thinkers in their midst. I quoted the writings of two great ladies, one of California and the other of England who are no more in the flesh.

As I was pondering over all these issues the postman brought your Tribune of 16.11.74. Your masterly review of our Prime Minister's

visit to U.S.S.R. drew my first and special attention. As a world-citizen and peace-worker, I heartily congratulate you on your far-sighted vision. I am one of those humble citizens in this country who have for many decades dreamt of Sri Lanka becoming the Switzerland of Asia. In fact, my opening speech on the 4th day of the World Constitution Convention, held at Interlaken, Switzerland, in August 1968, start with the following introductory remarks:

"Salutations and Greetings to you all from a fellow-pilgrim of peace from distant Ceylon. Ceylon should already have been, and is sure to be one day, the Switzerland of Asia."

This can be read in a booklet published in England under date 5.10.1968.

My knowledge of Astrology enables me to think that Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike may be chosen by the Higher Powers as the instrument for the fulfilment of the above dream. Her foreign policy is sure to be successful, as it reflects the mood of the party she leads, and the wishes of the people who support it. Her basic aim seems to be to conduct the foreign policy in such a way as to pay our way in the world, in the first instance to maintain our credit-worthiness in order to borrow the sums of money urgently needed to tide over our present sad economic plight, and then onwards conduct our affairs in such a way of development to be in a position to earn the money to repay the debts at the end of the decade.

Our Country absolutely lacks nothing except the willingness of the people to work hard to earn money and not to make money, and the ability of the leaders to see this done. We have fertile soil, plenty of rain water and sufficient working force to grow all kinds of food-stuffs including sugar cane and even cotton. Furthermore, we are surrounded by sea to supply all our marine needs.

K. RAMACHANDRA

Jayanthipura,
Talangama
24.11.74

Extracts from Mr. Ramachandra's message to the Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Railway Union will be published in the Tribune shortly.—Editor

HISTORY AND SHORTCOMINGS

The Ceylon Transport Board

by Jepharis

THE CEYLON TRANSPORT BOARD, which came into being with the nationalisation of the road transport services during the Bandaranaike Government in 1958, provides one of the cheapest, as well as one of the most slovenly and inefficient, not to say one of the most hazardous, bus services in the world.

The history of the mechanised (road) transport services of Ceylon (apart from the rail service provided by the C.G.R., the airplane flights operated by Air Ceylon, and the proposed new canal transport scheme), consisted of the urban electric tramcar service (1900-55) and its successor the short-lived trolley-bus service (1956-59) similar to the tramcar in that it used overhead wires, except that it did not run on rails in Colombo; besides the motor-bus service which dates from the second decade of the present century, and succeeded the stage-coach services of the early and middle colonial era.

The horse-drawn stage-coaches or more accurately mail-coaches as they were called, were mainly used to transport mail and freight, and incidentally a few passengers, in British times, and on British lines. Before that, during Portuguese and Dutch rule, the form of long-distance travel was the same as that used from time immemorial: namely the bullock-cart, the hackery or thirikale (buggy-cart), and for short distances, mainly urban travel, the rickshaw and the palanquin; all of which except for the last-named, which was used mainly by the affluent and the V.I.P., survive into our own day, particularly in the outstations, although dwindling in number and doomed to gradual extinction. The once robust rickshaw-wallah, for example, is now almost a lost breed, except for a few rare old stragglers.

EARLIER STILL, in the time of the ancient Sinhala kings, people seldom or never strayed too far away from their own villages,

except on the most urgent business, which was usually done on foot.

The first buses, which appeared in the early nineteen twenties, soon after World War I, were rather open in design, with provision for luggage to be carried on the roof, and were run by private bus mudalalies. Privately owned bus companies, such as Ebert Silva's (who still hire out coaches for pilgrimages, site and sight-seeing expeditions, etc.) continued to operate fleets of buses in the various provinces of Ceylon right down to the period of nationalisation during the first SLFP administration, which was dedicated to a policy of wholesale nationalisation on the lines of Britain's Labour Party.

Soon after World War II, about 1946, the first pillar-box red-coloured double-decker buses, newly imported from England, began to ply on the roads of the metropolis, and proved quite an attraction to us schoolboys of the time. Second-hand double-decker buses continued to be imported for use on Colombo roads, and a few outstation sections, such as the Galle-Matara stretch. They were shipped via Galle for this purpose, as they could not pass under the bo-tree hollow which existed at Kalutara on the Colombo-Galle route.

As they were second-hand, they were usually second best or second-rate, discarded derivatives from the dustbin of Britain's surplus stock of vehicles. This explains why they were so prone to breakdowns, so often "hospitalised" at the CTB workshops at Werahera and other centres. Many of them even leant over on one side at a precarious angle (like the leaning tower of Pisa) and occasionally toppled down. Their engines were faulty. Their bodies and seating left much to be desired. They earned

Singapore Haircut

Singapore shops, insurance companies and theatre booking offices have put up notices saying that long-haired men are served last. This is one of the measures taken by the authorities in the hope that it will teach young men not to wear long and usually dirty hair.

a noxious reputation as 'belching buses' exhaling noxious fumes of carbon monoxide from both radiator and exhaust to add to the increasing problem of pollution posed by over-industrialisation i.e. INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION.

They were notoriously unpunctual, and uncomfortably overcrowded, causing passenger congestion on aisle and footboard (until footboard travel was banned) and giving ample scope for pickpocketing. Their schedules were very badly planned, and sometimes overlapped. Invariably, you waited over an hour in no orderly a queue for a bus on a certain busy route, where there should have been one every fifteen minutes or so, and then saw two or three coming almost one behind the other.

Or buses tended to be so overcrowded that they did not stop. To combat overcrowding and inconvenience, special bus services were inaugurated on certain routes for women and school-children; and special seats provided for clergy of all faiths either at the front or the back of a bus. Sometimes buses did not pick up passengers at bus-halts through sheer cussedness on the part of the driver.

On outstation runs, they were driven at break neck speed by drunken drivers, who were wont to make unscheduled stops for the purpose of taking a drink, thereby imperilling the safety of the passengers who should have been their especial responsibility. This accounts for the frequency of bus accidents, particularly on long-distance trips, of which the Dowa disaster (off Bnddara-weia) was one of the most tragic.

Drivers and conductors had no patience with and were often rude to passengers, and vice versa. Arguments and fights ensued, sometimes serious, ending with the bus being driven to the nearest police station, and an enquiry ensuing.

Yes, in spite of three price hikes in recent years, from 5 cents a mile, then 10 cents a mile, through 15 cents to now 20 cents a mile, the Sri Lanka bus service remains the chea-

pest in the world they say, as well as one of the worst. One hopes the CTB will awaken to the need for a thorough overhaul of this most essential and yet most neglected service.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—II

A BILL OF UNKNOWN QUANTITIES

By Herbert Keuneman

THERE IS A LOCAL SAYING that none can count himself a Man until he has

- raised a family
- sown and harvested a field
- built himself a house.

Disqualified on the first two counts, I considered myself competent enough on the third; for I had built two houses, both of them successful enough under the crucial test of being convenient and comfortable to live in, and the one that I had built for myself had even been featured in the Press—NOT in any way at my instigation—as an attractive example of contemporary housing. Building a village house was, however, soon to bring my self-confidence down half-a-dozen pegs or two even in this capacity!

Building a town house, you start with a plan, you provide yourself with a Bill of Quantities, you find yourself a contractor or a team of contractors and agree upon a scale of charges, you elicit the fortitude to make no 'improvements' once your plan and BoQ are finalised; and within a reasonable time you have the house you thought you had thought of, at a cost not crippling more than that you had thought you had calculated: (I am speaking, of course, of pre-Gazette Notification times). In building a village house you may, if you are naive, go through precisely the same procedure, but only to find they have no bearing whatever. Town house-building and village house-building are simply not on all fours: town dealings are commercial encounters; village ones become psychological confrontations,

IT WILL TAKE a few examples to show what I mean; and, for the sake of order, the examples had better be quoted in general as they occurred, even though I quote but the tenth part of them. But I will summarize here my dealings with Jayawardana Baas as typical of them all. (The name *jaya-var-dhana* means Progressive Victory and was well chosen, for—like several score of others—he won psychological victories over me all along the line!)

I am very unhappy with what I shall now, and often in the future, have to relate; because I shall certainly fail to be impartial about myself, yet I should hate to be pre-judicially unjust to the many who thus bested me. There was, it is true, a time when I could see no justification of them at all: I judged them liars, twisters, trimmers and cheats by diabolical conscious decision to be so and to make me—man of my word, open-hearted (and even open-handed: which is rarer!) honest and honourable—a cynically plucked gull, a ruthlessly exploited dupe, a victim hamstringed by 'decency'. After three years as a 'villager', however, I am (I crust...I hope...I think...) a little less uncharitable. Is uncharitable the word?

Nothing so much helped me to this slightly reduced fever of self-righteousness than re-reading, after some time here, Norman Douglas, in *Old Calabria*; and I strongly recommend that anybody who would begin to understand the peasant read it also. For, as Douglas brilliantly and broad-mindedly makes clear, it is *peasant* that is the operative word and not *Vanni peasant* or *Sinhalese peasant* or any other particular variety of peasant. Dispassionately and generously and—at least at the distance that Calabria is from Ehetuwewa — convincingly he proves the peasant a *species* conditioned into peasant-ness by an environment no less metaphysically and morally determinant than it is physically. He even contrives to speak with a kind of ingenuous, if sometime wry, admiration of values and motives he would (one may be sure) scarcely recommend to a more sophisticated and complex

society. And every word he says of 'his' peasants is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to those I have had to deal with. I cannot pretend to compete with the magnanimity of his judgements. But he has helped me, at all events, to gain a little perspective in my own.

After all—and this is my own comment, not his—varying moulds or varying pressures produce varying forms: why not varying formulations? Is it not my own kind of society that states that Honesty is the Best Policy: clearly implying, then, that Honesty pays dividend? Surely a promise no way germane to the *absolute* virtue!

All the same, I have not yet learned wholly to emulate Norman Douglas nor even to be altogether unseptical of his liberality. *If only he had built a house in Old Calabria before writing his book!* That would have been the acid test! As it is, I tend to cling to my own scale of values, the scale I was reared on and still inattentively ascribe to others until they teach me wiser; if only because I still believe that honesty makes intercourse easier within a community—even a special community such as of peasants or of businessmen or of politicians—than pawkiness or the art of one-upmanship or the practice of calculated chicanery can do.

Of course I realize that our Brave New World has been liberated from this kind of insincerity—sincerity, by its new definition—being the refusal to do for the benefit of any other what will not (at the very least) also benefit oneself—but, to paraphrase the jargon of a different kind of 'lib', I remain largely a Christian Chauvinist P(r)ig!

Prig though I am—or Prig because I am—I am sincerely anxious that you, my thus far indulgent reader, receive from me as true a representation of Ehetuwewa and its people and its values and its problems as I can communicate. Yet I know with only shame that too many of my real motives will be veiled from myself; that my picture of my...shall I call them

'competitors' rather than antagonists...will be distorted if not downright unjust. Hence this so long-winded digression. Despite Norman Douglas despite a small measure (alas, not more) of carefully distilled objectivity I still look back in anger, justifiable or not. But my hope is that with this long apologetic any reader searching for the truth about The Village—and I do not advise any other reader to persist with these articles—will be in a position to audit my account, debiting and crediting as seems to him just. Also, then, I can write as I feel not pausing self-consciously every now and again to square up a debatable entry.

I MUST at the beginning accept blame (such blame as attaches to ignorance) for the beginning of the whole thing. As I have earlier declared, from my later wisdom, one does not build a village house in a hurry: it is a leisurely business, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; and one painfully learns precept upon precept! From the idea of having a house to the fact of having one, leaving time for the collection of materials, the finding of the where withal, and the insertion of periods of labour upon the actual framework between immediate avocations, 3 to as much as 6 years could be a not-unreasonable time! But here was I demanding to get my whole house built, from scratch, in 6 months! Before, that is, the setting in of the Northeast Rains.

Now, when you build a house in the village manner you do not calculate by a Bill of Quantities: so many thousand bricks, so much sand and lime and cement, so many balks of such and such a size of timber: you buy a cartload of bricks, a bag of cement or two, knock together a door—or window—frame or have one knocked together for you, when the need is pertinent and the money at hand. It is like buying your house on a sort of idealized 'never-never': you hardly feel it. I felt every wrench like having a tooth out without an anaesthetic.

Ever since I began to think at all seriously about building in Ehetuwewa I had had Banders or his father send me prices and 'firm'

quotations. I should have been suspicious that, for some reason I have not yet been able to fathom, Rs. 35 seemed to be a magic number: for 1,000 bricks, for supplying and delivering a trailer-load of sand, for erecting 100 sq. ft., of wall (single-brick wall I was afterwards to find: no one in the village deals in the 100 cu. ft. Cube, (save in earth-excitation) for laying a Square (100 sq. ft.) of wooden floor, for carpentering a Square of roofing; and what not. Nevertheless I suspected nothing, and with the help of Rutherford's *Planters' Notebook* and several other more highly technical publications calculated cheerfully, though meticulously, on such bases. It seemed that my house was going to cost around Rs. 12,000; which was very, very satisfactory.

Rs. 35 for building .75 Cube of brick wall may seem like very small money—and I may add that today, two years later, even the 'saying price' is most noteworthy increased—but it was the price that one *baas* but *all* the *baas* I consulted quoted; and, I think, if I had built the village way it would not (at that date) have been a sweated wage. .75 Cube takes about 1,200 bricks; and a good local bricklayer with two labourers to help can—according to Rutherford—lay this quantity in three days. Pay the labourers Rs. 5 a day (the *nominal* wage: the wage I would have to pay: though the wage a *baas* pays is a *great deal* lower and that leaves the *baas* with about Rs. 7 a day for himself, which is very near the basic Government wage for a Mason *now*, at the end of 1974!

IN POINT OF FACT, in village building the *baas* can even better himself. With no deadline to meet he can work at his own pace and convenience, engage only a single helper instead of two (and that a woman, or a *pro tem*, 'apprentice', whose wage might be half that of a man helper or less.) My six-month deadline, of course, without my realizing it knocked Jayawardana *Baas'* comfortable calculation of such possibilities into a cocked hat. That the deadline was kept is its own story, which I shall tell in due course, and in no way due to Jayawardana's willing co-operation! Nor—he saw to that—was he himself any way impoverished by his coercion.

Meanwhile my own calculations were being knocked into cocked hats, for their own part. Again a misunderstanding of village practice Building (as he does) a fraction of a structure at a time, and obtaining what he needs to build that fraction as and when he needs it, borrowing sometimes, returning when he can or must, never keeping cumulative accounts of the total material expended, the average village *baas* and Jayawardana is exceptionally average—has no real conception of overall quantities. The first thing I did on resettling in Ehetuwewa was summon him in earnest conference and check against my precisely drawn scale plan and elevation my painstaking calculations of every major item I must supply; and with every quantity he agreed. I do not know whether he did so with his tongue in his cheek, judging that if he jacked my figures higher I might lose heart and not begin and he would miss a remunerative opportunity; or whether he was just to polite to contradict me—for this, also, is a village convention and in certain circumstances not without some virtue—or whether he unquestioningly granted that in this kind of accounting I must know what I was talking about; but the fact remains that he did not raise a demurrer. Not one single demurrer.

But I did not know what I was talking about in village language. I did not know that when bricks are off-loaded with no one to supervise the operation the cart may be just tilted and the bricks (which God support) in large proportion pulverised. I did not know that mortar was slopped about in quite such slap-happy trowelfuls as in fact it seems to be. I did not realize that cement was anything like as bandiable a commodity as it proved to be after I had bought it (especially under the necessity to purchase it only under official permit, as was the case when I began to build). I had not suspected that the prices quoted to me for various materials and services were open to revision if it were assessed that I could—and thereafter should—pay more. Oh! there were many things I did not know until it was too late for knowledge.

What sticks in my gullet, however, is what Jayawardana was

quite probably partially innocent of: that completely irrelevant BoQ! We calculated 30,000 bricks. For safety's sake we said 35,000. We 'used' 56,500. We calculated 7 trailer-loads (7 Cubes) of sand. For safety's sake we said 10. We ended up with 23. We calculated 75 bags of cement. For safety's sake we said 90. The count to date is 153 and more needed, sometime.

SHAMBA

STILL WAITING FOR RAIN —a little philosophising—

by ANATORY BUKOBA

October 28,

Even a part of a day on the *Shamba* should mean a few words here. Late it was, but my colleague was outside the house: no rain yet, and a moonlight night. There were no *cadjans*, he said, and the money for that went on food. He had been out of work.

A baby had been left in the verandah of a *Kadday*, a Moslem one, in another village in this district. Found when the *kadday* opened up, I had seen it in a bed, a beautiful child, looking at us with attentive eyes. She was taking us all in. Three months old, I had been told, but less than that, the women around said. I suggested leaving the baby in the bed when they went to tell the police, no need to hawk it six miles. The attractive clothes, in which she had been found, hung above the bed. Better this, I thought, than extracted babies lying around on hospital tables waiting to die, and, I hear, thrown into a bin; extracted babies, crying, not loved, not hugged or cuddled. Even these had been born, if prematurely; what of those not allowed to be born? If I may anticipate some quotations. He who loves his wife loves himself, that was Paul, and, let the wife see that she respects her husband. Your wife shall be like a fruitful wine within your house. So thus shall the man be blessed who fears the lord. What has this to do with children? Your children shall be like alive shoots around

your table. You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands. The last four quotations are from a psalm, but I have mixed the order up, and I have left out much else.

Tribune, I see, has again been spelling navy as navy. This was in regard to the navy spitting on his hands and contemplating or surveying his work, before he sets to.

A very large government farm did I visit and buy half a pound each of *mungatta* or green gram, *thora parripou* or dhal, and soya bean. The *mungatta*, I was told, was a two-and-a-half month variety, and the dhal, I gathered, will give four crops or cuttings spread over two years. Soya bean makes excellent coffee. My host, where I stay, says it is only soya bean and cowpea which are safe and sure crops here; or at least, I think he said soya bean and not *mungatta*. Cowpea is very popular, and there is quite a demand for it as a food in the season.

There has, I notice, been an increase in the price of foodstuffs at the *kaddays* in the last week or two. What used to be forty cents is now forty-five or even fifty cents. Yet there is money around. Miles from here, I saw a young man juggling three cards face down. You had to guess where the picture card was. Ten rupees was each stake, and from where I was it all looked frightfully easy. A young friend of mine was almost drawn in, just as I thought he was about to lay a stake, I called him away assured him he would have to walk home. He saw the point, fortunately. The three or four men playing were, I felt sure, fast friends with the man manipulating the cards and they won and lost with gay abandon and made the most atrocious mistakes. It was all designed, I thought, to draw others in. I would have been sorely tempted to join in if Rs. 15/- was not about all I had until the end of the month.

An elephant had again been within a few yards of a house I slept in. So the householder rigged up a part of a door to encourage the elephant to keep his trunk out. This was the house that had been damaged by this elephant, as noted in an earlier *Shamba*.

Much building has been going on around the island the last two

years. I like it myself, but a young man said, what is the use of a hospital without the drugs? A man and his two daughters, small children, had just been turned away; no drugs for the skin infection they had.

October 29,

The quotations, yesterday, I had meant to end with this. About the Kingdom of God being like a mustard seed which grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches; that was Christ who said this. In the context of what I said yesterday, I regard the birds as the children. Those that come, or should come, of sexual intercourse.

The *mungatta*, dhal and soya bean will be given to a relation to sow elsewhere. Some of it, when it yields seed and beans in its turn, will be used as cattle feed.

Took I the mammy and the big knife to the *shamba*, and I made my mark for the day; that is, I removed a few prominent thorn bushes, dug them up, and cut down the less straight of two thorn trees growing together by the path that leads through the acre. I had no time for more. This written, I feel, as I felt thinking of it, that I am now faced with a blank sheet, and wondering what will come out of my effort to write something down.

Perhaps, a bit of reading I have been doing, Ronald Knox's *The Hidden Stream*, the stream that flows under and along the lane that runs by the Old Palace at Oxford. He dedicates his book to Tom Corbishley, Master in my time, and the Val Elwes, mentioned in these *Shamba* notes before. On employer of mine once marked that Ronald Knox had slept in the room I now occupied, as if I had slept in the room that Good Queen Bess or the Protector had once occupied; that was the mark of the man, and I realize this now after reading what I am about to relate. Talking of comparative religion, he says that comparing Christianity with Confucianism, you are comparing two systems of personal morality; so with Buddhism, two streams of mystical tendency; and Mohammedanism, two forms of fighting enthusiasm; and he says that Christianity is greater than all three because Christianity

corresponds to all three, where they, each, correspond to one particular, need a particular mood. I would have said that Christianity and Buddhism meet on a common psychological ground rather; detachment, lack of possessiveness, control of the passions, even when it comes to doing the wrong thing with lack of passion. Mohammedanism displays the opposite tendency, passion or enthusiasm. Both passion, and lack of it, have their parts to play; there is a time for each, I would say. Knox does not mention Hinduism, and I would say that Hinduism and Christianity meet on the intellectual plane, that of dogma, that Hinduism is an excellent preparation for the doctrines, if you call them that, of one supreme God, a Trinity; of God become man, called the Incarnation; of Christ giving himself to us under the form of bread and wine, or transubstantiation. All these ideas are to be found under various guises in Hindu mythology and practice; it should be very easy for a Hindu to become a Catholic. He should have no intellectual difficulty. It is should be easy for a Buddhist to live as a Christian should. Mohammedanism points the way to the enthusiasm that a Christian should display, and it came after Christianity. Why all the differing Christian sects? It is deplorable. Here, I would say, the difference is on the mystical plane; that God allows then to exist to correct, in some cases, false mysticism and, in other cases, to show up false mysticism in a more glaring light. These thoughts are intimately connected with *Shamba*, because it is when turning over a sod, cutting a thorn, pruning a tree, that the real ground is laid for deep thought, for, in the last resort, we must get our facts from nature, from what we see, informed always by the supernatural, for we are neither, we humans, either pure body or pure thought. We are always a mixture of the two.

Another point I keep harking on, as I learn from my reading, is that Augustine gave us a psychological or individual approach to life, and Aquinas a universal approach. One was an African and the other a European. What we require now is a new kind of approach, the third leg of the stool. In some

pects communism points the way, and the word socialism expresses some part of the idea. Tribalism expresses the old conception of what I am trying to say, as does the word village or hamlet, even corporation and public company does so, as do co-operative and Kibbutz. I am speaking of nothing else than a new society, of new groups within the state, in the community of nations; something, perhaps, between the individual and the state, and all co-equal. We have not got it yet; and when we do, society will be able to take care of its big families, without breaking up the family, and the need for much modern legislation, which cramps life, will disappear. The change cannot be brought about by more legislation, but by our way of doing things. Perhaps some one one day, will point the way.

So much for blank sheets; but even a blank sheet must start from a material point. I gather from Jacques Maritain that the Cartesian system, which is said to have governed life the last three hundred years, tried to make it start from pure thought, it all beginning with a dream of its founder, Descartes; but he meant well, so thinks Maritain, but Descartes; but he meant well, so thinks Maritain, but Descartes was not honest with himself all the time.

DETENTE

The Ford-Brezhnev Summit

by Basil Perera

THE RECENT MEETING between Soviet and US leaders Leonid Brezhnev and Gerald Ford in the Vladivostok area lasted only two days. But in the scale of its achievement this meeting is in no way second to the earlier Soviet-US 'summits' held since 1972.

This most recent meeting was the fourth Soviet-US Summit in the 1970's. It was the first, however, between Brezhnev and Ford. After the resignation of President Nixon who had earlier taken part in the first three 'summits', there were powerful forces in the USA which tried to put an end to the

process of rapprochement which has started with the 'summit' in 1972 and to replace the growing friendship and co-operation which had begun to develop between the two great powers with a reversion to the old, cold war days.

Soviet leaders noted with satisfaction that President Ford in his very first speech to the US Congress pledged himself to continue adhering to the course along which Soviet-American relations have been developing these last few years. At Vladivostok he repeated this pledge. The outcome of his first 'summit' gives ground to hope that the future of Soviet-American relations, and therefore of world peace, will continue to be bright.

The USSR and the USA are the two mightiest states in the world today that their bilateral relationships will determine the climate of world peace in a decisive way. This is a stark fact that no one can deny. These two countries are also the most powerful each in their own social systems—capitalist and socialist. This too is another factor that must not be forgotten, whatever the intentions of these who gloss over the inherent contradictions between the two systems with their talk of 'superpowers.'

For a quarter century after the end of the Second World War, mankind lived through perilous days of the cold war (threatening to turn to hot war at any moment) precisely because of strained Soviet-US relations. With the growing might of the socialist camp, the more realistic politicians in the US and the West began to adopt a foreign policy *vis-a-vis* the Soviet Union based on negotiation of disputed issues rather than those old discredited policies of 'positions of strength'. Detente was the result, so strikingly begun with the USSR-USA 'summit' in 1972.

It is heartening to all lovers of peace that this process has now become almost irreversible. The people of the Soviet Union as well as all progressive mankind will always have it that way. But we must not forget that to make it a reality, a continuous struggle must be waged without relenting. Frederick Juliet-Curie, the first President of the World Peace Council, said that peace is not to be begged from but imposed on the would-be warmongers.

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the last three USSR-US summits was that they put into treaty from the requisites for peace and peaceful co-existence as against war, particularly nuclear war. Landmarks in this process were, to give two examples, the "Basic Principles of Mutual Relations" and the "Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War" concluded between the two states in 1972 and 1973 respectively. At previous 'summits' were also concluded important agreement on limitation of strategic offensive arms.

Peaceful coexistence means not only the absence of war but also the development of fruitful co-operation states. To give effect to this aspect of coexistence, the USSR and USA concluded several agreements beneficial to the peoples of the two countries and the world at large in numerous fields of human endeavour—health and environment protection, agriculture and studies of the world ocean, atomic energy, space exploration, economic and technical co-operation etc. etc.

The most recent 'summit' has further strengthened the material basis of detente by the two world leaders agreeing to 'expand and deepen mutually beneficial co-operation' through the "establishment of commercial and economic co-operation" etc.

The beneficial effect that USSR-USA has on putting out the flames of war wherever they may arise was clearly brought out in the October war in the Middle East last year. As Brezhnev said later, if not for the Treaty on the Prevention of Nuclear War which put the USSR and USA under obligation to consult each other when explosive situations arise, that war may well have led to a world nuclear conflagration. It was the USSR-USA detente that not only prevented the development of that situation to a wider war but also

THE CEYLON ELEPHANT

The second part of the Wild Life Dept's Advisory Council Paper on a new policy for the Elephant, together with an editorial comment, has been held over for next week—owing to the exigencies of space.

helped to bring about cessation of hostilities and the warring contestants to the conference table.

Developments since then in that region have not helped to improve matters much. The Soviet and US leaders have now emphasised in their communique that the conference must be reconvened to settle the problems in that area on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and the just rights of the Palestinian people.

THE TWO LEADERS have also agreed to convene the last stage of the European Conference on Peace and Security at an early date and at the highest level. For the first time the US leaders has also agreed to bend all efforts to the maintenance of the independence sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus.

The most significant breakthrough at the latest 'summit', however, is in the field of limitation of strategic arms. In 1972 the USSR and USA agreed to place a ceiling on their Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs). The USA was allowed 1054 ICBMs and 710 SLBMs, while the Soviet Union was allowed 1618 ICBMs and 950 SLBMs to compensate for the fact that the US had a bigger throw-weight in the form of Multiple Independently-targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MRVs). However, no mention was made in the Interim Agreement of any restriction on the modernisation of these deadly weapons.

The 1973 summit agreed to continue negotiations to work out a permanent agreement on more complete measures on the limitation of strategic offensive arms on the basis of each other's equal security interests with no unilateral advantage to either side. But apparently no headway had been made in this field since then.

The significance of the latest 'summit' is that agreement has been reached between the two sides on the general guidelines for this long-term agreement. A new agreement covering the period 1977 (when the interim agreement expires) till 1985 will include agreed ceilings on the numbers of ICBMs and SLBMs as well as on MRVs. When the delegations of the two sides meet at the SALT II talks at

Geneva again in January 1975, they will have appropriate instructions and directives from their Governments to arrive at a satisfactory long-term agreement on this basis.

That is not all. The USSR and the USA have hitherto only negotiated about freezing the numbers of their strategic arms. Now they have referred to the possibility of even reducing their strategic arms after 1985.

At a time when brasshats in the USA are seeking a way out of their economic and financial crisis through greater expenditure on armaments and wars, this is no mean achievement.

According to present estimates, the USSR and the USA between themselves can deliver 8400 megatons of explosives by their missiles—420,000 times the destructive power of the A-bomb that razed Hiroshima. Under the circumstances, what does it profit one country to increase its ability to destroy another country ten times over if the latter has the ability to destroy the former even once? This is the stage that the world has now reached—the stage of what is called "mutually assured destruction" or MAD!

All sane men throughout the world must now redouble their vigilance and efforts for peace to ensure that the agreements reached at the latest 'summit' are translated into reality.

FROM DELHI

Indo-Ceylon Relations —Chavan's Visit—

By K. Rangaswamy

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The first country which Mr. Y. B. Chavan will be visiting after taking over as External Affairs Minister is Sri Lanka. This is an indication of the interests he and his government attach to the maintenance of close and friendly relations with India's immediate neighbours. (Mr. Chavan will be visiting Bangladesh next month). Although the relations between India and Sri Lanka are to present very cordial it is recognised that continuous

contacts must be maintained between the leaders of the two countries so that the relations get strengthened. Last year Mrs. Gandhi visited Sri Lanka and early this year Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike came to Delhi. The two Prime Ministers again met briefly in Delhi a few days ago. Mr. Chavan's visit is primarily a goodwill one though the occasion may be availed of to explore the possibilities of greater economic co-operation between the two countries. Mr. Chavan will exchange views with Mrs. Bandaranaike, who is the island's Foreign Minister, on a number of issues of bilateral and international interests.

FORTUNATELY there is no outstanding problem between the two countries. A source of irritation for a long time was the problem of Indians in Ceylon. The Shastri-Sirimavo agreement of 1964 settled this controversial question. While India agreed to repatriate 525,000 Indians Sri Lanka agreed to grant citizenship to another 300,000 Indians. In January this year the two Prime Ministers agreed to share the remaining 150,000 Indians. Till the middle of this year about 150,000 Indians have returned to India while about 95,000 Indians have been given Sri Lanka citizenship. Generally the implementation of the agreement is proceeding satisfactorily. The second, though minor controversy, was about the ownership of the tiny island of Kachchativu in the Palk Straits. The two sides first agreed on the principles according to which the ownership of the island was to be settled. According to these principles Kachchativu fell within Sri Lanka's territorial waters and there the controversy ended. It was also an occasion for the two countries to agree to co-operate with each other in developing the resources of the area. This agreement was concluded in June this year. India's liberal approach must no doubt have impressed the leaders of Sri Lanka and contributed to the promotion of greater understanding and co-operation between the two countries.

India and Sri Lanka hold identical views on many international issues. Both are non-aligned countries. The next non-aligned Summit is to be held in Sri Lanka next year. India and Sri Lanka agree that the

Indian ocean should be free of big power military presence. Sri Lanka appreciates India's approach to Pakistan's proposal for a South Asia nuclear free zone. Apart from defining what countries constituted South Asia there is need for consultation among the countries concerned. Every country is bound to view the problem from its own security angle. Sri Lanka has accepted India's declaration that she has no intention of producing nuclear weapons and that nuclear technology would be used solely for peaceful purposes. The threat to the area, if any, could only come from powers outside South Asia area which Pakistan has in mind. While Pakistan and China have been attacking India as expansionist and aggressive, neither India's nuclear detonation nor India's approach to Sikkim has made Sri Lanka revise its assessment of India as a peace loving country. India and Sri Lanka hold identical views on how the world economic crisis is to be met. Both countries stand for an equitable economic order which would ensure a fair price to the primary producer.

Mr. Chavan's visit must help to allay any misapprehension that may exist among some people in Sri Lanka over the emergence of India as a major power in the area. While none will raise this issue openly at any time, the possibility of elements unfriendly to India sowing seeds of suspicion among different sections of the population must be anticipated and appropriate measures must be taken to clear the atmosphere by establishing contacts at different levels, official and non-official. Initially Sri Lanka did not appreciate India's role in Bangladesh and some in the island thought that India was intervening in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

FORTUNATELY the Government of Sri Lanka maintained a steady and balanced approach. Early in 1971 India gave Sri Lanka material and military assistance in quelling an internal revolt. While this assistance was appreciated by the Government of Sri Lanka critics utilised it to ask how India was able so promptly to send its men and supplies without having something like a contingent plan. A certain uneasiness may exist in some quarters because of the presence of three million Tamil-speaking Ceylonese in the northern

part of the island. Will India make use of the cultural affinity between the two countries to subvert the independence of Sri Lanka? All these are hypothetical questions which those bent on preventing the establishment of close and friendly relations between the two countries will no doubt raise. But India's record must speak for itself. After India became independent the rulers of the three Himalayan Kingdoms of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were given asylum when their lives were threatened by their own subjects. It was quite easy then for the Government of India to have made these three rulers sign on the dotted line and secured a privileged position for itself in these States. But India contented herself with assisting the rulers and their subjects to compose their differences and work harmoniously. Again, after liberating Bangladesh, Indian forces promptly withdrew and Indian never sought any privileged position in Bangladesh. The leaders of Sri Lanka may not be unaware as to who provoked the several wars between India and Pakistan. Pakistani leaders themselves, including Prime Minister Bhutto and several senior army officers, have all claimed authorship for the wars and India is quite content to leave it to the claimants to sort out the truth among themselves. Independent India has throughout maintained her peaceful and democratic traditions and none can point an accusing finger at her. There is no doubt that Mr. Chavan's frank and forthright approach to problems will promote greater trust and confidence between the two countries.

LIKE INDIA Sri Lanka is passing through a difficult economic situation. India has offered commercial credit to the tune of Rs. 22 crores in the last ten years and repayment by Sri Lanka has been prompt and regular. The volume of trade between the two countries in 1973 was of the order of Rs. 12 crores of which Rs. 8 crores formed exports by India and the balance imports from Sri Lanka. The number of articles which Sri Lanka can export to India is not very large. Sri Lanka can export rubber, graphite and cinnamon. The import of chillies, onion and potatoes from India has been stopped by Sri Lanka as the latter is now able to produce these commodities

locally. The export of copra from Sri Lanka, which formed a feature of the trade between the two countries, has been reduced as the crop had been affected. India has been exporting sugar, cotton textiles, jute goods, iron and steel products, machine, tools transport equipment, electrical goods and bicycle parts. The emphasis now is to set up joint ventures so that the products of these ventures could be shared by the two countries. At the government to government level the projects in hand are rubber based industries, animal husbandry products and a fertiliser factory in which besides India, West Germany, Iran and the World Bank will be participating. In the private sector there are joint ventures in regard to steel pipes, glass, table fans, textiles and also a hotel. The manufacture of auto parts is a project under immediate consideration. Microwave communication link is being established between the two countries.

—Foreign News & Features

(Mr. Chavan was in Sri Lanka on November 18, 19 and 20)

What Shortens Women's Lives

According to statistics, women live longer than men. Studies of recent years have shown, however, that the difference in longevity between the sexes in the developed capitalist countries is diminishing. The discovery was made by British researchers on the basis of an analysis of statistics for 1955-70. The gap has narrowed most of all in the 45-54 age bracket in Denmark, Britain and Holland. The higher mortality rate among young and middle-aged women is attributed, among other things, to smoking and the resultant lung cancer, road and industrial accidents, and stress caused by the need to combine regular employment with household duties and aggravated by the rising cost of living.

IS IT TRUE? Sherlock Holmes

• More About Opinion Formers

IS IT NOT A FACT that our references in the last issue to *Opinion Formers* in Britain, and the BBC feature based on them, had attracted a great deal of attention? That as promised in this column we are reproducing the notes in the BBC programme handout, *London Calling*, about the four weekly periodicals, *The Economist*, *New Statesman*, *New Society* and *The Spectator*? That *The Economist*, it was said, "was founded in 1843 to support the cause of free trade: its modern coverage of political, economic and social issues is international, as suited to a newspaper which has more than half its readers outside Britain: it is politically independent of party: chiefly Keynesian in its economic approach, favouring private enterprise and the market; a supporter of state-organised education and welfare; a backer of the NATO alliance and the European Economic Community"? That about its Editor, Alastair Burnet, it was said that he was "editor of *The Economist* since 1965, is 46 and was educated at Worcester College, Oxford, he was with the *Glasgow Herald* for seven years as a sub-editor and leader writer and, after a spell as a leader writer for *The Economist*, became political editor of *Independent Television News* in Britain, now he is a familiar figure on BBC television, often presents the Panorama Programme and was principal anchorman of the BBC's extensive coverage in the last General Election."? Of the *New Statesman*, it was said, that it "covers politics, literature and the arts: it was founded in 1913 by a group of early Fabian socialists including Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells: in 60 years it has had only six editors—the longest serving being Kingsley Martin (editor 1931-60): politically it has always been committed to the

Left in Britain politics without being tied to the Labour Party; its role has traditionally been to provide the dissenting voice in what, the editor claims is all-too-often the harmonious political chorus of the rest of the British Press? That the present editor of the *New Statesman*, Anthony Howard, was born in 1934, educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford (President of the Oxford Union 1955), and called to the Bar in 1956: he has written for *The Guardian*, the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times*: first joined the *New Statesman* in 1961 as political correspondent under John Freeman, leaving in 1964 and returning again as assistant editor to the late R. H. S. Crossman in 1970: became editor 1972: author of *The Making of the Prime Minister* with Richard West (1965): a frequent broadcaster on current affairs on British radio and television"?

About *New Society*, it was said that it "was founded in 1962, to act as a bridge between social science, social policy making action, and the general reader: it is concerned with social justice but has no directly party-political line: its aims to raise the level of debate by examining what is actually happening (as contrasted with what is supposed to be happening): many writers are academics"? That the editor of *New Society*, Paul Barker, "was born in 1935, at the Bronte end of West Riding: he won an open award to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he took a degree in French, and then he went to the Ecole Normale Superieure, Paris, as lecturer, before joining the London staff of *The Times* in 1959: after a spell on *New Society* as a staff writer, he moved to *The Economist*, but he returned to *New Society* as assistant editor: in 1968 he became

editor: he has broadcast on radio and television"? And of *The Spectator*, it was said, that it has been "published continuously from 1827", is traditionally conservative, but is politically independent and does not necessarily follow the official line of the Conservative Party: it is presently 'High Tory', opposed to Britain's European involvement, in favour of sound money policies, and would claim to 'laugh and riot and scatter firebrands', says its editor: as well as politics and economics, its pages contain comment on literature and the arts: previous editors include John St Loe Strachey, Wilson Harris, Iain Macleod, Ian Gilmour, Nigel Lawson and George Hale."? Of its Editor, Harry Creighton, it was said, that he was "editor and owner of *The Spectator*, is 47; he was educated at Haileybury, and after National Service in the army in India and the Middle East entered the machine tool industry, becoming chairman of the Scottish Machine Tool Corporation of Glasgow: Mr. Creighton bought *The Spectator* in 1967 from Iain Gilmour, Minister of Defence in the Conservative Government, and now Opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland: Mr. Creighton, who is married to a daughter of Mr. A. F. L. Wallace of the Wallace-Sassoon Bank, lives on a small farm near Chichester in Sussex"?

IS IT SIGNIFICANT that the BBC serves its listeners well by providing them with a fair analysis of the weekly press in Britain? That in Sri Lanka, owing to the foreign exchange crisis, these weeklies from Britain only very occasionally drop out of the heavens like manna? That it was revealed recently that the Library of the NSA was also starved of such publications? That inquiries reveal that libraries in the different campuses are also unable to subscribe even for the most prestigious foreign journals? That in the meantime other periodicals the country can do without flood our bookstalls? That there is no wonder that there is a general complaint that the content of education in our Campuses (and our Maha Vidyalayas) was yearly deteriorating? That there should be serious re-thinking about the import of magazines and periodicals into this country?