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## Katana and After

THE RESULTS OF THE KATANA BY-ELECTION came as a surprise to many. The UNP had expected to win by a very much larger majority than they did, and they were disappointed that the majority was only 1,050. Hardcore United Front adherents, on the basis of the argument that all three partners of the UF were working unitedly for the SLFP candidate, D. J. Fernando pulled, (who was described as a "good candidate" in contrast to the "bad" SLFP candidate at Kalawewa), were confident that the

SLFP man would win by a comfortable majority of at least 2,500 votes.

Among the general public and the common people there was a vague and general "feeling" that the UNP would win, but UF enthusiasts argued that it would not be easy for the UNP to make up the 1970 SLFP majority of 10,781; and also that a large percentage of the increase in the registered voters (here were 5,077 new voters) would go to the SLFP or the UF because Katana was a semi-urban

area close to Colombo—it must really be regarded as a satellite area of Colombo as a large number of people in the Katana electorate work in the factories and offices in and around Colombo. In addition, the ruling UF had taken adequate precautions to make its election machine a streamlined one and UF supporters from every part of the Low Country were mobilised and brought into the electorate to help the candidate and the Party—according to conservative estimates there were several thousands of such UF activists in the electorate on election day.

### KATANA BY-ELECTION

The Katana electorate is on the outskirts of the city of Colombo. It is mainly a coconut-growing area, and the bigger estates in the area have come under Land Reform and from reports available it is one of the areas where large extents of the land taken over have already been parcelled out to the "landless". In many instances, the land so distributed has already been utilised for residential purposes with little or no attention to coconut production. A new township *KC de Silva Pura* has already emerged from one of the biggest and best run coconut estates in the area. It was because of the 10,000 odd majority secured by the SLFP candidate last time and the many material blessings bestowed on the voters since 1970 that certain sections of the UF High Command believed that the SLFP candidate would win by a majority of about 2500 votes (at least). According to the 1971 Census Katana has a total population of 83,556, with 42,347 males and 41,209 females: 35,800 were under 18, and 47,756 were 18 and over; 74,038 were Low Country Sinhalese, 869 Kandyan Sinhalese, 6,921 Ceylon Tamils, 781 Indian Tamils, 392 Ceylon Moors, 19 Indian Moors, 279 Burghers, 124 Malays and 133 others. Religion-wise, there were 42,700 Buddhists, 1,053 Hindus, 1,777 Muslims, 33,644 Roman Catholics, 4,348 other Christians, and 34 others. The total number of registered voters on the latest electoral list (probably 1973) was 48,151 whereas the number of registered in 1970 was 43,074, the increase being 5,077 voters. One important political factor which the Census (rightly perhaps) did not take into account was caste, but in Katana it is a well known fact that the Salagama caste constituted a very large percentage of the Low-Country Sinhalese population both among the Buddhists and the Roman Catholics and other Christian denominations.

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In addition, it is stated quite freely that many of the Police were inclined to turn a blind eye to whatever rowdiness which emanated from UF hooligans whereas they became law-and-order-minded where the UNP supporters were concerned. (This is a matter which the top governmental and police authorities must look into why sections of the Police adopted this partisan attitude—there were no such complaints about the by-election in Kalawewa. It is essential that the Police should not be allowed to slip once again into this kind of partisanship which they had indulged in freely in UNP days when they discriminated against anyone having a red or pink cap—and if it was red shirt a policeman in UNP days was permitted to run amok without any let or hindrance.)

Taking all these factors into consideration, it must be said that

the UNP did very well to score a comfortable majority of 1,050 votes. One reason the UNP had expected a bigger majority was that its candidate was a member of the Salagama caste and a large percentage of the voters in Katana are said to be of this caste. The Census (rightly perhaps) does not provide any figures of the caste divisions in each area—although this still plays a significant part in electoral and other matters—but there is no doubt that a large percentage of the Buddhists as well as the Christians in Katana are Salagama. In the 1970 elections, the SLFP as well as the UNP candidate were Salagama and Buddhist, but this time the UNP candidate was Salagama and Buddhist whilst the SLFP candidate was a Colombo Chetty and a Christian. From the results, it is clear that more and more voters are being swayed less and less by caste considerations—for if they were the UNP candidate should have scored a much bigger majority.

As it is, however, the results reveal an interesting pattern: compared to 1970, the SLFP has dropped 2,687 votes, whereas the UNP had got 9,158 more votes this time than it did in 1970. This is a big and significant shift in the votes. The SLFP (and the UF) has either completely lost the major part of the new voters plus a large number of those who had voted with the SLFP in 1970, or if they got part of they youth vote there has been a substantial swing among the older voters.

A NUMBER OF OTHER SIGNIFICANT MATTERS stand out: that as in Kalawewa, Independents are not taken seriously by the voters—five Independents lost their deposits, one of them (who announced his withdrawal in favour of the SLFP candidate) obtained 456, whilst the others got only 151, 97, 91 and 51 votes respectively. The two main parties, the SLFP and UNP still have substantial support in every electorate. Caste and religion do not seem to have played as important a part in this by-election as they had done in elections in the past—party considerations seem to have cut across caste and religious considerations. It has been pointed out that there have been nine by-elections since 1970, and the Government has lost all but one—the one in Ratnapura. It is also

likely that Government will lose the tenth by-election which is due on February 6 in Kankesanurala.

The loss of Kalawewa and Katana cannot be disregarded lightly by the Government. Kalawewa is a hundred per cent Sinhala rural area which has been an SLFP seat since 1952 and it has deep-leftist roots as was manifested in 1971 when it became a stronghold of the insurgents. Katana is a mixed Sinhala electorate with a heavy christian vote which the SLFP had wrested from the UNP for the first time in 1970, but it is an area where the Land Reform has already been utilised to grant many material benefits to its residents. To have lost an electorate which the SLFP had won in 1970 with a majority of 10,781 votes by a majority of 1,050 votes in 1974 is not something which the Government can ignore.

Unlike in Kalawewa, where disunity had marred the UF campaign—and there had also been serious divisions within the SLFP itself—the Katana by-election had witnessed all three partners of the UF working together for the SLFP candidate. With this, they certainly reduced the majority which the UNP might otherwise have got. It is noteworthy that the LSSP especially was anxious to establish its *bona fides* in its relations to the SLFP.

AFTER THE KATANA BY-ELECTION the General Secretary of the LSSP, Mr. Bernard Soysa, acting Minister of Finance, issued a statement which was published on January 10th in the *Daily News*, *Daily Mirror* and the *Times of Ceylon*. This is how the report of the statement appeared in the *Times of Ceylon*.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party is perturbed that it has not been consulted before the curfew was imposed on November 16, 1974, and the more recent imposition of a ban on the organisation and training of volunteer squads. While asserting that differences among the constituent partners of the United Front could be ironed out by mutual understanding and discussion, the LSSP's General Secretary, Mr. Bernard Soysa, in a Press release issued recently states:

"Like the LSSP on the occasion of its 39th anniversary the SLFP

has, at its 23rd annual session at Matara publicly affirmed the vital importance of the United Front of the SLFP, LSSP and CP for the carrying out of its pledge to march towards a socialist society. The President of the SLFP has personally affirmed what we have always told the people, viz, that there are differences between the three parties (as indeed there have to be between different political parties) but that these differences can and will be ironed out by mutual understanding and discussions.

"It is a matter for regret, however, that such consultation has not always taken place. Two instances in particular perturbed us. The imposition of a curfew on the occasion of the annual sessions of the Ceylon Federation of Labour on November 16 need never have taken place if there had been consultation between the United Front parties before the sessions was made. This is a matter of importance affecting civil rights enjoyed by the people over several decades.

"In fact, it was more than a question of civil rights alone. Capitalist parties in office depend exclusively on the State machinery as a means of implementing their policies. And the people tend to be pushed on to the sidewalks and consigned to a passive role of spectators until the next general election. It is important that the United Front does not make the fatal mistake of neglecting the crucial importance of popular participation is the march towards socialism.

"The ban on organisation and training of volunteer squads is the other example of failure to consult between the parties of the United Front. The impression has been sought to be created that these volunteer squads are a sudden eruption of para-military activity in the country.

"It is forgotten that trade unions and youth leagues have been accustomed to organise and train their volunteers and put them in uniform from the very commencement of such mass activity. The practice antedates even the birth of revolutionary politics in Sri Lanka and goes back to the days of Mr. A. E. Goonesinha's Labour Party.

"The LSSP has to protest against such curbs on mass activity. They can only undermine the effectiveness of the efforts being made by the United Front parties to secure the

participation of the people in their implementation of the governmental programme of the United Front."

THE PRIME MINISTER, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, was not slow in replying to Mr. Bernard Soysa. Her statement was published in the papers on Sunday, January 12, and we publish below what appeared in the Observer.

"As long as I hold office as Prime Minister, I shall take the full responsibility for maintaining the independence, sovereignty and national security of Sri Lanka as I have done in the past without, in any manner, preventing the forward march of our people to their twin goals of a democratic and a socialist society" states the Prime Minister Mrs., Sirima Bandaranaike in reply to a statement by Mr. Bernard Soysa, General Secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, published in some newspapers last Friday.

Indicating clearly and categorically her stand-point on matters which has been referred to in that statement, Mrs. Bandaranaike adds: "We must also not forget that in April 1971 it was through some of the very organisations that supported us at the 1970 general election that the JVP activities were organised to threaten national security".

Below is the full text of the Prime Minister's statement:—

"My attention has been drawn to a statement published in some newspapers by Mr. Bernard Soysa, General Secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, on the 10th of January 1975, and I should like to indicate clearly and categorically my stand-point on the matters therein.

"At the 23rd Annual Sessions of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party held at Matara, in the course of my reply, I did affirm publicly the importance of maintaining unity of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party and of carrying out the programmes agreed upon between our parties.

"I have also made it clear that the adoption and implementation of any policy or programme coming not within but outside the content and scope of the signed agreement between the Three Parties and our joint election manifesto must be based on analysis, discussion and agreement among the three parties and not through methods of pressure,

innuendo or a propoganda campaign which questions the motives of others.

"In keeping with this the SLFP had also unanimously adopted a resolution for the formulation of an immediate crash programme for the next two years to deal with immediate economic problems which would be placed before the Government for discussion and implementation.

"The need to maintain unity became particularly manifest in some of the comments made at that conference by SLFP representatives in electorates represented by our other coalition partners where, in many respects, allegations of discrimination against the SLFP and its members was pointedly made.

"The LSSP statement, however, complains that there has been no consultation between our three parties upon two particular questions:

(I) the imposition of the curfew on November 16th, and (II) the ban by Emergency Regulations upon paramilitary activities.

"The maintenance of law and order and the protection of national security is not a matter that can depend upon discussions or agreements between the constituent elements of the Government or anybody else.

"This responsibility is vested in the Prime Minister who also holds office as Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs. There have been more than one occasion when I have been called upon to take the necessary steps to protect our country against internal dangers, for instance, at the time of the 1962 coup d'etat the 1971 insurrection, attempted satyagrahas and the like.

"At such times, the responsibility must rest on the Prime Minister and it cannot depend upon a consensus of opinion of a number of political parties. This is quite different from determining the direction or pace at which the Government should move in its plans for economic development or social change and the methods that should be used for this purpose.

"I might add in passing that the declaration of the curfew would not have been necessary if not for the foolish attempt made in some quarters to defy my decision in the matter of the disallowance of processions in general other than:—

(a) Religious and funeral processions which will be allowed by the OIC of the Police Station, subject to normal security considerations and

(b) May Day processions; Bandaranaike Commemoration Day processions; Processions connected with the annual sessions of recognised political parties; and United Front processions which are being held districtwise, where the three Coalition parties have organised the



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procession and the leaders are participating.

"We must also not forget that in April 1971 it was through some of the very organisations that supported us at the 1970 General Elections that JVP activities were organised to threaten national security.

"As long as I hold office as Prime Minister, I shall take the full responsibility for maintaining the independence, sovereignty and national security of Sri Lanka as I have done in the past without, in any manner, preventing the forward march of our people to their twin goals of a democratic and a socialist society".

The Prime Minister's reply was certainly a vigorous and hard hitting one. She did not mince her words when she stated: "we must also forget that in April 1971 it was through some of the very organisations that supported us at the General Elections in 1970 that JVP activities were organised to threaten national security." The meaning of the words were clear to the informed and knowledgeable.

And it must be said that there seems to be universal relief and satisfaction (bar among the LSSP of course) that the Prime Minister has with determination banned the growth of paramilitary organisations as well as youth leagues and trade union units which had begun to receive training in arms, military exercises and the like—even if such activities were carried out under the excuse that they were being done to protect the Revolution from the reactionaries.

It is difficult to envisage what the LSSP will say to what the PM has stated, but it is likely that the LSSP will not do anything about it because the LSSP has shown no indication of wanting to break away from the Government. Nor does the majority in the SLFP want a break with the LSSP. The uneasy truce which has prevailed in SLFP-LSSP relations since Budget time in 1974 is likely to continue for some time longer.

# Tribunania

## Bureaucrats, Statistics and Food Production

TRIBUNE drew attention, once again, last week to the statistical gerrymandering indulged in by our bureaucrats in regard to paddy production statistics. This disease now seems to have spread out to certain Ministerial circles anxious to prove that the magic of UF socialism (which is no more socialism than the socialism of Britain's Labour Party) should automatically produce an annual Growth Rate of 7 or 8 percent. We have said it many times, and we repeat it once again, that our governmental authorities have no reliable method of knowing the actual acreage under paddy each season nor the actual production of paddy at every harvest. Various printed forms are sent out every year, and sometimes more often, to be filled up by field officers in each area, but the returns constitute a pyramidal build-up of bureaucratic fiction.

The old Cultivation Committees, composed of the Government Agent's favourites, failed to break the stranglehold of fraudulent bureaucratic statistical gerrymandering, and the new Agricultural Productivity Committees composed of the stooges of the MPs and the Political Authorities, will fare no better. In fact, things are likely to get worse. The old Committees partly cut across party and political lines and reflected village sentiment to the extent that some consideration was paid to fairplay and equity, but the new Committees are political bombshells intended to wipe out personal (and therefore Party) enemies and prepare the ground for the next elections. The new Committees are endowed with vast powers to compel cultivators to grow what crops the Committee thinks fit, to ensure that high standards of cultivation are maintained, and what not and what not—and with powers of penal sanctions to deprive cultivators of

their lands if the Committee is not satisfied with their work—but with all this ensure rapid agricultural development? Can a Green Revolution be induced only—by diktats legislatively ordained from on top? And, can any of the worthy objectives, enthroned in Manifestos placed on an ever-growing pedestal of slogans, be achieved as long as we permit bureaucrats to cheat us?

THE BUREAUCRATS who gerrymandered statistics brought ruin to the UNP and had made a mockery of Dudley Senanayake's food production drive. The same kind of bureaucraticism continues under the United Front—under the auspices of a politicalised bureaucrats who wield much more power than their predecessors ever did because they rattle off the correct slogans for the appropriate Political Authority. Did not the bureaucrats early in November know that the Maha crop for 74-75 was a write-off? In their wishful belief that the paper plans they had drawn up were sacrosanct, they hid the true facts about the situation—in the hope that the rains would come. If they were honest with themselves, honest with the Government they purport to serve and are honest with the people of this country whose toil and sweat pays their salaries and perquisites of office, they would have admitted that the tanks were without enough water for cultivation and that the rain-fed crops had all but vanished—Late November had December rains could have enabled a partial *meda* crop—but no more. It was only in mid-December that part of the truth was revealed to an unbelieving Government mainly composed of Ministerial and Parliamentary stalwarts who do not know even the elementary basic facts about agriculture in Sri Lanka. (Their trust in bureaucrats and political stooges, who pretend to a great deal of agricultural know-how, is so great that they do not bother to find out for themselves the true realities.)

The *Daily News* of Monday January 13 carried a news item which had been broadcast over the SLBC two days previously—only once, not thrice as is customary with gerrymandered statistics and glory hallelujah fairy tales of supreme achievement—under the heading Rs. 3.5 M FOR DROUGHT

### RELIEF THIS MONTH: SITUATION WORSE THAN REPORTED EARLIER.

This how the report reads: "The government has allocated Rs. 3.5 million this month for drought relief work in affected areas on a proposal of the Minister of Social Services Mr. T. B. Tennakoon. The money is meant for relief in Anuradhapura, Matale, Kurunegalle, Mannar, and Trincomalee. The drought relief schemes have been started in a number of districts to give relief to persons whose sole means of livelihood, agriculture, has been affected.

"The present distress says a press release from the Minister of Social Services is even more severe and widespread than was reported earlier and as many as 415 relief schemes in the Anuradhapura district and 43 in the Matale district are now in operation. In Kurunegala, Mannar and Trincomalee districts, steps are now being taken by the Government Agents to organise relief schemes while in Vavuniya, Badulla and other districts the Government Agents expect the need to arise for such schemes and data is now being collected."

Several weeks ago, Tribune had stated that a rice and food famine was well on the cards in 1975, but politicians and bureaucrats were indignant that we should be so pessimistic and suggested that our statements were only intended to denigrate the prestige and standing of the Government. We had only endeavoured to reflect prevailing realities, but those who thrived on bogus statistics found what we said rather embarrassing and inconvenient.

FAIRY TALES by bureaucrats continue even now. On January 7, 1975, the Daily Mirror, published a frontpage banner-headlined story (by-line Gilbert Dias) with the heading 90m BUSHELS — THIS YEAR'S PADDY TARGET. This was obviously a story based on information handed by some enthusiastic bureaucrat who did not seem to know that all agricultural programmes drawn up last year had been turned upside down by the failure of the Northeast Monsoon and other circumstances. For the record, and for journalistic posterity we reprint the story:

"Ninety million bushels of paddy — that is the target the Government has set in its crash programme for agriculture this year to avert the possibility of a grain shortage.

According to the implementation programme for 1974-75 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, paddy production during the Maha season (from 1974 to early 1975) and the Yala season of 1975 is expected to reach the all-time high figure of 90,644,784 bushels. The blueprint for agricultural production published as a working document sets the target in various fields of agricultural activity including the production of subsidiary milk and food-stuffs, livestock.

"The Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Mr. Mahinda Silva draws attention to the fact that a new feature of the programme is that targets have been prepared by the Agricultural Productivity Committees in consultation with the Political Authorities. The Agricultural Productivity Committees will also serve as implementing agencies of the programme.

"This target fixed for this year is 738,284 bushels more than the estimated target for 1973-74 which was 89,906,500. The Implementation Programme further reveals that although a target of 87,810,763 bushels was set for 1972-73 the actual crop realised was 62,900,000 — a shortfall of 24,910,755 bushels. This year the Maha crop is expected to yield 59,324,963 bushels while the Yala crop projection is 31,319,821 bushels.

"The highest yield is expected from the Kurunegala District (10,216 409 bushels) followed by Polonnaruwa (8,469,856) Anuradhapura (7,798, 248) and Amparai (7,366,599). Among the other Districts from which big yields are anticipated are Batticaloa (4,489,737), Trincomalee (3,752,629), Hambantota (4,535,625), Mannar (2,566,020), Jaffna (2,856,428), Badulla (3,394,443), Kandy (5,021 330), Galle (3,263,926), Colombo (5,160,414), Matara (3,263,926), Ratnapura (2,676,980) and Matale (2,151,070). Under the programme 181,738 tons of fertilizer are expected to be utilised for paddy this year as against 168,368 tons used last year.

"The targets fixed for the production of subsidiary food crops for this year are: **Dried Chillies**—497,032 (estimated target for 1973—74—499,427 cwts.) **Red Onions** 1,646,842 cwts. (estimated target for 1973-74—1,435,466 cwts.)

**Sorghum** 341,415 cwts. **Maize** 697,731 cwts. **Green Gram** 247,089

**cwts; Ground nuts:** 174,940 cwts. **Soya bean:** 46,442 cwts. **Manioc:** 1,451,179 tons; **Sweet Potatoes:** 264,373 cwts.

"Under the Animal Husbandary programme the Ministry has set a target of collecting a daily average of 185,000 pints of milk from collection centres in 18 districts. It is planned to set up 3,383 more farms by the end of 1975 in addition to the existing 17,627 with 5 to 15, 16 to 25, 26 to 50 and over 50 cows in each unit.

The public should be thankful to the Daily Mirror for publishing digested extracts of the "working paper" by the highest bureaucrats in the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. It is a fact Productivity Committees have not yet been established in many areas, and where they have been they have hardly begun to function. Even if these targets had been wishfully entertained in mid-1974, they should have been consigned to the waste paper basket by the November of 1974. It will soon be apparent to everybody that the production figure of 79 million bushels for 1974 is a piece of bureaucratic fiction. With the PMB purchases stagnating at 21 million, this production figure should have been revised—because even the most cursory and superficial random sampling survey would have revealed

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led that cultivators had, in fact surrendered to the PMB more than 50 to 60 percent of the crop. If the official production figures are correct there should have been (with stocks still available) with the cultivators and traders (who have political immunities to hoard) a little less than 60 million bushels. If this were so, the off-ration price in the paddy producing areas (with all the restrictions on transport) would have been far less than it was during the year—and what it is now.

**TOTAL AND COMPLETE IGNORANCE** of the real conditions in the rural areas, coupled with politically-oriented determination to hide harsh realities and present a rosy picture, make our bureaucrats what they are. On the bogus statistics of paddy production for 1974 and the expectations for 1975, the Government, according to press reports, has plans to import 400,000 tons of rice in 1975. Before the middle of the year, it will be realised that this amount will be grossly inadequate if a rice (and food) famine is to be averted in the country.

It is pointless arguing about this at the moment. Our bureaucrats seem happy to continue digging the graves of the present system. Karl Marx had correctly anticipated that each system produces its own grave-diggers and there cannot be the slightest doubt that our bureaucrats—old and the new—will make a mockery of the best-conceived plans of the Government.

On the basis of bogus anticipations, Government has obviously been persuaded that 400,000 tons would meet the needs of the country in 1975. Sixty thousand tons (or is it only 50,000 tons?) has been bought from Thailand. Pakistan is expected to sell thirty thousand tons, and if three hundred thousand tons can be bought from China—then our bureaucrats are satisfied that everything will be hunky-dory.

It is time that Ministers and politicians (including Political Authorities) find a way of getting at the realities of the situation on the agricultural front. If they continue to depend on the bureaucrats who have served them ill for the last four and a half years, they will have only themselves

to blame for what will happen in Sri Lanka in 1975, 1976 and 1977.

When famine conditions become a reality—as it can easily happen—then people will not be satisfied with explanations based on arm-chair theorising about global inflation, international distress and the failure of the monsoons. The common people will feel that the realities of global inflation had been known for a long time to enable the government to take remedial measures and that proper measures should have adopted to meet the vagaries of the weather—and if the famine could not be prevented it will be held to be a man-made famine, made by the short-sightedness of our bureaucrats in whom our politicians have placed blind faith.

A new **CRASH PROGRAMME** has been proclaimed with a fanfare of trumpets. We can only hope that this attempt to grow more food—not merely rice—will succeed. It can succeed—if we do not allow the bureaucrats to fool us and our pundits from going round in circles chasing doctrinaire theories to reach the mirage of a Revolution through the food production campaign. There is an unfortunate belief among ruling politicians and their bureaucrats that food crops can only be produced by UF supporters—and that food crops produced by UNPers, FPeres and others who are not loyalists of the UF should be discouraged because it would undermine the Revolution. This is an madness must end.

### It Wouldn't Do Today

The holiday season in Britain is ending, the sea resorts are becoming deserted, the press is summing up the results of the season. The "Daily Mail" has taken a look into history and writes that back in 1750 doctors recommended sea water, and not only to swim in. Dr. Richard Russell of Brighton then advised Englishmen to drink a pint of sea water every morning at five. But, the "Daily Mail" commentator adds with regret, sea water was much cleaner in those days.

## INTERNATIONAL-AFFAIRS BY ARIEL

### Kissinger Diplomacy— and India, China and Malaysia

THOUGH THE ASSASSINATION of Mishra has thrown the domestic politics of India into new turmoil, there is no doubt that in international relations India has begun to play a significant role. And there are good reasons, according to observers to suggest that there is fresh thinking in India regarding US policy in Asia.

Kissinger's recent visit to India is a milestone of sorts in the development of U.S.—Indian relations. The three-day talks in Delhi could by no means, once and for all, put an end to all the fears and suspicions India feels as regards the U.S. Nevertheless Kissinger went out of the way to bring it home to the Indian leaders that Washington sees India as a major power in the world and is ready, if necessary to have, it reflected in its policy-making—all of which could hardly fail to flatter India's ambitions.

Delhi was only too pleased to learn that those at the head of the American foreign policy-making had recognized the Indian doctrine of non-alignment which John Foster Dulles had, at one time, labelled as "amoral". It was no less pleased to hear Kissinger say that the US was confident that India would live up to its promise not to develop nuclear armaments. And the fact that during his visit Kissinger should confirm his government's interest in a peaceful and equitable development of relations between the nations of the subcontinent, found a ready response in the country. The remaining in force of the embargo on American supplies of armaments, despite persistent requests on the part of Prime Minister Bhutto that it should be lifted, shows only too clear that Americans have given up the pro-Pakistan

bias in their policy in Hindustan. On top of it, speaking in Delhi, Kissinger publicly declared that in view of its size and position, India had "a special role to play in the affairs of South Asia and the whole world."

**THE IMPROVING OF THE U.S.—INDIAN RELATIONS** however, has the effect of weakening the hard-line positions the Chinese had built up recently. The Chinese had a great deal to sacrifice when in 1971 they invited Nixon to visit their country. In the first place, it was very much to the detriment of their prestige of "steady fighters against international imperialism" in the countries of the Third World. There were many among its former ideological allies who either directly or indirectly, condemned the Sino-American rapprochement. Yet Peking knew what it was doing when it made this step pursuing the geopolitical aims of strengthening its influence in Asia with the help of agreement with the United States regarding the spheres of influence in the continent.

It is on record that the Sino-American rapprochement was openly anti-Indian. Suffice it to recall the time it took place—the culmination of the liberation struggle of Bangladesh and the collapse of a united Pakistan as well as the including into the Nixon-Chou communique of 1972 of a provision regarding Kashmir's right to self-determination which caused sharp and hostile reaction in India.

In pursuance of this policy, it seemed to many observers that the Americans had then provided China with certain concessions as regards the division of the spheres of influence in Asia. The case of the Paracel islands early in 1974 was regarded as good evidence of this, with Washington deliberately refraining from making any protest when China staged a *fiat accompli* of an armed occupation of the islands in the South China Sea, practically under the jurisdiction of South Vietnam, despite the fact that an American adviser attached to the Saigon army and several dozens of South-Vietnamese allies of America lost their lives.

**THE SITUATION**, many observers state, have changed after Kissinger came to Delhi and did his utmost to persuade the Indian leaders

about Washington's friendly feelings to India. Bangladesh has long since been recognized by the United States, while the Kashmir issue is carefully avoided in all official American documents. U.S. response to the events in Sikkim is also something that has been carefully noted. It is no secret that Peking has long been cherishing the idea of including this Himalayan principality, alongside with Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian territories of Nagaland, Misoram and Arunachal-Pradesh, into the so-called Federation of Himalayan states under Chinese protective auspices. These plans suffered a severe blow when Sikkim joined India as an Associate State. That was why Chinese propaganda made so much ado about "an unconcealed aggression of Indian expansionists". Peking was openly hopeful of U.S. support in this issue. Washington, however, completely ignored the problem of Sikkim.

In addition to this the firm determination of the U.S. to stay in Taiwan has been yet another significant feature in the Sino-American relations. The Americans have never stopped supplying the Chiang Kai-shek regime with armament, including supersonic aircrafts and submarines. It is doubtful whether this armament could be used by Taiwan against any other adversary except mainland China. Taiwan servicemen are still being trained in the United States, and when recently several new Taiwan consulates have been opened in the U.S., it came as new evidence of increasing diplomatic contacts between Washington with Taiwan.

**SOME OBSERVERS** are inclined to explain this fact by President Ford's attitude as regards the Chinese problem which differs from that of President Nixon. In fact, Ford himself declared of his earlier disagreement to Nixon's visit to Peking and later had to accept the Sino-American detente post factum. All of which suggest that he is hardly likely to go any further than just maintaining the *status quo*.

Kissinger's visit to India is regarded as further evidence that the U.S. in its foreign policy is giving up both a pro-Pakistani and pro-Chinese bias. It might well be that due to the instability in

China's internal affairs and aggravation of the struggle for power between various factions there, a strong democratic India, even non-aligned, but not hostile to the U.S., much more corresponds to the long-term interests of American foreign policy in Asia than the totalitarian China, whose changes in policy are going to be hard to foresee in case Chairman Mao, now in his eighties, dies and new leaders come to power.

Though some see Sino-American relations in a perspective, there are no illusion in India about the growing stature of China's role in Asia. New Delhi is understandably concerned about the role China chooses to play in the subcontinent and South Asia as a whole. G. K. Reddy in a despatch from the Indian capital to his paper *Hindu* on December 16 sets out the background of the mid-December visit of a special emissary from Afghanistan to China. This is what he said: "The Chinese are now displaying a lot of sophistication in the conduct of their diplomacy in Asia in marked contrast with their past tactics of placating pliable countries with extravagant promises and exerting crude pressures on dissenting ones with brazen demonstrations of displeasure. Though the China experts in Delhi are not attaching any undue importance to Peking's new diplomatic style, they are nevertheless taking note of the subtle changes in the Chinese attitudes to the problems of the sub-continent as well as the South Asian region.

"The fact that China has not so far recognised Bangladesh is not inhibiting the Chinese diplomats in third countries including India from gushing with special warmth when they run into their Bangla counterparts at receptions. There are reports that the Chinese have been able to establish good contacts with Bangladesh through its representatives in places like Rangoon, Baghdad, New York, despite the absence of direct diplomatic relations. The Chinese have been privately projecting themselves as useful intermediaries for sorting out Bangladesh's problems with Pakistan. Similarly, Chinese diplomacy in Pakistan is acquiring an extra dimension by holding out the prospect of Peking using its good offices for reducing the

mounting tension, with Afghanistan. The recent visit to Peking of Mr. Mohammed Naim, the right-hand man of President Daud of Afghanistan was, arranged at relatively short notice at the instance of the new Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Chiao Kuan-hua, soon after he assumed office. The Pakistan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Mr. Aziz Ahmed was asked to pay a visit to Peking on his way back from Tokyo to be told of the outcome of the talks the Chinese leaders had with Mr. Naim on Pak-Afghan relations."

Reddy reflects the constant attention New Delhi pays to Chinese intentions with regard to the normalisation of relations with India, and Reddy's despatch reveals current Indian thinking on the subject. "But the Chinese continue to maintain their policy of hostility towards India, without indulging in any fresh provocations other than the abuses that are being heaped over the Sikkim issue. The Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu is still stirring up anti-Indian feelings in the kingdom, besides attempting to establish contacts with subversive elements in Sikkim and Bhutan. At the same time it has been refraining from extending its covert assistance to the Naga and Mizo insurgents to overt political support for their proclaimed intention of breaking away from the Indian Union."

"The overall picture that is emerging of the latest Chinese attempts to consolidate their influence in the sub-continent is that on the one hand they are trying to cultivate Bangladesh and act as a conduit for improving its relations with Pakistan, and on the other hand they are manoeuvring to increase Pakistan's dependence on China by enlarging the scope of its support as a supplier of arms to a possible mediator in the settlement of its disputes with Afghanistan. The obvious strategy of Peking is to strengthen its relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, before negotiating with India for normalisation."

IN A FURTHER DESPATCH on December 19, Reddy had some interesting comments to make on the results of the Afghan mission to Peking—so far as India has been able to ascertain the trend of dis-

cussions. This is how Reddy summed up the situation. "The discussions that the Afghan President's special emissary, Mr. Mohammed Naim, had with the Chinese leaders in Peking on the problems of the South Asian region do not seem to have held out any fresh hope of any early change in China's attitude towards India, according to knowledgeable sources here. This was quite evident from the talks that the Afghan diplomat had in Delhi to-day with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, on his way back to Kabul from his trip to China and Japan."

"Though there is no firm indication yet whether he had brought any message from Peking, the External Affairs Minister appears to be proceeding on the assumption that what the Chinese leaders might have told Mr. Naim about their desire for better relations with all countries of the region including India cannot be very different from what they have been telling the other visiting foreign dignitaries about it. So there is no excitement at all in Delhi over the reported assessment of Mr. Naim that China is no longer averse to the idea of Sino-Indian normalisation."

"As a sign of the new maturity in the conduct of India's foreign relations, the policy-makers in Delhi are now inclined to believe that, when the Chinese feel that the time is ripe for commencing the process of normalisation, they would rather talk to India directly than send message through third countries like Afghanistan. So even if Mr. Naim has come with some sort of hint from Peking, the Indian response will depend on how it is worded, whether it is any different from the platitudinous phraseology of the past. The stand that India is taking is that, since it has already done the necessary soundings from its side, it is now China's turn to indicate its response more specifically to the suggestions made and renewed from time to time for a progressive normalisation of relations."

But Reddy's interpretative comments are even more interesting: "So from the little bits of information that are available about to-day's talks, it seems that Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Chavan were more

interested in Mr. Naim's impressions of the present mood of the Chinese leaders, their proclivities and predilections, than in his interpretation of Peking's intentions and attitudes. It is not easy to comprehend at what stage China would be prepared to give up its doctrine of permanent revolution that places countries like India in the category of permanent enemies cast in the role of an expansionist power or a satellite of the Soviet Union."

"As a first cousin and a close confidant of President Daud, Mr. Naim has been functioning as the de facto foreign Minister wielding considerable influence in the conduct of Afghanistan's foreign relations. A veteran diplomat who has served his country with great distinction, he has been the chief architect of the Afghan policy of cultivating China without prejudice to his country's special relationships with the Soviet Union. It was against this background that China invited him to pay a visit to Peking presumably to satisfy itself that, as a result of its strained relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan was not tilting too much towards India and the Soviet Union."

"Mr. Naim met Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi before he went to Peking in response to the Chinese invitation. He was presumably briefed by her about India's latest thinking on the possibilities of Sino-Indian rapprochement, so that he could bear the Indian position in mind while discussing the problems of the region. The Chinese, in turn, seem to have spoken to him about their own approach to Sino-Indian normalisation. In this kind of general exchanges on matters concerning other nations, it is not customary for any country, least of all for a highly arrogant power like China, to spell out its policies precisely and reveal its strategy in advance. The Chinese were more interested in discussing Pak-Afghan problems with Mr. Naim than in using him as an intermediary for breaking the ice with India, which they can very well do direct without resorting to any devious procedures."

"The Afghan President's special emissary and the Deputy Foreign Minister who accompanied him to Peking on his visit arrived in Delhi last night. They met the



Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister this morning at Parliament House and later lunched with Mrs. Gandhi before leaving for Kabul this afternoon. It was indicated to Mr. Naim and his colleague that in retaining its options to deal with the problem of Sino-Indian normalisation in the manner that it thinks fit in the overall context of the Chinese attitudes to the sub-continental situation. India was not in any way belittling their assessment that Peking was interested in re-establishing some sort of working relationship with it. And the Indian leaders did not want them to leave with the feeling that they were being unduly suspicious of the Chinese motives in displaying greater circumspection."

**WHILE ONE CAN PAY DUE HEED** to Reddy's observations about Sino-Indian relations as viewed from standpoint of Delhi in his observations about Chinese policies in Southeast Asia do not seem to tally with comments that have emanated from countries like Malaysia. This is what Reddy had stated in the course of his December 16 despatch:

"An even more interesting development is that China is no longer exploiting the Chinese communities in South-East Asian countries for political purposes to browbeat the local Governments. It is on the other hand, going out of the way to cultivate even avowedly anti-communist ones like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Burma and even the Philippines. Its policy is to prevent at all costs the emergence of any identity of interest between the two super powers in South Asia in the course of settling the lingering Indo-China conflicts."

Reports in Malaysian papers (highly censored) and from reports published in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in Hongkong it was clear, that the University Student demonstrations which had rocked Kuala Lumpur on December 3 and 4, and also in the northern towns of Ipoh and Penang, have begun to arouse grave US suspicions that the Malaysian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) had begun a new offensive on a legal front. The MCP—including its splinter groups—are pro-Peking in their politics

and Marxist (Maoist) orientation and though it had been dormant for some time it was known to have a great deal of strength in its jungle hideouts. It still operated a Radio Station (which some allege was situated in China; whilst others state that it was in the jungles of the Thai-Malaysian border). The MCP is still mainly composed of local Chinese though in some States it is said that it has some Malay supporters.

The current student outburst is really MCP-inspired political demonstration after Malaysia opened diplomatic relations with China. It is well known that the Chinese in Malaysia are totally opposed to the policy of "malaysiaisation" which is undoubtedly discriminatory of Chinese and non-Malay interests in that country. The Chinese wing of the ruling UMNO coalition has not been able to stem the tide of Malaysiaisation or indigenisation, and the MCP now seems to have upon itself to secure some relief.

But the current student demonstrations have not focussed attention on the "Malaysiaisation" policy, but on problems of rural poverty, high prices, inflation and low prices for rubber to the small producers, etc. etc., including a demand for a *gantang* (8 lbs) of rice at controlled prices.

The demonstration assumed a widespread character and the Police had to adopt stern measures to break them up. Riots followed in some areas. Through police action, the authorities were able to contain the demonstrations and troubles to the campuses. The local correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27/12/74, reported that "the University of Malaya Chinese Language Society (CLS), one of the student groups involved in the present unrest, is, according to the Government, being controlled by the clandestine Malayan Communist Party (MCP). This accusation came as the confrontation with the Government entered its third week, when the students themselves decided to return home and the university vice-chancellor, Prof. Ungku Aziz, warned that all those who did not sit for the examinations, some of which began two weeks ago, would automatically be failed...."

Many students had boycotted the examinations, and whilst the confrontation proliferated into many sectors, "the Government's accusation that the CLS was a 'front vehicle' within the campus for the MCP came after the seizure of a large quantity of documents from a house occupied by several members of the Society's committee. But a close scrutiny of the material indicated that the connection, for the moment, remains superficial...."

It is not clear how the confrontation will end. The Government has arrested and detained a large number of student leaders, but alone is not likely to resolve the problem. Tun Abdul Razak is said to have second thoughts about the assurances he had received about non-interference he had received in Peking but it can be argued that the MCP and the student leaders had acted on their own. Premier Razak, it is said, had insisted on establishing diplomatic relations with China against the views of other ASEAN countries, and today there is fresh re-thinking in all those countries.

### Canine Holiday Camp

A holiday camp for dogs has been opened 240 kilometres from New York. The canines are accommodated in special cabins. They are officially called "campers" and their owners—"parents." They are given the food they are accustomed to, and have a swimming pool, two promenades and a training ground at their disposal. The "parents" of the "campers" spending more than a week at the camp receive postcards with the imprints of their paws and the camp management's report on their health and conduct. A week's stay in camp costs \$ 40. A special fee is charged for training. For an extra dollar a day the "camper" is allowed to sleep in the main building—next to his trainer's bed.

## CHRONICLE—SRI LANKA

## DECEMBER 10—16

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA COMPILED FROM  
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10:** According to the *Daily News*, over 5000 undergraduates and staff of the Colombo and Vidyalkara Campuses of the University of Sri Lanka were locked out yesterday; they are likely to remain locked out today until the University Board of Governors decides on what action should be taken: the keys to the Campuses are believed to be in the hands of a section of undergraduates who are demanding an assurance of teaching jobs and graduate scales of salary after graduation. According to the *Daily News*, a Supreme Court Judge is likely to be appointed as special inquirer into last Wednesday's air crash at Maskeliya, according to high government sources: a decision is expected to be made by the Ministers at their meeting tomorrow: the remains of the three DC 8 air crash victims will be removed tomorrow for symbolic burials at three centres in Indonesia from where most of the 191 dead began their journey to Mecca last week. The by-election for the Katana seat in the National State Assembly has been fixed for January 8, 1975: seven candidates submitted their nomination papers for the by-election yesterday when nominations were accepted in the Colombo Kachcheri: Mr. Jeremius Fernando (SLFP), Mr. Wijayapala Mendis (UNP), Mr. D. C. Senadhipathy (MEP) and four other independent candidates will be in the fray. According to the *Daily Mirror*, police and armed services personnel are now speculating whether the bundle of magnetic tapes handed over by a person to the Sri Lanka Navy is the magnetic tape contained in the 'Black-Box'—the flight recorder of the ill-fated DC-8 air craft.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11:** According to the *Daily News*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike has now mooted a proposal to establish an 'Asian Identity' and in canvassing support for it: this has been told at a press conference held yesterday by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshman Jayakody: Mr. Jayakody said that her proposal, which is a significant development in foreign policy is for the identification of an Asian community, with geographic cultural, economic and social ties. According to the *Daily News*, the Planning Committee of the Board of Governors of the University of Sri Lanka yesterday asked the protesting students to hand over the keys of the two Campuses (Colombo and Vidyalkara) before further negotiations. The Maskeliya area has been cordoned off by the Police this morning as a combined Police and Army search party began a massive hunt for the 'black box' of the DC 8 plane which crashed at Maskeliya last Wednesday: the Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. Milton Aponso, will conduct the investigation into the DC 8 air disaster, the Ministry of Transport announced yesterday. Justice Minister, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, yesterday denied in the National State Assembly that he had asked the MPs to have a close check on the activities of the Savodaya Movement in their areas. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the visiting Australian Premier, Mr. Gough Whitlam

will have discussions with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, about problems of non-alignment, Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposals, Portuguese, colonies trade including bi-lateral trade relations and tea trade etc. There will be a special exposition of the Sacred Tooth Relic from December 20 to 29 at Dalada Maligawa Kandy: this exposition is being held after a lapse of ten years.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12:** According to the *Daily News*, employees of public corporations will this year receive an outright payment as a bonus and not a recoverable advance as paid in earlier years: as an additional bonanza the recoverable advances they received since 1970 will be written off, and considered as outright grants. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister, of Public Administration, Local Government, Home Affairs and Justice, said in the National State Assembly yesterday that his invitation to the Federal Party to come down to the South and have a dialogue with the Sinhala people was not a political ploy but a serious plea. The hunt for clues in the DC 8 disaster area at Maskeliya began yesterday with the preliminary blocking out of the most likely sectors which would have to be fine-combed. The Acting Minister of Education, Mr. B. Y. Tudawe, yesterday told a deputation of undergraduates of Colombo and Vidyalkara Campuses that there should be no negotiations on the current dispute until they hand over the keys of the two campuses and call off the protest. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party Youth League has told a youth meeting yesterday that a Youth Parliament elected by the youths and named the National Youth Assembly to reflect their feelings and ideas and harness their talents for National development must be established in the country. The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries which represents the majority of industries in a letter to the Prime Minister has said that if certain tax proposals in the Budget are implemented, the private industrial sector will be crippled and the country will suffer.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13:** The Colombo and Vidyalkara campuses of the University of Sri Lanka were closed yesterday: according to the *Daily News*, this followed the failure of protesting undergraduates of both these campuses to comply with an ultimatum to hand over the keys and call off their protest before 9 a.m. yesterday: the undergraduates were ordered to quit the premises by noon yesterday. According to the *Daily Mirror*, a search party of the Army yesterday detected the smashed outer covering of the flight recorder (Black Box) of the ill-fated DC 8 airliner: however the authorities found nothing inside the box as it was badly damaged: it was badly smashed up and twisted. Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance told the National State Assembly yesterday that cultivation loans to farmers would be channelled through the banks in future: the banks would take the necessary precautions and guarantees in issuing loans. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the slaughter of cattle and the wholesale distribution of beef is to be done by the Livestock Department Board: retail sale of beef by private butchers will continue as at present: however they will have to sell the beef at the maximum retail prices fixed by the Livestock Board. According to the *Daily News*, the establishment of a second refinery to produce 5 million

trans for export is one of several projects the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation expects to undertake shortly; meanwhile the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs Mr. T. B. Subasinghe told the National State Assembly yesterday that by judging from what scientists had told him and from the flood of applications now being received from various foreign companies for drilling oil, he is satisfied there is oil at Pesalai.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14:** The Minister of Transport Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, while expressing his sorrow over the recent DC 8 disaster regretted very much the speech made by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, which the Minister said might have the effect of prejudicing the inquiry that was being held into the air crash: Mr. Goonewardene was replying to the debate on the votes of his Ministry and making specific reference to the comments made earlier by the leader of the Opposition who called for the appointment of a Select Committee of Parliament to probe the Civil Aviation Department. According to the *Daily News*, the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade will next week gazette the list of exemptions given to companies under the Companies (Special) Provisions Act: the direction of exemptions under the law will permit companies to conduct their business without incorporating in Sri Lanka. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the scheme of issuing annual revenue licences for motor vehicles will continue: the Government has now abandoned the proposal to abolish the annual licensing scheme and increase the price of petrol by 30 cents. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the LSSP plans to hold as many as 80 meetings tomorrow in various towns of the country for its members and youth leaguers where leaders will explain to them the program of the party and how it could be implemented in the present context. The Government Medical Officers' Association in a statement issued yesterday has called on the Government to implement the report the Cabinet Sub Committee has made on 'brain drain'. The Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Gough Whitlam, will arrive this evening on a days visit.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15:** According to the *Sunday Times*, Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, is understood to have been recommended by several countries for the Nobel Prize for Peace for this year: these countries have been deeply impressed by her efforts to get the Indian Ocean declared a Peace Zone, and the proposal to establish an International Fertilizer Fund, to help the agriculture in the developing countries: these countries believe that the two moves could do much to ease international tension and pave the way for peace. According to the *Sunday Observer*, this year's Christmas, promises to be very austere with the prices of food items and clothing shooting beyond the reach of the average wage earner: since last Christmas the prices of food items such as beef, chicken, pork, sugar, flour, butter, eggs and most of the other essential items had been recording a steady increase resulting in an average increase of over 100 per cent. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, received the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Gough Whitlam, at the Bandaranaike International Airport yesterday evening: according to a *Reuter* report about 100 spectators booed and jeered the Australian Premier shouting 'Don't Come back' when he left the Canberra Airport on a 14 nation tour. According to the *Sunday Times*,

a large number of gem dealers from abroad are expected to arrive in Sri Lanka for what will be the biggest gem show of the decade: this show takes place at Galle Face Hotel from January 6 to 11. The Federal Party celebrates its silver jubilee on December 18 and the celebrations in Colombo will be held at the Ramakrishna Hall Wellawatte in which the President of the Party Mr. A. Amirthalingam will preside.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16:** According to the *Daily News*, an assurance of an increased Australian gift of 30,000 metric tons of wheat and more aid for the development of Sri Lanka's agriculture and livestock in addition to Colombo Plan aid was given by Australia's Prime Minister, Mr. Gough Whitlam, when he met Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike on Saturday night for talks on matters of mutual interest: the donation of wheat is a substantial increase over the 18,000 tons of wheat given to Sri Lanka in the previous year: speaking at a press conference the Australian Premier said that the 1976 summit of non-aligned nations being held in Sri Lanka was a fitting tribute to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's stature in the world: the Australian Premier left the island last evening by a special plane. According to the *Daily Mirror*, following the drop in price of sugar at the London Market by a further £ 100 per ton, the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade has decided to call for tenders for the purchase of 6000 tons of sugar. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles will commence issuing revenue licences of motor vehicles for 1975 today. According to the *Daily Mirror*, preparations to ensure that Sri Lanka's ports will not miss any of the business that is likely to come their way after the Suez Canal is reopened are now being given top priority by the Shipping Ministry: at Trincomalee two alongside berths are being built to receive extra vessels because the Ministry expects the bulk of the trans-shipment carrying vessels and passenger liners to call at Sri Lanka.

## CHRONICLE—THE WORLD

# DECEMBER 10—16

A DIARY OF WORLD EVENTS

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10:** The Greeks have decisively decided to do away with their 144-year old monarchy: this blasts the hope of 34-year old King Constantine—living abroad since his abortive counter-coup to overthrow the Military regime in December 1967. "The Licence Scandal" in the Indian Parliament has snowballed with the resignation of an Opposition Party leader, who said that Parliament is merely a rubber stamp for the ruling party: it revolved around signatures of Congress party members all but one alleged to have been forged on licence granting Pondichery firms the right to import certain profitable items. The entire Japanese Cabinet has resigned to pave the way for Premier Miki to name his team to govern Japan after Tanaka's resignation. Saudi Arabian oil Minister Yamani has arrived in London for critical talks with US oil companies over the future of their holdings in Saudi Arabia.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11:** A new crisis has developed in Cyprus: President Makarios who returned to the island last Saturday has 15 days to give his supporters a fresh mandate to negotiate with the Turkish-Greek Catholic Archbishop Hieronim Capucci has been convicted of gun running for Palestinian guerrillas and sentenced to 12 years rigorous imprisonment. The European Common Market Summit Conference has got off to a flying start with progress being made on inflation and ways of re-vitalising the economy. President Ford has stressed the importance of taking further steps towards peace in the Middle East, in talks with the Israeli Foreign Minister Allon. NATO's European members have announced a multi-million dollar plan to improve their fighting strength in the face what they call the constantly increasing military capability of the Warsaw Pact states.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12:** The European Common Market summit in Brussels reached full agreement on all the issues facing them, French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing said: the President said that the community heads of the governments had worked out accords on the principal problems of the community. A US ban on military aid to Turkey took effect yesterday: Dr. Kissinger has repeatedly said that arms embargo would prevent him from mediating in the dispute when he meets the Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers in Brussels. The Burmese government yesterday declared martial law in Rangoon and placed the city under curfew following widespread destruction and looting of property by what it called lawless elements. The Soviet Union announced it will be launching rockets into the Pacific Ocean between December 12 and 30 and warned ships and planes to stay out of the test areas during specified times.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13:** The Rhodesian Government has announced a ceasefire in the guerrilla war and the release of African political detainees, as a prelude to a constitutional conference. Sri Lanka Ambassador to the United Nations, Shirley Amerasinghe said at the Assembly on Wednesday that the Western Powers released the diplomatic equivalent of a MIRV against the majority rule in their attack on the third world members of the UN. The British Pound Sterling fell to its lowest level in recent years following a Saudi Arabian decision refusing to accept payment in pounds. Israeli jets attacked Palestine guerilla based near Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, military headquarters said. A high power Chinese scientists delegation led by Mr. Kuo Peishan, Chairman, of the Revolutionary Committee of the Institute of Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is currently paying a visit to Pakistan on an undisclosed but apparently important mission.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14:** The United States House of Representatives Judiciary Committee has okayed the nomination of Governor Nelson Rockefeller as Vice-President: the nomination must now be considered by the full House: approval is considered to be almost certain. The US House of Representatives yesterday approved legislation providing 18,100,000 dollars (about 7 million sterling) for construction of US military base on the British Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. The US Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger warned that a worsening-world economic crisis could lead to political unrest that would damage

the West's ability to defend itself. Ministers of the 13-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting countries (OPEC) yesterday set a new single price of \$ 10.46 per barrel of crude oil. Attorney-General William Saxbe has been named as the new U.S. Ambassador to India.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15:** Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mr. Ismail Fahmi said in Cairo yesterday that Israel must freeze its population and stop immigration for the next fifty years as a condition for peace in West Asia: he also said that Israel must compensate the Palestinians and pay war reparations to the Arabs "for its wars of aggression" in the past 26 years. The United Nations Security Council last night extended the stationing of the UN peace-keeping force in Cyprus for another six months. The Zambian President, Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, warned that armed struggle will inevitably follow if meaningful negotiations for a settlement in Rhodesia are impossible to continue. The Ministers of the 13-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) yesterday said that they would back "any initiative" towards establishing a dialogue between oil producing and consuming countries, and condemned any action aimed at a confrontation.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16:** President Ford has arrived in the French west Indian island of Martinique for his summit conference with President Giscard d'Estaing of France. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries had announced a further increase in the price of petroleum and said that the new prices will remain static for another 9 months. The United States will supply India with 800,000 tonnes of food grain under an agreement to be completed this week in Washington, according to the US Ambassador in India. Walter Lippmann, one of the leading figures of American journalism during the last half century, died in New York age 85.

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BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—16

## Getting Nowhere With the Establishment

By Herbert Keuneman

WHEN I SAY ESTABLISHMENT I do not so much mean the Establishment (personified) as the various departments of our Public 'Services'. Also the petty pashas, from Ministers as well as Chairmen, Directors or Managers down to peons (alright, give the latter their proper title *Karyala Bara Niladhari*: which so assuaged their febrile *amour propre* that its bestowal, together with the right to sit in a chair rather than on a bench, reconciled them to forego was it 10 other? far more tangible benefits in a triumphant short-sale of shadow for substance in was it 1957?) all those, I was saying, who staff them.

But maybe the *Karyala & c &c* were not sold all that short, after all. For the first thing a Ceylon Public Servant counts he gains on appointment to office is prestige. Not responsibility; nor even employment and an emolument commensurate; but *prestige*, like that conferred by one of the ancient *pata-bandi* titles: a public attestation of official approbation. His most unlikely concern would be with service! Why service, when the Government (or the People, especially now that they are held to be the same thing) has chosen him out to honour him above other men? No, he is the titled one, the entitled one, the officially privileged one; now at last his authority has been acknowledged, he is licensed to indulge that greatest of Ceylon pleasures: telling others what to do! In such circumstances, it is natural for him to look upon stipend or salary as a mere perquisite of office and count as his prerogative income whatever that office enables him to collect!

Thus I have often mused (without amusement) seeing politicians lord it over their patrons—save at campaign time—government 'servants' hector their employers, public officers await the bribe as a matter of course, and hospital

attendants refuse water to the dying because their compassion has not first been evoked by the honourific salutation of '*mahattaya*'.

Thus I have had infinitely the more occasion to muse since I became a villager; and never such concentrated musing of the sort as while my house was abuilding and I had to deal with the Establishment at various levels in getting it built.

The following is but a sampling of the kind of frustration I ran into persistently. It is a random and incomplete sampling and an involved one; one frustration often before upon another, although as far as practicable I shall submit my list under different heads.

WHEN I CAME TO EHETUWEWA in April 1972 there was still a hangover of criminality on the one hand and apprehension on the other from the lawlessness of the insurrection of a year ago. The environs of Ehetuwewa had been, in fact—and, some said, were still—one of the 'bad' regions. Certainly there were thefts—I early suffered one—and armed gang robberies. Yet, I needed from time to time considerable sums of money to meet my building commitments. I hesitated to keep anything over Rs. 50 in my all too vulnerable temporary quarters; but what else was there to do?

I first decided I would open an account at the People's Bank in Maho. But this was easier decided than done. I have never been to a bank that treated a would-be depositor less encouragingly. Courtously? Yes indeed. But encouragingly? You might have thought I was proposing not a new account but an overdraft!

I admit I may have made a bad impression to begin with.

I set off for Maho on the first Saturday after my arrival. I aimed to catch the 7.45 a.m. bus, which would have got me there as the bank opened; but on reaching its overnight parking point at 7.40 (radio time) I found the bus vanishing round the first bend in the road. I was consoled by being assured by passers-by that the next bus would get me to Maho at 10.30, but it did not; it got me there at 10.40, ten minutes to closing time, and what with my troublesome heart I was ushered into the Manager's room white-lipped and panting

He could have thought it was excitement—and I was a (slightly elderly) insurgent planning a bank-robbery.

I asked could I come in on Monday next week and open a new account with a deposit of Rs. 5,000. This seemed to convince the Manager that I must be planning nothing so simple as a hold-up, and he replied cautiously (but courteously) that I must be 'investigated'. This was a new gambit for me—I had heard of investigating a man who asks for money but hardly of one who offers it—and I counted myself fortunate to be allowed to leave, though still quite uninvestigated, with a clutch of forms to be filled in to take away with me. I offered to fill them in on the spot; but this apparently was being altogether too eager. Back I went with my Rs. 5,000 certain that everybody in the bus knew I carried it and suspicious as a Bank Manager that every fellow passenger not actually decrepit might be a mugger.

I HESITATED about going through with this farce; nevertheless I sent Nesan with the bank paper and promised a certified cheque should the papers be approved. They were not approved. On the contrary, they were returned corrected all over in red ink like a not-very-bright child's school exercise. (a) I had not dated my application—it said I was concurrently making a deposit and, in fact I was not—and (b) I had signed two specimen signatures. This I had considered customary—at least, it was in the two banks that somehow share my miniscule income between them—but evidently the People's Bank expects you to commit yourself to one; and the natural reaction is: 'Whatever happens if my signature on an urgent cheque deviates in the slightest from this single prototype?' Now I was getting suspicious.

So, I gave the whole thing a miss and wrote the Bank a rather sarcastic letter about the hardly insurmountable obstacles it had discovered: to which in due course (after, I suppose, I had been 'investigated' and found harmless) I received the following faintly peevish reply:

'OPENING OF A C/A. We shall be glad if you will call over and see the undersigned in regard to

the above noted as the contents of your letter is not understood by us.

Since some lack of understanding was mutual, I left it thus!

I am able—now—to look back on the comic side. But at the time it was a very real frustration, a genuine hardship. From day to day I required sums in cash that ranged from Rs. 10 or 15 to Rs. 2,000 or more; it depended on whether I was paying a couple of day labourers or for a consignment of timber from the State Corporation. It is true the villager seldom requires the larger sort of sum. But even he must often have conveniently to hand a couple of hundred rupees to purchase fertilizer or weedicide or hire a tractor to plough his field, and if he is not conscious of frustration in his situation it is nonetheless undeniably a hardship to him. Unfamiliar with, and hence distrustful of banks—I do not know a single individual in Ehetuwewa or any of the surrounding villages who can issue or will honour a cheque, no, not the richest *mudalali*—he still hides his cash amongst the clothes in a tin trunk under his bed. In a less lawless period the practice was well enough (if purely from the transactional point of view). But in current conditions, with guns confiscated only from more-or-less responsible owners, fathers of families and solid tillers of the soil, and left by default only in the hands of miscreants and delinquents, to guard your tin box may be quite literally to lay your life on the line. Even during the last year (with things—so they tell us—less chaotic) there were at least three armed gang-robberies in Ehetuwewa in which houses were plundered of every single thing of any value and the inhabitants escaped only because they were resigned to watching their goods and their hoarded money looted, without protest.

But it was not 'hoarded' money; it had been saved money and would be safe still had there been adequate provision for the owner to bank it with some responsible—and responsive—agency.

I ESTIMATE that there is probably around Rs. 10,000—Rs. 200 per family—in Galkadawala, the 'suburb' of Ehetuwewa in which I live, thus idle in hidey-holes.

Multiply this by all the heartland villages of the Island (those too unsophisticated, as yet, to boast banking facilities and the banking habit) and you come up with an impressive total. This total may well be considerably higher. It is when the cash hidden amongst his wife's saris reaches around the Rs. 500 mark that the villager begins to feel insupportably nervous and looks about for some means to dissipate it: he may buy a land sold extravagantly cheap by someone whose need for ready cash (perhaps because he himself has not dared to keep sufficient by him) eclipses good sense; or give it out on usury; or purchase something he does not desperately want save as a fiduciary easier to protect, trace or identify than a currency note. Meanwhile, up to the limit of his enforced recklessness his savings lie idle. If Government wants village money to come into circulation, banks with ideals of service and practising good public relations instead of and a notorious reluctance to fork out! are the answer.

For me it was out of the question to fall back upon the one facility open (within limits) to the villager; the Post Office Savings Bank. It is also, usually, out of the question for the villager. He can only withdraw Rs. 50 'on demand'—the sum is Rs. 100 in Galkamuwa eight miles away IF he can satisfy the Post master or the Counter Clerk as to his identity, and that may cost money—and once he has made a withdrawal his passbook vanishes for a week or two be processed. As for making withdrawals markedly exceeding the on-demand sum, well, every villager knows what that entails. You might think he was asking for Government money, instead of his own money back! The difficulties are usually raised around the authenticity of his signature; but in fact it is possible to erect obstacles irremovable without a bribe at several other points in the process. (I must say that the People's Bank's insistence on a single specimen signature created in me the suspicion that to get payment out of that institution might not be much less difficult.

I was left with the one clumsy solution of issuing cheques to friends in Colombo or Kandy who would cash them and send me Money

Orders for their value; all right so long as I knew well beforehand the size of a bill; but to present a bill and wait is not the village baas' way. He is convinced I, too, have a tin trunk to which I shall make recourse if he presses and embarrasses me hard enough.

Did I say the Money Order method was all right? I must have been dreaming. It was not only that on sums totalling into the thousands the commission involved was far from negligible: it was also that the postal services being what they then were (though not as bad as they are now) one lived in a continual state of hope deferred. I need only quote a few extracts from my diary....

May 23: Sent S. cheque for Rs. 405 to be converted into MO for Rs. 400 (Ehetuwewa sub-PO limit).  
May 25: Letter from S. to say G.P.O. insists Ehetuwewa MO limit Rs. 200. Write back EXPRESS enclosing letter from Basnayake, local Post Master, quoting proof of Rs. 400 authorization.  
May 26: Telegram from S. to say MO posted.  
May 27: Wesak holiday.  
May 28: No MO; though official 'notice', Basnayake tells me, received by Ehetuwewa.  
May 29: Still no MO. Attempted send URGENT telegram S.; but telegram refused by Galkamuwa, clearing house for a very large circle of Sub-POs, because no staff to handle! Galkamuwa staff-though Hindu to a man—apparently still unrecovered from Wesak jollification.  
May 30: Still no MO.  
May 31: No MO. June 1: Still no MO. June 2: Still no MO.

I afterwards learnt that the original of my precious Money Order (for the convenience of using which service I had payed the Government Rs. 5/00) had been sent to some destination called ETHILLWewa, although the address Ehetuwewa had been in clear typescript; a misdirection often repeated. Even so, an immediate re-direction should have got it to me earlier than the ten days it actually took?

FOR NEWS  
BEHIND THE NEWS

read

**TRIBUNE**

regularly

SHAMBA

## A SECOND START?

— on the acre —

by ANATORY BUKOBA

December 1.

Sunday is this, and I write by daylight. *Major* is under the bed. He has been there at least two minutes, getting at some food for us to eat. There is no room elsewhere to keep it. Two weeks ago I dreaded the holiday. I had two new companions. This presence took up all my time, and I did not see how we could relax, nor I read. We had got into a rhythm of work, and I dreaded breaking it. In some respects I was right, because *Minor* did leave suddenly the following day. A day of inactivity seems to have settled him, K.O.'d him.

This time I positively looked forward to the rest and enjoyed it. A few days ago I read *Augustine* saying: how *Seneca*, the Roman philosopher, I think, and tutor to hero and statesman, deplored the Jewish habit of a Sabbath Day of rest, just as if the whole pagan world outside the Jewish race had no conception of a day's rest a week. *Seneca* deplored the day lost to work, and he said that if you multiplied these days by the weeks in a man's life, you would discover the appalling loss of working days. The Christians went on to copy the Jews with their Sundays, and the Moslem to copy the Christian with their Fridays. The Buddhist had their *poyas*, but that was once a month. The Jewish were right. This break, coming regularly as it does, stops men in their headlong rush through life, and in the cases of those races of men who take life with equanimity it brings them upright with a jolt. This life was never meant to be an end in itself, ending with death, and Sunday, from a practical point of view, is there to remind us of this.

*Major* is good with the three-year old. He rags her, and she likes it. Even with her babyish ways, it lets her be more of a child. She was certainly very noisy just now, but *Major* was cooking. He is still at it. All cooking is done on one's haunches here, squatting.

My colleague came back today. He says he has been in Kandy and Colombo visiting his other children. He came with pineapple, plantain and nuts. His presence here is certainly welcome. It was a great day, for, not a moment after he arrived, there came our housewife's mother and a son of hers, grown tall out of all recognition. They stayed awhile and I enjoyed it all. Both mother and son bathed in the river while they were here; she seems a most industrious woman, much heavier than her daughter. She handles the farm work where she is while her husband does a mason's work. It is still light enough to write by. I have written much more than I intended; it must be the hour of the day.

The puppy died today. Whether it died mad or not, I do not know. The others think it did. It was certainly a great biter until I went to bed. The last thing I did for it last night was to cover her body with two small pieces of cadjans, and she bit even that. Whether that was the action of a puppy or of a mad dog, I really would not know. Nearly all the puppies I have known bit, and they were not mad. The puppy may have died of exposure, but we could not take any chances. That she died, (without food or drink for two days) may be due to the damage she received to her paw when she worried, chased, her last man. She was a very good watch dog, but very thin.

December 2,

Once, when I woke, up last night, I thought it might be a winter's night in England, so raw was the cold. A Cumberlan lad, a Northern Counties rugger player, wrote to his mother from the Sudan, to say that he had never been so cold in his life, as on a certain night on the Nile. *Major* took ill suddenly at about 9 p.m. He soon had a raging temperature and a very high pulse rate. I woke our parish priest up for some anti malaria pills at 11 p.m., and I stepped across the river from rock to rock each time I crossed. The fever returned this evening for a short while. I got the far end of the *Shamba* cleared, at last, of what had been cut, and I started doing the same at the place, diagonally opposite to us in the old house, close to where

the shell of the new house is, its cadjans said to have been stolen. Readers will know I got my money back from one of the two culprits. He came today with an offer to sell me some new cadjans, but with *major* ill, we were unable to see about it. I set fire to three heaps, two of which I had made today. There are two older heaps out there with the vegetation in it still looking green. Near where the new house is to stand, I had to deal with thorn all matted up. It is still not finished, but with the prospect of the cadjans of the new house going on tomorrow, I had to burn the heap I had started, as it was too near the house. We are all very quiet here, *Major* replying to a letter from his mother, the housewife putting her baby to sleep, my colleague sitting quietly out of sight behind the angle of his bed, and I writing this. The baby, three-years old, has to be put to sleep, each time, with a drink of milk, village style, what ever the name they use for it in the newspapers. With all this, the housewife has certainly kept her figure and her good looks, perhaps because of it. No tinned, skimmed or powdered milk for us, nor eggs, either. We do not see meat, except the occasional wild boar, which I do not like and would gladly do without. It was Samuel Baker who put me off wild boar with his description of what they eat. He would not eat its meat for the same reason. I find the meat too hard anyway. Everybody is in bed now, except me.

We had a distinguished-looking visitor this evening, our neighbour, our new neighbour, whose son has been clearing the land, and whose husband I have seen occasionally. She crossed the river by the rocks, stepping into the water at one place. Something happened today that I have never seen happy before. A man from another religion interrupted a Mass. He just did not know better. When I spoke to him later, I found he could speak English very well, and he apologized. The less said about the matter the better. A *Kirala* has just flown across the *shamba* uttering its sharp cry. *Major* and the housewife are still talking, my colleague and the baby are asleep. *Major* has just related a ghost story, a woman he saw, a

well-known ghost in the area. He was not afraid, he says.

Where I was working last this evening, where Major had been clearing some days ago, I saw what fine paddy land we have in a corner of the *Shamba*. It will make an interesting landscape once it has been cleared. The housewife has just told us she has seen sambhur, *gona* she said, in this acre. I would not have believed her had I not seen one myself in broad daylight about a year ago. Wild boar are still around, or they were, not so long ago. I saw some jackals a few days ago, but not here. They were running about in the bush close beside me, and I had clear sight of one. My colleague has joined the conversation, but Major is wrapped up to sleep. He has to keep chiming in as the conversation is directed to him.

On my last page am I now, and I think I ought to finish it. Reading Augustine has made me think, and I am revolving in my mind the some question that I remember worried me fifteen years ago. What is this life all about? We read that some horrible things go on in Africa. When I was there myself I found life normal. It is like Hitler's gas chambers, and most people on the spot, in the neighbourhood, being unaware of them. Should we involve ourselves in other people's misfortunes or should we not? The housewife has got up to make tea, and the conversation is waxing strong; even major is more wide-awake. The conversation is on ghosts and devils. I had an uncle-in-law, who at eighty, and doctor though he was, and once the Superintendent of the General Hospital, who eighty, as I said, used to cook all the meals for his wife and any visitors who dropped in. He had a gas stove, and that is more easy than a wood fire. Christ is recorded as cooking fish on a wood fire. I think any leader of men must be able to cook. My uncle when a young man, travelled from England to America steerage, Ceylonese though he was. His nephew did so from Genoa to Alexandria. So much for random thoughts.

December 3,

Pretty well all the vegetation that has been cut has at last been put into heaps, and that by the evening. Most of it was thorn,

and the two heaps I made, were set on fire at dusk, or just before it, for the heaps have to be tended if everything in them is to be consumed by the fire, and this takes at least half an hour. I always finish by torchlight. A hundred cadjans we bought today, long ones, for Rs. 30/-, and we have put them under the family's bed. It was a tight fit. After his malaria, Major did not feel strong enough to work, or we would have made the new house today and may well have been sleeping there tonight. My legs felt like lead, and I realised I was very tired. I took a long time to walk to the post office, and although I did that and nothing else, except write two postcards, and inspite of the fact that I caught a bus back, Major remarked how long I had been away. There may have been a heat wave on the last two days, and the nights are as cold as the days are hot. Black clouds built themselves up at 4.00 p.m., but it all passed away with no rain.

This place will look a fine place when it is all cleared. All the ground will have to be gone over again to get rid of the thorns. In spite of its flat appearance when I first came, now that more of it has been cleared, I can see that the ground is really quite undulating, and one corner of the *Shamba* might be east African hill country in miniature, especially that near Mugana by Bukoba in Tanzania, and near Kasese, I think it is or *Kisorr* in Uganda on the Congo border.

There was a snake in the house tonight, a *mapila*, I was told, a big one, in the roof above my bed. It was attacked several times with a *vici katha* of all things, and it looks as if it escaped. It may yet be in the house. This started me thinking about the cadjans under the bed. I wondered if it was worth the risk of fire. Knowing how my heaps of vegetation go up so quickly, how they are a roaring furnace in second, it will not give the occupants of the house much of a chance, and, then, snakes and mice! I would rather have chanced the loss of the cadjans outside the house. As I shall not be here for a few days, I let the others decide. It is they who would have had to have checked on the cadjans during the night. They obviously preferred to sleep tight, without any

such worries. The way the roof was attacked over the snake, I would have thought it gave the cadjans no chance if it rained. Fortunately, the roof has a steep slope on this side of the house, and so it may be all right, old though the cadjans are.

Last night I was having difficulty finding things to write about. I mentioned cooking, but I forget half of what I wanted to say. I was saying that a good leader ought to be able to cook. In the little Flowers of St. Francis, one of the more simple-minded of the Brothers served up a really horrible dish consisting of pretty well everything edible in the kitchen. If reading is serving, then one must certainly be able to cook. All the greater characters who have come to this *shamba* have cooked, and they liked doing it. Arjuna, the warrior-hero of that very great epic, the *Mahabharata*, elected to cook during the thirteen or fourteen years, I think they were, of his exile. It is yours truly who hates cooking and will not. That will have to be changed slowly. That rice is what everybody eats, makes it worse. I have known even Sinhalese lads fight shy of preparing rice for cooking. I have known rice served up with stones. Any quantity of rice in Ceylon, and even imported rice, I should think, contain stones. These have to be removed from the rice before it is cooked. To my mind, doing this is quite a performance, yet, there are people who can do this quickly and efficiently. Major is one of these. I think the housewife is another.

Well, I have done my stint, but I shall do a little more. One of the founder-Jesuits was Francis Xavier, a Basque, like the founder himself, Ignatius, and he spent quite some of his life in that part of India which faces Ceylon. His body, brought over from an island, where he died, near the Chinese mainland, has been in Goa, and it is periodically displayed for the reverence of Catholics. It must be exciting to see the body of a man who did as much as Francis Xavier, and who lived so long ago. His feast is today, and anybody, who goes to Goa by the 6th January next year, will be allowed to see his body. The conversation in this house has been going on non-stop while I have been writing.



If I had been able to listen, I may have learnt much about the state of Ceylon. That is education. That is what goes on in one's rooms at Oxford, and it is there that one's real education lies: not in the lecture halls.

Our three-year old has been in great form today. In fact, she usually is. Very occasionally she may go with her father and not with her mother. Today was the first time she elected to be without both. She elected to stay in the house, where I was while her mother carried sand from the river to the road. It is time that I stopped.

Up soon after 5.30 a.m. was I. The housewife was up first and in seconds, it seemed, had tea ready. I shaved on my way to the bus stop. In the middle of the river I shaved myself, half way across the stepping stones or rocks. Major helped see me across. The bus went while I was shaving. The next bus was in an hour and a half. Just before I caught it, my colleague came by, and he told me that major had just come in from doing some clearing in the far corner of the *shamba*, I presume where I was gathering up yesterday what had been cleared before. The resources I have left for the month will be finished, it looks like, by December 20. So, how will I bridge the gap till the end of the month? I shall just have to wait and see. Happy did I feel coming away from the *shamba* this time more than I have felt before. A sort of all is well with the world feeling. I am really feeling sleepy now, and I shall have to finish this tomorrow. The scrawl of the previous line is the spot where I actually fell asleep, and there goes another scrawl.

Major joined me three weeks ago. He came with *minor* who, stayed only a few days, but left saying he would come back after doing his examination in December. When *minor* left, I gave major several opportunities of returning home himself, because his presence put a curb on other activities of mine, such as travelling, and there was the question of my having to support him; and there was also the fact that I did not really know anything about major, and that I was having to take him solely on his word, and that if he was to be at all effective, for instance, while I was away, I would have to entrust

him with goods I could not afford to lose. Major insisted all along that his right place was on the *shamba*, and that he did not see how anything could be achieved, any progress made, by his going away. The presence of the family, especially on the days, the period, I would be away, would be an asset to him in some ways, a liability in others. If I was to make any progress at all with the *shamba*, and to justify even the writing of this record, I just had to take major at his face value. Then came the first test, when I was away five days, not travelling, but on some routine work elsewhere. I came back to find that he had done some work, and that the only loss were the cadjans of the new house, which because it was not finished, he had not been able to move into. It was thanks to Major in the first instance, to his straightforwardness, and good advice later, that I was able to initiate the steps that led at least to my recovering the money for the cost of the lost cadjans from the culprits. Then, after a little while, Major, fell ill. It was probably malaria, or that strange virus that had afflicted the housewife and her children for quite a

while. I worked away on my own and some of the cooking devolved on the housewife.

The loss of the cadjans, the circumstances in which they were lost, eventually led, just days before I left the *shamba* this second time, to a better understanding between the family and me. My colleague was always a good provider, when he did provide, and generous to a degree that I never was, except in the days of my affluence many years ago, in my youth, and generous when he could ill afford to be, as is typical with the really poor; but there were many days when he did not seem to provide at all, and it seemed to me, it was because of an inherent or chronic or constitutional laziness. His laziness may have been due to a sound philosophical approach to life, such as many of us have lost, because through all this, the family thrived, but not materially, but even, materially in some ways. If my luck holds good, which is another word for divine providence, I shall be able to say that I have made a second start with the *shamba*, with me a better man thanks to the interactions associates have on each other.

#### CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE

## Dr. Albert Schweitzer

born January 14, 1875  
died September 1965

*The Brith Centenary of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the Saint of Lambarene, Pioneer Medical Missionary, Great Human Being, Musician, Artist and "Reverencer of Life" fell on Thai Pongal Day. We cannot do better, in commemoration of such an occasion, than to quote in extenso from an article by Alec Robertson which appeared in the "Life Line" of April 1948, viz:*

The degradation of the meaning and value of words may cause us to regard with suspicion a written claim that a man is a great man, or a genius, until we are able by personal observation and experience to verify the claim; but, in writing this article, I recall that it was through the written word that I have come to look upon him as a man who can truly be called great, as well as a genius, and above all as an immensely inspiring force for all those who value the life of the spirit.

*And going on to quote the subject of his sketch he writes:*

This is the thing which I know—and which, if you labour faithfully—you shall know also—that in reverence is the chief joy and power of life; reverence, for what is pure and bright in your own youth; for what is true and tried in the age of others; for all that is gracious among the living—great among the dead—and marvellous, in the Powers that cannot die.

This quality of reverence towards a great composer and his art, I found, informed every page of Schweitzer's BACH; and it was with the deepest interest that I discovered later on, how Schweitzer came to formulate his own

ethic of reverence for life, which is the keynote of his being.

It was during a long journey in a tug-steamer upstream on the Ogowe River in West Africa "with the endless panorama, constantly unfolding, of life-in-death in tropical vegetation before my eyes, and in my mind's eye the endless panorama of life-in-death in the long history of mankind", that there suddenly flashed into his mind the simple phrase that, for him, "proved the key to unlock the door of all philosophy". It was "Reverence for Life." He subsequently wrote, "The ethic of Reverence for Life is the ethic of Jesus brought to philosophical expression, extended into cosmic form, conceived of as intellectual necessity."

*He subsequently traces the course of Schweitzer's long and distinguished life:*

Albert Schweitzer was born on January 14th, 1875, at Kayserburg in Upper Alsace, but Gunsbach in the Munster Valley became the home of his childhood and it was there, in 1927, that he built a guest-house for the people from all over Europe who wanted to come and see him. The eldest son of the local pastor, he was sent to school with the village boys: but, with that endearing simplicity which has always been a feature of his character, he realised that many of them in their own way, had as much in their heads as he had, and he disliked the knowledge that he was better provided for at home than they were.

Already his talent for music was becoming manifest and, which was more important, he felt aware of that deep sense of duty, even in the smallest matters, without which nothing of permanent value can be accomplished. He called it later, "THE great educative influence". Already, also, he had developed an enquiring mind, and at the age of eight he was wondering what, since they remained poor. The parents of Jesus did with the gifts of the Wise Men, and why these men never troubled themselves further about him.

Though Schweitzer's biographer (ALBERT SCHWEITZER, THE MAN AND HIS MIND by George Seaver) insists that his later sacrifice of his career was unsupported by any psychic mysti-

cism he was possessed, at this early age, of what Blake would have called 'double-vision', and could be utterly absorbed by the grain of sand or the wild-flower. In everyday life he had faults to conquer, a passionate temper and an eager disputatiousness, and he did conquer them. Saddened continually by the amount of misery he saw around him, both in the human and in the animal creation, he composed a touching prayer on behalf of all living creatures which he used to recite every morning. He came to the conclusion that though all life at the expense of other life, though the problem of evil in the world is insoluble, one could at least endeavour never to destroy life, not even that of the humblest wayside flower, unless it were unavoidable, and that one should try to help any living creature in distress.

Schweitzer was fortunate in his parents who 'trained for freedom' and did nothing to impede in him the growth of the twin graces of compassion and gratitude which were to lead him to the great decision of his life.

He entered Strasburg University at the age of eighteen reading theology and philosophy concurrently a competent scholar in classical Greek and Latin, and a gifted musician with a profound admiration for Bach and, strange as it may seem, Wagner.

In 1899, when he was 24, Schweitzer was offered a post as preacher at the church of St. Nicholas—preaching, he says, was a necessity of his being, though he has never conquered a feeling of shyness before a large audience—and he also lectured in his own university, accessible to all and beloved by all, both young and old.

Marked out for a successful career the thought came to him, one spring morning at his home in Gunsbach, "I must not accept this happiness as a matter of course, but must give something in exchange for it". He therefore resolved to devote his life to science and music until he was 30, and from thence onwards to undertake some sort of service to suffering humanity. And so in Paris, in 1905, Schweitzer began to put his great resolve into action. He had to bear many reproaches from his friends and acquaintances who were quite ready

to accept such a decision if they read of it in the New Testament, but were dismayed when someone they knew put it into practical effect, and quoted at him the parable of the talents. Undeterred by their reproaches Schweitzer prepared himself as a medical missionary to equatorial Africa, where doctors were urgently needed, and not content to be simply a practitioner, he qualified as a doctor in medicine, adding this degree to those he already held, or was to hold, in philosophy, music and theology. The incredible labours which this decision involved are summed up in his own phrase describing the seven years of work as a "continuous struggle with fatigue." And all this time he was preaching, playing the organ, and completing or writing two of his great theological books. Not only excellent health but grim determination also could have equipped him for these herculean tasks. In 1912, he married Helene Breslau, daughter of a noted Strasburg historian, who had collaborated with him in his literary work and was to prove the perfect helpmate in his medical labours.

Having made an offer to the Paris Missionary Society to serve, at his own expense, its mission on the Ogowe River, Schweitzer had now to overcome the objections of those who thought his beliefs unorthodox and dangerous but at last all kinds of objections, both theological and national, were overcome and he was ready to leave. He chose Africa, not because he had any particular interest in the negro, but because he had heard a call from the African jungle swamps which he could not choose but to obey. His purpose was not to 'save souls' but to take up the cause of 'the Brotherhood of those who are marked by suffering.' Nothing else counted beside this clear call which he felt so urgently compelled to answer. It was not a sentimental decision, it was not the decision of a man who, because he thought that Europe was unworthily living on its past and attached false value to 'progress', felt he could work better elsewhere; it was, for him, and he stresses the personal factor, simply a response to the command of Jesus which, as a true Christian, he must make. And for him Africa

has become the symbol of which the meaning is Reverence for Life.

On Good Friday of 1913 Schweitzer and his wife left Günsbach for Lambarene and on the journey upstream from Port Gentil he had his first glimpse, which he vividly describes, of the strange country into which he was journeying.

It is difficult to read without deep emotion the impact made upon such a reserved man by the conditions which he found—The need out here is terrible their pain is dreadful, and of the way in which he spared no effort on behalf of those who bore 'the Mark of Pain'. He had not only to be a doctor, surgeon, preacher, administrator, but also, with little help, to build himself the hospital that, though promised, had not materialised for lack of labour. But he set his hands to this task with the same care for detail that he gave to everything else.

His medical work, he tells us, took the more out of him, because he had not the robust temperament which can join detachment to skill. He could not look on suffering with equanimity, the natives were his friends.

The only recreation Schweitzer allowed himself in these early years was to play on the piano in the lunch hour and on Sunday afternoons. It was then he was able to recreate beauty and renew himself, amidst so much misery and in a climate which drains away the strength of the white man.

Three times since he went to Lambarene Schweitzer has returned to Europe and by means of lectures and recitals of Bach's organ music he has collected funds, of which he is always in need, for his hospital.

Dr. Schweitzer, an English reporter observed, does not disappoint those who see and hear him. He has never allowed himself to get used up or to lose touch with the common man: and imposing as are his intellectual attainments his true greatness lies in those qualities which he is able to share with the humblest: qualities which often go uncounoured and unsung in this noisy world. It is so easy, in writing about a man of the stature of Schweitzer, to leave behind a picture of great attainments, complete integrity and boundless self-sacrifice, without bringing alive at

all the human and lovable character his friends all declare him to be. 'If sainthood consists in making the good life attractive, Albert Schweitzer is a saint of our century. Yet his example does not battle our own lives. His ennobles us, who are made of the same human clay. His story is a living sermon on the brotherhood of man. It gives perspective to the sufferings of our time. I do not know of any man alive today of whom so just and moving a tribute could be written.

JEPHARIS

LETTER

University Admissions

This year's University Admissions results indicate that the selection has, again, been made on grounds other than merit, and the whole thing is tantamount to denial of University education to many really deserving students. There is already a good deal of frustration in the mind of the student population. The Jaffna Parent's Association views this mode of selections as a national harm impairing, chiefly, the efficiency of the administrative service in this country.

Our University Professors have openly expressed that candidates of 'poor quality' are sent into the University and that University education now in Sri Lanka, comparatively, is far below the standard of university education abroad.

University education is a national cause. The Jaffna Parent's Association considers racial discrimination in education as inimical to this cause. All candidates selected to the Vidhiyodaya and Vidyalkara campuses are Sinhalese students. In the Colombo Campus as against about 300 Sinhalese students only 38 Tamil students have been selected and in the Peradeniya Campus as against 447 Sinhalese students only 163 Tamil students have gained admission. In the one 'Tamil Campus' at Jaffna only 78 Tamil students have gained admission and the rest are Sinhalese.

Among these "Tamil students" many are Muslims. Year after year the number of Tamil students

selected is becoming less and less. This year's selection denies even communal quotas to Tamil youth which itself is discouraged by men of learning who stand for merit and purity in education.

According to reports, the Government is contemplating asking the Commission headed by Pieter Keuneman to consider all aspects of the University admissions, such as standardization, regional or communal quotas, etc. Whatever may be the evidence called by the Commission, it can reach only one conclusion: the adoption of the universally accepted educational principle that "Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."

In Britain and other countries education is free: Their universities are always open to all students on merit. In some of the British universities Welsh students, it is understood, are in the majority although they come from a minority community. Some of the best civil servants in Britain are Welsh and Scottish and yet the efficiency of the administrative service there is known to us as British and not as English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish.

The Government must, at least hereafter, ensure the enthronement of merit and efficiency both in education and administration. Any system that has no constructive policy and does not need to public opinion is bound to fail and cease to be benevolent.

S. Ponniah

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3.1.75.

Records

A new world record for roller coaster rides was recently set up in Pittsburgh (U.S.A.) by Jackson Armstrong. It took him 31 hours to cover 441 miles in 750 laps. Asked if he would ride a roller coaster again, he replied without hesitation: "No, not if I can help it."

# IS IT TRUE? Sherlock Holmes

## AICC Loans and The Land Take-Over

IS IT NOT TRUE that a large number of the estates which have been taken over under the Land Reform Law were mortgaged to the Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (AICC)? That the owners of these estates had been granted these long-term loans at comparatively low interests mainly to enable them to purchase these estates from non-Ceylonese owners—British, Indian and the like? That such loans had also been granted for a number of agricultural reasons like putting up a factory, improving the standards of production and productivity and even to pay off debts from private financiers? That these owners had paid the capital and interest due on these loans from the income of the estates in easy instalments? That with the Land Reform the whole system has come to a rude halt? That private companies and private owners have now been left with only 50 acres or less? That they are no longer able to pay the instalments they once did to liquidate the interest and the capital they had taken? That from the holdings they are left with it is inconceivable they will ever be able to pay the loans or the accumulating interest? That in theory it would be correct that the owners could pay for these loans from the compensation they would receive from the Government under the Land Reform Law? That it would perhaps take a very long time before the Bonds carrying an interest of 7% which the government hoped to issue as compensation, would materialise? That there are problems of survey and valuation that would take years? That in addition there are legal and legislative entanglements to overcome before these Bonds could be issued? That experts have now raised valid questions whether the Central Bank is statutorily entitled to issue such Bonds? That there is a further question whether (even if the

Central Bank is enabled to issue such Bonds) whether our Treasury is in a position to afford the payment of the huge sum that would accrue every year as interest? That the lands taken over amount to nearly 600,000 acres? That on a rough valuation the prices of these lands would have varied from Rs. 1000 an acre (for the poor lands) to Rs. 4000 an acre for the good tea, rubber and coconut lands? That some of the finest taken over would easily be valued at over Ps. 5000 an acre? That the lands thus taken over would cost the Government anything from Rs. 600 million to Rs. 2,400 to Rs. 2,500 million? That this would be a fair compensation—if there is a bona fide desire to pay compensation in terms of the Land Reform Law? That interest at 7% on the compensation which becomes payable on this new public debt would constitute a heavy drain on the public revenue? That apart from these fiscal considerations, the question we raised first was about the oustanding loans to the AICC? That all owners have now written to the AICC that they were willing to assign the Bonds (as and when issued) to the AICC in payment of the loans? That the owners have said that they would assign such part of the Bonds as would be sufficient to pay for the loans? That requests have been made to freeze the interest due as from the date of takeover? That nevertheless the AICC is entitled to forceclose on the part remaining in the hands of private owners for the debt and interest? That it would be interesting to see what the AICC will do?

IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE that the amount due to the AICC from estates and agricultural lands so taken over has not yet been revealed? That some of owners of these lands have also obtained Loans from other state lending

institutions like the Mortgage Bank, the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank? That the amount so owing to State institutions would come to a big total? That it would be interesting to obtain the statistics regarding the loans outstanding to all State lending institutions in respect of lands so taken over? That in theory it was said by the advocates of this kind of land take over that the new owners of these lands (the landless allottees, the Co-operatives, the Collective Farms and the State Farms) would pay off these debts and interest? That, as it is, the new owners do not seem to be either in a position or a mood to honour such debts? That in many cases the lands so taken over are in such a state of neglect already (overgrown with weeds and shrub) that it is inconceivable that these debts to the AICC and other state agencies would ever be paid? That it would be interesting to know how much the Government will lose on this account? That it would be unfair and wrong to expect the old owners to pay for the old debts without paying them the compensation under the Land Reform Law? That even if they only assigned the Bonds (on the basis that Bonds would some day be issued) it would become only a book-entry in the public accounts of the country? That such loans which were expected to be re-paid from the produce of the land will henceforth have to be paid from the revenue of the country—until the new owners are able to bring these lands to yield as much income as before? That Land Reform without compensation is one thing but the kind of Land Reform Sri Lanka had adopted has already become a double burden on the state—with the additional problems that the income and other taxes that the old owners had paid into the Treasury are not being paid anymore because the new owners would no doubt take many many years before they will be able to make such payments if they ever succeed in bringing these lands back to the same levels of production and productivity as before the takeover? That one has only to drive through the coconut, rubber and tea lands so taken over to realise that neglect and ruin has come to these lands?