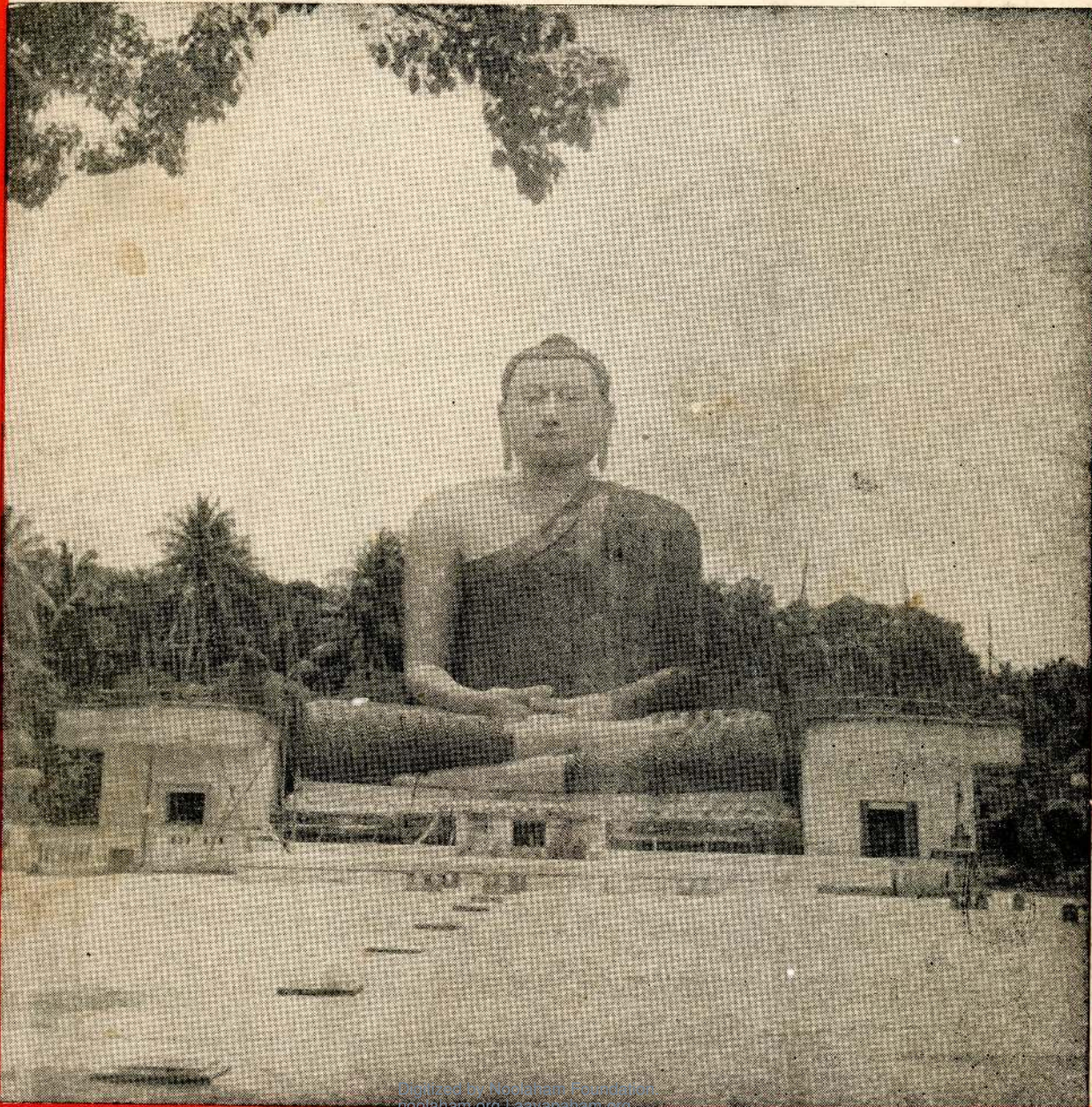


TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

THE PICTURE ON THE COVER this week is symbolic of Posa which falls next week and reflects the spirit of the Kapilavastu Relics from India which are being venerated all over the island. The Buddha is a world teacher who preached the equality of man in the context of tolerance, understanding, kindness and compassion. Domination, exploitation and discrimination, on the one hand, and racialism, communalism and casteism, on the other, are foreign to Buddha's *dhamma*. For some years in the recent past in Sri Lanka, many people, especially in the socio-political arena, had forgotten these virtues and the country was plunged into unbuddhistic confrontations and conflicts between races, classes and groups who should really have co-operated to build a better, richer and more harmonious country on the basis of unity, equality and justice. But, in spite of many exhortations to the contrary, the country was driven in the name of language, race and religion to the brink where Sovereignty and Identity was under threat of extinction by the blind folly and stupid actions of adherents of fissiparous, divisive and sectarian trends contending for political power. However, the results of the July 1977 general elections brought a change. A new and powerful force emerged which sought to undo the harm done to Sri Lanka and also to create an ideal state in terms of the liberal humanitarian and democratic concepts popularised by J. R. Jayawardene through the Manifesto of the United National Party. Some of the highest of the high dignitaries of the Buddhist Sangha also fearlessly declared, for the first time in living memory, that true Buddhism must accord equality and justice to all races, languages and religions in this country. This set in motion a chain reaction which led to the abandoning of unfortunate policies like standardisation, to the repealing of unsavoury laws like the Criminal Justice Commission Act and to ending of practices that had reduced the minorities to the level of second and third class citizens. Whilst there can be very serious differences of opinion on the correctness and justifiability of many things being done on the economic front, there cannot be the slightest dispute about the universal validity of what has generally been referred to as the Third Amendment. The changes are expected to create a society in which the communal and connected disputes will be minimised or even eliminated. But, it has not been easy to reach what has been achieved. Blind fanaticism and monomaniacal ego-centrism of extremist groups in the two major communities, which have so thrived on conflicts that stem from discrimination, exploitation and desire for domination, have resorted to every possible form of action to prevent these healthy developments. These dangerous forces have triggered communal holocausts, they have poisoned the political atmosphere and they have resorted to violence and terrorism, in fact everything possible to prevent J. R. Jayawardene's—there is no doubt that the credit must go to him—attempt to re-structure and re-fashion a Sri Lanka that will be acceptable to right-thinking people in all communities. The high principles enshrined in the Third Amendment or the New Constitution while not being the Ultimate or the Absolute marks the beginning of a great adventure in nation building. Some want the new constitutional changes termed the Third Amendment and lament the passing away of the pompous-sounding Republican Constitution of 1972. Readers will recall that when this Constitution was adopted in 1972, *Tribune* had declared (when some of its sponsors had claimed it would last a thousand years — like Hitler's boast about his Reich) that with all its infirmities, the Republican Constitution would not last a thousand days. In actual fact it has lasted about 2000 days.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK**We've All The Money
We Want, But.....?**

Colombo, June 10.

At the meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group on Tuesday, June 6, the President had stated that the government was making arrangements to distribute essential food items on the ration book and the token card. The reason for this was set out in the communique issued about the meeting. It stated:

"The Government has spent about Rs. 1,200 million by way of wage increases and welfare services to the people. The increase of jobs and the increase in the spending capacity has resulted in the increase of market prices. The need for the production of adequate goods has become a great necessity. The scarcity of poultry and other animal food and the consequent closure of farms has resulted in a shortage of meat. The prices too have gone up. As a result the people have been compelled to eat fish. Therefore there is a scarcity of fish and the prices have gone up. In 1978/79 about four lakhs will get employment under the Mahaweli Project."

The President, according to the communique had also mentioned: "...the doors are now open for a free economy in this country. With 400,000 persons being absorbed to the Mahaweli Scheme in the near future, large factories and industries coming up in the Free Trade Zone, and the development of our agriculture based on the country's cultural tradition he hoped the country would enter into a new era."

What this amounts to is that the country will soon be in the grip of an inflationary spiral that will

gather momentum like a tornado which, as everybody knows, cannot be controlled by human agencies. It wreaks its fury until its force is spent.

This inflation has no doubt been caused by the pumping in of money into the Sri Lanka economy on a staggeringly massive scale made possible by the grants, aid, loans and other handouts from the rich countries. At the Parliamentary Group meeting, the President had thanked Ministers Ronnie de Mel and Gamiñi Dissanayake for obtaining the assistance the country has received. There is no doubt that Sri Lanka has received assistance in cash, kind and service which not even the most optimistic adherents of the dharmista way of life had expected. Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel, made a statement in the NSA on Tuesday, June 6 in which he stated that the money needed for development was available and what was needed now was the people's efforts to utilise these funds to the maximum. The Finance Minister's statement in the NSA was a notable one and merits serious consideration. The full text of the speech is published below for the record:

"I wish to inform this honourable House and through this house the people of the country of the successful outcome of the Sri Lanka Aid Group meeting held in Paris last month. The Government of President J. R. Jayawardene wishes to establish healthy traditions of Parliamentary procedure in this land and keep Honourable Members of this House fully informed at all times. It is in this true spirit of Parliamentary Democracy that I thought it fit to appraise Members of this House regarding the Aid negotiations which I have just concluded and which are vital to the future development of this country. Considerable preparatory work had been

done for this Aid Group Meeting almost since November last year by my Ministry and also by officials of other Ministries. For the first time in recent years the Sri Lanka Government faced the Aid Group Meeting with confidence and hope. We had reason to be confident. We had a clear cut economic policy and a definite programme of economic development to present to the Aid Group. We had within the short time this Government has been in office given effect to a series of policy reforms designed towards a revival and resuscitation of the economy and setting it on a course of development and growth. We presented to the Aid Group Meeting the framework of a Medium Term Investment Programme and Strategy, a Summary Description of Projects suitable for aid financing and a Status Statement on the Mahaweli Ganga Development Programme. For the first time in the history of Sri Lanka we had a portfolio of over one hundred well-thought out Projects in Agriculture, Irrigation, Industry, Fisheries, Housing, Transport, Port Development, Social Overheads etc.—projects which the Aid Groups could support. In the past our case went by default all too often because we had no portfolio of worthwhile projects. I would wish to thank my Ministerial Colleagues and the Officials of my Ministry and other Ministries for the untiring efforts they had made in helping me to prepare Sri Lanka's case for the Aid Group Meeting. My success in a large measure was due to their efforts and due to the confidence Government enjoyed in the international community.

"Representatives of 14 countries and 5 International Institutions participated at the Meeting. The countries represented as Members were Australia, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy,

Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America, while Austria, India and Switzerland participated as observers. The International Institutions represented consisted of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the OECD. Norway attended this meeting for the first time as a regular Member of the Sri Lanka Aid Group. Switzerland and Austria participated for the first time as Observers. It is hoped that Switzerland and Austria will become regular members in due course. The increasing number of countries and international institutions present at this meeting is an indication of the confidence shown by the international community in Sri Lanka and its present Government. In my statement to the Aid Group as Leader of the Sri Lanka Delegation, I detailed the significance of the results of the Elections held in July 1977 and pointed out that our Government has received a mandate to build a just and free society for which a just and free economy was the surest foundation. I spotlighted the economic problems confronting the new administration and indicated our plans for development. I described briefly the run-down state of our economy and the causes that led to such run-down.

"I pointed out our inability to maintain our social achievements and meet the basic needs of the people, due to the serious paucity of resources. I analysed the causes and consequences of the past policies that have led to this situation. I reiterated the determination of the Government led by President Jayewardene to move away from economic stagnation, and economic policies based on mere survival, to those that would promote economic growth in the

medium and long term. The urgent need to solve the twin problems of unemployment and under-development and the necessity to solve these without impairing the social achievements of Sri Lanka were emphasised in my statement. I enumerated the several measures already taken by the Government, political as well as economic, to lay the foundation for social and economic growth. In my statement, I identified our needs for the revival and resuscitation of the existing economy, rehabilitation of the infra structure and investment in development projects with a view to solving in the near future the unemployment problem and other problems. I drew attention to the three major projects our Government is undertaking, viz: the Mahaweli Development Programme, the Export Processing Zone and the Greater Colombo Urban Development Project and Housing Programme. The relevance of these projects to employment creation and income generation were emphasised. I urged that substantial increased quantum of aid on the softest possible terms be made available to Sri Lanka and that at least in the initial years, the aid should be of a quick disbursing nature. I urged that assistance for the Mahaweli Programme should be given in addition to the normal quantum of aid as it is our intention to undertake the construction of the Mahaweli Projects simultaneously with development investment in other sectors of the economy. I also thanked the members of the Aid Group for the support extended to Sri Lanka up to now and for the increased support that would be forthcoming in the future.

"Mr. David Hopper, Vice President of the World Bank who chaired the meeting paid the most glowing tribute possible to Sri Lanka and to the Government of

President J. R. Jayewardene. The new Government voted to office at the last Elections he stated moved with commendable energy to tackle some of the complex problems facing the country's economy. I am using his own words as I feel that the Members of this House and through them the people of the country should know what a tremendous amount of confidence has been built up for Sri Lanka and in what high esteem the Government of President J. R. Jayewardene is held in the eyes of the world. Mr. Hopper added that during the discussions he has had with President Jayewardene and other Ministers of the Government, he was impressed by the infectious enthusiasm, energy and earnestness of purpose (I am using Mr. Hopper's words again) which the new Government has brought to bear on Sri Lanka's development problems, and commended the several policy changes, that effectively recast the basic ground rules on which the economy runs, within the relatively short period the Government has been in office.

An element of hope arises in Sri Lanka's development horizon, he said, from the manifest determination of the Government to pursue the new economic policy. He said that with the new policies and programmes, Sri Lanka is now looking beyond the mere exigencies of survival to a restoration of the growth process in the medium and long term. The performance of the Government during the past nine months, he believed, had eliminated the credibility gap that may have existed in the past, in relating pronouncement to performance. Mr. Hopper said that Sri Lanka was now poised on the brink of a major breakthrough with the stagnation in economic policies and performance, and that it would be little short of a tragedy if Sri Lanka's economic reforms and development pro-

gramme were allowed to fail on account of inadequate support from the Aid group, particularly over the next year or two. He concluded his comments stating that Sri Lanka deserves the full support of the Aid Group in the difficult task of the restoration of the economic development process.

"After the preliminary statements, the Donor countries expressed their views. The consensus of views expressed was the donor countries fully supported the policy of the new Government in Sri Lanka and that they would support the Development Programme of the Government, including the Mahaweli Ganga Development Project. Some representatives indicated areas or sectors for which they would wish to provide assistance. The financing of the Mahaweli Ganga Development Programme was taken up as a separate Agenda item, in view of its importance to the economy of Sri Lanka and also its magnitude. In introducing the subject Mr. Hopper further referred to the tremendous sense of urgency and direction that the Government has brought to bear on the programme and that the Mahaweli Programme stands out quite clearly as the single most important development activity to be taken up by Sri Lanka since Independence. At the conclusion of the discussions the delegates were called upon by the Chairman to indicate the quantum of aid likely to be made available to Sri Lanka by Members of the Aid Group. In this connection, I would wish to say a few words by way of clarification in regard to the pledges made at the Aid Group Meeting. Indications are given by the representatives of the various donor governments and institutions of the aid likely to be made available to Sri Lanka during the current years; but this should not be regarded as official commitment: no

announcement of the quantum could be made until the aid allocation to Sri Lanka has received the approval of the authorities of the donor Governments concerned, invariably the legislatures of the respective countries. This does not in any way detract from the firmness or the validity of the indications given or pledges made. It is merely a question of our not making official announcements of the aid to be expected from any particular source in deference to the sovereignty of the authority responsible for sanctioning such aid in the respective donor country. I am, therefore, not in a position to announce the breakdown country by country though I have myself a complete breakdown of the total amount of the aid.

"The total aid pledged at the meeting of the Aid Group works out to approximately Rs. 6,100 million or 6 billion rupees. In terms of dollars, the amount pledged this year is higher than that was pledged last year by 134 million dollars, equivalent to Rs. 2100 million or 54 per cent. Of the total aid pledged, Rs. 1694 millions would be available as outright grants non-repayable by Sri Lanka and the balance Rs. 4329 million as soft term loans. I wish to point out to Honourable Members that this pledge of Rs. 6100 million does not include aid for the Mahaweli Project. It is for our normal development projects in Agriculture, Irrigation, Industry, Fisheries, Housing, Plantations etc. The Mahaweli Project will be considered at a special meeting of the Aid Group to be convened in January 1979 when firm cost estimates would become available. The Aid Group countries, however, agreed in principle to accept the Mahaweli Programme and also agreed that aid for Mahaweli would be in addition to the normal or

regular aid programme and also that this aid would be on concessionary terms. It appears likely that the entire foreign costs of Mahaweli and even a portion of the local costs could be financed from aid on the basis of statement already made by certain donor countries at the Aid Group meeting held last month. The fact that a special Aid Group meeting will be held in January 1979 does not also mean that work on Mahaweli Project can be started only after the January 1979 meeting. As a matter of fact some priority projects for which bilateral aid has been already negotiated will be started immediately and without waiting for the special meeting to be convened in January. From the indications already given, I have no doubt that aid will be forthcoming to start Victoria, Kotmale, Randenigala, Maduru Oya, Ulhitiya and possible Moragahakanda in 1978/79. For these I expect to get a sum of money even larger than the Rs. 6000 million already pledged at Paris, but I do not wish to count the chicken before they are hatched.

"I am happy to state that the volume of aid received is a record for Sri Lanka. The Government should therefore have all the foreign resources necessary for its immediate development programme. We can go ahead both with our normal development programme and with Mahaweli side by side, complementary to each other as it were. This will be our approach and this will be our strategy. All this aid which we have received is a tribute to the sound economic and financial policies of the J. R. Jayewardene Government and the confidence which all countries repose in President J. R. Jayewardene and the UNP government. The aid which he have received this year, Mr. Speaker, is significant not only because of the total

amount which is a record but for several other reasons. Almost all this aid is on concessionary terms 1/2 percent—3 percent and quite a proportion of this aid—Rs. 1694 million has been given as non-repayable outright grants. The donor countries have also accepted the principle that aid for Mahaweli will be on concessionary terms and will be additional to the normal aid programme for other projects of the government. There is another significant new feature in this year's aid for Sri Lanka to which I should draw the attention of the Members of this House and of the people of this country.

"For the first time, several small countries like Netherlands, Sweden, Norway etc., have given us considerable aid on the most favourable terms. Our aid programme is no longer dependent on the large countries and big powers alone. This diversification of aid is significant for the maintenance of our policy of strict non-alignment and friendship with all countries. We also expect to receive aid from the Soviet Union, China, GDR and Socialist countries. We are also expecting aid from the OPEC countries. I have met the Managing Directors of the Saudi Fund for Development and the Kuwait Fund for Development and the Director General of OPEC in Vienna, as a result a delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development has come to Sri Lanka and held discussions with me and we hope to receive aid from Saudi Arabia too in due course. We have already received Rs. 100 million from OPEC after my discussions at Vienna.

"The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has also granted us approximately Rs. 190 million for the Kirindi Oya Project being a 50 year loan with a 10 year grace period and a one percent service charge per annum only. I am glad to state that this is

the first loan given by IFAD to any country, a signal honour to Sri Lanka. The loan agreement was signed by me in Rome. Austria and Switzerland also attended the Aid Group meeting as Observers for the first time. It is expected that they will come in as full members into the Sri Lanka Aid Group next year. The aid obtained this year is also significant for another reason. As a result of considerable lobbying by us in the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank the Aid Group Meeting and meetings of other lending agencies we have been able to obtain foreign aid to finance not only the foreign costs but also the local costs of our development schemes for the first time. This is a very significant breakthrough. For example, the entirety of the Kirindi Oya Scheme both foreign costs and local costs amounting approximately to Rs. 640 million will be financed under foreign aid and will not be a burden on my Budget. As a considerable part of foreign aid this year is in the nature of either non-repayable grants or loans on the softest terms possible, for example 50 years with 10 years grace period at 1/2 to 3 per cent interest—the future debt repayment burden for Sri Lanka on foreign aid received this year will be considerably less than before. Never in the history of Sri Lanka has aid been obtained on such concessionary terms before. Never in the history of Sri Lanka has so much assistance been given to our country in a single year. This too is a tribute to the confidence inspired by the development programme of the J. R. Jayewardene Government.

"Apart from foreign aid considerable interest has also been shown by foreign investors in the proposed Export Processing Zone in all the countries I visited. I had the privilege of addressing the Confederation of British Industry

in London at a meeting at which 88 big firms were represented. I also addressed the Confederation of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Paris and the Chambers of Commerce in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Oslo. On previous visits I had addressed the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Tokyo and Bonn and also addressed Swiss investors at the International Trade Centre in Geneva. I had also addressed similar meetings in New York on a previous visit. At all these meetings considerable interest was shown in the Export Processing Zone and investment in Sri Lanka despite the economic recession in the Western world I hope that the interest which has been generated will soon be translated into definite action and investment in Sri Lanka. The interest shown in Sri Lanka's economic development in the foreign press is also unprecedented."

The Finance Minister's statement is a comprehensive one and clearly sets out the mechanics of how the loans were obtained. But what is not explained—and we cannot expect it in an official government statement—is why the rich developed (some over-developed) countries organised in the bastions of western capitalism like the IBRD, ABD, IMF, IDA etc. etc. decided to extend this aid to poor little Sri Lanka at this juncture.

The Rs. 20,000 million—Rs. 25,000 million that Sri Lanka may receive in the next three years is a mere bagatelle for these countries. Even the total loss of this money can do no more harm than a minor pinprick on their economies. This is money these countries can easily lose or forget about without doing any damage to their financial institutions. They can also cancel these debts without giving a second thought to them.

But, to the capitalist, every cent or every penny counts. They know how to make them go the furthest. If they cannot obtain dividends in profit and cash they want political advantages, bilaterally (for each donor country), multi-laterally (for the group) and globally (for capitalism). All donor countries want both, profit (visible or invisible) as well as political conformism. There are no altruistic donors.

But with so many disappointments and failures since the end of World War II rich donor countries have become chary and cautious about extending new aid. It was difficult enough for them to collect the interest on the old loans, leave alone the capital. And many LDC (less developed countries) want the cancellation of all old debts—certainly debts on which heavy interest payments have already been made.

Nevertheless, the international capitalism (a left-wing cliché but a true reality) has decided to take a gamble with Sri Lanka. Why?

In a world where capitalism is constantly under attack, where the system of private enterprise and profit is being eroded at so many points and where the word capitalism has been identified with greed, exploitation and domination, there is not the slightest doubt that the capitalist giants are making a last minute attempt to salvage their reputation and future. A study of the Trilateral Commission, about which we have said a little in earlier issues, will show that a new endeavour is being made to present capitalism in a new light by formulating readily saleable programmes and policies. Primarily, the Third World had to be won over for capitalist and from 1972/73 when the Trilateral Commission emerged (as the economic counterpart of the mili-

tarist and political groupings known as the Bilderberg Conference), there have been concerted attempts by the West to develop and don a new kind of sheep's clothing that can hide even the most ferocious capitalist wolf from the eyes of the third world.

Left wing and radical circles and journals have blasted the Trilateral Commission as a sinister conspiracy to denigrate and destroy the economic independence of Third World countries in a bid to prevent the boundaries of capitalism from shrinking any further. It is not necessary to cite such polemics from the radical journals to show what the Trilateral Commission is and what it wants to achieve. It will be enough to refer, at the start, to an article in the highly prestigious and respectable pro-US Establishment journal FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AN AMERICAN QUARTERLY REVIEW—October 1976, Vol. 55, No. 1—written by Richard H. Ullman, (Director of the 1980s Project of the Council on Foreign Relations and Professor of International Affairs at Princeton University and author of *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-21*, 3 vols., and other works), entitled TRILATERALISM: "PARTNERSHIP" FOR WHAT?

It is a fascinating study and all interested in the subject should read it. We will refer, if necessary, to relevant extracts, from this article whenever we examine the objectives and activities of the Trilateral Commission (TC). But for the moment, the *Christian Science Monitor* article by Jeremiah Novak, we published (vide *Tribune* June 3, Vol. 22 No. 49) provides adequate source material for our deductive and inferential comments. After tracing the rationale behind the setting up of the TC, Novak pointed out that "it is because Carter now is President that the ideas of the Commission are

important. In essence, the Commission has devised a plan to totally renovate GATT, the IMF, and the World Bank. The plan would create a world economic system far different from that of Bretton Woods." Novak refers to the more important of the TC's plans to win the third world to capitalism by a new economic order.

Sri Lanka is one of the first countries in the third world which seems to have full benefits blessings of Trilateral experiment. In the last two years of the SLFP regime, the concessions IMF and the IBRD were willing to grant the Government were an indication of the changes that were in the offing, but the election of a UNP government which was returned on a programme of "free enterprise" provided the TC with a splendid opportunity to test its plans. Already, the new IMF Policies are being tried out in some countries, but in regard to some there have been differences of opinion even among the Trilateralists as to what should be done. But there seems to have been a rare unanimity not only among the Trilateral giants but also the smaller rich capitalist nations who go along with them to allow Sri Lanka to combine a subsidised public sector economy and a subsidised food distribution system with a massive infusion of foreign capital to provide a special leverage for private enterprise to grow and in time dominate the whole economic structure. The sponsors and patrons of this new TC experiment seem to feel confident that in spite of initial setbacks, pin pricks, and difficulties, the Sri Lankan economy could be induced to effect a breakthrough from stagnation into affluence that will banish for ever revolution, socialism and the other evils which they think stem from third world poverty.

It will be our endeavour to examine how far the aspirations of the TC will be successful so far as Sri Lanka is concerned. The first act of the drama has begun: massive money aid has been made available to Sri Lanka: the existing subsidies (which were anathema to the pre-TC IMF) are being continued though symbolic cuts have been effected whilst new increased subsidies (flour and bread) have been sanctioned: dole and subsidised housing are being offered as incentives to keep the population happy whilst the economy is "developed": and consumerism is being satisfied to the maximum possible with liberal imports. Democratic traditions and the rule of law are being permitted whilst the iron fist has also been shown in legislation to check subversive movements and terrorism.

But it is not clear whether the TC and our Government have paid sufficient heed to the possible socio-political consequences of the kind of inflation that has begun to sweep the country (with the devaluation that was part of the TC-IMF package) in which the contrasts between rich and poor are being shown up very sharply.

The question that concerns us now is whether the acclaimed panacea of the new-TC inspired IMF and IBRD policies will bring economic prosperity to Sri Lanka, and, if so, at what price? Can the TC-IMF experiment in Sri Lanka, if successful, be repeated in other countries or will it be unique because of a unique combination of socio-political and economic factors extant in this island at this time? Looking at the other side of the coin, what if the best efforts of the Trilateral to save Sri Lanka for capitalism (by providing high living standards and prosperity for nearly everybody on a per-capita basis) fails?

It is necessary to be clear about one thing. What is happening in Sri Lanka today is not something which we Sri Lankans (and the UNP) could not have set in motion by ourselves. We are the playthings of international forces which have decided that Sri Lanka is a place where an experiment should be tried out. If we Sri Lankans grasp the opportunities offered, whilst we at the same time succeed in maintaining our self-respect, our sovereignty and political integrity, we should consider ourselves lucky. If we fail and fall by the wayside, we will usher in a new era of colonial dependence (it is now called neo-colonial to distinguish it from the earlier kind of imperialist domination) for another hundred, or one hundred and fifty or even four and hundred fifty years—as in the last spell.

It is interesting to live through an experiment of this kind when the Trilateral Commission and international capitalist agencies like the IMF make a heroic attempt to save the "soul" of Sri Lanka from dangerous ideologies and policies that lead to socialism—in the same way that western missionaries of an earlier era tried to "save" the poor natives from the evils of idolatory and paganism. The old missionaries failed after doing untold damage to the countries which are tried to proselytise and evangelise (for colonial expansion). Will the new missionaries succeed?

We Sri Lankans are today the human guinea pigs in a vast and massive (for this island) experiment for the economic salvation of a poor and idle country. All the world's a stage, and Sri Lanka is today a nook for the Trilateral

experiment—though some of us are foolish enough to believe that our cleverness and genius are responsible for persuading the IMF and the Aid Consortium to untie the purse strings and give of grants, aid and assistance. It is not easy for those caught up in the toils of Operation Trilateral in Sri Lanka to perceive what is taking place in a detached and objective manner, but unless this is done, with all the limitations and constraints that exist, it will not be possible to evaluate how Sri Lanka is faring in the mighty tumble of events—making the future more uncertain than it need be. Corrective action or even total withdrawal from the experiment will be possible if the only realities are recognised in the correct perspective.

Already, Trilateralism's and IMF's insistence on a currency devalued appropriately to embark on a pattern of liberalised imports and unrestricted exports, coupled with an unbelievably massive pumping in of foreign capital and cash, in the first instance, to enable the government to offer public works employment (building dams, roads, houses etc) to minimise unemployment and to provide houses and dole to the unemployed and under-employed as bribes to ensure temporary political passivity, has begun to submerge the country in frightening and ever-swelling tide of inflation.

Fish is three times the price it was six months ago. And so with everything else a household wants. Middle class homes, with fixed and static incomes, which were able to afford, fish, or meat or eggs every day six months ago, cannot afford them even six times a month today. Imports of consumer goods have flooded the country, but how many can afford chicken at Rs. 13 a lb, mutton at Rs. 11 a lb and beef at Rs 10 a lb? Only the richest of the rich and the government

servant who is in a position to get "invisible" perks can afford imported meat as well as other imported goods. It is already become a struggle for ordinary houses to keep hunger from the door.

Agents of the Trilateral Commission and the IMF, and even some UNP VIPs (who have already become fossilised in ivory towers), should stand at street corners and hear the comments of ordinary people (middle class and working class, leave alone the unemployed and under-employed)—most of whom who could have afforded meat, fish and eggs six months ago—about the life and activities of the mod-dressed folks in flashy cars who boast that seer at Rs. 20 a lb, beef at Rs 10 a lb, mutton at Rs. 11 and eggs at Rs. 1 a piece were cheap considering the prices they paid in London, New York, Singapore, Hongkong, Oman, Kuwait, Timbuctoo and other places they claim to frequent. The socio-political implications of the loud and ostentatious living of this new jet set (successors to the CRA gem set crowd who have now developed wings in the free enterprise system introduced by the TC-IMF-UNP) are frightening and if the Government does not read the writing on the wall it will only have itself to blame.

The Government would have done better to let the few rich do without imported meat and other tidbits from abroad until local meat and other produce became available than to do what it is doing today in letting a volcano of underground resentment build up which, if unless remedial measures are introduced immediately, will burst open with fateful consequences. The President, sensing this, has announced a rationing scheme for a package of hard-to-get basic essentials, but will this be enough to douse the fires that have already started burning? Is not such

rationing a retreat from the Trilateral-IMF theory of free enterprise without queues and rationing?

What next?

A great deal of re-thinking must be done by the UNP, the Trilateral and the IMF if a new revolution of angry and indignant people—not merely the youth—is not to emerge not merely round the corner but also at every doorstep.

* * *

BETWEEN THE LINES

BY SERENDIB

• Third Amendment Or New Constitution • Cabinet Reshuffle • Bouquet

The Select Committee of the NSA appointed to revise the Constitution, according to the *Daily News*, (9/6/78), adopted its report on Wednesday, June 7, with seven government members in it voting for the report and the two SLFPers (Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Mr. Maithripala Senanayake) dissenting. Mr. Thondaman, from the CWC was also a member, but he was away on June 7 in Geneva to attend the ILO Conference. According to the *Daily News* (9/6/78) "the report will be tabled in the National State Assembly on June 22 by the Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa. In Parliament on June 22 the Premier will also table along with the report a draft constitution in all three languages. The Legal Draftsman's Department is expected to draw up final legislation based on the draft Constitution. There will be no debate on the report in the NSA, the official sources said yesterday. Whether the draft Constitution should be in the form of a Third Amendment to the Constitution or an

entirely new Constitution has not been discussed by the Select Committee and will perhaps be decided by the Legal Draftsman's division, the sources said."

The *Sun* did not have any report about the final meeting either on the 8th or 9th of June. The *Daily Mirror* of the 8th had a cautious paragraph which read: "The Select Committee drafting the Third Amendment to the Constitution is expected to submit its report to the National State Assembly on the 22nd of this month. The Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa who is the Chairman of the Committee hosted its members to dinner yesterday. Informed sources said that District Ministers were likely to be appointed by the President next month after the passage of the Third Amendment to the Constitution."

Only the *Ceylon Observer* of Thursday October, 8, had a front-page splash (star newsman Manik de Silva reporting). It read: "The Parliamentary Select Committee, considering Constitutional changes finalised its business yesterday. The report of the Committee together with a draft Constitution is expected to be presented to Parliament on June 22. Political sources said today that the SLFP plans to incorporate a rider into the report of the Select Committee stating its objection to a new Constitution being promulgated. The Freedom Party is of the view that the present Constitution should be amended, rather than a new Constitution promulgated. The Government party does not agree with this contention. 'The people gave the UNP a mandate to draft and promulgate a new constitution. We said that we would do this in our manifesto,' a Minister commented. The political wing of the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) which was represented in the Select

Committee by Mr. S. Thondaman, the third MP for Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya, is also expected to add a rider to the report. Mr. Thondaman whose union represents the majority of the country's plantation workers, was keenly interested in matters pertaining to citizenship. Political circles said that the major changes in the draft Constitution would include giving Tamil the status of a national language along with Sinhala which will remain the official language; a section on proportional representation; the creation of an Ombudsman; and the setting up of District Ministries."

This report is an afternoon paper's brief journalistic re-hash of what is known about the constitutional changes—there will be no surprises when the final draft is tabled—wrapped up in the news about the last meeting of the Select Committee the previous day. Manik de Silva with journalistic nicety mentioned that the two SLFP members and the one CWC member would add "riders" whilst accepting the Report. This is certainly a better way of describing what is believed to have taken place at the final meeting of the Select Committee than the *Daily News* report which said that there was a "dissent" by the two SLFP members—without saying with what what they had disagreed.

The SLFP members, it is believed, had concurred on all the constitutional changes adopted, but differences had arisen only on the question whether the draft to be presented should go as "Amendments to the Republican Constitution of 1972" or be presented as a completely New Constitution. There may have been no final decision or voting by the Select Committee on this question, but there is no doubt that there was a great deal of "unofficial" discussion about it. In fact, it is

known that the final meeting of the Select Committee had been delayed from the end of May to June 7 to resolve the differences of opinion on this particular matter.

It is now clear that the SLFP had "dissented" or insisted on the "rider" in order to place on record its position that it would only accept the changes as an Amendment to the Republican Constitution of 1972 and not as part of a new Constitution. Apart from this, it is said that the SLFP had agreed with all other recommendations of the Select Committee. The UNP had evidently tried to by-pass this "mini-confrontations" (in order to reach consensus and on all matters un-animously) by suggesting that the Legal Draftsman should decide on this. The SLFP evidently did not want to take chances and placed its "dissent" on record.

The CWC's rider relates, it is said, to a particular "appointed date" in regard to "registered citizens". Officials concerned with registered citizens, the stateless and repatriates, the whisper goes round, were opposed to CWC's proposals on this matter because they had argued that if the CWC's demand was conceded the whole structure of the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact would be endangered. The SLFP, it is believed, had opposed the CWC tooth and nail, and the UNP evidently did not want to side with the CWC against official-ism and the SLFP on an important matter in the politically sensitive area of the "stateless Indian" question. Hence the CWC's rider or dissent, probably submitted by Thondaman before he left for Geneva.

It would be wrong to anticipate all the constitutional changes in detail. As we said, everything to be known, has "leaked" in bits and pieces, but the report in its entirety has not been published

by any paper. One wonders whether a touchy NSA would consider it a matter of Contempt or Privilege if the document is published before it is tabled in the House. There is really nothing for any newspaper to scoop in the Select Committee's report except the final wording. But what would be of interest is the reaction of the different parties to the changes. The SLFP, LSSP and CP will swear by their famous Republican Constitution of 1972 and will want all changes (all of them now say changes are necessary) to be called Amendments. The UNP is anxious to present a New Constitution to demonstrate that it was capable of fulfilling every Election pledge.

What the reactions of the different political parties to the far-sweeping constitutional changes will be it is difficult to predict. But it will not be impossible to guess what each would say. The UNP is in a position to carry the constitutional changes with a two-thirds majority but that alone is not enough to make the changes work.

CABINET RESHUFFLE. With the tabling of the Third Amendment or the New Constitution fixed for June 22, speculation has increased about the long-impending Cabinet changes. The stars, astrologer tell us, have moved to the right places—so say all almanacs bar one—and the long-awaited Third Amendment will soon be law. Many expect the President to lay the foundation for his new Cabinet by making some early changes even before June 22 and the debate in the NSA on the new Constitution (or the Third Amendment).

Rumour and gossip reign supreme in regard to the reshuffle. Is Information Broadcasting to be tied to Tourism under a new Chief? Is the present incumbent of Information & Broadcasting to be given charge of a new Ministry based on a department which has

been shunted around several times in the last two decades—a department which is political dynamite but on which the future of Sri Lanka is largely dependent.

There is talk of many changes in the Cabinet and nearly everybody has become involved in the game of picking winners. And this game has now been extended to the 22 or 24 District Ministers who will be appointed shortly. One question that intrigues many is whether the TULF will now find the Third Amendment or the new Constitution satisfactory enough to enable them to agree to a "national government" in which some of them could be District Ministers.

One political know-all told us that even before this issue of *Tribune* is on the news-stands, the process of re-shuffling the Cabinet would have started! We then pointed out the reshuffle had started (a) when the resident took over Aviation under his wing; (b) appointed a Minister without Cabinet rank to look after the application and operation of the Tiger Law.

The Cabinet reshuffle, everyone says, is round the corner. *Tribune* has no information to the contrary. But the question that haunts us is how far a Cabinet reshuffle by itself can help the government to shake itself out of its present state of myopic lethargy? Will the government be able to stop Ministers blabbering airy-fairy tales to explain inefficiency and worse? ***BOUQUET FOR THE PRESIDENT.** A handsome bouquet must be handed over to the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, for the way he handled the Kalawewa region problem arising from the obliteration of purana villages and tanks. Though, admittedly, the bulk of the destruction had been done in 1975 and 1976, during the SLFP regime, the hangover had continued until September 1977 when the new

UNP Minister had stopped it, the stink and the tragedy of this action had passed over to the new government because the victims continued to be left high and dry without any means of subsistence. Minister Gamini Dissanayake had stopped the earlier indiscriminate and unilateral destruction and had ordered that if any purana villages and tanks had to be destroyed in the larger interests of the project and the country it had to be done after the villagers were persuaded that it was in their interests to "transform" tanks and lands for the area to be better utilised.

But such orders alone are not enough. The problems of displaced villagers had to be attended to as top priority if the rapidly mounting hostile reactions were to be brought under control—and it was politically important that this should be done. But the bureaucrats slept over the matter. Ministers and Deputy Ministers made correct orders and issued clear instructions, but that was all that happened. Bureaucrats reigned supreme. Excuses are legion and scapegoats easy to find. Among the excuses trotted out was that surveyors were not available and the displaced and dispossessed could not be paid compensation—they were left to starve. They were not even provided alternate lands for cultivation.

Feelings ran high and because UNP Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPS could not make the bureaucrats move, some villagers went to the old Samasamajist leaders to plead on their behalf. They did and raised the matter with the President, but some sections of the "revolutionary" youth in the area were opposed to LSSP intervention because they felt that if problem remained to fester, UNP's popularity would diminish and its chances in the next elections would be reduced, if it was not

completely eliminated. If this rot was not stopped, the UNP could well have lost every seat in the NCP—Mahaweli or no Mahaweli.

It was at this stage that the President had stepped in as if in response to the Samasamajist leaders' appeal. The Presidential visit, together with the LSSP leaders, was a historic one. Full newspaper reports have appeared about the highlights of this visit. If the President's instruction to pay compensation immediately and re-settle the displaced persons without delay are carried out, the UNP's stock in the NCP will be restored. But the President and his Ministers must see that their orders are carried out—quite often even Presidential orders are side-tracked, as in the case of the inquiry into the Amparai sugar cane loan scandal referred to in an earlier issue of *Tribune*.

The President must be congratulated for intervening in this matter in such a spectacular manner. He also scored a bull's eye by inviting the LSSP leaders to accompany him and place facts before him which local bureaucrats would have done everything to hide. The President of course took the opportunity to preach a homily on his concept of a "national government" where developmental problems would be placed above party politics.

POSTSCRIPT. As we go to press, we have received a lengthy statement from Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, former Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, about the recent *furor* concerning the obliteration of purana villages and tanks in the Kalawewa area. This statement will no doubt be published in all the daily papers. In any case, *Tribune* will publish it at an early date—depending on the exigencies of space—with our comments, if necessary.

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IN DEFENCE OF THE
SRI LANKAN BUREAUCRAT—3

What Public Servants Complain About

by A Special Correspondent

A Tribune Special Correspondent, in a series of four articles writes spiritedly IN DEFENCE OF THE SRI LANKAN BUREAUCRAT. This series, we hope, will provoke discussion on the following questions which the writer has raised: (a) Why is the bureaucracy in this country under fire? (b) What could be the net result of this unrelenting attack? (c) How can this be contained? (d) What is it that compels the bureaucrat to hold back something of himself—what are the problems? (e) How and in what manner does the bureaucrat feel that political power can help? and (f) What kind of environment (including incentives) will make the bureaucrat contribute more than he does at present?

Tribune will welcome comments, criticisms and suggestions in regard to the questions raised. There cannot be an Administration without a bureaucracy, and without an effective administration with an efficient bureaucracy there cannot be development, growth or prosperity in any country.—ED.

From my discussions with a broad cross-section of the state service I found a fair measure of unanimity in the views regarding factors which have contributed to the present disarray and confusion in the ranks of the public service. For some time now, every occasion I ran into a state servant I put the

question "Is it correct that public servants do not work"—often resulting in sharp reactions! The identified problem areas could be grouped thus:

- (a) excessive political interference
- (b) badly managed career system
- (c) lack of discipline
- (d) inadequate attention to officer's personal comforts.
- (e) uncertainty of firm political support
- (f) inter-personal rivalry among colleagues and services.

These areas will now be discussed, without bias and with clinical detachment. Political decision alone can put right these inadequacies. Thus I request our politicians to view the problems with sympathy and understanding because it is in the national interest to do so. The public servant has none other who can grant him/her redress.

(a) Excessive Political Interference.

In the writer's view 'intervention' is the more appropriate word. The public servant should realise that he is the servant of the State and that he must carry out the will of the State which is given expression through the NSA, the Cabinet and individual Ministers. It is quite wrong for any state officer to take umbrage at any political intervention. In my own experience, I have found that it is far easier to work with the politician than with a bureaucrat. The former's main concern is to deliver whatever is possible within the shortest time to the people in his electorate.

I am also aware of a very senior political leader who has said on a number of occasions that in his vocabulary there is no such word as 'impossible' and that the words he does want to hear are that "it has been referred to for report". A

very understandable position. Referred to, is simply passing the buck. One thing the politician will not tolerate is any attempt by an official to promote or assist in the erosion of his political capital—the vote.

Political intervention is a tool of management and must be used and should also be available to the political arm of government. It is a tool, however, that should be used with much restraint and not to humiliate public servants in public. This was done during the latter part of the former government, when a Minister took much delight in flaying any and every public servant within sight. It reached a stage when the public servants avoided attending the conferences summoned by him.

"Rulers are beset with the anguishing challenge of compressing into decades, the changes which took centuries to accomplish elsewhere" writes Wriggins. This naturally makes the politician, understandably, impatient with the slow moving deadweight of an administrative hierarchy that keeps passing the buck. But, very unfortunately, one or two instances of obstruction or delay or attempt to outfox and outplay, leads to a generalisation, an inductive leap, and an entire fraternity stands condemned. It is here that the bureaucrat has a legitimate cause for complaint.

But if the Prime Minister's declaration in the NSA (Ceylon Daily News of 20.05.78) that "One should not condemn the entire organisation because of this (black sheep) but try to correct or weed out the miscreants" finds echo in the hearts of other political leaders as well, the state service should find the deepest satisfaction.

This complaint of political 'interference' can easily be pushed into

the limbo of a forgotten past. If politicians of their own volition and the officials for their own protection can jointly cultivate a healthy climate of mutual understanding. These problem areas had received the attention of the Administrative Reforms Commission set up in 1968 to study the machinery of the Government of India.

Its recommendation—8(5)—is a healthy guide to the civil service: "Secretaries and other civil servants need to show a greater sensitivity to and a better appreciation of the Minister's difficulties, and to discriminate between minor adjustments on the one hand and acts of political and other forms of accommodation, compromising basic principles or likely to have substantial or lasting repercussions on efficiency and morale of the service on the other".

It is not unreasonable to take the view that Ministers as representatives of the people and political head of their departments, have every justification to review individual cases, and it is a terminological inexactitude to refer to such a review as 'interference'. The politician at the top provides the ultimate point of decision as well as functioning as a catalyst of change.

Prof. B. S. Narula of the Public Administration Department of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, in an article entitled "Ministers and Civil Servants in a Developing Democracy" has written⁸ "It needs hardly to be emphasised that differences, if any, between the Minister and the Secretary should be settled quietly and not known outside. The Minister has a special role in promoting higher standards of personnel efficiency and integrity. The way in which a Minister would deal with the senior officers, the praise and support he would give them in the performance of their duties and the standards which he will set in the matter of tolerating

delays and defaults has a great impact on the quality of performance of the Department as a whole". Over a century ago Benjamin Disraeli, in *Endymion*, wrote in a similar vein: "The relations between a Minister and his Secretary are, or at least should be, among the finest that can exist between two individuals. Except in the married state, there is none in which so great a confidence is involved, in which more forbearance ought to be exercised, or more sympathy to exist."

Thus if the Minister/Parliamentarian and the officials can consciously and determinedly cultivate such a relationship there should be no problem at all for public servants.

Some years back one of our Government Agents had problems with the MP of that area. The MP had complained to the Minister, who is reported to have sent for the GA and told him that while he sympathised with his predicament, the only way to resolve this issue was to transfer him, because he could not transfer the MP. The veracity or otherwise of this story, I must confess, I am unable to vouch for—but there is a lesson even though it has the element of fantasy found in *Alice in Wonderland*.

(b) Badly Managed Career System.

This is a very serious matter and one of great concern to the public servant. Young men and women in the prime of life, generally between the ages of 18 and 15 and bristling with ideas enter the state service with the hope of great futures and of great things they are going to do. They expect the highest standards of justice and fairplay—many do not get it. I have seen these same young men and women (I have grown very old in the service) still in their prime of youth, going about with their heads bent low, their spirits

crushed, their efforts at creation frustrated and their individuality killed. Why should this have happened?

A case in point were the promotions made to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service shortly before the present government took office. That was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Fortunately for the service, the elephant's back could not be broken! That left the Service badly bruised, battered and broken. Can anyone blame the public servant in the face of such inequity?

Let us take the case of Government Agencies. These positions are regarded by almost the entire public service as plums. The office is clothed with much power and panoply. There are perquisites and fringe benefits that go with these posts. Quite apart from all this, in times of emergency, the GA is given almost dictatorial powers—he is virtually in supreme command in the district. It would therefore not be unreasonable to expect the holder of such an office to be mature, senior and endowed with attributes that would ensure acceptance of his leadership. There are only 22 districts and thus only 22 such officials need be found.

Sad to say that, with some rare exceptions, those chosen few have not been able to measure up to the job and achieve pre-eminence in the district hierarchy. In a number of instances, they are either ignored, treated with casual unconcern and at times even with unconcealed contempt—because it becomes known how they got there! In such situations, is it fair to blame other public servants, some of them in the professional services, who sulk in their own camps? If political imperatives govern the choice, it is far better to say

so—some choices can hardly be understood, even politically.

Let us take the case of transfers. Instances occur almost with unflinching regularity of transfers which cannot be justified on any ground whatever. A classic case has been reported in the *Tribune* of 20.5.76. Transfers form part of the administrative armoury. It is meant to 'manage' the services and not to harass or destroy individual officers. There is no sense if the transfer tool is used to destroy rather than to build. No public officer who has been a victim under this scheme will ever be able to get over this injury—can he be blamed if he thereafter keeps passing the buck and does nothing?

President Sukarno is stated to have "effectively used the notion of 'retooling' to keep the upper level of civil servants unsure of their position. Such a policy has the advantage of deepening a lieutenant's dependence upon the leader by generating an anxious sense of insecurity, but it destroys initiative and greatly weakens the ability of government to pursue its many functions" (6).

Unless every tool of administration available to an administrator is used with caution and with strict adherence to the principles of natural justice, it will fast become a tool of intimidation. The result will be somewhat like what would happen to a garland if it is delivered into the hands of a monkey

(c) Lack Of Discipline.

Discipline has broken down. Whether it is in a small public office or in the field or at a worksite, discipline seems to have lost its meaning. Managers are reluctant to enforce discipline for fear of being victimised themselves. But discipline can be gradually introduced into any administration if the managers themselves are prepared to set the example. They, not infrequently, fail to do so.

They come late to work, use official vehicles for private purposes, use their official position to secure private gain, use official labour to attend to domestic chores.

Any public servant who wants to hang on to a particular post or station, will be prepared to compromise on any issue, will go to any lengths to accommodate indiscipline and generally keep out of trouble. These officers have only themselves to blame—and none else.

(d) Inadequate Attention To Officers' Personal Comforts.

Into this category would fall cases like that of the medical intern already referred to. I am quite certain that the young man would have accepted such a novel situation with alacrity if the department could have lent a hand. After all such situations are not unusual. Our cultivators, the men who keep the nation fed and alive watch over their farms thus in many areas. Hunters stalk their prey in this fashion. But what prey the intern could have found within the precincts of a hospital had better be left to the imagination of the readers. He could in all probability have met with some success.

This is however being flippant about a serious matter. The Head of the Department should have shown greater concern. In the face of such indifference (if indeed this incident had really occurred) can the public service be blamed? Even if this incident has been exaggerated or never happened at all, variations of similar behaviour occur off and on.

Many perhaps may not be aware that during the pre-independence era (I do not know if it happens now or whether it ever happened after independence) when young recruits to the public service, not necessarily to the higher echelons, are posted, the appointing authority invariably informed the

head of the institution to which the officer was being sent requesting him to afford all facilities so as to enable the recruit to settle down comfortably. In the case of cadets to the Ceylon Civil Service, the GA or AGA was even requested to meet the cadet on arrival: and this was done.

The situation is now different, with large numbers being taken in—but surely an effort can be made in this direction? The response will be equally beneficial to the Service itself and to government in view of its demonstrated concern for its employees. It is hardly fair to send young men and women away with a bare railway warrant and asked to fend for themselves.

These merely touch the fringe of this problem area. Headquarter offices tend to deal with employees in remote areas with a casualness that has amazed and distressed me often. It may be a very minor issue as far as the Colombo officials are concerned, but to the employee in a remote jungle who is desperately in need of a hurricane lantern, often waiting for months at times, this is a very serious affair. As the *Time* commentator has remarked with a delightful sense of humour "It's like tuning a TV with a 3,000 mile long screw driver". No one should blame this man if he behaves irresponsibly.

(e) Uncertainty Of Firm Political Support.

Situations arise when a state officer's action attracts a hostile response, at times from very powerful quarters. These situations can be contained with the firm backing of the Minister. If the state servant can be assured of such support, it can safely be assumed that in 99 cases out of 100, the officials will act impartially and in the public interest.

If this firm support is not an assured fact, administration will start falling apart. I have

already referred to what Viscount Finlay and Sir Edward Carson had stated in this regard. Would such support be available even if it means resignation from office by the Minister? Much would depend on the answer.

In 1954, Britain's Minister of Agriculture Sir Thomas Dugdale, resigned from office over the Crichel Down affair. He had nothing at all to do with the transaction, but he chose to resign, accepting responsibility for the action of his department and officials. It was a unique case in which eminent counsel told Court "looking for the thread which linked the very different officials involved, it was found that they had no corrupt motive, but all of them were prepared to do things which persons of their position and background would never do in normal course of behaviour."

In India, Railways Minister Gurzillal Nanda resigned because of a train crash. On the other hand, if for every act of omission or commission of the administration, the Minister concerned were to accept responsibility, no Minister can remain in office even for a day.

Thus although there is a limitation implicit in political support, nevertheless the public should not be thrown to the wolves.

(f) Inter-Personal Rivalry Between Colleagues And Services.

Opportunities whose only claims to advancement is toadying will be prepared to curry favour with Ministers and influential politicians, to secure preferential placements in order to quickly advance their careers. This happened in the past, it is happening right now within earshot of Ministers, who seem to be happily oblivious to these unseemly antics. There are many who will put chameleons to shame.

But that is another matter and outside the theme for this discussion.

Some officials often anticipate the Minister's wishes and colour their advice accordingly much to the detriment of their more sincere and honest colleagues. Professional advice is overruled by an administrative fiat for this same purpose and the professionals thereafter to not co-operate. Can you blame them?

Mr. Narula has commented "that one of the underlying causes for this development is that many Ministers judge the civil servants not by their administrative competence but by their willingness and ability to do things which the Ministers wish them to do, no matter whether these are regular or not."

The Administrative Reforms Commission of India pointed out that "there is a disinclination among quite a number of Ministers to welcome frank and impartial advice. Instances are not wanting of Ministers preferring a convenient subordinate to a strong one, thereby making the latter not only ineffective but a sulky and unwilling worker." This process encourage inter-personal rivalry, state officers not having any hesitation or compunction in cutting across all canons of accepted human behaviour, public servant or private citizen.

It would help the steady growth of a healthy, independent and virile public service, loyal to the government and to the State, if politicians and Ministers would view with disfavour toadyism and flunkeyism on the part of state servants. Indeed this is very necessary at the moment, if we are to save the public service and restore to it much of the quality it has lost.

(To be Concluded)

REFERENCES

- 8) *Administrative Reforms Commission Report, Government of India.*
- (9) *Howard Wriggins—Rulers Imperatives p. 175.*

FOR THE RECORD

Proscribing Of Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam And Other Similar Organisations Law, No. 16 Of 1978

Certified May 23, 1978

A LAW TO PROSCRIBE THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROSCRIBING OF ANY OTHER ORGANISATION WHICH ADVOCATES THE USE OF VIOLENCE TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECT, THE EXISTENCE OF WHICH IS PREJUDICIAL TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES BY ANY SUCH ORGANIZATION, AND TO PROVIDE FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH OR INCIDENTAL THERETO.

Preamble:

WHEREAS an organisation styling itself as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has advocated the use of violence for the purpose of prejudicing national unity and integrity and thereby endangering national security, public safety and public order:

AND WHEREAS certain acts of violence have been committed in certain parts of the Island which are claimed to have been committed in pursuance of the objects of the said organisation:

AND WHEREAS the said acts have endangered national security, public safety and public order: AND WHEREAS it has become necessary to proscribe the said

organisation and to provide for the proscribing of other organisations advocating the use of violence and whose activities are prejudicial to national unity and integrity, national security, public safety and public order.

BE IT therefore enacted by the National State Assembly of the Republic of Sri Lanka as follows:

Short title.

1. This Law may be cited as the Proscribing of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Other Similar Organisations Law No. 16 of 1978.

Proscribing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and power of President to proscribe other like organisations.

2. (1) The organisation styled as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is hereby proscribed.

(2) If the President is of opinion that any other organisation advocates the use of violence and is either directly or indirectly concerned in or engaged in any unlawful activity, he may, by Order published in the Gazette, declare that such organisation is proscribed.

(3) Where any organisation is or has been proscribed by or under this Law, the provisions of this law shall apply to every other organisation engaged in activities substantially similar to those carried on or formerly carried on by the proscribed organisation in like manner as though it was also a proscribed organisation.

Provisions applicable to Orders made under Section 2 (2).

3. (1) Every Order made under the provisions of subsection (2) of section 2 shall come into force upon the date of such publication in the Gazette and shall be final and conclusive and shall not be called in question in any court by way of writ or otherwise.

(2) Every such Order shall as soon as possible after publication in the Gazette be brought before

the National State Assembly for approval and any such Order which is not approved by two thirds at least of the whole number of members of the National State Assembly (including those not present), voting in favour within a period of thirty days of the publication of such order in the gazette shall cease to operate upon the expiry of the period of thirty days unless such Order is earlier revoked or disapproved by the National State Assembly.

(3) Where such Order has not been approved by the National State Assembly, no subsequent Order in respect of the same organisation made before the expiry of one hundred and eighty days from the date of the first order, shall come into operation until such order is approved in like manner by the National State Assembly.

(4) Every Order approved by the National State Assembly shall remain in force for a period of one year from the date of such Order if not earlier revoked by the President or by the National State Assembly.

(5) Notice of the approval, disapproval or revocation of an Order under this section shall as soon as may be convenient be published in the Gazette.

Offences.

4. Where any organisation is or has been proscribed by or under this Law, any person who—

(a) wears any uniform, dress, symbol or other emblem which signifies or indicates any association with or membership of or adherence to such organisation; or

(b) summons a meeting of such organisation or participates or engages in any activity of or connected with or related to such organisation; or

(c) supports such organisation by inviting or enrolling members, con-

tributing or collecting funds or furnishing information or securing other assistance to such organisation; or

(d) harbours, conceals or in any other manner assists any member of such organisation with intent thereby to prevent, hinder or interfere with the apprehension, trial or punishment of such member; or

(e) makes, prints, distributes or publishes or is in any way concerned in the making, printing, distribution or publication of any written or printed matter which is or purports to be published by or on behalf of such organisation or by any member thereof; or

(f) Communicates or attempts to communicate to any other person in any manner any order, decision, declaration or exhortation made or purported to have been made by such organisation or by any member thereof or any information relating thereto,

shall be guilty of an offence.

Control of publications:

5. (1) Where any organisation is or has been proscribed by or under this Law—

(a) no person shall, without the approval in writing of the competent authority, print or publish in any newspaper any matter relating to

(i) any activity or proposed activity of such organisation or any act committed by or purported to have been committed by such organisation;

(ii) the investigation of any act or offence committed by or purported to have been committed by such organisation;

(b) no person shall, without the approval in writing of the competent authority; distribute or be concerned in the distribution of any newspaper printed or published in Sri Lanka or outside Sri Lanka containing any matter re-

ferred to in sub paragraph (i) or sub paragraph (ii) of paragraph (a).

(2) Any person who commits any act in contravention of any of the provisions of sub section (1) shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) (a) Where any person is convicted of an offence under this section, the court may, in addition to any punishment which it may lawfully impose for the offence, order that no person shall print, publish or distribute or in any way be concerned in the printing, publication or distribution of any such newspaper for such period as is specified in such order and that the printing press in which such newspaper was printed shall, for such period as is specified in such order, not be used for any purpose whatsoever or for any such purpose as is specified in the order.

(b) Where any proceedings have been instituted against any person for the commission of any offence under this section, it shall be competent for the court to make an interim order that the printing-press in which it is alleged that such newspaper was printed shall not be used for any purpose whatsoever or for any such purpose as is specified in the order until the conclusion of the trial.

Offences by bodies of persons:

6. Where an offence under this Law is committed by a body of persons, then—

(a) if that body of persons is a body corporate, every director and officer of that body corporate;

(b) if that body of persons is a firm, every partner of that firm; and

(c) if that body of persons is a body unincorporate other than a firm, every officer of that body responsible for its management and control,

shall be deemed to be guilty of such offence:

Provided that no such person shall be deemed to be guilty of such offence if he proves that such offence was committed without his knowledge or that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

Forfeiture of moneys, securities or credits and movable and immovable property of a proscribed organisation:

7. (1) Where any organisation is or has been proscribed by or under this law and the Minister is satisfied, after such inquiry as he may think fit, that any person has custody of any moneys, securities or credits which are being used or are intended to be used for the purposes of such organisation, the Minister may, by order in writing, declare that such moneys, securities or credits as are in the custody of such person or any moneys, securities or credits which may come into his custody after the making of such order and any other movable and immovable property belonging to such organisation, shall be forfeited to the State.

(2) The decision of the Minister under subsection (1) shall be final and conclusive and shall not be called in question in any court by way of writ or otherwise.

Provisions in any written law relating to the grant of bail not to apply to persons accused of any offence under this Law.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other written law—

(a) where any person suspected or accused of any offence under this Law appears or is produced before any court, such court shall order the detention of such person until the conclusion of the trial;

(b) every person convicted by any court of any offence under this Law shall, notwithstanding that he has lodged a petition of appeal against his conviction or the sentence imposed on him, be kept on remand until the determination of the appeal;

(c) any order made under the provisions of subsection (3) of Section 5, shall, notwithstanding any appeal made against such order, continue in force until the determination of such appeal:

Provided, however, that the Supreme Court may in exceptional circumstances release on bail any such person referred to in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) subject to such conditions as the Supreme Court may deem fit, or vary or suspend any order referred to in paragraph (c).

Provisions of the Administration of Justice Law No. 44 of 1973, relating to certain punishments not to apply to persons convicted or guilty of certain offences.

9. Notwithstanding anything in the Administration of Justice Law, No. 44 of 1973—

(a) the provisions of section 239 of the Law shall not apply in the case of any person who is convicted;

(b) the provisions of section 250 of that Law shall not apply in the case of any person who pleads or is found guilty.

by or before any court of any offence under this Law.

Offences to be triable by District Court.

10. Any person accused of any offence under this Law shall be tried by a District Court and shall be liable, on conviction, to a sentence of imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years.

Direction by Minister to detain persons who have committed offences under this Law or any other Law.

11. (1) Where the Minister has reason to believe or suspect that any person has committed or been concerned in the commission of any offence under any law and that such offence was committed in pursuance of or in furtherance of or in relation to the aims or objects or the apparent or ostensible aims

or objects of any organization proscribed by or under this Law or any organization to which the provisions contained in subsection (3) of section 2 of this Law would apply and whether or not such offence was committed before or after the date on which such organisation is proscribed, the Minister may order that such person be detained for a period not exceeding three months in the first instance in such place and subject to such conditions as may be determined by the Minister, and any such order may be extended from time to time for a period not exceeding three months at a time;

Provided, however, that the aggregate period of such detention shall not exceed a period of one year.

(2) (a) At any time after an order has been made in respect of any person under subsection (1), the Minister may direct that the operation of such order be suspended subject to such conditions as he may impose, and such restrictions as may be specified in the direction, in respect of his movement or his association or communication with other persons:

Provided, however, that any such direction shall not be in force for a period longer than the period specified in the order made under subsection (1).

(b) The Minister may revoke any such direction if he is satisfied that the person in respect of whom the direction was made has failed to observe any condition imposed or that the operation of the order can no longer remain suspended without detriment to public safety.

(3) Any person in respect of whom an order or direction has been made under the preceding subsections shall be informed of the offence or offences in connection with which such order or direction has been made and such person

or any other person on his behalf may make representations to the Advisory Board against such order or direction.

Advisory Board.

12. (1) There shall, for the purposes of this Law, be an Advisory Board, consisting of not less than three persons appointed by the President.

(2) The Minister may make rules in relation to the hearing and disposal of any representations that may be made by any person under meeting of the Advisory Board held to consider such representations as aforesaid shall be presided over by a Chairman nominated by the Minister and it shall be the duty of the Chairman to advise the Minister in respect of such representations.

Order under Section 11 not to be questioned in any court.

13. An order under section 11 shall not be called in question in any court by way of writ or otherwise.

Protection of officers c.

14. No suit, prosecution or other proceedings, civil or criminal, shall be against the Government or any officer or person for any act or thing in good faith done in pursuance or supposed pursuance of any order made or direction given under this Law.

Duration of this Law:

15. The provisions of this Law shall be in operation for a period of one year from the date of its commencement.

Interpretation.

16. In this Law unless the context otherwise requires—
“competent authority” means any person appointed by the Minister by name or by office to be a competent authority for the purposes of this law;

“newspaper” includes any journal, magazine, pamphlet or other publication;

“organization” includes any movement, society, party, association or body or group of persons; “printing press” includes any machinery, apparatus or plant capable of being used for printing, lithography, photography or other mode of representing or reproducing words in a visible form, or any type or other article belonging to such machinery, apparatus or plant; and

“unlawful activity” means any action, taken by any means whatsoever, whether within Sri Lanka or outside Sri Lanka by or on behalf of any organization, which is prejudicial to the internal security of Sri Lanka and includes any organised action likely to or intended to disrupt or endanger the sovereignty, unity or territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

* * *

Grama Sastra-9

Scriblings on Uva Villages

Justice And The Peasant

by Gamiya

I walked and walked and walked and entered a township courthouse. Everything looked suspended in mid-air with an aura of waiting: practically milling ocrwds (if crowds could mill) and shuffling of feet. Long drawn faces, taut, gaunt, waiting, waiting like that drama of the absurd, *Waiting for Godot*.

A sleek car, the make of which I won't tell you, came in and a person got down. More minutes and then, he came in to judge the nearly hundred cases, or so it would seem, in that stuffy room where I counted three hundred

people on all three sides: plaintiff, accused and observers/witnesses.

"Silence" reverberated through the unpretentious courthouse, and all fell to a deeper silence, for already they were in silent suspense since eight on the dot, and the minutes and seconds had dragged their weary feet to 9.40 a.m. Case after case went on, one hearing the number "25467321" and the date of postponement "14th September 1978", and we were in October '77.

What hope in the future and in the music of the spheres as they roll on in glee in deep space: all months ahead. Adventists have no reason to fear, the world wouldnt end till September '78, what.

Then I realised that we were all wrong. How disorderly is our order: how unjust is our justice; our lawlessness is our law: seventeen persons were called: Ranmenike, Bissomenike, R. M. Muttubanda, the whole gamut of Ratnayake Mudiyansele, Disanayake Mudiyansele, the Heen, Punchi, Loku, Kalu and Sudu Banas—they all filed in middle-aged, suffering written on their faces, with them came Sellamma, Kandasamy, bringing up the middle set!

And what was their crime, I pray you? That they had squatted on a big hurly-burly fellow's land.

There he was with the stern solemnity of an owl dethroned from his favourite branch of a jak tree, struggling in his colour to be fair, but grossly unfair in his demeanour. These poor people, the backbone of our country, had had the misfortune to "squat" on his land under orders from an official, three months before July last year.

And he was asking for his pound of flesh, several pounds in fact.

Ten minutes later, another set of another twenty for the same cause. All the old administration

papers and the Usa-something-wasama or some such thing were there, but here were people who had become the puny pawns and playthings of petty politicians behind big money and big landed estates.

The lines of suffering on the face of the old woman who led the group and who was being given a verdict, would tell of untold tales, but who will hear? What rubbish about social integration. If in the green wood they do these things, what would they not do in the dry? The Sellamma Kandasamy duo, in that group of fifteen others showed a terrible mien, heaved a deep sigh for the tragedy of unjust laws.

Who wrote these laws for whom? Advocates of Lyon in France have decided to work towards an important goal: "to try to work out another, and more just scheme of justice adapted to man." "There, it is the great inter-play of money versus money" (says a Jesuit lawyer, Mr. Boyer), "here it is the justice of end-of-the-month affairs, or again of daily life and small tragedies, But inside this courthouse, with "yes, sir", "no sir". And in between the watchful guardians of the peace. The whole thing reeks of comedy" (Info. C. Internat., 516, juillet, '77- p7-8)

Justice is for all, it is true, but it is partial, for the scales are uneven already at the start."

* * *

HELD OVER

* INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

—Vietnam And China

* THE WORLD TODAY

—Zaire

ACID BOMB EXPLOSION—I

Chapter One

GETTING THERE

by James Goonewardene

This is the first chapter of James Goonewardene's new novel ACID BOMB EXPLOSION. It is a sensitive novel about one of the most critical periods of Sri Lankan history. All rights reserved by the author.

The train arrived at the station in a whirl of dust—the scattered bits of litter went tossing and rolling with the gust of breeze. Deva seated by the window of his carriage watched the passage of this mass of rubbish as it went disappearing down the platform. The train came to a halt with a grinding of brakes. He didn't stir. This was where he got off but he stayed in his seat. This was the end of the journey but it didn't seem to matter if he got off here or just went on. It didn't seem to matter to him what happened. He just stared out of the window.

The heat was wafted up to his face suddenly; it was then he moved. The breeze, coming in from the sea, had been blowing in steadily as he rode down in the train, but now suddenly he felt the heat. The breeze cut off, one suddenly felt the heat sweep up from the platform, the scorching sensation on the bare hands and the ooze of sweat under the clothes.

He had felt no discomfort on the train apart from the smell from a basket of fish a man had dragged into the compartment; it had been lying there until its owner left some stations back; the reddish, brown stains on the floor,

coming, it was obvious, from the constant passage of fish baskets, the thick lumps of coagulated dirt on the wooden head-rests, the fans up in the ceiling gone—just the metal brackets now—the fans wrenched off and taken—he was seeing it all as if he were a visitor to the country—the railway station, the grubby railway station, the disintegrating carriage, the unswept platform.

Finally he swung his bag from off the rack over his head and stepped out and stood on the platform in the sweltering heat looking about him. There was an air of desolation—an absence of life and movement; everything was still, the stillness heightened by the few, bare brown bodies moving wearily up and down the platform hauling stuff off the train—the bodies bony and undernourished, the skins on them leathery. His eyes moved to the walls of the station master's office, to its falling plaster, the wooden fence, blue painted but chipped and weather-beaten, with patches of white showing where the paint had peeled off. His eyes went to the toilets, marked males and females in Sinhala—the English letters had been replaced with Sinhala letters but the discoloured walls, the pools of stagnant water, and the filth choked drainage pit outside the toilets revealed an indifference and contempt for those who had to use them. The train steamed off and when it was finally gone he turned away and as he did so he saw the piles of rubble and rotting packing cases lying about outside the goods-shed; the advancing jungle of creepers and weeds had already claimed the rubble.

He slung his bag on his shoulder and trudged up the narrow roadway. The resthouse wasn't far away. In a few minutes he arrived at the main road flanked, beyond the junction, by textile shops, gro-

cery stores, tea boutiques, junk stalls, trinket vendor's counters, a tailor's shop and a couple of eating houses—the last named called themselves hotels and had given themselves such grandiloquent names as 'The Imperial Hotel' and 'The Royal Hotel'—dingy places with stained walls, rotting woodwork and a few moth-eaten show cases. On his right was the bus stand. There was no visible evidence of the police station, the post office or the power house. The rest of the town consisted of small coconut allotments and houses of various shapes and sizes, standing in the centre of run-to-seed and decrepit gardens—just blocks of land in which the human habitations had come up, so different from village huts with their well-swept, tidy compounds; these gardens were untidy with dumps of coconut husks, decaying branches and other undisposed of garbage such as tins, bottles and empty cardboard cartons—the progression towards urbanisation seemed painful and difficult and full of unsuspected pitfalls.

Deva asked his way at one of the eating houses and one of the bums, seated outside an eating house lifted up his dull, almost sightless eyes and said; "Over the bridge—you go straight on, get over the bridge and you are there." There were three of them seated on the ledge waiting for a hand-out from someone. Only one of them was an old man. The other two were young and able-bodied, unemployed.

As he went on he passed the fish and beef stalls, and soon he had left the bazaar behind. Then suddenly it was quieter; he had come to the more open area of the town and he felt easier in mind. His feelings of doubt had already started to leave him. He now vaguely remembered all this from old times—this town and this bridge; travel-

ling down to the southern provinces one had to pass this way.

He finally arrived at the rest-house. It was around eleven. He went in and registered. He was fagged out and wanted to refresh himself. The moment he was shown his room he went into the wash-room and moistened his face and neck and hands. He felt better after that. Vaguely he heard the sound of the sea—it seemed to come from a great distance away; the thoughts were passing swiftly through his mind, his reaction to the town, to the resthouse, but there was time to think about all that. Now he was tired. He had been full of sweat and dust as he came through the town, but after he had been to the washroom he felt better. He made sure his lunch was going to be ready at midday; when he had made certain of that he went down to the river at the bottom of the large, gravel and weed-ridden grounds. He stood here and then drawing out a cigar from the pocket of his shirt he lit it.

The rest house was wedged in between the sea on the one side and the river on the other. Built at the beginning of the century it still seemed to hold the restfulness of those early times. The shapeless mass of cabook and granite on which it stood took its rise from almost the edge of the road and on it they had built the rest-house where colonial administrators could stop to rest as they rode down the coast in their horse carriages, quaint, tough colonial rulers with their pith hats, great handle-bar moustaches and deep, intimidating voices. The weeds now grew freely round the coconut trees and hibiscus as if a jungle was being brought in slowly to blot out this colonial past.

He was suddenly, once more, caught by a feeling of depression. This seemed to come on him every

little while. It came from an old, raw wound in his mind. He watched the smoke from his cigar spread thinly upwards and disappear. Two hundred yards away a train whistled as it rumbled over the bridge. He began to think about an article he had read coming down on the train. Someone had written that herding rats and even large animals into the constricted space of a small cage could drive them into frenzy, madness and cannibalism. The article had argued that putting human beings into a similar situation could produce the same result. Asia's madness, he thought, seemed to have only just begun despite being crowded and constrictive for a longer period than it had been in any other part of the world.

His island home had seemed to him in London still protected from this dangerous trend. Certainly it had had its share of blood-letting during the communal disturbances, but it had not yet gone sufficiently mad to produce its extermination camps and secret police. For so long he had wanted to get back to the ordered, peaceful life he had once known. As things became progressively bad for him in London he had so often talked of his country and its people and of their virtues, and all he had done since his return home was to look for the things he had talked about, the people he had known, supposedly gentle and considerate, with their unusual willingness to share their meal with you or "give up their bed for a stranger—all wonderful virtues; but where had all those, well mannered people gone?

He heard the summons to lunch. He tossed his cigar and went back. He was a lean, wiry man of middle height—educated, it seemed, yet with nothing very distinctive about him, nothing to distinguish him from any one else one ran into on the street. His face showed nothing of his skills.

There was nothing to mark him out as a man of exceptional talent. What did distinguish him was this drag on his left leg as he walked. His movements were easy and relaxed but he dragged this foot of his. One noticed it. He paused on the verandah to take another look at the scene he had just left. The river intrigued him. A river had always had a soothing effect on him, but this river flowing on the edge of the town had unusual features about it. It was wide by the resthouse, but further on it narrowed itself and took a straighter course. A quarter of a mile away it made its exit into the sea, and, no doubt, during the monsoon, a disturbed scene at the point where the water met with terns screeching over the turbulent water as the fish started to leap as they got washed down into the sea. It was peaceful and silent now—the clumps of bamboo and other shrubs growing on its banks in which the birds nested—it was good and peaceful.

He followed the waiter into the gloomy dining room and took his seat at the table on which there was the usual rice and curry. He surveyed the meal and then started to serve himself. After he had been eating a moment, alone in the dining room, with so many empty tables round him his mind began to wander until his thoughts came to rest on his appointment that afternoon. He'll take the job. There was nothing else for him to do but to take it. He had come to the end of the road. The springs inside him had dried up and there was nothing more for him to do but to take it. He had read the unmistakable signs. The intellectuals had put up their shutters and the serious artists had turned to more profitable activities. He had held two exhibitions and that was enough to prove that the county was in no mood for him or anyone

else like him. Skills were at a discount here and people seemed to have no other interest than that which concerned the tasks of how to fill their bellies and put clothes on their backs. There were other signs he had begun to read; they were deeper and more sinister, and they were creating a mood of a kind that could lead to one result and he tried not to think of it.

A shadow fell across the table as he sat thinking. He looked up to find a middle-aged man in a bush shirt standing over him. "Sorry we couldn't give you a better meal—its the best we could provide at the moment."

"Doesn't seem too bad to me," said Deva.

"We used to serve a good meal here—the regular cook took a day off suddenly and left us with only a stand-in—not much good at it; besides things have started to disappear from the shops and stalls."

"The meal's all right," said Deva, "I am not complaining." He bent over his meal once more. "Your staff running off like that must create problems for you", he said as he glanced up. "No, not really—only today I had this problem. Not many people get about these days—no holiday makers as there used to be. You get the odd one stopping here for a drink or some other refreshment on his way somewhere—so there's no pressure as we used to have—the cook can safely take a day off....."

The man spoke fluent English. That was unusual for a resthouse keeper. He knew from past experience that they generally spoke a kind of pidgin. Obviously he was not the run-of-the-mill resthouse keeper. "You are the manager here, or what they used to call the resthouse keeper?" Deva glanced up at him and an unexpressed question seemed to hover on his lips.

"You are thinking I don't fit in here," said the manager.

"Yes, the thought occurred to me."

"I am frequently asked this question."

"And you are getting bored with it."

"Irritates me a bit sometimes—always personal questions people ask here—I don't mean you—its the others, always probing, prying."

"I didn't intend to pry, I swear," protested Deva. "You spoke to me and one thing led to another—that was all."

"Oh, I don't mind telling you—I don't mind telling anyone; you didn't ask me—I told you; you see, I was drifting around looking for a job, and this thing came up and I took it. Life's not too complicated here—a few problems now and then—otherwise, there's nothing to grumble about." Deva looked up at the manager with a new interest, looked at the tough, lean, firm exterior of the man. He was a solid, rugged sort of man one did not expect to find running a resthouse. He had obviously weathered a few storms in life—his face was a bit like the rockbed of a stream with its top soil washed off—pitted a bit here and there, but it was a cleanly hewn face—the clear, hard, basic features. "Why don't you sit down and have a drink while I eat my meal?"

"I had better not. I don't customarily sit with my visitors. I am sorry, I've made it a rule here." He stood a moment scrutinising his visitor and then he wandered off, but came back when Deva had started to finish his meal.

"Like some dessert?"

"Yes, please."

"Fruit?"

"Yes, fruit would be excellent."

The manager was gone again; it was suddenly very quiet. Deva thought it strange that a resthouse

should exist here at all. There was no visible support it seemed to have. It seemed to be running on its own momentum. He was its only visitor at the moment, and there was no evidence that anyone else had been in that day. Perhaps, there were good days and bad—it was just that he had happened to come here at a time when there was a lull.

The manager returned, accompanied by a waiter carrying the dessert and then he was gone. Deva finally finished his meal and rose. He felt stuffed with all that meal inside him. He rose with difficulty—it was too bad he had eaten too much, he thought as he wandered slowly out to the verandah. It was a long time since he had had an excellent rice meal. The substitute cook the manager apologised for had not done too badly, he thought.

Everything was now quieter—the sea, the deserted beach with not a man or an animal on it—the breeze blowing softly and lifting the sand over the surface, the tufts of marram grass and bintamburu in the foreground, and suddenly a sadness came over him, being contented he felt lonely and missed his dead wife. Something in the peace here stirred old and persistent memories. He stood there motionless as if hypnotised by the tin-sheet brilliant sea heaving quietly out there. He was so absorbed in all this that he hadn't noticed the manager return and stand by him. Suddenly, he fished out a cigar and offered it—"A cigar," he said.

"No, don't mind me," said the manager. "Go ahead and light yours." Deva lit his cigar and began to smoke it, the earlier mood still with him. He was beginning to like it here. He had hungered for a haven—a wind-blown, safe, protective haven, not yet overtaken by human habitations and overcrowding. He was particularly

glad that the beach was free of fishermen's huts. They had a right to living space, but not to turn a beach into a slum; this alone—a slum on the beach—would have been enough to send him on his way again. Wherever they put up their huts there was a village full of puddles, of stagnant water, heaps of fly-ridden rubbish dumps, exposed human toilets and destitution. This inability to deal with the problem of destitution seemed to be the most visible and damning evidence that something had gone wrong back here since he left home several years earlier; something was wrong, seriously wrong.

"No fishermen's huts around here, I noticed," he said.

"Haven't still started to settle in here—they may eventually do so. So few places left here now where their little communities have not sprung up—pressure on living space, on housing, on food, on even grave-yards".

"This is possibly the cause of all this, the overcrowding, the dreadful overcrowding of destitutes—been abroad, no doubt and perhaps, seeing it all for the first time—always causes distress; soon enough you get used to it."

Deva nodded, his thoughts still somewhere else. "Yes," he said, "I was sorry to go when I did. There was so much I felt I was leaving behind; but back now it has begun to bewilder and confuse me."

A long silence followed now. They both stood staring at the sea and both moved by deeper emotions than they seemed capable of dealing with. Suddenly they wanted to talk of other things, of trivial things, suddenly burdened with their own private thoughts they could not trust themselves to talk about them.

"The sea's rough out there today," said the manager.

"Always rough here?"

"It is always dangerous. Something to do with the river meeting it here, barely a quarter of a mile away—strong currents there all the time. You'll notice how the waves dig in as they roll back. Barely three feet from the shore you can be suddenly out of your depth."

"Does anyone, ever bathe here?"

"A few do, the adventurous ones—now and then someone get's carried away. Its usually a visitor to the place becoming too sure of himself—not paying heed to the warning. No one has gone in my time. I always warn people of the risks."

"That's something I must remember. I swim a bit but not well enough to fight that sort of current."

The visitor was still a stranger, thought the manager, the only one in the last twenty four hours. I must not go probing, he thought but his curiosity got the better of him.

"You talk of going swimming," he said glancing at him, "You intend to stay long?"

Deva nodded broodingly, keeping his eyes on the sea. After a moment he turned and looked at his companion. "Yes, it is what I am hoping to do."

The manager noticed while the stranger gave answers to questions asked he was reluctant to talk. He didn't give answers freely—a reticent man who preferred silence—visitors, with nothing to do, were generally inclined to talk, but as a rule he himself avoided asking questions. A visitor was entitled to his privacy.

"You hope, of course, to stay at the resthouse?"

"No, not at the resthouse."

"You have someone here then you are going to stay with?"

"I am a stranger here. I don't know anyone. Actually it depends

on what's going to happen after I've been to the school in town here."

"The school?"

"Yes, the school—you know where it is?"

"Yes, I do—the only one around here; everyone knows the school", "I have an appointment there this afternoon..about an hour from now. I was going to ask you the way to it—only the vaguest idea how to get to it. I haven't actually asked anyone yet."

"Its across the bridge—ask for the police station—its not far from there. You won't have difficulty finding it."

The manager was once more scrutinising his visitor. There was something that attracted him to the stranger—there was something compelling about him—the quiet, self assured way he gave his answers, but yet with some kind of brooding sorrow that seemed to hang over his answers. He looked at him, looked at his oval face and heavy brows, over which his longish hair fell as if permanently disturbed by a wind. Yet his brow was free of furrows, a smooth brow of a man who was not young and not yet too old—a man, perhaps, in his late thirties or early forties.

"The truth is I have applied for a job at the school", volunteered Deva answering the question that had started to nag him, despite himself and his natural reluctance to go prying into people's affairs Deva glanced round him. There were chairs behind them.

"Why don't we sit?"

The manager nodded; they went to the chairs and sat in them

"You are not a teacher, are you?"

"Actually, I am not"

"I can recognise a teacher when I see one—besides, I know some of the teachers from this school..

..somehow, you don't look like one of them." Deva smiled but said nothing. How much did one open upto a stranger one met by accident in a resthouse. Saying nothing he stared out to sea. It was a long, brooding stare. The manager, getting no answer from him, glanced at him but decided not to intrude on his thoughts. If a man was unwilling to talk one naturally left him alone. There they sat like two ship-wrecked men who had been thrown in each other's company on the shore of a strange island, and making tentative attempts to know each other, but yet wary of each other.

A warm blast of air blew in from the beach, and there they sat silently, thinking—one of them a resthouse keeper who looked like a mendicant who had found refuge in an abandoned resthouse, and the other an artist running away from his calling to find obscurity in a far away school. It was however, the beginning of a strange friendship and also of events that seemed to have no beginning and no end, dull and apparently insignificant events beginning, it seemed, in routine situations but as the events came to an end, growing in terrying proportion and fear and death and finally, nothing.

NEXT WEEK

THE SCHOOL & PRINCIPAL

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NEXT ISSUE

CARAVAN FAMILY

—In The North

TRAVELLER'S TRAVAILS

—In CGR

WHIFF OF MONEY

—Review

BOOK REVIEW •

Racism And Radical Nationalism

A Savage War of Peace by Alistair Horne (Macmillan, £8.95)

Begin and Co. edited by Israel Shahak (M. R. Mehdi, 7 Lodge Drive, London N13, £1.50)

The Foundation of the League of Arab States by Ahmed M. Gomaa (Longman, £14)

Last Sunset by Stephen Harper (Collins, £5.95)

ALISTAIR HORNE described metropolitan France's reluctant forging of a new relationship with long-colonised Algeria. His battle-pieces are longer than his perspective. In particular, the internal Algerian background that Jacques Berque so finely communicated for the pre-war years is missing, as is a sense of the links between settler colonialism and fascism.

But the narrative sweep of this strongly constructed and well-illustrated book does not gloss over the racism of the doomed settlers.

They made Algerians call themselves "Arabs", much as the term "Bantu" was dragged out of African throats by Pretoria's settlers. The vigilantist tendencies, and infection of French conscripts with a taste for torturing the voteless, are convincingly evoked. The role of the exceptions—like Pierre Chauvet and Franz Fanon, who came to Algeria and went over to the national liberation movement—is fairly assessed.

The independence war was won politically, not militarily. France in the fourth republic was blind to the irrelevance, in the balance of world power, of destructive military feats. The genocidal "pacification" only drew Algerians, as a lesser evil on occasion, to the nationalist side.

The book's flaw is a lack of empathy with the Algerian people. Like some American studies of the Vietnam war, or Robert Blake's recent account of Zimbabwe, this is a metropolitan-slanted account of a war in the third world. The anti-democratic and militarist flavour of De Gaulle's predecessors in France found brutal expression in Algeria. De Gaulle himself, saw through settler pretensions, and with accurate snobbery commented of Thatcherlike Poujadism, "In my day, grocers voted for solicitors. Today, solicitors vote for grocers."

But notwithstanding a stereotyped view peeping through of "pragmatic" Algerians and "hot-blooded colons", this is a praiseworthy account of France' shame in Algeria, without recrimination or special pleading.

Israel Shahak's "anthology" of "Begin and Co as they really are" assembles, mostly in translation from Hebrew, some fascinating evidence of past Zionist terrorism and present-day expansionism. The implicit lesson of this revealing documentation, all from Begin's own camp, seems to be that Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation cannot be achieved without American intervention to counter Begin's brand of settler colonialism.

Recalling France's involvement in Algeria, the reality of a Middle Eastern military guarantee surely needs to be international and not unilaterally American, and to be very much subordinated to a political settlement integrating the Palestinian people with the community of their region and one world. When such a settlement is being agreed, and if the Israeli government is still of Begin's stamp, Shahak's book will avert illusion on the part of negotiators and the world electorate.

The Foundation of the League of Arab States considers wartime dip-

lomacy and inter-Arab politics to conclude that the Arab League was founded less by British initiative than by Middle Eastern realism. The insights into Iraqi dominance in the thirties, and on Egypt's "Pharaonism" as an alternative to a wider Arab orientation, are freshly based on Arabic sources. Egyptian fascism, under Ahmed Hussein, is seen in balance.

The Palestine question too shaped British encouragement of the Arab League's beginnings, following Syria's controversial independence from France. Social and political currents today are illumined by this judicious book.

Stephen Harper sees Aden as a modern "nest of pirates". His attitude to its people mirrors the Algerian settler claim that their labouring class were "rats". He writes, for example, of "a 'bag' of five dead Arabs", and admires "a wickedly grinning lieutenant", who claimed "We got a couple of brace", "as he took me down to the vaults of the Chartered Bank used as a trophy room cum morgue. The grotesque bodies of four fat Arabs..." It is a representative gem from this *Daily Express* style sample of prejudice.

There is no mention of Amnesty International's Rastgeldi report on British tortures in Aden, nor of the follow-up and official Bowen investigation. This distasteful book seeks to inspire contempt for the people of the Middle East, as if the mistakes of the Algerian and Suez wars had never been assimilated. Its sparse obeisances to simplistic anticommunism don't disguise a fundamental and disfiguring blockage of human sympathy and understanding.

Nicholas Hyman
—Tribune, UK.

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AN ELEPHANT STORY—I

NLDB vs Cold Stores Ltd.

—will a hoax succeed?—

by A Tribune Investigator

WITH THE APPROACH of the first anniversary of the UNP Government drawing near, *Tribune* has been watching with considerable interest the activities of the different public sector organisations and we had hoped to present our findings in the course of the next few months. One such public sector organisation, in the field of agriculture, to which we had paid a great deal of attention—in spite of the difficulties to obtain any information from the Chairman or its officials—is the National Livestock Development Board (NLDB). This may have been among the last of the organisations which we would have dealt with because of the difficulties of ferreting out information, but an advertisement in some of the Sunday papers (11/6/78), by Elephant House made us change our minds. The advertisement was a bash at the NLDB.

Let us now refer to the preliminary information and evaluations we have made so far about the NLDB. First, within a matter of weeks of the appointment of the new Board of Management, came the news of re-examination of the proposed abattoir at Alawwa, and shortly afterwards the announcement of the abandonment of the pipe dreams of four years of negotiations. *Tribune* was in total agreement with the decision. Why spend close on Rs. 100 million on a sophisticated abattoir when Sri Lanka did not have the animals? This was clear and decisive action which other corporations and government boards can emulate with profit.

Second, after the welcome action about the abattoir, *Tribune* followed the progress of this Corporation with more interest. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands re-defined the primary function of the Board thus: "...to save the dwindling animal herd..." *Tribune* was made to understand that the policy was mainly directed to an upgrading and multiplication programme.

Thirdly, *Tribune* has read the complimentary comments made in the NSA in respect of the work of the NLDB—its proposals, and the execution plans made by the Board. Outside the NSA too the comments about the NLDB were favourable and augured well for the future. It was said that the NLDB was getting its teeth into the problems confronting it and that it had laid out clear cut policies in priority segments.

Fourth, *Tribune* learnt of the World Bank—IDA Dairy Development programme had been transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the NLDB. *Tribune* tried desperately hard to get information of the proposals put forward by the NLDB—and which now only await ratification from Washington—but failed. From the news that has trickled down to us about the proposals to the World Bank—IDA, *Tribune* understands is that the proposals represented a clear concise evaluation of the immediate needs of a dying industry. *Tribune* awaited a press release on the matter and that not forthcoming, *Tribune* approached the Chairman NLDB who, most apologetically, asked us whether we would mind waiting a week or two. We have waited, but nothing has yet been released. We have become very interested in this aspect of NLDB activities as we are reliably informed that the proposals made by the NLDB

and the firm stand taken by this body had received more than fair praise from the Review Team of the World Bank. It is well known that praise for the Review Team of the World Bank is not, at any time, easy to get.

Fifth, *Tribune* was able to get information of a successful negotiation of animals and equipment under the Dutch Assistance Programme: that air freighted consignments of Friesians which had arrived in difficult conditions when foot and mouth disease was raging in the country were looked after in a way that has earned acclaim: that these animals were destined for Haragama which was affected by the foot and mouth disease just before the arrival of the imported stock; that alternate accommodation, we are told, was rustled up within days to accommodate the pampered heifers which left their homeland in below freezing conditions and have survived to tell the tale: and that all said and done, it was a remarkable achievement when one considers earlier debacles.

Tribune was impressed with all that it had learnt in bits and pieces from various sources and endeavoured to get more details. But the NLDB is an impregnable fortress from which it is almost impossible to extract information. The publicity-shy Chairman in giving us a few points—mainly confirming or denying what we had heard—courteously remarked that we should wait for cessation of quarantine before making a statement.

Sixth, *Tribune* understands that one of the Department of Agriculture farms up-country is to be handed over to the NLDB: and that another consignment of Friesians are on the way.

Seventh, our sleuths have been able to come up with some figures

from places which collect statistics which show that the sources from which the NLDB derives its income have appreciated considerably viz., livestock and coconut. We believe that the figures are authentic and if they are not the NLDB should furnish us with the correct figures (and also all the statistics about its activities).

(a) *Livestock*: Tribune understands that there has been a very significant increase recorded in the animal population of the NLDB:

Item	September 1977	May 1978
COWS	969	2,057
CALVES	653	868
BUFFALOES	463	567
SHEEP	3,700	5,116
CART BULLS	154	201
STUD BULLS	84	99
PIGS	2,838	3,262

These figures include:

460 MRY's Freisians imported from Netherlands.

900 sheep imported from India and in quarantine

(b) *Crops*: Tribune understands that there were significant increases in crop figures during this period. In the first pick of 1977, the total recorded figure was 2.4 million, while the parallel first pick for 1978 recorded 4.4 million showing an increase of 82.5%. In the second pick of 1977, the total recorded figure was 3.4 million, while the parallel second pick for 1978 was 4.8 million showing an increase of 41.4%. Nurseries for selected seed nuts set up in two properties have been extended. Approximately 15,000 bushels of paddy have been harvested from farms under this Board during the present season. We hope to get more detailed figures soon about the crop figures of different NLDB coconut estates.

It is in this background that one must examine the startling disclosures by M/s. Cold Stores Ltd.,

in the advertisement in the Sunday Newspapers. The article, it was claimed, was "inserted in the interests of the customer" and places "facts about the current situation of frozen produce."

Are these startling disclosures factual? Are they correct? If not, will the usually reticent Chairman reveal the relevant and pertinent facts?

The Cold Stores Ltd., or Elephant House as it is popularly known, has made some devastating claims. Tribune contacted the Chairman NLDB, whom we were told was in office although he was officially enjoying (according to his staff) the first few days of a well-earned rest. The answer was "may I comment after seeing my Minister?..." Can the reading public expect a reply soon?

But until such time, Tribune ventures to suggest that the Sunday advertisement in question is an import-fostered gimmick to justify the unwarranted import by Cold Stores Ltd., of 50,000 pounds of frozen meat (vide *Confidentially* at page 32): that it is a smoke-screen to fool public to justify that massive importation of Australian, New Zealand and American frozen produce on the bogus pretext of supporting consumer demand.

And, if so, has M/s. Cold Stores Ltd., (alias Elephant House) engineered and manipulated the statistics to persuade the Trade authorities not only to reduce the existing tariff rates but also permit imports?

Is local production to suffer because of hotel requirements?

Is this country rushing headlong into a new era of rackets at a time of galloping inflation? Are business enterprises like Elephant House, in their craze for easy import profits, to take this country to the brink of a new revolution and insurrection—for imports of frozen

produce will open the floodgates to an import orgy that can only lead to a revolution of have-nots who will neither have local produce to eat nor be able to afford the imports?

More about the elephantine hoax next week!

(To be Continued)

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

May 30-June 6

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; CM—Chintamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release; DK—Dinakara; DW—Dawasa.

TUESDAY, MAY 30: Sri Lanka has been assured of an 'umbrella cover' of foreign aid for all its major development programs including the accelerated Mahaweli project; all that is needed now is to find the manpower and technical resources to implement the various programs. A Malaysian cargo vessel MV 'Wing On' is reported to be sinking off Trincomalee. The River Valleys Development Board will collaborate with a reputed South Korean firm in the execution of the different projects under the accelerated Mahaweli Development Scheme. The Minister of Fisheries made surprise visits to over twenty Fisheries Corporation stalls and detected severa

irregularities. The present scheme of granting scholarships to educational administrators and teachers will be completely revised to ensure that more persons would get a chance of going abroad and broadening their knowledge the Minister of Education said—CDN. Sri Lanka would obtain substantial financial aid from oil rich countries for various development projects. The Minister of Finance said that he was surprised to learn that nearly 30000 Sri Lankan domestic and garage mechanics are employed in Italy. The USSR-Sri Lanka plan of Cultural and Scientific Exchange was signed at the Foreign Ministry yesterday. According to the Chairman of the Agricultural Development Authority the reason for the shortage and high prices of coconuts was the inadequate application of fertiliser. The Minister of Labour will shortly introduce legislation to legalise the five day week—CDM. A crash program to streamline the CTB service is to get under way next month said the Minister of Transport. The National Narcotics Advisory Board has decided to start a joint investigation with the Indian Narcotics Bureau to trace the agents in opium smuggling. A 35 year old Englishman was arrested yesterday in the possession of 11 lb of hashish valued at more than Rs. 65,000 police reported—SU. Vamadevan who was arrested recently is to be the fourth accused in the Chenkaladi co-operative society robbery—DP. The couple who had given shelter and who were arrested along with Vamadevan will appear before the Hatton Magistrate to day—VK. Canada has presented 2000 tons of milk powder worth Rs. 11 million to Sri Lanka—DM. Each Agricultural Officer will be responsible for 400-600 farmer families and look after all their needs—LD. The US will ask its NATO allies this week to call for a full Israeli withdrawal from captured

Arab territories Israel radio announced. The US is looking into reports that Cuba has offered to provide Rhodesia black nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo with military advisers a State Department official said yesterday—CDM. Ex-President Ali Soilih of the Comoro Islands recently deposed in a coup was shot dead early today attempting to escape from house arrest the government announced—SU.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31: Sri Lanka's rubber export market was now experiencing a boom and prices at the local weekly auctions were continuing to increase according to the Rubber Broker's Association. The President, Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka will today preside at the convocation and deliver the convocation address at the BMICH where eight honorary doctorates will be conferred on distinguished nationals. All long distance buses coming into the city from places north of Colombo will soon terminate in Colombo North and not in Pettah as at present; a modern bus terminal with all amenities is soon to be constructed. The police will bid farewell to their chief, Mr. Stanley Senanayake, IGP at a colourful parade today. The government will come down hard on late comers to office; Ministers have been instructed to deal firmly with those who are not at their desks on time. An MP will be able to nominate two persons to serve as observers in the Electoral Job Placement Committees in addition to his or her own participation—CDN. A number of Ministers styled 'Project Ministers' are to be appointed shortly and will function outside the cabinet shortly; they are expected to be assigned specific projects which at present fall within the ambit of cabinet ministers; this is because the work of ministers has increased to such an extent as to become virtually un-

wieldy to control. The Dept of Health Services will import X-ray equipment worth Rs. 75 million this year. The Hatton Magistrate yesterday remanded Ramalingam and his wife Pushpakanthi, who were arrested along with Vamadevan indefinitely—CDM. The satellite station at Padukka is to be streamlined and geared to meet the increased telecommunication requirement of the Export Promotion Zone. The Police made a major breakthrough in their investigations into the recent spate of burglaries in the city when they arrested a suspect at Kollupitiya last morning. The Englishman who was found to have 11 lb of hashish in his possession is believed to be a carrier for an international ring of narcotics dealers; several Pakistanis and a Sri Lankan resident abroad are believed to be members of this ring—SU. The CID has instructed police stations to take steps to arrest immediately the six terrorist suspects who have not surrendered and who are evading arrest—VK. The government has decided to replant 50,000 acres of neglected tea at a cost of Rs. 360 million. The government has decided to close 75% of the Divisional Development Councils as they are running at a loss; the previous government spent Rs.1000 million to establish them. More than 20,000 youths who have not been able to pursue higher studies will be given bank loans to start their own business ventures—DW. Teachers who were transferred due to political and other pressures will be re-transferred to their old places. The Ministry of Trade has decided to import 5 million tins of fish—LD. Accusing the US and the Soviet Union of duplicity in their disarmament proposals, China predicted yesterday that eventually one of the super powers would go to war against each other. A leading Israeli electronic firm to-

day unveiled two sophisticated reconnaissance systems one of which is said to be unique, for it traces the location of enemy missile bases—CDM. King Khalid of Saudi Arabia arrived in Paris yesterday for a two day visit to France; Saudi Arabia would negotiate on the purchase of 100 French 'Mirage 2000' jet fighters and missiles with a total value of 3500 million dollars. NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns yesterday said that the US may go ahead and produce the controversial high-radiation Neutron warhead because of Soviet refusal to make a matching arms control concession—SU. Pakistan offered yesterday to enter talks with its neighbouring states on ways and means of reducing military expenditure and building security and mutual trust in its region—CDN.

THURSDAY, JUNE 1: Making his convocation address, the President said 'I wish I could shatter this structure to bits and then the people to build it closer to their heart's desire; he was referring to the economy 'restrained, constricted and brought to the verge of collapse' which the government was saddled with. Sri Lanka's proposal for a World Disarmament Authority initiated by President Jayewardene at the Commonwealth Regional Meeting in Sydney recently has the undecleared blessings of UN Sec. Gen. Kurt Waldheim. The government has banned the import of all luxury motor cars with effect from today. Beginning today all the 2847000 households in Sri Lanka will be visited by an army of enumerators to revise the 1978 Parliamentary Voter's Lists—CDN. 'The government is opening up a new way of life for the vast majority of the people of this country; are they going to fritter it away arguing about ideological differences; or waste their time consider-

ing who should form a future government; this was the challenge posed by the President in the course of his convocation address. Law and order has to be maintained at all costs and we cannot allow the people to take the law into their own hands said the IGP Mr. Ana Seneviratne addressing pressmen at Police HQ's yesterday—CDM. The President in the course of his convocation address lamented that corruption and inefficiency are still rampant in the country. All passengers who purchased tickets and flew to Jaffna by Air Ceylon during the communal disturbances last August are to be refunded their air fares—SU. The President in his Convocation address said that he would treat all citizens equally, would grant equal opportunities for each one's progress and that he would give equal opportunities to all minorities—DP. A Palmyrah Products Development Council comprising seven members was set up by the Minister of Plantation Industries; its HQ's is in Jaffna—EN. Over six lakhs worth of dry fish imported by the CWE has been declared unfit for human consumption in the last two months and has been sent to the Oils and Fats Corporation to produce animal food. 12,000 acres of land under the Mahaweli Project will be distributed to farmers shortly. The government has decided to use a computer to choose applicants for jobs through job banks—DW. The government will recruit 15,000 persons for the police shortly—LD. The government has paid Rs. 3 lakhs to the Air Force for the use of helicopters by government ministers in the last four months—DK. Security Police seized top human rights activists in a dawn swoop on dissident homes yesterday before Soviet President Brezhnev began a state visit in Czechoslovakia. A government Committee has held Sanjay Gandhi, son of former Indian

PM Indira Gandhi responsible for the illegal demolition of several slums in the capital city during his mother's 21 month internal emergency rule. King Juan Carlos will visit China next month—the first monarch to do so since the Communists took over the country in 1949. President Anwar Sadat said yesterday Egypt would go to war if any power tried to deprive it of the Nile waters or attacked Sudan—CDN. Rioters set fire to buildings and looted shops in Antananarivo yesterday on the second day of disturbances in the Madagascar Capital. Zairian President Mobuto Sese Seko said yesterday that rebels had massacred all the Europeans fallen hostage when they retreated from the Zaire mining town of Kolwezi—CDM.

FRIDAY, JUNE 2: The President has directed that the legislative infrastructure for the FTZ should be ready by December; a comprehensive Code of Intellectual Property Law bringing all antiquated trade laws up to date and prepared with the assistance of the World Intellectual Property Organisation World Patent Symposium is now before the government. The Minister of Labour will visit the Middle East by mid-June to undertake a personal study of the problems facing the Sri Lanka community there. Heavily armed anti-hijack squads of the Sri Lanka Air Force took up positions on the tarmac apron as the new ministry of Defence scheme to streamline the operation of the Katunayake International Airport was put into effect yesterday. Dr. N. M. Perera and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva have accepted the invitation extended by the President to accompany him on his tour of the NCP on June 10 to the Mahaweli developed area—CDN. The fifty rupees a month dole scheme announced in the last budget will be operative from July 1. A total ban on the import of lux-

ury cars over 1500 cc and a liberalisation on the import of utility cars, vans scooters etc was decided by the Minister of Trade. 'Tourism in Sri Lanka is as old as the Sinhala race. I do not share the view expressed by some that Tourism will damage the culture which has survived for 2500 years' said the President yesterday—CDN. The felling of timber is expected to be banned by Executive order shortly. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles earns a revenue of 40 million Rs. per year—SU. The government with the help of the British government has decided to undertake a scheme whereby underground water and rain water could be utilised by turns for agricultural purposes in the Jaffna Peninsula—EN. The government has decided to consider GCE 'A' level qualified persons for teaching appointments after finalising admissions to the University and Technical Institutions—CO. Crimes have increased by 550 in the last five months in the island—DW. The Ministry of Labour has decided to train over-6000 rural youths in the various trades this year—DM. The PMB has taken steps to build 14 paddy warehouses with a capacity of 50,000 bushels each in the paddy growing areas. The Labour Ministry hopes that 20,000 will get employment when shops all over the island are opened from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.—LD. Former Indian PM Indira Gandhi may be tried by a special Court for the charges listed against her by a government Commission of Inquiries. The World's major food exporting countries may be moving closer to the formation of a price-fixing cartel similar to that which exists for oil, Canadian Agricultural Minister said—CDN. President Carter assured Atlantic Port leaders that the US was prepared to use all the forces necessary to defend the NATO area. Indian Fore-

ign Minister Vajpayee will be in Colombo at the end of this month on a two day official visit. The US and the Soviet Union will fire nine rockets into the earth's upper atmosphere later this month in a joint experiment to gauge the effect of solar activity—CDM. The South West African Peoples Organisation yesterday accused South Africa of killing more than 800 people in raids on SWAPO camps in Angola early this month—SU.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3: Sri Lanka's exporters will be protected against default of payment by buyers abroad once the Export Credit Insurance Corporation is set up. Mr. P. B. Satagopan, Export Financing Adviser of the International Trade Centre, Geneva said yesterday. The scheme of issuing paddy on ration instead of rice has met with success according to the report received by the Ministry of food and Co-operatives said the Acting Minister of Food and Co-operatives. A three member team from Saudi Arabia is now in Sri Lanka to identify and discuss projects in which the Saudi Arabian Development Fund could assist Sri Lanka—CDN. Development of villages surrounding estates in the up-country and the mid-country will be entrusted to estates which will serve as bases for development work in those areas, according to a comprehensive plan drawn for the development of villages in estate areas by the Ministry of Plantation Industries. The Medical Faculty (Jaffna Campus) would start in September instead of July as earlier planned because of the difficulty in obtaining a building from the Ministry of Health. Twenty six of the thirty three men who surrendered to the police and who were wanted for terrorist activities in the north by the CID are 'no longer wanted'. The Canadian High Commissioner will hand over a gift of milk powder worth 2.6 mil-

lion dollars on behalf of his government to the Minister of Agriculture—CDM. The government has launched an all-out offensive to make fresh fish available to the consumer at a reasonable price; at present the prices are reported to be exorbitant; the government has now decided to seek the assistance of private sector organisations for the supply of ample fish to consumers at a reasonable price. The Canadian government has made available an interest free loan of Rs. 22 million for the purchase of eight rice mills and spares for these mills—SU. A communique issued by the LSSP (Left) led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara stated that the Tamil people have been subjected to many burdens and restrictions and this is the reason for various movements developing amongst them; the government should find solutions to their problems and not try to suppress them—VK. 231 out of the 236 lorries owned by the Food Dept which distribute rice all over the country have been out of action. The government has taken steps to import Rs. 660 million worth of railway engines and wagons from Japan, West Germany and Rumania—LD. Sri Lanka has earned a record Rs. 502 million on tea exports—DW. British PM James Callaghan in a major speech to the disarmament assembly today will call for the banning of chemical weapons and underground nuclear tests and the strengthening of the UN peace keeping rule. Electronic spying devices have been found in the US Embassy in Moscow the State Department said last night—CDN. Former Indian PM Indira Gandhi said today she was innocent of the charges listed against her by a government Commission of Inquiry. Queen Elizabeth II celebrates her official birthday today—SU.

SUNDAY, JUNE 4: Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel has obta-

ined aid pledges for the financing of the entirety of the Rs. 648 million Kirindi Oya Project which will be the largest irrigation cum agricultural project in the Southern Province. The Minister of Health is exploring the possibility of getting some foreign doctors to fill vacancies in the medical cadre here with a UN agency, the Switzerland based UN Volunteers. The government will establish an ultra-modern duty free shopping and office complex complete with the latest amenities. Britain is to provide a five million sterling aid grant to Sri Lanka to finance development projects, the Ministry of Overseas Development announced today—SO. A person against whom a Commission appointed under the Commissions of Inquiry Act holds an can be punished by a Commission appointed under the Special Commissions of Inquiry Law provided that the prescribed punishment is endorsed by a special resolution passed in the NSA. The government has stepped up the operation to flush out Indian plantation workers who are overstaying their period of authorised residence here in terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreements of 1964 and 1974—ST. In a significant move coinciding with World Environment Day the government has adopted a new policy whereby Environment Planning is to be introduced as part of the education curriculum in all schools—WK. Many new and up to date fish and prawn farms are to be established soon under a scheme being worked out by the Minister of Fisheries—CM. The Agricultural Training Research Institute will shortly launch a scheme under which government and corporation officials will be given a specific training on Agricultural methods—RR. Morocco announced today it would send troops to keep Zaire fight against rebels. Sanjay Gandhi, son of former Indian PM

Indira Gandhi was today granted bail in a complaint against him for refusing to appear before a government Commission of Inquiry. The US and China discussed their common concern over Soviet and Cuban penetration of Africa at a meeting cut short by Chinese Foreign Minister Hua Kua's departure for Zaire. Upto 1 million people are starving in Ethiopia's Welo region because of a drought and special airfields are being built to aid relief operations—SO. Defence officials said yesterday French troops had smashed a big force of Libyan backed rebels in Chad while guerillas reported they had shot down three French planes in recent fighting—ST. Penthouse magazine said today that more than 200 agents of the Soviet KGB spy agency were working under cover as employees of the UN in New York. Egypt's largest opposition group, the conservative new WAFD Party dissolved itself in protest against measures to purge communists and old-guard politicians from the country's political life—WK.

MONDAY, JUNE 5: Far reaching changes are proposed in the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill that has been gazetted; among the changes are attractive incentives and reliefs for several areas of investment; the FTZ is prominent among them. The government will shortly introduce legislation to bring about changes in the existing labour laws to provide better financial and retirement benefits to all sections of the working class. The future industrial policy of the government will lay emphasis on the development of small scale industries and assistance to cottage industries to expand their ventures the Minister of Industries said. A trade delegation from the GDR led by Mr. Horst Soelle, the Minister of Foreign Trade will arrive here today on an official

visit. A new ultra modern orthopaedic hospital is likely to be set up in Colombo with foreign assistance—CDN. The Minister of Labour will shortly introduce legislation to guarantee permanency of employment to those jobless persons who are recruited as trainees under the private sector employment exchange programme. Triple river valley projects ie Nilwala, Kelani and Kalu Ganga will be the next major development schemes that would be undertaken by the government said the Minister of Irrigation.—CDM. The government is to focus more attention on Sri Lankans employed abroad, particularly in West Asian countries; the main objective of this move is to streamline the recruitment of Sri Lanka personnel in the light of the practice in India, Pakistan and other countries where the state plays a major role in the selection of men for employment abroad—SU. A new left front against the left front of the LSSP and the CP is being formed; Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara leader of the LSSP (Left), Mr. N. Shanmuganathan, Mr. Nanda Ellawala and others are behind the organisation of this new left front.—VK. Action is being taken by the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs to grant compensation and offer employment to those who were victimised politically during the last regime; this is expected to commence next month—DP. The Minister of Trade has said that the government had spent Rs. 76.5 million to import consumer goods and only Rs. 3.9 million has been spent to import luxury items—DW. More than half of the engineers who worked for the Mahaweli Development Board last year have gone abroad—DM. Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua arrived in Zaire last night and lashed the Russians and Cubans for their alleged role in a rebel invasion of

Zaire's Shaba Province from neighbouring Angola last night and accused the Soviet Union of seeking to establish control over the strategic country in the heart of Africa—CDN. The United Arab Emirates will contribute 284 million dirham to the budget of the Arab organisation for military industries. NATO proposals for the reduction of troops in Europe submitted on April 19 this year has been rejected by the Warsaw Treaty countries—CDM. The Opposition group defeated by General Ziaur Rahman in the Bangladesh Presidential elections alleged today that voting results have been rigged and anti government scrutinizers driven from the polling stations at gun point. PM Morarji Desai begins a visit to Europe and the US tomorrow leaving his ruling Janata Party deeply divided over critical domestic issues—SU.

TUESDAY, JUNE 6: A massive import loans since the liberalisation of imports has resulted in Letters of Credit being opened for over Rs. 3000 million for the period of November 15 last year to April 30 this year. Twenty four of the thirty eight urban councils were involved in corruption and maladministration says a report of the Presidential Commission appointed to probe irregularities in local bodies. Along with the government's project to lend beauty to the city's highways is a state programme to erect statues of national heroes in every major township to instil a sense of patriotism in the minds of Sri Lankans. The Central Bank has inaugurated a Credit Guarantee Scheme where guarantees will be provided to approved credit institutions in respect of loans granted by them to small scale industrialists—CDN. A new authority will be set up shortly to deal with alleged cases of indiscipline by employees of state corporations; at present such in-

vestigations are carried out by by pannels of retired public officers made available to the corporations by the State Services Disciplinary Board. A scheme to modernise the existing process of Petroleum refining in Sri Lanka is now being considered by the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs—CDM. Sri Lanka is to seek the advice of a leading international firm of consultants on airways before deciding on any link with an international airline. All school children will be supplied with a mid-day meal shortly, the Minister of Education announced yesterday. The act of appointment will be presented by the President to the 10th Mahanayake of the Ramanya Nikaya at the Independence Hall on June 8—SU. The government is actively considering the possibility of enacting a foreign investment law as a further incentive to attracting foreign investors here—CO. The rupee is to be devalued by 25%—DK. Sri Lanka has lost 3,45,000 sterling on the agreement between British Airways and Air Ceylon "sign" after flights were suspended—ATH. The Minister of Irrigation has said that Sri Lanka will be able to save Rs. 400 million annually after the completion of the Mahaweli Project—DM. Sri Lanka and Vietnam will sign a trade agreement shortly. The Minister of Education has decided to make only the mother tongue compulsory at the GCE'O' level examination—DW. 507 tons of onions and potatoes imported from Pakistan were spoilt lit even before they were unloaded; the CWE hopes to recover the full loss from Pakistan—LD. A Zaire goerment newspaper yesterday reported a new rebel massacre of whites in Southern Zaire as the US Airforce began an airlift of Moroccan troops there to form the nucleus of an African Security force—CDN. The New York Time

reported yesterday that the US had rejected a surprise Soviet proposal to ban the testing and deployment of all new Russian and American intercontinental missiles upto 1985. Eye witness accounts from prisoners support the chareg that Cuba backed last month's rebel invasion of Zaire, US defence Security Harold Brown said yesterday—CDM. Five Western powers open talks in Paris toay on their response to increased Soviet bloc activities in Africa. The UN svcial session on disarmament is virtually on the verge of collapse with representatives of super powers and the third world engaged in severe polemics—SU.

* * *

RAIN

Thunder awakens me.
The clock strikes five.
Its dark outside.

The unceasing sound
of the beating rain
upon the window pane....
A few hours more
I will be on my way to work.

Oh! the dreaded thought
of wading, in the mud,
'hanging' on a slippery foot-board
everything so inconvenient
and uncomfortable.

But at this dark hour,
will there be a dawn
in shanty-town and pavement-pura?
The alarming rain
chimes out loud the warning
"sleep no more—
the flood sets in."

On the banks of the Kelani
the water level's rising,
shacks are submerged.....
People were fleeing
the night before.
Where are they now?

Anon

Confidentially

Import-Export Orgies

IS IT NOT TRUE that the Government has allowed the import of meat from foreign countries? That the SLP weekly, *The Nation*, has asserted that such imports have started in a big way? That in its issue of June 9, in a front page story entitled WHY NO FISH, FFSTUS? it stated: "The fate of the fish-eaters of Sri Lanka, after the faux pas of Festus, who farmed out the seas that surround us to ferocious foreign fisherman, has floundered and fallen sufficiently to reach festering, fission stage! The shortage of fish and the unprecedented hike in fish prices means that the government must immediately discard its shortsighted and stupid policy on the whole question of fisheries production and marketing. The government's fish policy must be fumigated and put in formalin, like they used to do fish in the old days during ice shortages. The price of seer has risen to Rs. 20 a pound; even the lowly kiri mora (shark), which used to be once sniffed upon, is now Rs. 7.50 a pound. As for prawns, we might as well not talk about it, since the prices have reached outer space..." After dealing with the question of fish, *The Nation* went on: "Meanwhile, the price of beef in Colombo is Rs. 6 a pound (with the usual bone and offal thrown in) and an egg costs 80 cents. These prices are beyond the reach of most people. The government now seems to be playing a sick joke, because we understand that a private firm of elephantine proportions has been given the licence to import 150,000 pounds of frozen meats. This firm, we

understand, has imported 50,000 pounds of chicken from the USA which will be retailed at Rs. 13 a pound, 50,000 lbs. of mutton from New Zealand which will be retailed at Rs. 10.50 a lb. and 50,000 pounds of beef from Australia which will be retailed at Rs. 9.50 a lb. The shipments are due in July. The CWE has also been given an allocation to import similar quantities of chicken, mutton and beef and also corned beef. All this is in support of the mad theory adopted by this government of importing goods in order to make the local producer more efficient..."

That such imports, *The Nation* rightly points out are only one side of the coin? That the paper went on to say: *The Nation* has, in the past few months, exposed the absurdity of the government's policy of importing food, whilst also exporting food at the same time. The lead story of Saturday 4th March, under the headline 'HUNGRY LANKA EXPORTS FOOD', referred to the utter madness of the Fisheries Corporation's boast that it had exported 35,000 pounds of prawns in a single consignment to Japan at the end of February. That shipment alone amounted to three quarters of the total prawn exports of the Corporation during 1977, according to the Corporation communicate itself. The same story also stated that the government had approved the setting up of a Japanese syndicate under the name JALANKA which was going to export prawns, lobsters and fresh fish to Japan. The man behind JALANKA is Mr. S. M. Yoshida, whose picture appeared in the stooge press very often in those days, because he praised Mr. Jayewardene for his services to Japan during the San Francisco Conference. On that subject the *Nation* of Saturday 7th January stated: "Yoshida wants to buy our fish. Having praised

Mr. Jayewardene, as we predicted, Mr. Yoshida finally got to the fish. It looks as if Mr. Festus Perera is going to take the bait..." That between a self-defeating import policy and a suicidal export policy—both in regard to food items—this country will soon be a country where only the rich can live? That to be rich in these circumstances one has to steal—legalised and otherwise? That already butchers and "fowl-shop" mudlalalis want to push up the prices of the locally produced mutton, beef and chicken to the prices to be charged for the imported counter-parts? That producers of local meat, chicken and eggs will naturally say that if such "world prices" had been offered to them, no sooner this government had obtained the loans for imports, local production would have received a boost? That with cattle and chicken feed costing what they do now, there was no incentive for the local producer to increase production at the "controlled prices" the government insisted that meat should be sold? That broiler chicken meat had no "controlled" price and the price moved up from Rs. 5/75 a pound to Rs. 10/75 in less than ten months? That now the sellers will want Rs. 13/- a pound? That when stocks of imported chicken are over, the local producer will want Rs. 15/- or more for his pound of flesh? That it will be the same story with beef and mutton? That these imports—to suit the pocket of the rich and the foreigners who enjoy the benefits of our devalued currency—will only inflate prices of essentials without the local people getting a higher *per capita* income to meet the new prices? That the country would have done better without these imports at least till the middle and lower income sections were able to pay these prices?

**TO SAVE THE NATION
AND ENSURE PROTEIN-RICH
FISH PRODUCTS FOR THE
PEOPLE**

GOVERNMENT HAS ACTED WISELY
in cancelling the licences of two foreign companies
and compelling them to withdraw their trawlers
from Sri Lankan waters

GOVERNMENT MUST ALSO CANCEL
all other pending licences, if any, and not
issue any more new licences.

BUT MORE THAN THIS

GOVERNMENT MUST STOP THE EXPORT
of fish and fish products. Sri Lanka has no
surplus of sea-food for export. The nation gets
no benefit by export — only a few exporters,
commission agents, middlemen, contact men
and mudalal's, benefit.

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