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MAY DAY 1975

— new UF euphoria —

IN SPITE OF ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR AND APPREHENSION, which certain interested parties had created in regard to the last May Day in Colombo, the rallies and meetings took place without any disturbance of the peace or any untoward dislocation of the normal life in the city. The procession, rally and the meeting organised by the three parties of the ruling United Front overshadowed anything put up by the other Parties or trade unions. And, although the UNP worked under several restraints it had mobilised a rally and crowd much bigger than many had anticipated.

The over-enthusiastic SLBC had estimated the UF crowd at half a million, that is five hundred thousand. The SLBC did not refer to the UNP meeting except in passing. The SLBC which gave a live running commentary of the UF procession in Sinhala (not in Tamil or English) had commentators at four points who seemed to think that the SLBC was already an organ of an ultra leftwing government of a particular Marxist persuasion. These commentators used jargon and idiom of a particular ultra leftwingism and some of their comments were in the nature of strong agitational political speeches. (Even if English listeners are regarded as a "decadent" class why were the Tamils not given the benefit of a live commentary?)

The SLBC estimate of five lakhs of the UF Rally was not supported by the estimates of some of the daily newspapers: their estimates varied from three to four lakhs. There is no doubt that the UF rally had at least three lakhs and

this was no doubt the biggest ever crowd seen on any single day in Colombo for a political meeting. No estimates were made by any of the daily papers about the crowd at the UNP rally—all daily newspapers played down the UNP meeting and rally in the same way the daily papers in the heyday of UNP rule had played down meetings of the Left Parties and the SLFP. But neutral and disinterested observers who had made it a point to see both rallies at the moment of the greatest mobilisation say that if the UF rally had between 3 to 4 lakhs of people, the UNP meeting had anything between 1 and 1½ lakhs.

The mass media, now controlled completely by the Government is doing everything in its power to make the UNP appear like a lost cause without a following. This tactic is just a repetition what the UNP had done from 1946 to 1955 (more exactly from 1931 onwards when the Senanayake-Wijewardene caucus had controlled all the organs of mass media from that time right up to 1970, but in the period after 1960 this monopoly control was challenged by the growing periodical press of the left parties and the SLFP).

Will the present propaganda tactics of the government make the people believe what the UF leadership want them to believe or will the ordinary man (and voter) react to this lopsided propaganda in the way an earlier generation had reacted to UNP lopsidedness? Propaganda to

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be effective over a long period of time must be balanced and must relate to realities. It is foolish to think that the UNP can be wiped out by exaggerated cacophony over the SLBC or virtual blackouts in the daily press. Furthermore, the kind of propaganda indulged in by the SLBC will sooner or later bring serious discord between the three partners of the UF.

FROM ALL ACCOUNTS the CMU rally was not impressive in the least and it was completely dwarfed by the UF show and could not even offer the UNP a distant challenge. But the CMU, for many years now has ploughed a lone political line of a Spartacist nature and one must admire the persistence of leader Bala Champoe to keep one of the most efficiently organised trade union organisations out of the mainstream of the left trade union movement in the country. His version of the Fourth International trotskyite marxism has long been abandoned by the LSSP which has enriched its marxist logic with the dialectics of parliamentarianism as a method of reaching out to the dictatorship of the proletariat in a country like Sri Lanka blessed with adult franchise and a high degree of literacy. Whilst Champoe is a kind of lone voice in the leftwing wilderness of United Front politics, there was another lone ranger rally in Colombo on May Day (and which received a far better press in certain Lake House papers than the CMU or even the UNP).

Shanmugathasan has recently resurrected his "Communist Party" as distinct from the other Peking-

wing Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) which loyally and stolidly supports the United Front. Shanmugathasan, who was the authentic voice of Mao in Ceylon from 1963, had chosen to retreat into a kind of exile after 1970 when the major section of the Pekingwing communists had moved into the UF mainly through the SLFP. Although he had no truck with the insurgents and had denounced most vigorously as "reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries", he had been detained during the insurgency, but on his release he had not been able to rehabilitate himself in the political field as many of his former colleagues were able to do. He broke his silence only a few months ago with a laboured thesis why the UF should be supported in order to ensure the defeat of the UNP and the reactionaries, but more recently he seems to have swung to his old line of being highly critical of the UF leadership and even UF policies. His theme is simple: the UF was not left enough and not revolutionary enough—the UF had not destroyed foreign imperialism and foreign economic interests in Sri Lanka. While Shanmugathasan was echoing openly what may ultra leftists within the UF were demanding of their leaders, Bala Tampoe's more doctrinaire approach about the need for a purer and a more sacrosanctly orthodox kind of marxism does not seem to evoke a response in any quarters other than among some old loyalists in the CMU.

NO DOUBT, OVERWHELMED by the increasing euphoria for socialism throughout the world and in Sri Lanka also, J. R. Jayewardene sought to give a new "socialist image" to the UNP. It was a most unconvincing attempt—as flabbily unconvincing as Sir John's big talk in the mid-fifties about an "efficient socialism"—another version of Hitler's "national socialism" which in Ceylon it never got off the ground. Except for this, Jayewardene's speech indicated that the UNP was edging more and more to centrist positions. Extracts from the Daily News reports will give some indication of the line JR took at the meeting:

The UNP leader assured that there will be no repealing of any progressive legislation introduced by

the present government. The land reform law will be retained but it will be implemented in a more honest manner than today. He claimed that as far back as 1944 he had proposed land reforms in the State Council of the day. His proposal had been supported then by the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake. He had not been in power to implement those proposals but should he become Prime Minister he would implement those proposals in full. Land reforms he said, were thought of first not by the Kobbekaduwas and Colvin R. de Silva but by J.R. Jayewardene and Dudley Senanayake. Mr. Jayewardene recalled how the UNP's Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya had been started in 1960 with a membership of ten. Today its membership exceeded 100,000. "The secret of our success is that we have done no harm to anyone, we have scolded no one and we are non-violent."

About the size of the crowd at the meeting, JR pointed out some of handicaps the UNP had worked under and the Daily News report was on a low-key; the fact is that the management of the CTB had not at first intended to allot any buses to the UNP, but the Prime Minister before her departure had ruled that the UNP too should be given buses for the Rally. The buses were hired out to persons and organisations who had wanted them, but there is no doubt that the UF had an immense advantage over the UNP in regard to transport—the UF was also able to utilise ("hire") lorries belonging to various government corporations to transport crowds to the city.

He said most of those who participated in the UNP rally had come walking because they had not been allocated any buses till last Thursday. They had been refused the use of lorries and even the railway did not provide them with trains.

Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, shrewd politician that he is, also sought to steal the thunder about the cry against fascism which the UF had adopted for some weeks now—ever since the talk about the 1975 elections and the National Government had emanated from certain SLFP circles. But this attempt to portray the UNP as an "anti-fascist party" will not convince many just as the

attempt to make the UNP appear as a "socialist party" will be regarded as a political gimmick.

Another notable aspect of JR's speech was the manner in which he paid subtle tributes to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, whilst he had some sledge hammer shots for certain other Ministers of the UF government. It is debatable whether this is the best way for JR to continue wooing the SLFP to bring about a centrist coalition, but probably he has no other method of publicly indicating that he was still prepared to begin or continue negotiations for a National Government with a new centrist programme.

Mr. Jayewardene said that their rally was being held as an anti-fascist meeting and to protect democracy. The UF meeting too was being held for the same purpose. Fascism was against parliamentary democracy, against the party system, against elections and for a one party rule. The UNP did not seek to topple the government or to displace Mrs. Bandaranaike as Prime Minister. They (the UNP) had only called for elections. "We want the people to be given their vote" he said. The UNP was not aligned to foreign powers and it only called for elections this year. "Is this fascism?" he asked.

It will be noticed that JR has soft-pedalled his demand for a 1975 General Elections. But he directed his sharpest attack on those "capitalists" who had switched sides—from the UNP to the LSSP in particular.

In stating this, he used demagogic catchwords about liquidating all the capitalists classes and capitalism in his new UNP fervour to present the image of being a democratic "socialist" party.

There is not the slightest doubt that UF policies have spawned a new breed of capitalists, most of them converts from the UNP enthusiasts they were. But whether the UNP will be ever able to do this is another question, but at this time when there was so much antagonism to the CRA and gem capitalists, even in the ranks of the UF, this was no doubt a useful demagogic cry for the UNP leader to raise.

The capitalist class in Sri Lanka will be finished for good if the

United National Party comes to power, said Mr. J. R. Jayewardene leader of the UNP. He claimed that his party today derived support from the broad masses and not from the capitalist classes as has been alleged.

Mr. Jayewardene, who was addressing his party's May Day Rally at the Colombo Town Hall premises added that if he became Prime Minister he would nationalise within twentyfour hours the business establishments of individuals who once licked the boots of the UNP but were today licking the boots of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and other United Front Ministers.

IT IS NECESSARY to refer to some extracts of the report of Mr. Jayewardene's speech in the Daily Mirror which does not, as yet, seem so completely inhibited about reporting Opposition speeches as Lake House papers are today. Without the SLBC live broadcast and the complete newspaper coverage for the UNP, it is essential to know all aspects of the new UNP line if one is to understand current political trends. This is the Daily Mirror report.

If the UNP is returned to power, capitalism will be wiped out. So assured the Leader of the Opposition Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, when he addressed the UNP's May Day Rally held at the Town Hall premises Colombo. Mr. Jayewardene also pledged to nationalise within 24 hours, those institutions which had earlier 'licked the boots' of the UNP and were now 'licking the boots' of Colvin and other UF leaders.

The United National Party is no more a party of the rich. The workers, peasants and common masses are the people now behind the UNP. Not a single mudalali or any other company owner has given a cent to organise this year's UNP rally. It has been organised with the aid given by the small man, he added. He said that while the UF supporters were given over 1,500 CTB buses, apart from the other Government vehicles, the UNP supporters were able to get less than 200 CTB buses and that too with great difficulty. But I am overjoyed to see this massive sea of heads that took over 5 hours to come here from the Sugathadasa Stadium, he said.

He assured the people that the confidence they had placed in the UNP would be completely justified and their wishes carried out to the fullest. Touching on the anti-fascist cry, Mr. Jayewardene, pointed out that fascists were those who wanted no opposition, opposed parliamentary elections and those who introduced laws to trample on the freedoms of the people. The UNP had always stood for parliamentary elections, guaranteed freedoms and when defeated did not stay in power for more than five minutes. The people, could not be fooled: they knew on which side the fascists were.

The UNP he asserted, never envisaged or instigated toppling the Government by force. It only wanted the right to be given to the people to exercise their franchise to elect a Government of their choice at the end of every five years. Referring to happenings in Cambodia and Vietnam he said that the events in these two countries proved that no Government even if backed by the strongest armed power could stay in power against the wishes of the people. Mr. Jayewardene admitted that the land reform were good. But, a UNP administration coming into power was determined to clean up the present administration of these estates, which were now carried out by corrupt co-ops with their real income passing to the MPs and their relatives and other henchmen of this Government. He was the one who envisaged land reforms, some thirty years back. Land Reform administration would be cleaned up and streamlined so that the people could derive the full benefits of the soil that belonged to them.

Those present at the UNP say that Mr. Jayewardene's speech was a most impressive one.

BUT AN EVEN MORE impressive speech than Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's was that made by the acting Prime Minister Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, at the UF Rally at the Galle Face Green. It was a compact and clear speech powerfully delivered and it set out the position of the three partners of the UF with scrupulous objectivity.

The acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, address-

ing the United Front May Day rally yesterday called upon the people to continue to give support to the Government and not permit reactionaries to raise their heads again. Mr. Senanayake said that the progressive governments since 1956 were able to withstand many conspiracies—the assassination of the late Prime Minister the conspiracies of 1962 and 1964 and the insurrection of misguided youths in 1971—because



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the people were behind those governments. The people should take to heart that it was their duty to protect the government against such conspiracies, he said.

Stressing the need for unity, among the three constituent parties of the United Front he said that the three parties were able to come together after they agreed on a 25-point common program. It was because of this unity that the United Front was able to win one of the greatest parliamentary victories in 1970. There were differences among the three parties. But those could be resolved by the leadership. If there were major problems the government faced they could go before the people. But it was necessary to safeguard this unity from enemies within and without the United Front.

It was not the enemy outside that had to be feared but the enemy inside, Mr. Senanayake added. Earlier Mr. Senanayake said that never before had a crowd of that size gathered at Galle Face for any occasion. Had the Prime Minister been present she would have been extremely happy about the solidarity the workers and farmers had expressed with the government. People from Point Pedro to Dondra had gathered at Galle Face. "We must re-dedicate ourselves unitedly to defeat counter reactionary forces that many attempt to raise their ugly heads again in whatever form or shape or from whatever quarter they come." Mr. Senanayake said.

Of the other speeches, at the UF Rally the most notable one made by the LSSP leader Dr. N. M. Perera, who repeated his warning to the US Embassy in Colombo about the implications of the withdrawal of large PL 480 Funds from the Central Bank. He warned the US about interference in the internal affairs of this country. The following is the Daily News report.

Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera yesterday warned the United States of America not to interfere in the internal affairs of this country. Dr. Perera addressing the May Day rally at the Galle Face Green said he wished to direct the warning to the US through its embassy here, following discoveries made by his Ministry about sudden drawings from Central Bank by the

US Embassy here under the PL 480 agreement. Dr. Perera who disclosed he had already informed the Prime Minister about this matter and called for a full investigation said under the PL 480 agreement the US embassy here was entitled to draw a certain quota of money from the Central Bank for their expenses. Generally they drew about five or eight lakhs of rupees. Last month he discovered the Embassy had withdrawn Rs. 20 lakhs and despite that had sought permission to draw another 15 lakhs of rupees. This was of course not allowed.

Why was this sudden urge to withdraw such large sums of money? Was it to assist some fascist force? Dr. Perera said: "I have informed the Prime Minister about this and it is my duty to tell the people that we are aware what the US did through its CIA in Cambodia and Vietnam. But we will not allow the US to repeat such things in this country. Like the USA, the UNP too has to learn its lessons. If Mr. J. R. Jayewardene is so naive as to imagine that he could ride to power through US dollars he is a fool. Before Mr. Jayewardene takes to foolish moves he must pause to consider the recent events that have taken place in Cambodia and South Vietnam. Today entire Asia—from Japan, Indonesia to Australia—was agitated by the wave of socialism and Mr. Jayewardene is toying with the idea of capturing power through American assistance."

Dr. Perera also warned that what took place in Cambodia and Vietnam might well be repeated here if the Government did not quicken its pace towards socialism. Reminding his earlier saying that "there are no Ambalamas in the march towards socialism" Dr. Perera pointed out when the people were ready to assist and co-operate with the Government the Government must act. He said "We will not allow those events to take place here but we may have to face difficulties."

IT IS ALSO NECESSARY to mention that the MEP also had a separate rally at Dematagoda, and Dinesh Gunawardene had endeavoured to hold aloft the MEP founded and led by the late Mr. Philip Gunawardene.

Well-deserved tributes have been paid to the Police for the manner in which they had handled the arrangements for the May Day celebration and had ensured that the meeting of several political parties and groups had not led to any serious friction or clashes anywhere.

The ultimate impression which has been left upon the public mind in Colombo is that the United Front is still the most powerful political coalition in the country and that it has not only perfected the techniques of mobilising large numbers of its supporters to be brought to Colombo but that it has also begun to excel in utilising the organs of mass media for the fullest benefit of the UF.

The fact that some sections of the UF had a slight edge in the matter of the number of buses allotted or the manner and slant in the propaganda would naturally cause pricks within the UF but these were not likely to cause any major disruption within the coalition. The acting PM, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, had rightly said that the greatest enemy of the UF were within and there is no doubt, many observers feel, that this is true.

The UNP has still much ground to cover before catching up with the UF. But it must be remembered that the UF's position has been greatly strengthened, at the moment, by the de-rationing of flour which was made possible by PL 480 shipments which had been negotiated by the Prime Minister herself. The food crisis within the country had eased a great deal owing to the free availability of wheat flour, and in this context it was surprising why Dr. N. M. Perera should have started to publicise his "warnings" to the PM about the PL 480 counterpart fund withdrawals.

May Day 1975 has brought a new euphoria to the United Front parties. It is yet to be seen whether this new euphoria can be sustained until the General Elections in 1977. Or will there be another downward plunge—due to the further inadequacies of the food production drive and the possible stoppage of PL 480 shipments?

Tribunania

• Medawachchiya

• May Day

TRAIN DERAILMENT. So far as the daily press and the mass media controlled by government are concerned, the Medawachchiya Train Derailment is a thing of the past to be forgotten. Except for a solitary piece in the *Times of Ceylon* of May, 2 in which it was mentioned that the trains would run through on that day, there has been no reference to derailment in the papers after the first two days. The *Times* report on May 2 stated the night trains would operate from that day. The report had further stated: "Twelve passengers were killed and 20 treated for injuries. The death toll would have been higher if not for the timely action of the engine driver. This morning two trains leaving Kankasanturai and Colombo ran through using the diverted rail track at Medawachchiya. Since the accident, only day trains were operated and the passengers had to be transferred by four CTB buses between Medawachchiya and Vavuniya...."

This was the first time that there was a reference to the fact that the number killed was 12 and that 20 had been treated for injuries. Earlier, the papers had reported that the death toll was only 3 and that "many" had been sent to the hospital for treatment.

But, now the *Times* has clearly stated that the death toll was 12. Was this correct? This information has neither been denied nor corrected. Will it be stated at a later date that the *Times* figure was a mischievous canard? But with the *Times* doing several somersaults in order to show how loyal it was to Government, there was no reason to believe that it would have concocted the story that the death toll was 12. And if this figure is correct, why have no other newspapers published this fact? Was has the SLBC been silent?

In the normal course the casualty death roll should have been published with the names of the dead. It is also usual to publish the names of the injured. But, in this case, there has been a total blackout about the number or the names of the dead and the injured. Why?

The wildest stories are circulating among the Tamil peoples in the North and everywhere else in the country about the derailment. There are suspicions that the number of dead and the number of the injured are many more than has been disclosed. And what is worse is that they are disturbed by the step-motherly treatment that had been extended to the road-and-rail travellers to and from Jaffna after the derailment.

Four and sometimes five crowded passenger trains set out from Colombo and from Kankasanturai each day. Three of them are in day time and after the derailment, the night trains were cancelled for nearly a week. And the day trains were therefore more than doubly crowded. To transport the passengers from Vavuniya to Medawachchiya and vice-versa, a distance of 15 miles, until a diversion track was laid four CTB buses were assigned for the job. Each train carried a crowd anything from 750 to 1200 passengers and these four buses took four to five hours to transport each trainload.

The question has been raised why more buses were not assigned for the job. Train travellers on the northern line remember that when there was a rail accident near Tambuttegama, sometime in 1974, over 19 CTB buses were assigned to transport the passengers from there to the next station and vice-versa. The question has naturally been asked whether this difference in treatment was because the Tambuttegama accident was in a Sinhalese area where the interests of the travelling public were made the primary concern of the authorities, whereas in a Tamil area, the passengers could be treated anyhow, Vavuniya having a TUF man as MP, and protests evoke no response from the higher authorities.

The leaders of the UF do not seem to realise that it is incidents like these which has made the Tamils feel that they are second class citizens and

is driving them into separatist frustrations and frenzies. Men, women and children, who had been compelled to travel in the train service of the CGR after the derailment are bitter about the callous and often indifferent treatment extended to them with four CTB buses which became the unholy targets of passengers wanting to be ferried by road between the two rail points.

Many passengers complain that they had lost their belongings mysteriously in the derailed train. Some of these complaints may be bogus, but some complaints are real. Have there been any attempts to conduct inquiries among the passengers who were on the train? Or have all inquiries been confined to finding out the culprits who had caused the derailment? The one question that is usually asked in such derailment inquiries is how the spanner which unlocks fishplate nuts and bolts had got into unauthorised hands? If the Police are only interested in finding out the culprits responsible for the derailment, the public relations department of the CGR should find out from the passengers what complaints, if any, they had about the way CGR officials had behaved after the derailment and especially during the period when the road and service had operated.

All discerning passengers on the fateful train are unanimous that it was the experience and the presence of mind of the engine driver which had saved a major disaster. Observing some foliage on the lines, it is said, that he had started braking but not all at once—in which case telescoping of the carriages would have taken place. He had broken speed and by the time the train reached the damaged track he was able to let the train slide without causing jerks (as far as it was humanly possible to do this). All are agreed that it was this action on the part of the engine driver which had kept the casualty rate to a minimum. Passengers on the train are also all praise for the guard who had not only sent a party quickly to walk to the Medawachchiya to bring relief, but had also organised a squad among the passengers to

look after the other passengers and thus afford some kind of protection to passengers from possible looters. There are no reports about looting, but passengers complain of mysteriously missing suitcases and parcels.

Only full and free reporting about such accidents and incidents will prevent the growth of whispered suspicions and suppressed bitterness and indignation. Will the official report be ever published? If this report is published, it will be interesting to see how soon after the incident the Police party had arrived at the scene of the derailment. Varying and different versions about the time of the Police arrival have reached the *Tribune* from passengers who were on the train. Only the official report on this matter will enlighten the public.

As we had pointed out last week, playing down the news and facts about this derailment and other such incidents, in "normal times" such as the present, will do more harm than good. We are thus only creating a new hierarchical elite entitled to know everything and also to decide what the rest of the population should know (or should not know). This also betrays a lack of confidence in the people and the masses who are kept in darkness and ignorance about many matters. The elite often take cover under the blanket excuse that they are acting in "the interests of national sovereignty and internal security". But, how far can this excuse be stretched?

MAY DAY SPEECHES. The speeches made at the UF rally on Galle Face Green had come as an anticlimax to the expectations that had been aroused by the whisper campaigns and hints in some daily papers that many startling and revolutionary declarations would be made.

For one thing, it had been proclaimed that the Workers' Charter would be announced on that day. Everybody knows that a Workers' Charter is coming, that its final draft has been made and that it would be presented to Parliament shortly. But a point was made that its final contents would be revealed as a special item on May Day.

It is interesting to note that whilst the LSSP press like the *Janadina* had been all praise for the draft of the Workers' Charter that had been published, the CP paper *Aththa* had criticised the Charter as being a "bonus" being handed out to the employers (because it was made easy to dismiss certain categories of workers like apprentices, etc. etc.)

Secondly the public had been led to believe that decisions about further drastic plans for far-reaching nationalisation would be announced. Some had thought that an announcement would be made that all foreign banks would be nationalised, others were certain that it would relate to Agency Houses and sterling company estates and yet others were certain that the plans to take over some of the biggest local undertakings would be made public. About a fortnight before May Day, the *Daily News* had scooped the Agency House report and had published significant details. The Report was later released as a sessional paper and its recommendation that all agency houses should be taken over and brought under the control of a governmental organisation was highlighted in the Press.

A few knowledgeable persons; however, had been emphatic that the May Day speeches would not refer to any concrete decisions about the nationalisation of either agency houses (and sterling company estates) or the foreign banks. It was pointed out that the Prime Minister had revealed to the *Observer* shortly before her departure that she was likely to discuss some of these matters with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson, when she visited Britain after the Jamaica conference and would seek a solution of these matters. It was felt that a mutually negotiated agreement with Britain in regard to sterling companies, agency houses and the foreign banks would be better than unilateral decisions by Sri Lanka. Whether the *Observer* story was a pointer to what was coming is not possible to say, but at the May Day rally the speeches were on a low key so far as the nationalisation plans of the Government was concerned.

Every speaker had stressed the need for UF unity in the face of the fascist threat from the UNP. Only Dr. N. M. Perera had said something which had major national and international significance when he repeated the warning to the US not to misuse PL 480 funds: he had wanted the US (meaning the CIA) not to interfere in the internal affairs of this country and had stated that he had written to the PM about this matter. Coming as it did from the Minister of Finance, who has a great deal to do with US-based and US-controlled institutions like the IMF and the IBRD, it made many people to sit up and think. Some recalled that Minister T. B. Langaratne in some of his speeches had gone on record to say that the CIA had been responsible for the assassination of SWRD Bandaranaike. Many had expected him to echo this anti-CIA refrain at the May Day Rally also, but he had not done so.

The massive crowd mobilised by the UF was no doubt impressive and outstanding, but the speeches at the Rally, except that of Dr. Perera's, were parochially pedantic.

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CHRONICLE

APRIL 22—30

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

TUESDAY, APRIL 22: The National Planning Council's sectoral committee on social overheads meets tomorrow to consider a revision of the existing system of admission to the university: the revision will be considered on the basis of a large number of memoranda and other evidence submitted by the public and relevant institutions and organisations—CDN. A ministerial committee has approved the Bill for the establishment of National Pricing Commission: the Bill will be presented in the National State Assembly—CDN. The success of students sitting the NCGE Examination which replaces the GCE level from this year will not be on the performance at this examination alone but on the performance of students in the lower grades during the past four years—CDM. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Home Affairs, Local Government, Public Administration and Justice, will be in charge of all security arrangements during the May Day celebrations—TOC. A senior Deputy Inspector General of Police, Mr. Rudra Rajasingham, who has returned to the island after an observation tour abroad has recommended the establishment of 'mini' police stations to be set up in rural areas as a part of modern crime prevention—CDM. India has launched its first satellite and it is now orbiting the earth: the satellite was launched atop a Russian Intercosmos rocket from the Soviet Union. The Indian Government has introduced legislation in Parliament making the former Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim the 22nd state of India. US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, told the Congress that the change of political power in Saigon could lead to negotiations on Vietnam. President Ford said that the South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu resigned yesterday of his own accord with no pressure from Washington: Van Thieu appearing on television soon after his resignation bitterly denounced America: Vice-President Tran Van Huong took over the Presidency.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23: The Minister of Transport, Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, yesterday introduced the Bill in the National State Assembly to convert the Ceylon Government Railway to the Railways Board: the passage of the Bill was put off when the Minister agreed to postpone discussions for Government to consider an Opposition amendment to the Bill concerning the status of the present employees of the Railway—CDM & CDN. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Justice, answering a question in the NSA during adjournment said that he did not know the reasons for the resignation of the three judges of the former CJC (Exchange Frauds): he also said that he had no right to inquire into the reasons for the resignation as the duty of appointing the new judges rests on the Chief Justice—CDM & CDN. The commission inquiring into brokering firms and agency houses has recommended that no agency functions be permitted in respect of any plantation company partnership, proprietorship or co-

operative society by any organisation deemed to be an agency house or any person or body other than such institutions as may be created by the Government—CDM. The Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways has decided to bring 41,000 acres of marsh land under paddy cultivation: the once fertile and now abandoned marshes for reclamation have been identified in the West and South West sectors of the island—CDN. The Prime Minister before her departure to Iraq on her way to the Commonwealth Heads of State Conference said that she hoped to have talks with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson, on the British controlled agency houses and the sterling company states—CO. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, will act for the Prime Minister during her absence—TOC. India's Ambassador to Moscow said that Soviet-Indian co-operation in space was not aimed against anyone. The PRG demanded the replacement of the Saigon Government of President Tran Van Huong who took over from Van Thieu. The new Government of Cambodia said that the country under their rule would be neutral and non-aligned.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24: Sri Lanka has clinched new non traditional export deals with ten countries: for the benefit of these new buyers the Export Promotion Secretariat has arranged a full-scale exhibition from May 3 to 10 at the BMICH—CDM. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, who arrived in Baghdad was received at the airport by Mr. Saddam Hussein, Vice President of the Iraq Revolutionary Command Council—CDM & CDN (Reuter). The UNP will discuss the present political situation at the Executive Committee meeting at the party headquarters on April 29—CDN. The Special Committee appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbakaduwa, to report on further steps which should be taken regarding the 550,000 acres of land vested in the Government has recommended the establishment of co-operative Boards on an electoral basis to administer the vested lands—CDN. The UNP's May Day celebrations will be held at the Town Hall premises and the CTB said that it would release buses to persons attending the May Day rally of the UNP on the same terms applicable to those attending the UF rally—CDN. Up to the second week of April the Paddy Marketing Board has collected over two million bushels of paddy—CO. From 4 p.m. today Colombo and the suburbs will have an uninterrupted supply of water in view of the improvement in the water levels at Kalatuyawa and Labugama reservoirs—CO. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Plantation Industries, addressing the annual general meeting of the Planter's Association of Ceylon said that the Cabinet had approved a sliding scale scheme of export duty for coconut products which afford considerable relief to the producers—TOC. The Viet Cong firmly rejected a last ditch peace appeal from Saigon denouncing it as a manoeuvre by the United States to prop up its "puppet machine" in South Vietnam. Describing Adolf Hitler as a great man, Ugandan President, Idi Amin, said that he would erect a monument to him on a spot where British and German troops fought in the First World War.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25: The Government yesterday decided to make sugar available at Rs. 7.50 off the ration from Monday onwards: the present issue of three fourths

of a pound of sugar per ration book holder at 72 cents a pound will continue—CDN & CDM. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, began formal talks in Baghdad with Mr. Saddam Hussein, Vice President of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council—CDM & CDN. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, yesterday called for vigilance to seek out and eliminate secret forces of reaction seeking to divert the forward march of the Government—CDN. According to a plan drawn up by the Government ten oil wells will be sunk to meet Sri Lanka's requirements: the first production well will be sunk in Mannar on April 27—CDN. No change has been made in the system of selection of the 3457 students admitted to the University this year: all these students have been selected on the district quota system—CDM. Mr. Tom William, leader of the British delegation that visited Sri Lanka for the recent IPU conference, is quoted in the *Guardian* as saying that they have visited all the tea estates featured in the 'World in Action' T. V. program on Sri Lanka and found that the program was selective, unbalanced and biased: this program produced by Granada Television alleged malnutrition, soaring death rates and poor living conditions in British-owned tea estates in Sri Lanka—CDN. India has signed a second-stage space agreement with the Soviet Union following the successful launch of her first earth satellite on Saturday atop a Soviet rocket. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt arrived in Teheran on Wednesday for a two-day state visit. President Ford told Americans last night that they must put Vietnam finally behind them and their attention to the problems of the future. The Government of Saigon resigned and efforts are being made to form a new Government to negotiate a ceasefire in South Vietnam.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26: Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction and Chairman of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on 'brain drain' said at a seminar held at the Institute of Chartered Accountants that the so called 'brain drain' was in his opinion only a temporary problem: he also said that Western and African countries which were now taking our technically qualified personnel would not be wanting them much longer and then there would be a backwash of brains—CDN. In the latest report of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development it is stated that Sri Lanka did not benefit fully last year by the internationally commodity boom which had enabled many countries to increase their revenues by several million dollars: the reason is attributed for the difficulties faced in increasing the volume of exports of the country's traditional exports—CDM. The Australian Government had informed the Sri Lanka Government that assistance in water pumps and related equipment for the Prime Minister's crash food program up to a value of 250,000 Australian dollars will be shipped here within the next few months: this assistance will be on a full gift basis—CDN. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Plantation Industries, will soon suggest to the Government specified proposals based on the Agency Houses Commission report—CDN. The British Government yesterday announced the take over of the country's biggest car maker, British Leyland. The PRG have accused the United States and the Saigon Government of "flouting all norms of morality and international law" in using chemical bombs that cause instant

asphyxiation: the US State Department yesterday acknowledged that a US made asphyxiation bomb may have been used by the South Vietnamese to suffocate PRG troops. Saudi Arabia has objected on religious grounds to the holding of the next Arab summit in Somalia and Arab foreign Ministers and their deputies held private talks to reconsider the venue.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27: Interpol has alerted Sri Lanka about a booming international trade in stolen Asian Buddhist and Hindu art treasures: Police sources in Colombo said that this matter was highlighted at the recent Asian Interpol Conference at Manila by the Japanese Thai, and Indian 'police representatives—CO. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, left Baghdad to Jamaica for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference—ST & CO (Reuter). United Front May Day organisers have requested the CTB to release 1000 buses for the transportation of members from outstation to Colombo: as a result of this most of the bus services in the city and outstations are expected to be curtailed—ST. As a result of the increase in production the prices of coconuts have dropped considerably—CO. According to the Economic Review published by the Central Bank about 19 per cent of the land vested in the Government under the Land Reform have come into the co-operative form of existence—CO. Exporters from Sri Lanka will participate in the 1975 Baghdad International Trade Fair to be held from October 1 to 21—CO. In a statement issued at the end of the four day visit of the Prime Minister in Baghdad, Iraq and Sri Lanka announced their full support for the policy of non-alignment which they said had provided great services to the international community: the two sides signed an economic and technical co-operation agreement—ST & CO (Reuter). Thousands of Saigon refugees poured into Guam aboard US airlift planes: the Navy commander in charge of evacuation operations said that his command had spent about 90,000 dollars on the refugees in the last three days and he was expecting authorisation to spend more.

MONDAY, APRIL 28: The National Planning Council's Sectoral Committee on Social Overheads headed by Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, was asked by the Cabinet to examine and recommend changes in the existing system of standardisation of marks and the district quota system of admission to the University—CDN. The night mail train from Kankasanturai was derailed on Saturday night near Madawachchiya Railway Station: three passengers died and several were seriously injured: the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, called for a detailed report on the derailment: Police sources did not rule out sabotage—CDN & CDM. A committee of several leading Buddhist priests and leading citizens from the Southern province had brought to the notice of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education the willingness of several philanthropists and organisations to provide the necessary funds to set up a Campus of the University of Sri Lanka in the Southern province—CDM. In two cases that came up for inquiry before the CJC (Exchange Frauds) fines totalling Rs.11,000 were imposed: Mr. P. M. J. Marikkar of Puttalam was fined Rs. 1,000 and Mr. Don Carolis of Colombo was fined Rs. 10,000—TOC. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Public Administration, Local

Government and Justice, addressing the annual general meeting of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce made an eloquent appeal to the private sector to offer "a total commitment to the Government"—CO. Police headquarters reported the killing of a Police Constable by a gang of robbers who tried to waylay a C.T.B. bus at a lonely spot between Vavuniya and Kebithigollawa—CDN. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, began the sinking of Sri Lanka's first petroleum exploratory production well at Pesalai Mannar—CO. Liberation troops and tanks smashed forward and encircled Saigon. Queen Kossamak, mother of Cambodian Prince Nordom Sihanouk, died in Peking yesterday. In Washington a high official said that the United States had sought Soviet and Chinese help as South Vietnam's military situation worsened. The North Vietnam News Agency reported that the PRG had condemned the continued American involvement in the affairs of South Vietnam.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29: The Government leaders meeting at Temple Trees yesterday approved the general lines of the resolutions to be presented at the UF May Day rally at the Galle Face Green; the UF's May Day resolutions will deal with the international situation, domestic issues and Worker's demands—CDN. Mr V. T. Navaratne, General Manager of Railways, described the low casualty list on Saturday night's derailment of the Kankasanturai night mail at Madawachchiya as a 'near miracle': he said that at the time of the derailment the night mail was travelling at 35 m.p.h. and it was fortunate that nearly 2000 passengers escaped unhurt—CDN. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, after he inaugurated work on the sinking of the first exploratory oil well at Pesalai on Sunday said that there will be a revolutionary change in the economy of Sri Lanka, if the oil wells that are to be dug produce the expected results, CDN. So far Sri Lanka has received Rs. 125 million in foreign assistance for the Prime Minister's crash food program: this foreign assistance for the food drive is both in the ways of outright gifts and loans—CDN. General Duong Van Minh, accepting Parliament's request to step in as President, said that his program called for an immediate ceasefire, negotiations with the PRG and reconciliation. The Commonwealth heads of Government meeting in Jamaica tomorrow will consider tougher sanctions against white-ruled Rhodesia and

prospects of Mozambique joining in by closing its vital ports to Rhodesian trade. A Washington summit meeting between Soviet leader Brezhnev and President Ford, originally planned for June or July has been postponed. President Anwar Sadat will visit four Arab capitals and one in Europe next month to strengthen the Arab position before a new Middle East Peace conference.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30: Yesterday the Government published the long awaited 'Workers' Charter' as a White Paper titled "Contract of Employment": it provides greater power in the Commissioner of Labour to adjudicate in industrial dispute and to compel employers to provide reasonable wages and working conditions: according to the provisions of the "Workers' Charter" no employer in the private sector shall impose any restriction or disability on, or withhold any benefit or privilege from, any employee on account of that employee's race, caste, religion, membership in a trade union or political views: the 'Workers' Charter' will be formally announced tomorrow—May Day—CDN & CDM. The Prime Minister and the delegation to the Jamaica Commonwealth heads of State Conference were held up for several hours at Kuwait airport for want of accommodation: Air Ceylon was entrusted with making travel arrangements for the delegation: the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, yesterday directed that a full inquiry be held regarding this—CDM. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, in proposing the Price Control Department be scrapped and its functions taken over by the Prices Commission, observed that he proposed this drastic measure because the inspectorate of the Price Control Department is corrupt—CDM. A businessman Mr. M. A. A. Rasheed was yesterday fined Rs. 10,000 by the Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) on his pleading guilty to charges of foreign exchange violations—CDN. The UNP Parliamentary Group considered the recent events in South East Asia resulting in the formation of a new Government in Cambodia and South Vietnam after several years of war among a series of resolutions passed by the Executive Committee of the party—CDN. Saigon surrendered to the PRG forces unconditionally. The Viet Cong Radio announced that Saigon will be re-named as Ho Chi Min city. America announced today that it had spent over \$ 140,000 million on the Vietnamwar.

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INTERNATIONAL - AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

● Vietnam

● Portugal

THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR, with the total withdrawal by the United States from the Indochina peninsula is undoubtedly one of the most significant events of the second world war era. Historians may be even tempted to regard it as one of the greatest events in history. For over thirty years, the Indochinese people, particularly the Vietnamese had fought, first the Japanese who had occupied the French-owned territory. With the defeat of the Japanese, the French had wanted to re-establish their old empire in this area, and Ho Chi Minh and his colleagues had resisted this and had started a war to win national independence. For ten years, the French had fought a losing battle and their final discomfiture had come with the defeat at Dien Ben Phu. A Geneva Conference had been convened and Vietnam was divided into two countries with a plan for a final reunification.

At this point of time, the cold war logic of John Foster Dulles had become the supreme policy imperative of western capitalism which still believed in encircling the socialist bloc of countries with a cordon sanitaire based on military pacts and blocs. This logic had also spawned the domino theory that if communism was permitted to stabilise itself in any region the immediate neighbours were in the danger of being toppled over by the communists. On the basis of this line of thinking, the US did not accept the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and had adopted South Vietnam as one of its military outposts in order to stem the sweeping tide of communism from the North. This naturally led North Vietnam and the socialist bloc to react sharply to US entrenching itself militarily, and in 1959, the North Vietnamese began to extend direct military assistance to the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Then, began the classic Vietnam

war into which Cambodia and Laos were drawn.

The war ended, first with the peace accord in Laos two years ago, and the fall of Phnom Penh and Saigon more recently. The US was defeated militarily not only because of the resistance put up by the Vietnamese and Cambodian people but also because the American people were no longer willing to support a war which appeared to them immoral and unnecessary. The US Government and Administration had not realised for a long time that it was carrying on a war contrary to wishes of the American people. It was only after the rumpus over the Pentagon Papers and the Watergate scandal that the Administration was confronted with a hostile Congress that even refused to vote more money to fight the war in Vietnam. The American people evidently felt that the \$142 billions and the 55,000 American lives lost in this war had been in vain. It was only with great reluctance that the Congress has even voted money to enable the evacuation of US citizens and Vietnamese who had become part of the American Establishment in South Vietnam. The US is now saddled with very nearly 150,000 South Vietnamese evacuees.

A revolution has begun in American thinking and it is hard to say what this will lead to in the near future. The US has started its celebrations for the bicentennial anniversary of its own war of independence against the British. Editorials in leading US papers like the "New York Times" have begun to sermonise that it was time that the US recaptured its original spirit of anti-colonialism in order to re-establish its position among the young and growing nations of the world.

It is yet too early to say what the current awakening of a new conscience in the US will develop into but old Wall Street vested interests and powerful Multi-nationals will wage a major battle to compel the US to continue its frustrated ambition of being the leading dominant (imperial) power in the world.

Much has been written about Vietnam and much more will be written. And what is even more significant is that very much more

will be written about the history of the United States in the process of the dramatic changes that have overtaken her as a result of the defeat in Vietnam.

IN PORTUGAL, the elections for a Constituent Assembly was held on April 25. The results reveal an interesting pattern. The preliminary results gave the Socialist about 38% of the votes, followed by the Popular Democrats (PPD) with 26.4%. The Communists obtained only 12.5% of the votes, the Social Democratic Centres (CDS) 7.65% and the quasi-communist MDP secured just over 4%. Seven percent of the electorates had turned in blank votes. This was a slap in the face for AFM leaders who had been urging those who believed that their movement was more representative than any of the parties to vote this way. Some of the AFM leaders had actually predicted that 40% of the electorate would turn in blank votes.

The results have come as a shock to many leaders of the AFM who had expected a much heavier poll for the Communists and also for the AFM itself in blank votes. This elections shows that the non-marxist majority in a Catholic country like Portugal has begun to assert itself. But this does not solve anything. The elections will, however, bring into being a Constituent Assembly which will be severely circumscribed by the recently concluded pact between the authorised political parties and the the Armed Forces Movement (AFM), giving the AFM virtual dictatorial powers for 3 to 5 years.

On May 1, the AFM gave the Communist-controlled Trade Union Federation the sole right to represent the workers in the Lisbon Rally, and had also extended a rather step-motherly treatment to the socialist leaders Mario Soares. This led to a counter Socialist organised demonstration a few days later. All this has opened a period of uncertainty and flux in Portugal. The elections have shown that the centrists and moderates have triumphed in the elections, and observers have begun to speculate whether the moderates in the AFM itself will be able to assert themselves a little more than they have done so far as a result of the elections.

In the meantime, the ECM countries have decided to extend credit, loans and economic assistance to Portugal. This is no doubt in order to help strengthen the centrist-moderate socialist elements and also to ensure that Portugal was not thrown completely into the hands of the socialists bloc and Comecon. The ECM does not want to make the mistake made by the US in regard to Cuba which had compelled Castro to depend completely on the Soviet Union. It will be interesting to watch developments in Portugal where a realistic ECM will seek to prevent the country going communist through subtle and indirect methods. What strategy the communists will now follow, after their recent setback in the elections, will also be of great importance.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—31

NATURE NOTES

—a tank in drought—

By Herbert Keuneman

SO MANY CHARMING.... interesting, curious, though seldom phenomenal, natural episodes take place all round my house at all seasons of the year that although these (I fear, pedestrian) notes may deal largely with the tank and the drought that now dominates it they will not do so exclusively. They will be gossip, not an ecological study. Serious naturalists, be warned off!

I should first like to convey, if I can, the psychological climate that the physical occasion of a drought produces in a region wholly dependent on a limited and hitherto absolute quantum of water. Colombo may have its water shortages and water cuts, but everybody is sustained by the confidence that there will be water in the tap if he opens it at the announced time. A fallacy, of course! but one that has never yet had to be put to disproof. In the 'tank' country there can be no such confidence: the tank dweller continually has his nose rubbed in the mud which is evidence of his shrinking, irreplaceable resource.

The peasant is not given to long-term postulation, he has too long been too dependent upon the immediacies produced by more-or-less unpredictable phenomena; so, he is neither preoccupied by plans for the future nor fortified by hope of it. Living habitually adhoc, he is dismayed by threatened disaster but not educated by its occurrence. His prime realities are grain and the water by which the grain springs. The great jar-shaped wattle-and-daub free-standing bins (bissos) in which his paddy is stored are held to their shape by a cross of crude timber which spreads the framework at the point of its greatest girth. It is said that when the first *bada-liya*, or belly-beam, begins to show he begins to dream of the next harvest; when the second is fully exposed he dreams of nothing else! The situation is similar with regard to his tank. When the *we-pitiya*, the surrounding verge of greensward, is a certain width he thinks wistfully of rains to come; should it widen beyond familiar marks he sinks into almost an apathy. Here is a crisis concerning which he is no longer even sure whom it will be most effective to approach: the gods or the government. Somebody must lift him from his apathy, that's for sure.

Yet, as the water shrinks and the verge expands, he is not left to comfortable resignation: he has got to decide whether to deplete his resource further—say, for a *yala* sowing—or whether to husband it against a failure of the true Rains.

The last time our tank, Galkadawala, was full (Ehetuwewa is a larger tank a little way off) was September '73. And then, too, it filled so atypically—so early and so slowly—that all kinds of 'side effects' appeared: some of which I shall relate to you in due course. Galkadawala, whose name means in effect Stone Quarry, has the reputation of never running wholly dry, so, the farmers dependent on it had no hesitation in drawing upon it to irrigate a *yala* sowing in March '74. This reduced the water level to 'wistful' point... and we have not had a significant shower until two weeks ago.

NEVERTHELESS, Galkadawala preserves its reputation. But only just. All the beauty of blue and

silver that you see extended in tank country soon after the rains is in a way a deception. Much of the expanse—which, by the way, by rule of thumb about defines of the expanse of paddy-field a tank can irrigate—is unbelievably shallow: six inches to a couple feet deep, much of it, and unbelievably susceptible to evaporation as the sun hurrying back from its southern excursion rises to its mid-April zenith and the heat stokes up to its breathless climax. Only a little ditch, as it were, just within the bund (whence the soil for the bund was excavated) has its bottom about as far below the surface of the water at spill level as the surface lies then below the bund's crown. If Galkadawala was indeed a quarry to begin with—and, in one portion at least its bottom is plentifully strewn with partly-silt-covered stone—it may be that soil for the modest dam had to be dug from beyond where the stones lay uncovered, and thus the deep-water area was increased. There are in the 10 sq. mls. surrounding this place no less than 29 tanks—I have counted them, from an aerial photograph—ranging from very small (the size of a football field) to largish (the size of Colombo Harbour) and I know of not more than four, of which one is Galkadawala, that now have any water at all in them. Ehetuwewa itself is bone dry and even the jackals no longer haunt its fissured mudflat, there are neither crabs nor fish nor tortoises left to dig out and eat; nor do wild boar excavate for lotus yams, the soil is softer and the spoil nearer the surface in what remains of the village vegetable gardens.

There is little enough, however, for Galkadawala, to congratulate itself about. The water that remains is too little to be divided amongst the fields below; and, besides, it is needed for bathing and washing—and up to a few years ago would have been required for drinking, too—not only for the Galkadawala people but for the Ehetuwewa people, and the Waratakagama people and the Divullewa people (although both these are wrong castes) and for people from as far abroad as Hiddewa and Attanapola, 2 mls. off; although the surviving puddle—it can scarcely be half an acre, all told, and is less

than waist deep—already smells slightly and is as thick as mulligatawny with decaying vegetable and animal matter.

I WISH I could feel that the tank's being used without hindrance by the Waratakama and Divullewa folks—I cannot think where the *rodi*, from Lokurugama, go—were purely a demonstration of humane tolerance in adversity. But I fear it has less estimable roots: the enervation (of which I wrote last week) of today's villager's ability or inclination to look after himself. Every afternoon the young bloods from Ehetuwewa—Country Town that it is becoming—congregate by the score and, having finished their bathe, hang about to casts glances and remarks at the women who would now like to make their ablutions. Nobody effectively protests. Every night two Galkadawala villagers who live close below the bund draw off by an ingenious trick, through the locked sluice, some of the already too depleted water, which is all-the-village's common possession, to supply their private vegetable plots in the *gammandiya* itself. Galkadawala bears this with? patience.

I have, of course, as so often, disgressed. To get back to the drought.....

You can judge a little of its severity—and, unless we have the inter-monsoonal April rains on the scale we had in 1972 (when I arrived for the final time) and never since, we have six more months of drought to ride—when I say that my bedside flask of iced water is scummed with the floating bodies of ants that have drowned for their thirst. When, I wonder, will the procession of animals to our tank and its rare remnant of moisture in a parching countryside begin? Or has it in silence already begun? That could hardly be. Where do the jackals drink? They are no silent imbibers! In September 1972, with the drought not nearly as severe, there was a small herd of elephants came to Ehetuwewa for the small pocket of slimy liquid it still held. Elephants are not silent in the water, either; yet I have not heard from our tank suggestion of snort or splash or rumble. Are there, perhaps, no animals left? But that again cannot be. With the villages guns still unrestored despite profuse Government promises, the wild

boar (for instance) have grown so numerous and so bold that they run through the villages: the other day one was killed with clubs in Waratakama! and shortly after, another appeared in our own very garden.

I SUPPOSE, if these were real Nature Notes, I should be able to answer such questions: if no other way, with a reasonable hypothesis. Alas! I treat nature as a pageant primarily, not as a puzzle as someone more knowledgeable would do; as a looker-on rather than an enquirer-into.

And yet, it was a fascinating puzzle of Nature fascinatingly expressed by Hal Borland, which I came across in an old *Harper's* the other night that set me off on this tack this week.

'How can a tree lift its sap from the roots to the tip of its highest branch?..The answer..is still a secret. Mathematically it can't be done by capillary flow, root pressure, the pull of evaporation, from the leaves, or any other way we know. But it is done, in every tree on earth.'

This is not the sole secret of its sort mentioned even in Borland's brief *Harper's* piece; and if this kind of ratiocinative impotence—only, it isn't felt by him (far less by me!) as impotence: it is an awakening of modern man's torpid sense of wonder, the proof that 'miracle' is not yet superseded—I am satisfied to go back to naive, wide-eyed looking-on. Not that I do not enjoy explanations!

Why do some species obviously less well-adapted than others to drought conditions still tend to establish themselves with those others in waters more or less severely subject to drought? I am thinking, now, particularly of the *Tilapia* (*S. teppili*) who persist in infesting the Vanni tanks and die by the thousand as the drought-stricken tank recedes, huddling ever thicker together in the deepest pools until they are so crowded that the village children lift them out by hand and fill bushel-baskets with them, while their fellows in their habitat successfully survive in water foul with organic decay (the *lulla*) or burrow deep into any mud where a hint of moisture lingers (the *mada-kariya*) or even migrate where instinct tells them

a better 'ole' exists (the *kavaiya*). The *teppili* just die. Is Nature deliberately destroying a race? Or have they just not been long enough around (they were introduced in the Island as late as 1951) to learn to adapt themselves? And yet, if they have not learnt, how has their tribe so phenomenally increased? Are Nature's principles of Survival of the Fittest and Survival of the Species at cross purposes? Even to me that seems hardly a likely deduction, entertaining though its possibilities would be!

WHY, ON THE HUMAN SIDE, has the new name *teppili* so caught on that both of the other, old-established *Cichlids* are now given the name *teppili* also? (And why do the textbooks still preserve for the latter the almost forgotten *koralii*?) And finally, why—when he must make a distinction—does the villager name the *Tilapia japon teppiliya*, or very rarely *japan koraliya*, seeing that it was introduced from Africa?

This confusion with denominatives is, maybe, not confined to the unlearned. There are two kinds of water snake common throughout Ceylon: one the villagers call *diya-naya* (*diya*—water; *naya*—Cobra, the pattern and king of local colubers) or, alternatively *diya-polonga* (*polonga*: the archetypical viper) and another even more common called *diya-bariya*, a name *Deraniyagala* (*Serpentoid Reptilia*) apparently finds so offensive, as belittling a Sri Lanka Reptile? that he gives it no Sinhalese name at all! Wall (*Snakes of Ceylon*) and Mendis & Fernando (*Fresh Water Fauna of Ceylon*) agree in giving the *diyabariya* the scientific name *Cerberus rhynchops*; and together with *Deraniyagala* designate the *diya-naya/polonga* *Natrix piscator asperimus*, a type of keelback.

All this would be complicated enough. But there is more. There can be no argument about the scientific denominatives: the types are very distinct. Whereas, however, one would expect the fiercer popular name to be bestowed by the villagers on the fiercer creature, all those who have been bitten—and a high proportion in any tank village have been bitten at one time or another—are sure it was a *diyabariya* bit them. Mendis & Fernando seem to confirm this

by describing Crthyncoas as 'rather an aggressive snake'; but Wall characterizes it as 'peculiarly inoffensive' and Deraniyagala agrees that it is 'inoffensive and slow. Of *N. piscator asperimus*, on the other hand, Deraniyagala says it is 'very aggressive when cornered' and Wall goes right out and says: 'With the exception of the *Echis*, I think it is the most vicious snake I know'. Both, thank goodness are totally non-poisonous to man. But have the scientists got their local named mixe up? or do the villagers (who are anything but taxonomical) merely decide that any snake from whose bite they have escaped scot-free could have been neither *naya* nor *polonga*?

This as it may be. But Dinga, who has once been bitten by a 'diyabariya' and took no more notice of the occurrence than if a broody hen had pecked her, tells me that now, in the drought, with so much more of the surviving tank life concentrated in so much the less area, every time she goes to the water (in the early morning and late afternoon) she must shoo three or four watersnakes from the shallows before she dips her pot!

This, combined with a second Russel's Viper experience even more recent and somehow more shocking than the one I described less than two months ago, opens to me a new subject for nightmare. Or would, if I began dreaming of it, which heaven forbid; at present I see it only with the inner but waking eye. I see the drought-beset tank; and men and cattle and deer (who actually never come and jungle boar and jackal and all the pleasant warm-blooded creatures, home and wild, cut off from the precious water while in the night silence a rolling circle of sinuous menace, a fence of serpents, impedes them as, in fact, of course it nowise does. But the stuff of chimeras is not fact. Now, with the weight of drought upon me as it lies here upon us all, I recollect those horrid lines of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Wall quotes them:

*...lo! a spring amid the sandy plain
Shows its clear mouth to cheer
the fainting train.
But round the guarded bank in
thick array
Dire aspices roll'd their congregated way,
And thirsting in the midst the
dipsas lay!*

K A Z I — 5

Jaffna and Vavuniya

By ANATORY BUKOBA

March 6.

Go north of Atchchuveli and get off the bus where it veers east to Point Pedro; keep on till you come to the sea, just a short distance. Turn west and walk about two miles along the shore, you will come to two buildings whose properties line the beach. Here you can get back on the road if you wish. On this walk you will be fascinated by the designs on the rock, coral, along the seashore. They look almost too good to be natural. Take your sandals off in places, wet your feet, and keep walking along in the clear water. You will not be able to do it everywhere for the coral. When you get back on the beach, you will find the sand quite firm. At one place, several yards long, there seem to be a large quantity of twigs lying in the water. Pick them up, you will find they are coral, and you can snap them just as if they were twigs. Do not be in a hurry. Take your time. What can be more important than making the most of the little time you have here. You may never get a chance of coming back. What can be more important than just this moment here? I have written all this, for this, to my mind epitomises Jaffna.

People, here, are not really interested in politics, it seemed to me. They have better things to do, live. They will talk politics, if you want it. From past experience, I would say the Catholics seem to be more cautious in their views, conservative, that is, running with the government, this government. The Hindus are more bold; they have no such inhibitions: they are less cautious. The Jaffna Tamils are emphatically not much enamoured of politics. They have loyalties. Their loyalties are to persons. They do not lay much store by their parties. The vote at KKS, I was given to understand, was a personal vote. Of course, that the candidates, from the leading parties have both increased

their votes has happened elsewhere. I think I am correct in saying. Explain it how you will.

Life in the Jaffna peninsula has traditionally been hard. Every plant in a field, each plant, is watered by its own little irrigation system within the field itself. It is a system that has been worked out I suppose, over centuries, so that it comes easy to the Jaffna Tamil. It means diverting water to each plant, or to each, or to each series of plants, in turns. It would exhaust the patience of other men. The peninsula has been comparatively heavily populated, although you would not think so looking around. This density, I was told, has forced the Jaffna man to look to education for an outlet. That is why the output of Jaffna men in higher education has been out of all proportion to their numbers, taking the island as a whole. That is also why the new system of selecting men for the Universities has hit the Tamils very hard.

The Federal Party has one set of politics, the Tamils themselves another. They want one island. They do not want there to be Sinhalese and Tamils, I thought. They want there to be Sinhalese and Tamils as if there was no distinction. They do not want the distinctions to be emphasized. That emphasis about Sinhalese and Tamils, about two races, is just what the politicians of both over are doing. The people are tired of the old politics, but in the absence of something better from both sides they will naturally side with those of their own race. I met some Sinhalese in the peninsula, visitors and they seemed at ease as there as much as a Tamil would in a Sinhalese area or at least until the politically minded get busy. In my experience in those parts of the world where I have been, I found that the people are friendly; it is the governments who are not: governments have a split personality one in private and the other in public. It is a sort of cowardice.

There was a place, not many acres in extent, with both arable and livestock, some of the land down in fodder grass, which, in spite of a considerable indoor population, who also worked, employed a number of people from outside.

They baked bread, produced most of their own food, which was simple and wholesome, but made twenty-two varieties of small industrial products from what they grew. Most of these were beverages, some medicine, some food or appetizers, and a soap. If the prices of some of these products were somewhat high by the average man's standards, well, so are most things these days. At least, I would say, they were not priced with an eye to the tourist. I do not think tourists came here, and those people, I saw, who had come shopping, were from the area. I thought,

Rained, it did, the two days I was here. I always seem to bring rain whenever I come. The paddy fields were fallow. This I saw from the train. The buses were clean, but about the most dilapidated I have seen anywhere in Ceylon.

Jaffna may look different, but it is one with Ceylon. We are one island, one people. That antipathy against speaking Sinhalese is not there so much. At one time, I used to be reminded of the people of Buganda, tee Baganda, who would not speak Swahili or English. As regards Jaffna, that is much less so now. I write all this seated on the steps of a boutique on the Jaffna road in another district of the same province.

Most people do some agriculture now, even if they are not primarily farmers, and their chief source of livelihood is another calling or profession. This is as it should be. It is the one part of the Communist Manifesto, so far as I know, that has not been put into practice by the Communists, and it has fallen to our present government to do it. Bravo! You could scrap the rest of the Communist Manifesto, I think. That it should be done in Jaffna, where there has traditionally been a land-squeeze, a shortage of it, speaks well. It is being done elsewhere in the Island, too. Yet, much of the peninsula looks uncultivated. There is certainly no need for population control among the Tamils, or elsewhere for that matter, as I am convinced. The Tamils are looking for leadership, but they are still not primarily concerned with power politics, but only fair play, another word for justice, and they want unity, as I said.

March 6,

Late evening it was, when I came to a farm. Friends of mine were away. I stayed a little while and asked a few questions about the work that year, and I stayed in the district that night. The paddy, I gathered, had been a failure in spite of the irrigation that was available from well water. On the other hand, the paddy that had been sowed on strict chena, in the district had, it seemed, been a success, as threshing had been done, if the visual evidence did not deceive one as the piles of straw, in a few places was there to be seen. It could of course, have been a case of much straw and little grain. If, on the evidence, the highland paddy, as it is called, had been successful, and the paddy fields had failed, it must have had something to do with the variety of paddy or rice that had been sown. There used to be a large number of strains of paddy in Ceylon, and it is not inconceivable that each strain must have served a purpose. This is certainly so with cattle. Concentration, these last few years, on a few, so called, heavy-yielding varieties seems to have driven most of the country-strains of rice off the face of the earth, come a year of drought, and the agricultural experts are made to look foolish, and the farmers are left to curse their own folly and credulity. This is supposed to be science, and it is what the various organs of UNO propagate and we are seeing the same kind of foolishness in the so-called Family Health programme which the world will regret when it is too late, and the damage has been done, and not least in this country. Then the pundits will be able to sit back and reflect on the havoc they have caused, as they may do how with the rice.

Staying a night in the area was helpful in enabling me to have a sort of broader look at the place I would like to draw a comparison here between the Vavuniya area, that I saw, and Greece. I was fortunate, many years ago, to call at Salonika, Piraeus, and Cusehaven all in the course of a single voyage from Port Said to Glasgow. Cusehaven of course, is elsewhere. It was all done in one of those mass-produced Liberty ships. I wonder if they are still sailing, just as the

Dakota is still flying. Seeing Greece from the sea, made me conscious of history. Vavuniya District is the meeting place of the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Greece was mountainous, wild, all grass, no people to be seen. Vavuniya is jungly, cleared and looking deserted, at least, that part I that saw. *Veni, vidi, vici*, and then what? Well, we know that people have not left altogether, they still come back.

People are rightly trying to form communities. We are all called to be Prime Ministers, Ministers of Finance, and conquerors of Mount Everest. In short, we all cannot be on our land all the time. That is far from imputing that we should have no land. Today's *Daily News* says, almost in one breath, that all land in Ethiopia will, in future, be state-owned, and that the peasant or farmer will not be able to keep more than twenty-five acres; that sort of journalistic licence we have got used to the real revolution is not public ownership of land, if there ever was such a thing, but, and this is really much more revolutionary, all hired labour is, in future, banned from Ethiopia. Just think what this would mean in Ceylon. The consequences are almost too dreadful to think of

There was a time when the employer had a real hold over his employee. That is not so now. I have just read a book, called the *Acquisitive Society*, which was published, or rather written, by an ex-Oxford don, as early as about 1920. What he said, then, holds good now. I cannot agree with all his conclusions, or, perhaps I should say, remedies. I have my own solution. The *Acquisitive Society* is an arresting title, because it so aptly describes the world we live in, whatever bloc that is, but I think the book was misnamed. Perhaps it should have been called, well, just anything else, but the point the author makes, or tries to make, is that socio-economic society must be organized along different lines; but he backs his thesis by strong historical evidence reaching to the present day, for the history he brought up to 1920 has its tendencies even more strongly marked now.

So, if agricultural development is to be successful and meaningful

for those engaged in it, and if we are to get away from the quite unreal world of subsidies, which has taken a hold of agriculture even more so in the West than in our world, or part of it, we have to realise a quite different way of doing things together, so that everybody engaged in agriculture in more meaningfully involved both as to his responsibilities and as to the rewards. The first is as important as the second, and its realization is part of the success of communist China; but I do not need communism to tell me what is right. As I recalled a day or two ago, an old English headmaster of mine, a Jesuit priest, said as much as I have just said in a letter to me as long as 1948, when I just started farming, but he did not state the whole case; he left out the bit about the rewards. What he said was that money must bow to knowledge, the owner to the farmhand who knows his job. That I would presume, used to be reward enough for the farmhand in those days, to be respected in a meaningful way.

Yet I think the old employer-employee relationship has to go; matters have gone too far to retain it; but there will always be hierarchy, for every family needs its head. Unfortunately, the employee complex dies hard, particularly among the Indian Tamils in Ceylon. It will be a very long time before they will be willing to forge a wage in the interest of a better form of association with the head, the man who used to be called an employer.

There were other impressions I had. The forlorn appearance of most farms can be avoided, both in season and out, if the aesthetic value of a place is not neglected the need to keep a place tidy. The short comings of machines was shown up. One farm had two pumps out of order, and I gathered they required major repairs. Another farm had good grass growing in some of its fallow fields, and that kind of weed that, I should think, cannot be eaten, in others. Now I know that cattle can find a bite even when all the grass seems burnt up at the tail and of a dry season, so would not cattle be of some help? Once again I got the impression of a dearth of population. Water there certainly was in some

places, well water, but there the matter ended, I thought.

Quote I must now from and apostolic exhortation by Paul VI to all bishops in peace and communions with the apostolic see, for the right ordering and development of devotions to Blessed Virgin Mary. He says, it is characteristic of the Christian in his manner of life not to give into circumstances but to overcome them, not to succumb but to make and effort. These words could be applied to the people whose farms I saw in this area, as people who also shine in this way.

* *

Inania of this, that and the other Rice Up, Railway!

BY INNA

I HAVE SEEN the French Railways, the SNCF at close quarters, and have read of their efficiency. At the Brussels Expo of 1958, I watched for hours on end, with keen interest, the *deroulement* of the SNCF stall: travelled to Rheims and back now and again and have a nostalgia for the quiet, fast efficiency of that line.

Whiff, like a dream came back the SNCF when from the Kandy station, our SLR—Sri Lanka Railways, slid noiselessly out on the dot of 6.35 a.m., just last week, the second week of April 1975. It was, to me, a triumph of precision, a bull's eye at accuracy. Starting on time, even on the dot of the second, is therefore, not the monopoly of the fabled SNCF, Sri Lanka SM's and trains are capable. Hats off to them.

But then, I read somewhere: "Good comes from the total cause: evil, by whatever is deficient". True, we can't cry for the moon and be perfectionists, but why not remember that ordinary persons in normal life, become railway passengers on the train, and so, John Doe, and you and I and Everyman must collaborate with the 'authorities' wherever we can.

On the train, I have the rights of a railway passenger; but to every right answers a duty. I have the duties of a railway passenger. Why say this? It's pretty obvious, you'd say. But look at, let's call him, Barasinghe, carrying a heavy bag coming into the train at Giragama. Good for him. So far, so good. Every man carries his own burden. Barasinghe spreads out his legs like billy-ho, imitating the wingspan of the Jumbo Jet from the knees and places a newspaper and handbag just by his side for sheer relief that he has got a seat: too good to be true.

The train comes to a halt at Sarasavi Uyana, and young Varsity lads and lassies get in, medical students by their looks and their talk. Barasinghe puts on a 'bara' face and the knees don't get any closer. Hard work, a hard term, drawn-out faces of the young people, future intellectuals and risk-bearers of our country are not for him. He looks out into the blue or green of the passing show. The girls keep on standing in the corridor. What can Railway efficiency do about such a situation?

Plug-in Bus Halves Running Costs

London.

A new electric city bus—twice as economical to run as a diesel—began passenger-carrying evaluation trials in Manchester, north west England last week. The 34-seater, powered by light-weighted lead-acid batteries on board, has been developed by the Lucas group and will run all day on Manchester's city centre routes. It can accelerate smoothly with a full passenger load to 30 mph in under 15 seconds and has a top speed of 45 mph. The bus has already made a 100-mile road test and a Lucas spokesman said: "We see no problem in operating all day in city centre conditions, where the average bus travels about 40 miles in a single day." The lead-acid batteries, which the company feels are capable of further development for later vehicles, are charged overnight and research is aimed at producing a battery with a life of several hundred cycles.

Here it is only selflessness that can cure such callous disregard of ones' fellow human beings. Hasn't Barasinghe, (or Barasingham, couldn't say) a mother, a sister, a wife? Couldn't he edge a little bit and close the genuflex-accordion? And then, someone popped up and said in tourist tones: Oh, but why couldn't you push on a little and close up and give a seat to them. They look like your students—it takes a student to recognize a student, perhaps, at least he was a student of human nature. The knees went back to meet each other, the paper flew to the rack above, the bag (weeny little handbag) went on to his-lap and two people sat where fellow-passengers should be, *by our side*.

If it's a relative, we close up and give room easily; if it is one of another colour, one with (or without) a pottu and sounding a different language from the vocal chords we do not so easily give up a little room. We give in to the temptation of "railway racialism."

Don't knock down the Railway when it is trying to do good. Collaborate; co-operate as fellow-passengers—we are fellow passengers in life, going on this one same journey.

THE GREAT VICTORY

Over Hitler Fascism

By T. DURAISINGAM, J.P., U.M
Formerly Editor, Lanka-Soviet Journal

THIRTY YEARS AGO, on May 9, 1945, the people of the World rejoiced at the glad tidings that fascist Germany, on the previous day, had surrendered unconditionally and that Hitler's "new order", which perpetrated the most barbaric atrocities against humanity, was finally crushed.

It is estimated that more than 50 million people from 70 countries lost their lives before fascism was defeated in Europe and Asia in 1945. Twenty million of them were Russians and other Soviet people, 6 million were Polish,

1.7 million were Yugoslav, 600,000 French, 405,000 American and 375,000 British. Another 35 million were permanently disabled. People in Germany and in other countries also had to pay dearly for the policies of their governments: The military operations conducted on an area of 22 million square kilometers in 1939-45 spread death and devastation to an extent never before experienced. The war destroyed 1,700 towns and over 70,000 villages in the Soviet Union and almost one million houses in France. Four hundred villages were razed to the ground in Greece and two-thirds of all livestock perished in Yugoslavia.

Hitler Germany was defeated by many countries which had formed the anti-Hitler coalition, amongst others the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France and the United States. Judged by the number of casualties, the Soviet Union bore the main brunt of the Second World War. Throughout the war, between 60 and 70 per cent of Hitler's armies were on the German-Soviet front. When the three million strong German army invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, nearly all of Western Europe, with the one exception of Britain was already at Hitler's feet. One by one the countries of Europe had been overrun by the Nazis and it had taken only a few days or weeks to overcome each nation. Hitler had therefore drawn the remaining countries, Italy, Rumania, Hungary and Finland, into the Axis coalition and these countries joined Germany in her way against the USSR.

HITLER AND HIS GENERALS had planned a blitzkrieg (lightning war) against the USSR. They believed that in a few months they would knock out the Red Army, break the Soviet people's will to resist, destroy the Soviet Socialist system and enslave the peoples of the Soviet Union. The Red Army's operations against the fascist aggressors began in extremely unfavourable circumstances. Germany's onslaught was unexpected and the Soviet forces were taken by surprise. Through its surprise attack, the German Air Force had put out of action a large number of Soviet planes and tanks in the very first hours of the war. The Soviet

forces fought heroically, but the Red Army was forced to retreat and in a month's time the Germans had seized part of the Ukraine, Moldavia, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and even parts of Russia proper.

The Soviet Government had frankly and courageously told the people the grim truth about the setbacks suffered by their army. In its appeal, the Government had revealed the intentions of the Germans and had declared the country to be in mortal danger. But no matter how great the danger, the Government had expressed firm confidence in ultimate victory. The radio address delivered on July 3, 1941 by Joseph Stalin, then Chairman of the USSR, the Generalissimo of the Soviet armed forces and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was published in many newspapers throughout the world, including this country. Stalin had said that "a perfidious military attack on our fatherland begun on June 22 by Hitler's Germany is continuing in spite of the heroic resistance of the Red Army, and, although the enemy's finest divisions and finest air force units have already been smashed and have met their doom on the field of battle, the enemy continues to push forward, hurling fresh forces into the attack."

"How could it have happened", he asked, "that our glorious Red Army surrendered number of our cities and districts to the Fascist armies? Is it really true that German Fascist troops are invincible, as is ceaselessly trumpeted by boastful Fascist propagandists? Of course not! History shows that there are

Lost and Found Story

A woman of Hanover (New Hampshire, U.S.A) recently returned to a library a book she had discovered among the belongings of a deceased relative. He had borrowed this book—a 106-page work by British orator and statesman John Bright—back in 1907. "Even a slow reader," a library spokesman said, "could get through it handily in 67 years, pacing himself well by reading one page every 231 days."

no invincible armies and never have been. Napoleon's army was considered invincible, but it was beaten several times by Russian, English and German armies. Kaiser Wilhelm's German army in the period of the first imperialist war was also considered invincible, but it was beaten several times by Russian and Anglo-French forces and was finally smashed by Anglo-French forces. The same must be said of Hitler's German Fascist army today. This army had not yet met with serious resistance on the continent of Europe. Only in our territory has it met serious resistance and if as the result of this resistance the finest divisions of Hitler's German Fascist army have been defeated by our Red Army, it means that this army, too, can be smashed and will be smashed as were the armies of Napoleon and Wilhelm."

Then he set out the measures that should be taken to defeat the enemy. But even at this stage, the Soviet Union did not confine itself to national tasks alone. In this speech Stalin had declared that "the aim of this people's Patriotic War against the fascist oppressors is not only to avert the danger that is hanging over our country, but also to aid all the European peoples who are groaning under the yoke of German fascism." The Soviet people and army, by their struggle, gave the peoples of the world faith in victory over fascism, and so encouraged the anti-fascist resistance movements even in the Nazi-occupied countries, and also contributed greatly to the fusion of the war in defence of the socialist homeland and the struggle of the peoples for national and social liberation. People all over the world, who had been overwhelmed by rapid victories of the Nazis, regained hope.

In many countries organisations of friends and well-wishers of the Soviet Union were formed. In Sri Lanka, the Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union was formed in early 1942. Its aims and objects were: (a) to study and enlighten the public in general about the USSR; (b) to give as direct and practical aid as our conditions and interests allow to the Soviet peoples in their fight against Fascism and Reaction; and (c) to work for full and friendly

relations between the peoples of Ceylon and those of the Soviet Union. The *Lanka-Soviet Journal*, the organ of the Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union, in its issue of November 1943, stated in its editorial that "we in Lanka owe the Soviet peoples a great debt. Their valiant resistance at Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad has saved us from fascist attack and their brilliant counter offensive has finally smashed the fascist threat from the West. It is up to us to learn the Soviet example how to unite to smash the fascist threat from the East and by doing so win our freedom in a free world. For the past 19 months, the Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union have sought to supply this knowledge through lectures, pamphlets and public campaigns. We have sought to build and increase friendly relations between our peoples and those of the USSR and to express our admiration for and solidarity with them in the fight against fascism by organising collections for Soviet Medical Aid."

Pieter Keuneman, on 7th November 1943, at a public meeting organised by the Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union to celebrate Revolution Day, said: "The whole world now realises the debt owed to the Soviet Union, which for two years stood between the fascists and the realisation of their dream of world conquest, which has destroyed the best divisions of the German Army, given other people time to prepare their forces and made possible the celebration of the third November 7th since the attack on the USSR."

In a goodwill message to the December 1944 issue of the *Lanka-Soviet Journal*, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, then Minister for Local Administration, said: "Through the centuries mankind has every yearned for the Golden Age—an age of friendship and brotherhood, of prosperity and happiness. These things have never been beyond human reach, though man has hitherto failed to achieve them. In the face of what many thought were insuperable difficulties, both internal and external, a few dreamers and theorists set to themselves this noble task in Russia. Whether we agree or not with all aspects of the activities of Soviet Russia, no one can deny that within

the short space of a quarter of a century an almost unbelievable progress has been made in industry, agriculture, education, health services—indeed, in most of the things required for human prosperity and happiness. Above all, the truly remarkable manner in which Russia has stood the terrible test of this war has proved that to the jaded spirits of man there has come a new courage and a new hope, the courage to overcome inconceivable difficulties in the hope of achieving mankind's true heritage."

In a message to the same journal, George, E. De Silva, then Minister for Health, said:

"If one looks to Russia's achievements during the short period of 27 years, one cannot help but admire the heroism of the Soviet people, which has made possible the stupendous advancement in every sphere of human activity. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, many wrongly thought that the Red Army would not be able to survive against the might of German arms. Today the Soviet Union has demonstrated to an astonished world what a united people could achieve in defence of freedom and liberty. It is no wonder then that the whole of freedom loving humanity is looking to the Soviet Union for inspirations and guidance in the struggle against world reaction."

The only tangible way that the Ceylon Friends of the Soviet Union sought to assist the Soviet Union was by collecting money from all sections of the public and send it for medical aid in Russia. Thrice during the period of the war, the CFSU sent the money so collected to the Soviet Ambassador in London for transmission to the Soviet Union.

In May 1945, soon after the allied victory over Hitler Germany, the CFSU organised a public meeting to celebrate the victory. At this meeting Pieter Keuneman spoke about Soviet foreign policy. He said that the central fact on which Soviet foreign policy was based was that the USSR was a Socialist country in a capitalist world. All the main principles of its foreign policy, he said, arose from this fact. Briefly, he set out this policy as: 1. Rejection of imperialist ex-

pansion at the cost of other nations; 2. Political and economic co-operation with all states, irrespective of their social systems, based on the sovereign independence and equality of the contracting parties; 3. Non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states; 4. Alliance with any state or states for the purpose of mutual protection from acts of aggression; and 5. Maintaining peace through collective security.

"Now that Hitlerism is defeated," Keuneman continued, "what does the Soviet Union ask for as a necessary guarantee for keeping the peace? He enumerated them as: (a) the political, economic and moral destruction of fascism; (b) continuing and extending the unity of the United Nations as the essential factor for peace, as it was for victory; (c) building a security organisation, based on such unity, which will maintain peace through the use of combined might against aggressor states; (d) seeing that Europe is re-fashioned on the basis of independence, self-determination and democracy for its various nations; (e) Seeing that colonial and subject peoples obtain independence as early as possible.

The victory of the anti-fascist coalition in the Second World War produced far reaching changes in the world. The world socialist system was enlarged with 13 socialist states comprising a quarter of the territory of the globe and more than a third of its population. Most of the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America had, thereafter, achieved their independence.

The thirtieth anniversary celebrations of the victory over fascist Germany now coincides with the celebrations of the victory of a small nation—Vietnam—over the armed might of the greatest imperialist power of the world—the United States of America.

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LAW

Committed judges: a caution

New Delhi,

Differing attitudes of judges, "committed" and "uncommitted" creates tension in courts, former Chief Justice of India, M. Hidayatullah said here on Friday. Delivering the first annual lecture instituted by the Bar Association of India, he said that besides, the court's view itself depended on whether the majority consisted of either of these types of judges. Mr. Hidayatullah said that judges who accepted the policy of lawmaking bodies and the Government as supposedly reflecting the people's view could be classified as "judicially modest" or "committed" and those not doing so as "judicially active," or "uncommitted".

"To expect judges to keep away from public policy and then blame them for living in an ivory tower is hardly fair", he said. There had often to be an "accommodation" between the judiciary and the centres of political power, Mr. Hidayatullah said.

Urging the legal profession to be the guardian of the rights which the Constitution guaranteed. Mr. Hidayatullah said that in India today, the lawyers who spoke for "power of the people" were vociferous but lawyers who took the opposite stand were apathetic. "It behoves them to speak also so that a proper balance in the exercise of power may be reached."

The increasing power of Government functionaries, he said, was the "most notable feature today", and whether the exercise of a power was justified under the Constitution was always doubtful. Lawyers today are decided on every such issue, inside and outside courts. Many of them, affiliated to certain parties, are always eager to read down the checks on powers the Constitution has created." Mr. Hidayatullah said.

Mr. Hidayatullah deplored the current multiplicity of laws and their constant change which "perplexed the common man, encouraged misleading arguments and drove

judges to despair." There had never been such legislative activity in the country's history. "When we consider that Parliament has passed an average 60 Acts every year from 1950 we get about 1,500 Acts and about three or four times as many sets of rules and regulations", he said.

"Our laws are often experimental and more and more laws are passed to bolster up old ones which prove ineffective. Almost every Act passed is immediately subjected to amendments because hurried drafting results in flaws." Mr. Hidayatullah criticised Indian judges for writing complicated judgements which were more like "sermons".

"Judgements are becoming more and more diffuse and the simplicity of exposition is being lost." A judge "should not think he is a machine giving impersonal answers or a priest giving a sermon. The judgements must exhibit the stamp of literature and liberal culture," he said. Former Vice-President G. S. Pathak presided over the function which was attended by judges of the Supreme Court, the Delhi High Court and a large number of lawyers.

Sunday Standard, 6/4/75

Holdup Stories

A new method of combating holdups has been introduced by the Chemical Bank in New York. It has put up signs with the words "Robbery in Progress" outside its branches. These warning signs flash when activated from observation posts inside: In France bank cashiers recently struck for two hours to protest against the inability of the police to check the increase in armed holdups. Bank robbers, however, are not always successful. In Rome, for instance, a band of them were recently forced to leave the 67 million lire they had stolen in a bank in their automobile and flee on foot when they got hopelessly snarled in a traffic jam.

LETTER

IWY—Alien Wives
Of Sri Lanka Nationals

Sir,

In 1975 we in Sri Lanka who are celebrating International Women's Year sponsored by the United Nations, must surely be concerned with the rights and privileges of the alien wives of nationals of Sri Lanka.

We are undoubtedly mindful of the fact that these alien wives are proud of their own nationalities and heritage: that their parents, brothers and sisters, relations and friends still in the lands of their birth, are those they have to depend on to return to, in the event of the demise of their husbands: that they would have the right to return to the lands of their birth, only if they retained their own nationalities.

These alien wives of Sri Lanka nationals enjoy the rights and privileges of all married women, except that they suffer an embarrassment and a humiliation of having to depend on their husbands to pay a visa tax of five hundred rupees every year, on their behalf, (as for a 5 Sri Motor car!) only for the reason that they retain their own nationalities, and not, for the sake of expediency, becoming nationals of Sri Lanka.

Further, the non-payment of this visa tax invites a geographical separation of a married couple! a gun directed at cupid? As such some wives must live at the mercy of their husbands who could cause such a forcible separation by the non-payment of this tax!

May it therefore please our gracious lady Prime Minister to recognise this embarrassing, humiliating and servile plight, these alien wives of Sri Lanka citizens find themselves in, only for their wanting to safeguard the sentimentality, the rights and old age security benefits of their own countries, and use the discretionary authority vested in her uncle the visa Tax Act, to grant exemption by notification in the gazette, of the provisions of this Act to these alien wives (and widows) of Sri Lankan nationals in honour of women in this International Women's Year.

A Husband

Colombo 5. 2/5/75

AGRICULTURE

Inadequacies Of
Soil Tests

Systematic analysis of soil samples to assess the fertility status in different regions and decide nutrient doses for successful cropping in India was started in 1955-56 under an Indo-U.S. project. Beginning with 24 soil testing units, it now provides comprehensive coverage in different States with 179 soil laboratories set up by Government and 49 by the fertilizer industry. In addition some mobile units have also been commissioned. These facilities enable the analysis of nearly 2.7 million samples every year. The activity is more concentrated in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh.

Useful as it is, the soil analysis technique now practised could be improved considerably, some critics feel, to give more precise and purposeful recommendation to the farmer. Even in the U.S., with its phenomenal expansion of soil laboratories, it is held that the service is capable of improvement, and there is scope for refining their work on a more scientific basis.

Improvement is called for in the collection of soil samples and in the analytical procedures. Dr. A. Sankaram, in his keynote address to the recent Convention of Agricultural Chemists, pointed out that soil tests should be supported by

research on fertilizer response, for a correct interpretation of the findings. Factors like crop needs and root feeding power, nutrient intensity in the soil solution in relation to other elements, fixation properties of the soil for a particular nutrient, capacity of the soil to release non-exchangeable nutrient element, sub-soil levels of the element, strength of absorption of the element to the soil colloids, the effect of time of sampling and soil preparation, critical soil and plant needs and targeted yield levels, were factors that decided the usefulness of soil tests for fertilizer recommendations. He emphasised that there was no substitute to actual field trials for determining the nutrient needs of the crop. Fertilizer recommendations formulated for a specific region could not be applied to the same or similar crop in another region without further field tests on the soils of the region.

There has been a shift in emphasis more recently in U.S. from soil testing to plant analysis as a criterion for fertilizer recommendations. Referring to the massive supporting data gathered to substantiate the methods and interpretations of plant analysis in U.S., Dr. Sankaram pointed out that the scientists held even these recommendations as only tentative. This showed their awareness of the complexity of the interaction between the soil and the plant.

—Hindu

RUSSIAN TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR CLARKE

It has been announced that Arthur Clarke's latest novel, *RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA*, is the first English work of fiction to be purchased by the U.S.S.R. since it signed the International Copyright Agree ment. *RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA*, published by Gollancz in 1973, has already won all existing prizes in the U.S. and U.K. for the best science-fiction novel of its year. It will be followed in late 1975 by Mr. Clarke's most ambitious work, *IMPERIAL EARTH*, upon which he has been working for twenty years. The *RAMA* contract was signed by Mr. Clarke's brother and European representative Fred Clarke, with appropriate Vodka toasts, at a ceremony in the office of the Mayor of Haringey, London. 50,000 copies of the Russian edition will be printed initially by Mir, Moscow.

Although Mr. Clarke's fiction and non-fiction has appeared in very large editions in the USSR, he has never before received any payment. "I don't know which pleases me most", he comments, "the distinction of being the first English novelist so honoured—or the fact that my Russian royalties can at least help the economy of Sri Lanka." Mr. Clarke became a permanent resident of Sri Lanka in 1975, under the government's new "Resident Guest" scheme. He plans one more novel, *THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE*, set in an island very much like Sri Lanka—but a hundred years hence.

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

● VENISON AND WILD LIFE CONSERVATION

IS IT NOT A FACT that a commendable effort is now being made to conserve wild life in this country? That for some years after 1970 wild life conservation had been thrown into disorder owing to new-fangled confusions about conservation? That this has led to the withdrawal of game wardens and rangers from all parts of the country—except in the game sanctuaries? That the ruling ideology was that wild life should not be "protected" because they ruined the crops of the peasants? That, but for the insurgency when guns were withdrawn and ammunition was not issued, wild life, especially the elephant and the deer, would have been practically wiped out now? That this policy had led to an uproar regarding the wanton killing and the brutal savagery in capturing elephants? That this had triggered the "retirement" of the official who had made this philosophy of wild life conservation the credo of the department? That there is as yet no evidence that a new policy for wild life conservation has been evolved? That, in the meantime, there are plans afoot to create a "Corporation" for the conservation of wild life? That this organisational gimmick was likely to be a safe haven for a number of officials who had beaten a retreat from the Department and also provide a ladder for ambitious conservationists to climb into the international wild life band-waggon via the Sri Lanka outfit? That the bait for this scheme would be laid with promises of donations from the World Wild Life Foundation's funds? That whilst these plans and schemes were being cooked in secret, wild life is being destroyed at a terrific rate?

IS IT NOT A FACT that under the plea of promoting tourism, certain kinds of wild life were being

destroyed at an alarming rate? That whilst it was permissible to supply wild boar meat to tourists, it is a crime of the highest magnitude that venison was being supplied in plentiful quantities not only in a number of governmental Hotel Corporation resthouses but also in a large number of private guest houses and hotels away from Colombo? That a cursory *Tribune* survey has shown that at least three Hotel Corporation resthouses regularly provide venison to tourists who want them? That price charged for such venison is so high that it is enough to cover the blackmarket price of cartridges? That many other non-Hotel Corporation resthouses also supply venison with meals? That a multitude of boutiques and eating houses in the Wannai and its periphery provide venison with meals? That the Wild Life Department in charge of conservation does not take any interest in the matter? That it now relies on the Police to prevent poaching and the destruction of valuable wild life? That the Police are overburdened with other work to devote time to conservation of wild life? That in these days of meat shortages many policemen will be inclined to shut a blind eye to meat that is sold illegally? That venison can easily be passed off for wild boar flesh to those who are not expert in distinguishing meat in the raw state? That, all in all, deer is now being destroyed at a fast rate not only to promote tourism but also to meet the meat shortage? That, without game rangers and wardens in the areas where the deer still roam, the killing has increased tremendously? That instead of educating tourists about the need for the conservation of the fast disappearing species of deer, elk and sambhur, our tourist promoters are seeking to inveigle

tourists by offering them fresh venison which they cannot get in their own country for all the gold they can commandeer?

IS IT NOT TIME that something is done about the conservation of Wild Life in this country? That many dedicated persons, including technically qualified officers, genuinely interested in conserving wild life in this country have been kept out of the Wild Life Department for the most perverse reasons? That administrative officials and rich honorary amateur Wild Life conservationists, who do not like the face (or the nose) of some of the best qualified veterinarian animal lovers in the island have prevented some of these people from helping in the work of conservation? That these VIPs prefer to have ill-qualified salaaming yes-sir types at their beck and call rather than employ independent-minded technically qualified officers who are available in this country? That the services of some of our technically qualified officers are sought after by zoos and wild life departments in neighbouring countries? That before Sri Lanka loses these men—on the brain drain stemming from frustration—Government must ensure that their services are usefully and purposefully utilised? That it is also time that Government paid some attention to the whole question of conservation of wild life? That the Government must ensure Wild Life Department is reorganised in such a way as to ensure that the wild life is really protected? That the philosophy of permitting wild life to be slaughtered under the pretext of helping peasants must be abandoned for a more realistic and dynamic policy? That the objective must be to see that deer and other valuable species like the leopard are protected? That for this purpose game wardens must be re-appointed to cover the old beats? That Government must impose an effective ban on governmental resthouses and Hotels Corporation hosteleries providing venison (even in disguised form) to foreign tourists? If this is not done it will not be possible to enforce the ban on private guest houses and eating houses?

