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TRIBUNE

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Letter From The Editor

THIS WEEK'S COVER depicts the hardworking Jaffna peasant toiling in a small onion plot against a back drop of plantain trees. In Jaffna there are no large landowners or big landlords. A four to eight *lacham* plot (that is a quarter to half an acre) is the average holding of the bulk of the farming population. A fifty or hundred *lacham* stretch of land was a billionaire's dream so far as the Jaffna man was concerned—especially intensively cultivated agricultural land with good soil and well water facilities. In more recent times, with the inflow of outside money sent by Jaffna Tamils employed in Malaya, South Ceylon and elsewhere, a few medium sized coconut plantations had come into existence in the Palai area—and this is the only part of the Jaffna District where the 50 acre ceiling of the current Land Reform became applicable. Though small in extent and limited in potential, Jaffna has sustained (together with the hinterland across the Elephant Pass in the Northern and Eastern parts of the island) a Tamil community which is part and parcel of this country. Today, the one-time outposts of the Tamil areas have become even more important than Jaffna itself—Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mannar, Killinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu. The economic problems facing the Tamil community are no different, in the main, from those affecting the Sinhala and other communities. And, what is worse, is that the political problems of the Tamil community *vis a vis* the majority community still remain unresolved. It has become a source of continuing political irritation and conflict. For a short time now, a Government which lives under the miasma that it is "socialist" has pretended that all the problems of the Tamils had been solved because a "progressive" government was reaching out to the Tamils who had previously been misled and misguided by communalists and reactionaries: and it was therefore felt that the Tamils would respond to these overtures from the progressives with enthusiasm. This attempt at a new kind of patronage-politics did not meet with the success the "socialists" had hoped for. When the *Tribune* had pointed out that the patronage-politics played by the SLFP, LSSP and the CP had not won any significant increase in political support for the United Front or solved political problems, the *Nation*, the unofficial English organ of the LSSP, had attacked the *Tribune* in language and idiom (often descending to personal abuse) unworthy of a reputable journal. The position taken by the *Nation* was that *Tribune* should support the patronage-politics of the SLFP, LSSP and the CP because it was intended to undermine the communal politics of the FP and the TUF; and that the efforts made by the *Tribune* to explain that patronage-politics would fail to make any headway in denigrating the TUF was political blasphemy and worse. Ever since *Tribune* began publication in 1954, it has opposed the communal politics, the adventurist tactics and the puerile strategies of the FP in no uncertain manner, but *Tribune* never lost itself in fanatical obsessions of blind hatred so as not to be able to analyse a situation with objective detachment. It was therefore heartening to read a political comment in the LSSP journal, the *Nation*, of August 15, 1975, entitled "SOCIALISM" AND THE MINORITIES. This comment had been prompted by the murder of Duraiyappah, the Mayor of Jaffna. This murder had evidently induced new thinking in LSSP circles. Elsewhere in this issue we have published this *Nation* comment in full for the record. But the following sentences are worthy of special mention: ".....Our purpose in drawing attention to these events is to pose the question whether the policies and administrative actions of the Government have not contributed towards the creation of a climate in which such acts of criminality assume a cloak of extenuation..... It is no wonder then that the Tamil minority should feel orphaned in a very real sense. It is no argument of any real worth to assert that the Tamil voter has only himself to blame..... Attempts to win over communities on the basis of party-political advantage and patronage have succeeded nowhere in the world and at no time in history..... You cannot win people over by parachuting Pied Pipers into their midst—you can collect only a motely crowd of time-servers in that way and earn not support but ridicule. If we are to defeat the forces of Reaction and their imperialist masters in any lasting sense, we have to win over this minorities to this struggle. It was hoped in 1970 that the United Front would succeed in this endeavour, but it is clear that it has not." This is frank admission of failure. Whatever the ideological verbiage and whatever the political casuistry enveloping this statement, the *Nation* admits that patronage-politics even under the cover of "Socialism" has not paid dividends. And this is just what *Tribune* has been saying over the years; that patronage-politics (alone) cannot solve the communal problem in Sri Lanka.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The United Front

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY is at all times difficult to comprehend, more so at a time like the present when events unfold themselves in the most complex, unexpected and bizarre fashion, now slowly, then fast and suddenly in tumultuous cataclysms. It is even more difficult to write about such historical events contemporaneously with objective detachment in a way that even the most fanatic partisans would be willing to admit, at least after the heat of the battle has died down, that what was set out was as close to realities as was possible under the circumstances. It is, moreover, humanly impossible to prevent subjective bias and comment from colouring something of what is written. But a weekly journal of political comment like *Tribune* has been able to maintain a continuous rapport with its wide circle of regular readers because *Tribune's* bias is known—the interest of the nation as a whole and the wellbeing of the country has been the bedrock of its bias. Our larger yardstick has always been the interest of humanity as a whole, and we have endeavoured to sustain ourselves on humanist ethics evolved by man in his quest for a better life. Human as we are, we admit, we have erred at times, but when our mistakes were pointed out to us or we have discovered them for ourselves we have never hesitated to make amends or correct them.

This is just a prelude to the very difficult task we face today in seeking to comment, analyse and interpret the changes which have overtaken the United Front. These changes have been a long time coming. But, so far, it has been, for *Tribune* only a question of reportage with occasional flashes of backgrounded comment or explanatory notes with interpretative insights into men and events. Hereafter, for a reasonably long time at any rate, reportage will be less and interpretative analysis and comment will be more.

And this where the trouble starts. How does one look at, review, interpret, analyse and comment on the break between the SLFP and the LSSP? Each political party and group will be inclined to look at this turning point in our contemporary history from the angle of their beliefs or their ideological gospel. Each of them will undoubtedly think that the way they understand the matter is the one and only way of looking at it. It is not merely the collective logic of a Party, but even more important is the attitude of leading individuals who (for the moment at any rate) make opinion in their circles.

This kind of dilemma has befallen *Tribune* in the past. The SLFP, the LSSP, the CP, the UNP, the FP, the now proscribed JVP, the Maoist CP and a whole host of others—all expect the *Tribune* to echo their way of thinking, and when we do not, we have become suspect in their eyes. We have been accused of being a little bit of this and little bit of that and there is general disappointment that we do not become involved in this or that side on a continuous (and "consistent") basis. There have been frantic attempts to discover the secret prompting of our thinking and papers like *The Nation* have indulged in abuse because we have taken a different point of view which exploded some of the myths they believed in (and some of which they now admit have exploded in their faces).

In spite of all these assaults, *Tribune* has, we believe, generally steered clear of narrow partisanship. On this occasion, too, we will. This is not easy, however, in a country where newspapers and periodicals have a long and persistent history of partisan involvement. The *Lake House*, whether under the Wijewardenas or the nebulous state ownership of today, has been deeply involved in this or that party or a combination of parties. The *Times* too has always been partisan; and in the case of the *Dawasa* group the partisanship had become so intent and dedicated, swinging violently with each stroke of the pendulum, that the Government (it had helped to bring into power) had found it necessary to put it into the freezer. (It is to be hoped that the *Dawasa* will soon be allowed to function once more be-

cause in a country of partisan newspapers, the rule of the merrier is valid in more ways than one). In the maze of involved newspapers, partisan comment and slanted interpretation, *Tribune* has a responsibility (which it has sought to discharge for many years now) to maintain objectivity and detachment to enable our readers to get as clear a picture of the situation for themselves.

DESPITE THE HEROIC EFFORTS of the diminishing coterie of unity-wallahs in the LSSP, CP and even the SLFP, the Prime Minister had, it would appear, made it clear at the summit of UF leaders on August 27th that she could no longer work with the LSSP leader, Dr. N. M. Perera, as her Minister of Finance. This fact was known for sometime now. She had therefore repeated the offer of different portfolios to two of the three LSSP Ministers (she was willing to have Dr. Colvin R. de Silva in his old Ministry of Plantation Industries), but they were unwilling to forgo the Ministry of Finance. The LSSP was even willing to let go the Ministry of Plantation Industries (no doubt because it will be without company and sterling estates) if the Ministry of Finance was retained by the LSSP. This was, however, the one Ministry the PM did not want the LSSP to hold. At the summit, it was believed, she had set out (for at least an hour) the reasons why she did not want either Dr. N. M. Perera or the LSSP to hold this Ministry—and there seems to be a great deal to be said in favour of the stand she had taken. (The finances of the country are indeed in a mess: the liquidity position had become so bad recently that Sri Lanka has had to resort to the most extraordinary ways of finding money to meet current bills: our gross foreign debt has more than doubled since 1970—in September 1970 it was Rs. 1578 million, in April 1975 it was Rs. 3088 millions and in May it was Rs. 3228 million; and fiscal, monetary and tax policies have left all productive units bereft of any kind of incentive to increase production—empty slogans of land reform coupled with notional promises of ownership have not increased production further but only brought it down.)

The pros and cons of whether LSSP tenure of office in the portfolio of Finance must be examined

more leisurely on a later occasion, but in the crisis which has grown within the United Front the Prime Minister, (as she is entitled to do), had wanted a reshuffle of portfolios, no doubt to give effect to a more positive and fruitful programme. She had offered the LSSP other Ministries, but they had declined to accept them. The unity-wallahs had done everything possible to persuade the LSSP to accept the Ministries offered, and although substantial sections of the LSSP membership were anxious that their leaders should accept these new portfolios, the leaders themselves, it would appear, were not agreeable to accepting these newly allotted Ministries without having the Ministry of Finance as an LSSP stronghold.

In the circumstances, the Prime Minister says that she had no alternative but to ask the three LSSP Ministers to tender their resignations because they were not willing to accept the decisions she had made as Prime Minister and Leader of the United Front. Lest it be said that she was acting on a personal whim or fancy, she went before the Working Committee of the SLFP and she received a total and unanimous endorsement in regard to the actions she wanted to take. The LSSP and the unity-wallahs had hoped that the six (or seven) SLFP backbenchers, who had wanted the PM to keep the LSSP by granting to them the Ministry of Finance, would be able to turn the scales in favour of "unity". The LSSP had also hoped that Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe and Miss Chandrika Bandaranaike who had gone on record that "unity" must be maintained at all costs would be able to effect a palace transformation and prevent the anti-LSSP outpourings of Anura Bandaranaike from getting the upper hand.

At the Working Committee meeting, the seven SLFP backbenchers were not able to make any headway and only some of the unity-wallahs had been heard to ask "what next?" The Sunethra-Chandrika palace miracle the LSSP had hoped for did not take place. Close observers of the current situation, in no way interested in the partisan politics of the LSSP or the SLFP, had known the reality that the LSSP could not have its way any longer under a propaganda barrage that the "unity"

of the United Front was in danger because the PM and the SLFP were being misled by the reactionaries and the mudalalis. The LSSP had cried once-too-often "wolf! wolf!" and the PM seems to have been ready with all the answers and all the strategic manoeuvring to meet the customary LSSP blackmail about preserving unity. Independent observers believe that if the LSSP felt so strongly about "unity", its leaders should have accepted the portfolios that were offered to them.

THE LATEST ISSUE of LSSP's weekly *The Nation* speculates on whether it was merely a "clash of personalities" which had led to the differences between the SLFP and the LSSP, or whether the differences reflected a new "conflict" of "basic interests". The LSSP attitude was that if it was only a case of "personality incompatibility", the PM would have accepted one of the compromise solutions suggested by the unity-wallahs under which the LSSP would have retained the Ministry of Finance. If she was not willing to accept the peace-making of the unity-wallahs, it was clear, hinted *The Nation*, that there was something more sinister in the matter—that dark forces of reaction, the mudalalis, the CIA and the like were succeeding in their conspiracy to disrupt the unity of the United Front.

Whatever the LSSP may think or suggest, there are many progressives, as anxious as the LSSP to reach a socialist goal, who sincerely and honestly believe that the fiscal, monetary and revenue policies the LSSP Minister of Finance had pushed through in the last five years have neither paved the way for socialism nor enabled the economy to increase its productive capacity. If sections of the SLFP and others are today compelled to look to international finance and orthodox rightwing remedies, there is no doubt that this has come about because the LSSP Minister of Finance has failed to deliver the goods. (The LSSP is likely to say that if the UF had gone faster in its radical programmes and if the LSSP had not been thwarted by the slow-speed crawlers and saboteurs in the

Bureaucracy and certain SLFP-dominated Ministries, the millennium would have been reached. But this argument is not likely to impress many outside the ranks of LSSP loyalists).

The Prime Minister and the SLFP today stand poised on an advantageous position. Propaganda-wise she has (or will have) the *Lake House* and the *Times* behind her. She will now be advised to bring the *Dawasa* back into the fray and there is no doubt that this newspaper group will support her to the hilt (after the LSSP attempt to liquidate the Gunasenas through various fiscal and other devices.) The PM already has a major propaganda argument in her favour—that it was the LSSP which had refused to accept the re-allocation of portfolios she wanted, and the responsibility for the break was theirs. (This may sound a bit of casuistry to those who have made an orthodoxy of "unity", but it will go down with the ordinary man.)

Apart from the LSSP, the CP alone will bemoan the developments which

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has led to the United Front getting unstuck. The CP has adduced good political reasons why unity should be maintained and why differences should be resolved through amicable discussions, but the CP has failed to persuade the LSSP not to make a fetish of wanting to hold the Ministry of Finance. The CP realises that if any Ministry has been administered the way Mr. Pieter Keuneman had run the Ministry of Housing and Construction, neither the PM nor the SLFP would have had any cause for complaint. Privately, at least, CPites will admit that the LSSP ran their Ministries as if they were LSSP moghulates. Neither the CP nor anyone else has been able to persuade the LSSP to run these Ministries as United Front ministries—let alone having some consideration for people who sympathised with any of the Opposition Parties. One does not know how far the CP will be inclined to back the LSSP in whatever action it might take under the slogan of socialism and leftism. The CP will be tempted to agree (because of its ideological predilections) to accept the argument that the dark forces of reaction had at last begun to prevail, but if the CP does not want to leave the field clear for the rightwing reactionaries, it will be chary of following the LSSP lead in any precipitate action it may want to take to assert LSSP power. The CP has so far been cautious and careful about what it has publicly said and it has not resorted to any attacks on the SLFP or the PM. (Many CPites will find it hard to forget that when the headline section of the CP had problems with the United Front in 1973/74, the LSSP had taken a very unsympathetic attitude towards the CP—and people with longer memories will know that in 1964 the LSSP had joined a coalition with the SLFP leaving the CP to hold the baby of the newly formed United Left Front with Philip Gunawardene who promptly went over to the UNP.)

It is as yet too early to say whether the LSSP will stay inside the United Front, even notionally, and extend responsive co-operation (shades of G. G. Ponnambalam and his fifty-fifty!) to the Government. Or will the LSSP quit the UF

and prepare for the next General Election on a go-it-alone basis using the power it wields in the trade unions and the administrative machine to cause industrial strife to embarrass the Government? (If the LSSP launches out on such a programme it will push the SLFP, into the hands of the UNP and other rightwing forces and place the CP in a major dilemma). The question is also being asked whether the LSSP (or sections of it) will begin to lose faith in parliamentary democracy, elections and the system and be attracted to revolutionary politics the LSSP has rejected.

IN THE ULTIMATE ANALYSIS, the crisis within the United Front had become inevitable because the Government had failed to deliver the goods. A great deal of praiseworthy legislation of a radical nature had been placed on the Statute Book and some of it implemented in the most haphazard fashion, but unemployment has kept increasing, the cost of living has gone higher and higher, the value of the rupee has kept dropping lower and lower, the liquidity position of the Treasury has become unmentionably bad and the production of food and other crops and goods has begun to slip down in the most disastrous fashion.

The United Front for five years has had indulged in the most specious explanations—at best dangerous half truths—to persuade people that they must bear up with all the hardships: at first it was sabotage of the UNP and the reactionaries coupled with the argument that the legacy left behind by the UNP was responsible for the

ills; then when this argument failed to cut any more ice, the excuse of the insurgency was trotted out as to why no progress had been achieved, and when this died down, the world recession and global inflation was held aloft as the sole cause for all our ills. But now, the Government has come to the end of such propaganda tether. The PM and a substantial section of the UF had begun to wonder whether it would wise to persist in the kind of "radicalism" the LSSP Minister of Finance had thought was a panacea for all our economic ills.

Our readers will recall that Tribune has from 1971 onwards been critical of the fiscal, monetary and other policies of the Government. Our position was that they were unrealistic and impractical especially in any attempt to pave the way for socialism. We had always pointed out that production will suffer (it has, in spite of the propaganda barrage which even the SLFP was persuaded to accept). We had pointed that without incentives at all levels (adequate wages, appropriate prices for agricultural produce, fair profits and the like), even the radical measures of the Government will fail to produce results.

This is not a sermon on a well-told-you-so formula. But our readers will recall that our warnings and criticisms about the policies which have now brought this country to the brink of bankruptcy (in spite of grandiose radical legislation and ceilings to curb the rich) had been resented very much by the leaders of the Government. Today, many of them have (privately) begun to admit that

DR. N. M. PERERA

The LSSP crossed over the Opposition when its three Ministers were removed from office by a Presidential decree on September 2. On the next day, Dr. N. M. Perera made a 3½ hours speech (in Sinhala) in the NSA. It was an indignant refutation of the charges made against him by the Prime Minister. It was also a counter-attack alleging that the PM was a prisoner in the hands of the mudalalis now furiously conspiring with international reaction (and US imperialism) to de-stabilise progressivism in Sri Lanka as had been done in Chile, Bangladesh and other countries. He accused the PM of breaking up the United Front and hinted that the villain of the peace was Satan—everybody knew whom he meant. He threw in bit of SLFP dirty linen for good measure.

Tribune's criticisms were valid, and tomorrow they will (publicly) proclaim lines of action we have suggested from time to time. This has happened many times in the past and only a few of the discerning will now recall the role *Tribune* has played in making opinion in this country during the last 20 years.

What the re-shuffled government of the Prime Minister will do is hard to say. Unless it is able to solve some of the basic economic problems it cannot hope to enjoy the confidence of the people for long. It is not political slogans of high radicalism (even if

implemented) that can solve our economic difficulties. Two or three important tasks confront the government. The cash liquidity position has to be improved, and this may entail additional foreign loans (at least to keep up our foreign payments). No foreign loan will be feasible without a realistic rate of exchange for our weak rupee and this means devaluation. But more than this it has become essential to evolve a scheme of incentives to induce wage earners, farmers, industrialists, and others who produce wealth to make them respond enthusias-

tically to the PM's call for increased production. We must produce more food to survive. We must produce more goods to beat inflation. We must streamline our utility services. We must work harder. The working people in towns and villages in the Sri Lanka of today will only respond to incentives. (Even socialism thrives on incentives.)

Whether the Government after the reshuffle will be able to cope with the urgent tasks is yet to be seen. We can only hope for the best.

CHRONICLE

August 22—August 28

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; TOC—Times of Ceylon; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22: In a letter the Prime Minister has indicated to Dr. N. M. Perera, that she would be reconstituting the government: the Politbureau of the LSSP was in continuous session yesterday since Dr. Perera received the letter from the Prime Minister: the LSSP had been offered the choice of three portfolios in the reconstituted government—Foreign and Internal Trade, Shipping and Tourism, Labour, Posts and Telecommunications, Fisheries and Plantation Industries; Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction was yesterday requested to come to Colombo for discussions—CDN. Later in the day LSSP informed the Prime Minister that they are unable to accept any other portfolios other than what they are holding at present and in the event of any changes the party would quit the United Front—VK. According to *Lankadipa* it is very likely a new Cabinet will be sworn in today or on Monday: According to the *Janadina* reactionary forces are desperately attempting with the use of newspapers, to break the unity of the United Front: Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Plantation Industry, speaking at the Trotsky commemoration day meeting held at the New Town Hall on Wednesday said that minor disputes would never distract the LSSP from their march to achieve the main objectives of socialism—CDN. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike will leave tonight for Lima, Peru, to attend the non-aligned Foreign Ministers conference—CDN. The Political Report, presented by the General Secretary of Communist Party (Moscow wing), Dr. S. A. Wickrema-

singhe, to the ninth National Congress of the party was unanimously adopted yesterday at the party's Congress now being held in Matara—CDN. Nearly 20,000 people who opted to become Indian citizens in terms of the Sirima-Shastri Pact, have overstayed their permits—CDN. A few hours before Dr. Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State, set out on his Middle East peace mission Israeli planes bombed the Northeast of Lebanon. In Cairo spokesman for Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, said a new interim peace agreement will be a step towards the liberation of all occupied Arab States.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23: According to the *Daily Mirror*, today was D-day for the LSSP: the Party's Central Committee which meets today will be called upon to take a crucial decision on whether the LSSP Ministers should accept the portfolios offered to them by the Prime Minister: the three LSSP Ministers did not attend the meeting of the NSA yesterday: Mr. Pieter Keuneman, who returned from Matara on a request by the Prime Minister on Thursday night shuttled between the residences of the leaders of the SLFP and the LSSP carrying one formula after another in an attempt to bring about a compromise between the two parties—CDN. Dr. Lal Jayawardane, Secretary to the Treasury, and Mr. H. Tennekoon, Governor of the Central Bank, will represent the country at the World Bank and IMP meetings—CDN. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike told the NSA yesterday that he did not dissolve the Jaffna Municipal Council but its life had ended in December 1974 and since that day it was extended by emergency regulations and that he had decided not to extend it after August 11—CDN. Federal Party MP for Uduvil told the NSA yesterday that since the killing of the Mayor of Jaffna there is a reign of terror in the peninsula and innocent youths were being harassed by the Police—CDN. The 24th anniversary celebrations of the SLFP will be held today in Trincomalee presided by the Prime Minister—JD. Felix Dias Bandaranaike's trip to Lima for the non-aligned Foreign Ministers conference was postponed yesterday—VK. The annual Kandy Esala Perahara ends today with the day perahara—LD. Education Ministry informed all teachers that if they indulge in private tuition they

will face dismissal—DM. The amendment to the Land Reform Bill which will vest estates belonging to public companies in the Land Reform Commission also gives power to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to remove the directors of Agency Houses and organisations which are statutory trustees of the lands—CDN. Britain has one hundred and quarter million unemployed. Police in Jerusalem detained a youth who planned to attack the US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24: The LSSP in a letter to the Prime Minister sent yesterday said that it was not accepting the alternate portfolios she had offered to them: a new Cabinet is expected to be formed tomorrow: sources close to the LSSP said that though the LSSP will be out of the Cabinet it will continue to give its support to all the progressive measures of the Government—ST. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing the 24th annual conference of the SLFP at Trincomalee yesterday said that a decisive moment had come and important decisions would have to be taken in a few days—CO. The Prime Minister further said that in keeping with the progressive policies of the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, she has reluctantly decided to make important changes—VK. Since the Prime Minister announced a change in the Cabinet a number of SLFP politicians headed by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, are making attempts to secure certain portfolios for certain senior SLFPers and this has resulted in sharp differences in opinion within the SLFP—JS. Work is nearing completion at Padukka—22 miles away from Colombo on Sri Lanka's earth satellite station: it is through this station that the International Telephone Switching Centre will be operated—CO. Nawalapitiya Police yesterday arrested two youths wanted for questioning in the Duraiyappah killing and Police expect a big breakthrough in their investigations after interrogating these two suspects—SLD. Ministry of Agriculture has decided to extend generous loan facilities to growers of grass with a view to improve the production of milk—SM. The SLFP will hold six rallies in Kurunegala, Galle, Ratnapura, Bandarawela, Colombo and Kandy to commemorate the party's 24th anniversary on September 2—ST. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's titular Head of State, arrived in Peking yesterday on the first leg of his journey home after five year's of exile. Unconfirmed reports from the United States said that Saudi Arabia and Soviet Union established diplomatic relations—an unlikely event in the days of King Faisal who was an avowed anti-communist. Bangladesh promulgated death sentences for a wide range of offences including corruption and possession of arms.

MONDAY, AUGUST 25: According to the late edition of the *Times*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, was engaged in reconstituting the Cabinet without the LSSP as a result of that party's decision not to accept any of the portfolios offered to it as part of the reshuffle: Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Local Government, Home Affairs, Public Administration and Justice, left for Lima last night: Mr. Neale de Alwis, LSSP Deputy Minister to Mr. Felix Bandaranaike's Ministry, resigned from the LSSP yesterday and he was sworn in as Acting Minister until the return of Mr. Bandaranaike: Mr. Pieter Keuneman

addressing the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party now being held at Matara warned his party not to play into the hands of reactionaries, having in mind the events that took place in 1958 where certain reactionaries had succeeded in capitalising on the dispute between late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and late Mr. Philip Gunawardene and changed portfolios to suit their whims and fancies and where ultimately, instead of protection, Mr. Bandaranaike came by his death—TOC. Senior ministers addressing a SLFP anniversary meeting in Kurunegala yesterday presided over by Mr. Maithripala Senanayake assured support to Mrs. Bandaranaike in whatever stand she choose to take on the present crisis—CO. The SLFP last night was studying the provisions of the Constitution in regard to the appointment and removal of Ministers in view of the LSSP's decision not to resign their portfolios—LD. The *Aththa* editorially warned the people of the country that a dangerous threat was hanging over the country in view of the reactionaries' attempt to break the unity of the UF. Ten undergraduates of the Vidyalkara Campus of the University may be suspended or expelled from the Campus following certain incidents in the premises of the Campus after a foundation stone laying ceremony—CDN. The UPTO decided to call off its work to rule campaign launched a few weeks ago in all post offices after considering a formula offered by the Post Master General—CDM. Preparations for the fifth summit conference of non-aligned states to be held in Colombo in August next year and considerations of the draft for the summit meeting are listed in the agenda for the Foreign Ministers' conference of non-aligned states which opened in Lima, Peru, on Saturday—CDN. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, said in a television interview that she was not moving to one party rule in India and that she had no more powers than before declaring a state emergency two months ago. Twenty six people, some of them prominent personalities in the regime of the former Bangladesh President, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, have been arrested and they would be tried in military courts for acquiring wealth beyond their known means of income. The Indian Government had ordered Eastern States to seal their entire border with Bangladesh.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26: Minister Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, and Mr. T. B. Subasinghe arrived in Colombo last night from Moscow—CO. Several SLFP MPs who advocate a policy of unity in the UF at the present crisis approached the two Ministers at the Bandaranaike International Airport and persuaded them to request the Prime Minister to have further discussions with the LSSP leaders to prevent a breakup—TOC. According to the *Times of Ceylon* it is likely more resignations from the LSSP will take place following the resignation of Mr. Neale de Alwis. Police said that none of the three gunmen wanted in connection with Duraiyappah killing have been apprehended yet: a team of CID men are conducting inquiries—CO. Sixteen undergraduates including three Buddhist monks of the Vidyalkara Campus of the University were suspended yesterday indefinitely following certain incidents in the Campus last Friday—CDN. The disciplinary inquiry against the conduct of Mr. Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, during the Colombo South by-elections has been postponed by the UNP indefinitely—DM. Mr. Rukman Senanayake MP for Dedigama addressing a meeting at Paiyagala

said that he will never quit the UNP which was formed to obtain independence for the country when Britishers were ruling Ceylon—CDN. The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO has received \$ 150,000 this year to import scientific equipment, books and other items of educational value—CO. Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe, daughter of the Prime Minister and the co-ordinating Secretary, told a meeting at Attanagalla that it is very important to safeguard the unity of the United Front Government—JD. Foreign Press was barred from the Supreme Court in New Delhi when the Indian Supreme Court began hearing a challenge to the validity of an amendment to the constitution which gives legal protection to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi's election to Parliament. Soon after returning from Egypt Dr. Henry Kissinger late night had discussions with Israeli leaders on a Middle East peace agreement: observers said that an interim agreement on the Sinai Front might be reached this week. The wife of Bangladesh's former leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his three sons, two daughters-in-law and ten other inmates of the house were killed in the Army Coup on the morning of August 15.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27: At Temple Trees yesterday the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, had discussions with Ministers Mr. T. B. Illangaratne and Mr. T. B. Subasinghe who had returned on Monday night from the USSR—CDN. The JCTUO yesterday postponed a public meeting scheduled for tomorrow and appealed to the leaders of the United Front to protect the Front—CDN. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Moscow wing) yesterday made an urgent appeal to the Prime Minister to summon a UF party leaders summit conference—VK. According to the *Daily Mirror* a Cabinet reshuffle is now only a matter of time and according to the *Daily News* moves aimed at resolving issues within the United Front continued yesterday and more discussions will be held today. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. Wijedasa Soysa, a member of the CTB Board of Directors and a Member of the LSSP Central Committee resigned from the party and later he was removed from the CTB by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Leslie Goonewardene: according to the *Aththa* and *Janadina* the LSSP has informed Mr. Soysa that until inquiry on certain complaints against Mr. Soysa on some appointments made to the CTB was complete he is banned from the party membership and according to the Minister of Transport Mr. Soysa was removed from the Board of Directors following complaints against him on certain appointments he has made to the CTB. A one man committee has been appointed to investigate and report on certain incidents that occurred in the Vidyalankara Campus of the University last Friday—LD. Mr. A. Aziz, President of the Democratic Workers' Congress, will leave for Talaimannar on Friday to study the problems of repatriates to India following several complaints received regarding difficulties the repatriates had to undergo at Talaimannar Pier—VK. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation, North Vietnam and Panama gained formal admission to the non-aligned group of states at yesterday's foreign ministers conference in Lima, Peru. Bangladesh's new President in a message to Pakistan's President Ali Bhutto has said that he looks forward for earliest cordial relations with Pakistan. Fifty US Congressmen issued a statement expressing deep concern and disapproval over any action to expel Israel from the UN General Assembly.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28: A United Front Summit held yesterday to resolve the crisis within the UF ended in a stalemate: at the discussions, attended by senior Ministers of the SLFP, all three Ministers of the LSSP and Mr. Pieter Keuneman, the LSSP was adamant that the Finance portfolio should not be removed from Dr. N. M. Perera while the Prime Minister indicated it should go to a Minister in the SLFP: after the talks ended in a stalemate the Prime Minister conferred with her senior SLFP Ministers on the new situation that had since arisen—CDM. According to the *Daily Mirror*, in the event of Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, not accepting the portfolio of Finance, the Prime Minister herself would for the present take charge of Finance pending a major Cabinet reshuffle shortly. According to the *Daily News*, frank exchange of views took place at yesterday's meeting and all the issues raised by party leaders will be reviewed before a final decision is taken. According to the *Virakesari* it is likely that the Prime Minister might issue a statement explaining the situation of the present crisis between the SLFP and LSSP. The *Aththa* reporting on yesterday's summit said that the outcome of it was not satisfactory and editorially commented that blacklegs in political parties are now using the Times Group of newspapers to make their presence felt. According to the *Janadina*, there is a likelihood that the unity of the United Front will be saved after yesterday's discussions and further said that discussions will be continued later. Following severe restrictions on items that could be imported under the Convertible Rupee Account gem exports are coming to a virtual standstill—CDM. The Ministry of Local Government extended the terms of 18 local bodies—JD. Following the suspension of 16 undergraduates of the Vidyalankara Campus of the University yesterday the students went in a protest march demanding an interview with the Vice Chancellor—LD. Following fatal accidents in the last few weeks to railway commuters who travelled on the foot boards, the Department of Railways from today imposed a ban on foot board travel and sought the help of the Police to implement this ban—DM. British Chancellor of the Exchequer Dennis Healey said at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Conference in Guyana that the EEC had agreed to back the sale of IMF gold and make the expected \$ 3,000 million profit available to developing countries.

LSSP'S NEW STRATEGY

In his 3½ hour speech in the NSA on September 3, LSSP leader Dr. N. M. Perera appealed to the "progressives" on the Government to rise up against reaction and follow the lead of the LSSP to forgo a new synthesis of a united left front. He also stressed that as the United Front was now no more, Mrs. Bandaranaike's government had no right to continue without seeking a fresh mandate from the people. (This was certainly intended to neutralise and woo the UNP whose leader is obsessed with the idea of a 1975 General Elections—though the LSSP is not yet ready to go-it-alone at the hustings with a United Left Front trailing behind it). The NSA will meet again on September 18 when the SLFP will reply: among other things LSSP dirty linen, it is believed, will come into the picture:

CHANGING WORLD

BY KAUTILIYA

• Helsinki • Lima • Bangladesh

In a fast changing world with so many important and significant events tumbling one over the other, it is difficult to pick out matters which are of immediate interest to readers in Sri Lanka. In the last six weeks, the Helsinki Agreement, the conference in Lima, the talks on a Sinai peace accord, and the developments in Bangladesh have merited serious attention. Commentators of current affairs, moreover, now seem to believe that major world events must be hereafter examined in the light of the accords, however limited, achieved in Helsinki. The document, signed by the leaders of 35 countries who attended the Conference on Security and Co-operation, has been hailed as a Magna Charta for Europe, but doubts have been cast whether many of the signatories, particularly the Big Powers, will honour it in the spirit and letter of the Agreement. The document enunciates ten principles to govern relations between the countries. They call for the sovereign equality of nations, the non-use of force by one nation against another, the inviolability of frontiers, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights, co-operation among States in accordance with international law, etc. Since there are historic and ethnic claims to territory by various nations, it was agreed that territorial changes should be achieved through peaceful negotiation. The biggest problem of this kind relates to Germany which was divided up after the last world war.

The Madras Hindu, in an editorial immediately after the Helsinki Conference, on August 4 reflected the sentiments in India (and in this region) in the following terms:

The Helsinki declaration marks the progress of detente between the US and the USSR, as well as between West Europe and East Europe. A welcome result of detente has been that the communist and non-com-

unist blocs have ceased to emphasize ideological differences. With the muting of ideology, the climate has improved for following pragmatic policies and slowing down the arms race. Both President Ford and Mr. Brezhnev have committed themselves to work vigorously for a limitation of strategic nuclear weapons and for reduction of the present high levels of military forces on both sides. It is interesting to observe that the President of Rumania, Mr. Ceausescu, called for the simultaneous dissolution of the NATO and Warsaw Pact military groupings and the creation of a permanent body for promoting security and co-operation in Europe. He asked also for the dismantling of bases and the withdrawal of troops from foreign soil. This is unlikely to happen in the near future, but it is significant that the suggestion came from a member of the Warsaw Pact. Speaking for the non-aligned countries of whom six, including Finland, the host country, were represented at Helsinki, Marshal Tito called for greater understanding of the problem of developing countries and criticised the pressures used against the non-aligned who followed independent policies. The rights of non-European countries are, of course, recognised by the Charter of the United Nations, but the most powerful members of the UN come from America and Europe. For several centuries now world politics has been dominated by the interests of the European countries who were the first to develop the technological revolution. While the end of the terrible wars that have divided Europe may be welcomed, peace in the West should be followed by peaceful policies in other parts of the world. The leading countries of Europe should help to solve disputes in other parts of the world through joint action, instead of backing rivals in the Third World and promoting conflict among the smaller countries.

THOUGH MOST OBSERVERS were inclined to regard Helsinki as a major triumph for Soviet diplomacy, there is no doubt that it was an epoch-making event which took place under a shadow of "controversy, doubt and even outright euphoria." Commentator Bathuk Gathani writing on the eve of the Conference had stated:

It is a complex work of diplomatic engineering to suit everybody's purpose. The Westerners feel that there

are enough cross references and muffled echoes of old conflicts, ominous silences and circumlocutions which makes one wonder about the credibility of the Helsinki summit. For the United States—a mixed bag of diplomatic concessions and assurances that human rights will be more respected in Eastern Europe now onward. For the Soviet Union, this is like the end of a grand dream of conquest culminating into recognition of post-war II map of Europe including boundaries in Eastern Europe that resulted in a Soviet force at the end of the last war.

More optimistic West Europeans feel that Helsinki will make the Soviets more respectable and better business and political partners on the Continent. A majority of them feel that Helsinki will put some muscle into detente politics and perhaps help to enliven East-West relationship. Of course, there are scores of cynics who scoff at such ideas and vehemently argue that Helsinki is a mere change in tactics of long range Soviet foreign policy. They argue that softshoe shuffle in Helsinki this week is a cover-up operation for deadly Soviet foreign policy tactics to penetrate now in the heart of Western Europe. This is merely a brutal reality of international power politics where Western nations have little choice but to give in because of the presence of 18,000 Soviet tanks, and nuclear and military superiority. With or without Helsinki, there will be no reduction in those tanks and military might of the Soviet Union. All the talk about "basket three" proposals on improving the quality and style of human contacts between Eastern and Western world, could disappear overnight if Kremlin decides to think otherwise. But by any standard it is a major Soviet diplomatic triumph and as much as the Soviet party leader, Mr. Brezhnev, is keen to bolster his image, the American President will also be there to give some boost to his political image back home.

There is also no doubt that Helsinki marks a delicate change in the world power balance, and countries like Sri Lanka will do well to take serious note about this. All the assumptions which were valid diplomatic premises in the cold war period after 1945 have been thrust aside. (This process had begun with the Nixon years of detente). Helsinki marks

Nonaligned Strategy

the end of the cold war era and it ushers in what many sceptical observers have characterised as a period of cold peace. While the Helsinki Agreement has been generally welcomed throughout the world as a further step in expanding detente, China has taken a contrary view. China has made it clear that she believes that the accords reached at Helsinki are as dangerous and meaningless as the Munich Pact which had led to World War II. Peking has more than once, in its official papers, described the Helsinki peace agreements as "scraps of paper". An observer of international affairs who writes with perspicacity has very aptly stated:

But this is quite an understandable reaction, because the Chinese are suddenly finding out for themselves that their own brand of special detente with the Western countries does not seem to get them very far either economically or politically. China feels increasingly isolated after the American debacle in South-East Asia and the growing power and prestige of Hanoi as the third most powerful communist base in the world.

Hanoi has a special relationship with Moscow and it should be noted that it was the Soviet Union that stood by it unflinchingly for two decades to eliminate American presence in South-East Asia. Only two months ago the Chinese were acclaiming the new situation in South-East Asia and now they are suddenly busy warning Hanoi and Cambodia against developing closer relations with Moscow.

In Western Europe, very few take serious notice of these Peking sermons, but for an Indian observer it is fascinating to see how the Chinese are also suddenly getting disenchanted with their special detente with the Western countries.

IT IS YET TOO EARLY, at the time of writing, to write about the work of the non-aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference at Lima which ended last week. From the brief newspaper reports available, it is clear that a great deal has been achieved in agreed conclusions about the attitude non-aligned states should take at the current UN sessions and also at the non-aligned summit next August. The Colombo summit is still a year away and a great deal of what we cannot envisage at this stage may have be-

come realities to contend with in 1976. In any case, the Lima Conference has appointed a sub-committee to work out the details of the agenda for the Colombo summit. One significant decision arrived at Lima showed that the Arab countries had toned down their demand for the expulsion of Israel so far as the non-aligned group were concerned. Forty Islamic countries had decided to demand that Israel should be expelled from the UN, but many African and Asian countries had not been enamoured of expelling any country, and though many Arab countries had forcefully wanted a decision in favour of expulsion, a reasonable compromise was arrived at Lima. It is significant that countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia had become less enthusiastic than before about expulsion. Lima therefore decided that Israel should be censured for not withdrawing to 1967 frontiers without asking for its expulsion.

But the most significant decision was that, despite the many differences which characterised the countries that met in Lima, they were able to formulate a common economic programme whose keynote was co-operation for mutual benefit. The Lima Declaration, which will include the economic programme, is not yet available, but press reports indicate that one of the most significant achievements is the recognition of the principle that "improvement in commodity prices (such as that of oil) will be accompanied by measures to safeguard the interests of importing countries and specially, the most seriously affected (MSA) countries by a rise in price of those commodities."

The expectation is that when this principle is incorporated in the Lima Declaration, it will amount to a commitment by the oil exporting countries to extend special relief to countries hit by high oil bills—this could be either a dual pricing system which favours MSA countries, or some other concessionary form of payment. Precise modalities will be left to bilateral negotiation between exporters and importers of high priced commodities.

The Lima Declaration is also expected to exhort the OPEC countries to channel a larger portion of their investments in the less

developed countries of the third world and not confine them as at present, in the already developed countries.

The Economic Committee of the conference has proposed a number of funds, six in all so far, subscribed to by non-aligned countries and intended to serve the needs of various categories of members. There are a solidarity fund (which would have a capital subscription of one million SDRs from each participating nation if a Kuwaiti proposal goes through) a fund for agricultural development, a fertilizer fund, a billion-dollar buffer-stock fund and an Indo-China reconstruction fund. It is the expectation that all these funds would receive concrete pledges by the time the non-aligned summit meets in Colombo next January. The conference has also drawn up a list of international trade and monetary reforms which would protect the interests of the developing countries—by agreeing to a common platform the nations assembled here hope to canvass their case more effectively at the larger forums that will debate and negotiate these crucial reforms. This includes a decision by the conference here to push for the extension of the IMF oil facility beyond 1975 and a liberalisation of its terms of lending.

It is interesting to note whilst the Conference was in progress there was a bloodless coup in which the President (who had been in power for seven years) had been removed and was succeeded by the Prime Minister, another General. This change of Presidents does not seem to have affected the work of the Conference. The change seems to be similar to the coup which took place in Nigeria whilst the OAU summit was going on in Kampala. The deposed Nigerian President Gowon quietly acquiesced in the change and has probably gone back to Nigeria. Palace coups seem to be the order of the day in countries where the parliamentary elections system does not seem to have taken roots.

Whilst the Lima Conference was in progress, US Secretary of State Kissinger had shuttled between Jerusalem and Alexandria and it is likely that an interim peace agreement on the Sinai should be finalised before long. (Before this issue of Tribune is

out on the news stands; the interim agreement, it is reported, will be concluded). If this is done, it will be a big feather in Kissinger's (and USA's) cap. The next task for Kissinger will be bring Syria and Israel together to agree on an interim peace agreement in regard to Golan Heights—the one problem which keeps both countries apart. If an agreement between Syria and Israel can be achieved, there is no doubt, that the chances of a general peace agreement emerging from the Geneva Conference are greater.

FINALLY, developments in Bangladesh continue to intrigue observers. In the first flush of the coup (which had displayed unparalleled barbarity in wiping out 60 odd members of Rahman's family and friends) there was a belief that the new group had decided to transform Bangladesh into an Islamic Republic. On the strength of this belief, Pakistan had hastened to recognise the new regime within a few hours of its coming into existence (it had witheld recognition from the old regime) and had promised to rush food and textiles as gifts to "brothers" who had returned to the fold. But this euphoria seems to have shortlived. A Reuter message from Islamabad on August 20 (five days after the coup) had this to say under the heading PAK DISAPPOINTED AT NO CHANGE IN NAME.

The reports that Bangladesh has not proclaimed itself as an Islamic Republic have been received in the Foreign Ministry here with disappointment and embarrassment, according to diplomatic sources here. Pakistan, itself an Islamic State, had been seeking urgent clarification of the original reports after taking the lead in recognising the new Bangladesh Government of President Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed. The Pakistan Government was naturally embarrassed, the sources said, because it had been influenced in prompt recognition of the new leadership by its supposed return to an Islamic nomenclature.

Furthermore, the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Bhutto, had made a special appeal to other Islamic countries to follow suit in recognising the new Bangladesh Government. Nevertheless, Pakistan's desire to improve relations with Bangladesh was not likely to be affected by the altered situation, the sources said. It was not clear what was the basis

of the original reports that President Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed had immediately declared Bangladesh an Islamic Republic on taking office. There was speculation that the new President, known to be a devout Muslim, had decided on the change but that it had not been approved by the military architects of the coup, the sources said.

In the meantime, all other countries which had diplomatic relations with the Rahman regime continued to recognise the new regime, treating the change as "an internal affair of Bangladesh. Mrs. Indira Gandhi had stated that she "regretted" the killing of an outstanding personality like Mujibur Rahman and had stated India was naturally concerned about developments in neighbouring countries. Mrs. Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka had also made a similar statement condemning political assassination and regretting the murder of Rahman.

It was thought that the new Bangladesh government would change its attitudes and policies to India in a marked manner, but this too does not seem to have happened. News reports on August 22 had indicated that:

Radio Bangladesh appreciated today what it described as "the response by our next door neighbour, India" to the new President Khondakar Moshtaque Ahmed's desire to work for normalisation of relations and promotion of peace in the sub-continent. The appreciation came in a special commentary over the radio this morning which noted that the Indian envoy in Bangladesh (Mr. Samar Sen) had called on President Moshtaque Ahmed on Wednesday "to convey his Government's best wishes for the prosperity of Bangladesh." The commentary said that the proclamation issued by President Moshtaque Ahmed on Wednesday night was intended to set at rest doubts raised in certain quarters and "spells out the actual situation, in Bangladesh and the policies of the new Government".

The Constitution is in force and the four fundamental state principles—nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy—enunciated in the Constitution remain unchanged. Even Parliament has not been dissolved.

Thus by keeping the Constitution and the parliamentary life in force, and reiterating its adherence to parliamentary principles, the new

Government has reaffirmed its abiding faith in "the cherished democratic values of life."

"It is therefore not surprising that hardly within a week of the change, the international community has come forward to renew its friendship and solidarity with the new Government. Now the community is convinced of the fact that the new Government will not deviate from the democratic principles", the commentator said.

India's reaction to the new regime were reflected in a despatch by G. K. Reddy from New Delhi to the Madras Hindu on August 25 and this showed that a new era in the diplomatic relations between the two countries had begun.

The Bangladesh High Commissioner, Mr. Shamsur Rahman, called on the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to-day with a special message from President Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed assuring her of the new Government's keen desire for close relations with India fully reflecting the fraternal bonds that had developed between the two countries through the common sacrifices made during the 1971 war of liberation. The Prime Minister fully reciprocated these warm sentiments, reaffirming India's feelings of friendship and goodwill towards Bangladesh, which had already been communicated by the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Samar Sen, when he met the new President last week soon after his return to Dacca from Delhi.

A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said that President Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed had reiterated in his message to Mrs. Gandhi his Government's firm commitment to honour the existing treaties and agreements between India and Bangladesh, while expressing his confidence that the two countries would continue to work in close co-operation and maintain "friendship, fraternity and peace, free from any friction and tension." The Bangladesh President's message referred to the shared struggle and sacrifice of the two countries for Bangladesh's liberation. It spoke of the existing bonds of friendship which were deeply cherished and valued by the two peoples in proclaiming Bangladesh's continued faith in the five principles of peaceful co-existence. It also referred in this context to Bangladesh's adherence to non-alignment and commitment to work for the

normalisation of relations in the sub-continent.

In voicing India's high appreciation of these lofty sentiments expressed by the new President of Bangladesh, the official spokesman said that India, too, believed in friendly relations with all its neighbours and would continue to play its full part in promoting co-operation and good relations among the countries of the sub-continent. The exchange of these very agreeable and reassuring messages between the two Heads of Government came in the wake of similar assurances already conveyed to each other through the respective High Commissioners in Dacca and Delhi.

In diplomatic parlance, the reciprocation of such assurances in the wake of a change of regime in either country amounts to a formal acceptance of the new Government. Since India has been following the convention of recognising countries and not regimes, a formal reiteration of the mutual desire of the two Governments to maintain the existing relations is reckoned as a recognition by India of the new Bangladesh regime for all practical purposes.

China, which had refused to recognise the Rahman regime (no doubt because Pakistan had not done so) recognised the new regime on August 30. It will be interesting to await developments in Bangladesh especially to see how the new regime will set about restoring the economy to some kind of viability, even if primitive.

FOR THE RECORD

LSSP Re-Appraisal

—“Socialism” and the Minorities—

We publish below a comment from the *Nation* of August 15, 1975, entitled “SOCIALISM” AND THE MINORITIES. The *Tribune* has referred to this *Nation* comment in the Letter from the Editor column this week. It is interesting to note that the *Nation* now accepts what *Tribune* has always maintained that the patronage — politics alone, even of the UF variety, will not be enough to solve the problem of the Tamil Minority in Sri Lanka.

The dastardly murder of the Mayor of Jaffna, who was a prominent personality in the politics of the Peninsula for many years, raises questions which have been troubling us for some time. We are not concerned here with the Police aspect of the matter, naturally. We are concerned with its social and political implications. Whenever, murder is used as a political weapon it means that, for whatever reason, normal constitutional processes of political agitation or adjustment are not considered effective by a section of the body politic. When one considers the alignment in national politics of the particular victim in this instance and the socio-political milieu in which the murder took place, one can pin-point its significance without great difficulty.

The murder of Mr. Thuriappah is no isolated act of violence. The late Mr. Visuvanathan, the acknowledged leader of the LSSP in Jaffna, had been the target of a cowardly bomb attack not very long ago. The M.P. for Vaddukodai, Thiagarajah, was also attacked. These acts of terrorism against individual politicians are without doubt associated in a generalised political sense, with the campaign of civil disobedience announced by the TUF and with the clandestine activity of its youth front. Our purpose in drawing attention to these events is to pose the question whether the policies and administrative actions of the Government have not contributed towards the creation of a climate in which such acts of desperate criminality assume a cloak of extenuation.

Even while the United Front Government has taken and continues to take various measures in the direction of socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, its attitudes and actions in respect of the national minorities have at times been disquieting. All too often we fall a prey to the fallacious and dangerous posture of identifying the interests of a reactionary leadership with the rights of its communal base. Our people have paid a bitter price in the past on account of such confused thinking, not to speak of militant majority racialism. Our political history over the last decade have made us wiser. The realisation that racial

conflict or racial oppression only feeds the flames of Reaction have tempered the attitudes of the most vociferous racialists among the Sinhala people. But habits of thought die hard and official processes acquire a momentum which is difficult either to halt or to divert when reversal is not possible.

The coming into power of the United Front was accompanied by a spirit of accommodation towards the racial minorities which was free from any unprincipled alliance such as characterised the previous UNP-FP combine. The commitment to Socialism itself was, in a sense, a guarantee of fair-play and justice to all communities alike. But the particular shape which political and administrative forms assumed under the UF Government placed the elected representative on the Government side in a position of authority and responsibility in areas hitherto occupied by the bureaucracy. Employment is one such area and in our existing economic circumstances it assumes priority over everything else. When one considers the composition of the present Government it is easy to perceive how this shift in administrative power affected the minority community voters, especially those who could find no responsive ear in the seats of the National State Assembly. In a country in which communal identification has not yet been superseded by a national identity, the pressure of the majority community on the elected representatives becomes an irresistible force.

It is no wonder then that the Tamil minority should feel orphaned in a very real sense. It is no argument of any real worth to assert that the Tamil voter has only himself to blame. Backwardness in politics is a manifestation of the evolution of our national social consciousness and a carry-over of social attitudes, engendered by institutions and pressures of the past, to the present time, in which they are no longer valid as a concomitant of social evolution anywhere in the World. It is an especial feature of what is called the “Third World” in this epoch. A task which the majority community cannot neglect, save to its cost, is to carry the minorities with them and thus rescue them from their own backwardness in politics. This is a respon-

sibility of political leadership at the national level and the social cost of a failure at this level is very heavy indeed.

Attempts to win over communities on the basis of party-political advantage and patronage have succeeded nowhere in the world and at no time in history. A consciousness of community, however narrow and obsolete it might appear to the observer from without, is a cohesive force which withstands pressures from alien sources until such pressures are withdrawn or the community itself is destroyed. These are the lessons of history and we are too hardy in learning them, although it must be said that an effort is being made. The task is by no means an easy one and calls for study and discussion, but this is precisely what is lacking. As we observed, the immediate pressure of the electorate is in a totally different direction and thought to this urgent national problem goes by default.

We cannot depend upon emigration for a solution to this problem. Those who think in purely economic terms may hope that job opportunities abroad may solve both problems of unemployment and minority discontent. This is wishful thinking. Social problems are far too complex to lend themselves to such facile solutions, even if one assumes that the strictly economic aspect can (a very large assumption indeed!). There are parallels in former centuries and in other lands which tell us that this is a mirage.

The present situation calls for a positive approach based upon the sources of grass-roots level response to our social outlook and upon a recognition that such grass-roots connections have been built up over the years and still exist. You cannot win people over by parachuting Pied Pipers into their midst—you can only collect a motley crowd of time-servers in that way and earn not support but ridicule. If we are to defeat the forces of Reaction and their imperialist masters in any lasting sense, we have to win over the minorities to this struggle. It was hoped in 1970 that the United Front would succeed in this endeavour, but it is clear that it has not.

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AN APPEAL

Liberation Of Tea

—Practical Action Essential—

The weekly seminar on 'Liberation of Tea', organised by the Centre for Society & Religion held its twelfth and final session on September 3. The topic discussed on that day was entitled "Action for Liberation" and the two subjects that were dealt with were "The Process of Liberation" and "New Directions Towards Liberation." As these titles imply, this session was specially designed to help us realise the overall objective of the total Seminar, namely to evolve a strategy of political, economic and social change in order to remove the iniquitous and exploitative character of the tea industry through a process of radical options.

Such an approach was considered necessary if this Seminar was not to end up as a mere academic exercise, abortive of any tangible results. In order to circumvent this shortcoming and thereby enhance the value of our modest endeavour, we sought to give this final session a pronounced practical bias. For, unless we helped to evolve an action-oriented programme towards certain specific goals our efforts would be a mere dissipation of time and energy.

If a strategy of this nature is to prove its effectiveness it should have the active collaboration and the co-ordinated efforts of those institutions and individuals that have the same community of interest in this respect. Such a consolidated thrust must impact on those segments of our society that determine decisions effecting the plantation industry—be they the opinion leaders at the grass-root level or the decision-makers at the political and administrative level. It is, therefore, to provide an opportunity to those interested to give expression to their views on this subject that we have exclusively set apart this final session. Thus, those who wish to make such a contribution are kindly requested to give serious thought

to any of the following areas now under discussion: (1) An Integrated Approach to Tea Marketing; (2) Prospects of Nationalisation; (3) Emerging Patterns of Ownership and Management; (4) Development Problems of Tea Production; (5) Diversification of the Tea Industry; (6) the Economic Conditions of the Plantation Workers; (7) their Socio-cultural Integration and their Political Future; (8) the New Role of Estate Trade Unions, and also any other subjects that are worthy of our attention.

As each of these areas lends itself to ramifications of a varied nature, we wish to appeal through the courtesy of your esteemed journal to those who have an interest in this subject (!) to kindly identify the undesirable features that are inimical to accepted norms of justice and fairplay and send us concrete proposals as possible solutions to such problems. And if found feasible incorporated into the framework of action that may emerge as a result of this exercise; (2) to intimate to us their willingness to serve in an action group we propose to form to implement such proposals; and (3) to suggest names and addresses of any individuals and institutions who, in their opinion, may be willing to place their services at the disposal of this proposed group.

In conclusion, we earnestly solicit the unstinted co-operation of those whose conscience urges them to contribute their mite for the removal of those structural and functional infirmities that are an impediment to the liberation of tea from its present socio-economic stranglehold. We would, therefore, request your readers and particularly those who participated in this seminar to respond to this appeal of ours by sending in their views, to the Secretary Seminar, Centre for Society & Religion, 281/1, Deans Road, Colombo 10, (Telephone 91933; between 1.30 & 5.30 p.m.)

NEXT WEEK

- * WILD LIFE FIASCO
- * FOOD PRODUCTION
- * POLITICAL ZIG-ZAGGING

The Pleasure Of Ruins

— Concluded —

By Herbert Keuneman

The deep pleasure of ruins is not for the tourist as such. Not, that is, for the hurried sightseer (for whom these notes are not, really, meant). The pleasure is for the contemplative, the cogitative, the true rationalist, instead of the empiricist and sensationalist that your rubberneck is bound to be, for despite the fevered exhortations of the Do It Now school—'the past is dead; tomorrow is not born'—or the realists' moralizing for whom Adelaide Ann Proctor spoke—'The Past and the Future are nothing/In the face of the stern Today'—the past is the one *absolute* reality. Not until the present has become the past has it any recognizable shape; the future is even more shapeless. The present moulds the future, to be sure; but only when the cast is already cool—when it has set as The Past—can it be fully and objectively assayed. Too many in our time have been preoccupied with Today (however stern) and what I venture to term our Effluent Society—yes, E, not A—has been the result. But alas! their same herald, Mrs. Proctor, was the poetry-lady that could dream up *one* (unfortunately lost) chord of music like the sound of a great a-men: two chords, surely, by any rational method, but the kind of surd that dedicated 'realists' typically come up with! Lots of economists could benefit from a little musing in a vernal wood or in a country churchyard. Or on a ruin!

This is why, last week, having promised you an itinerary for 'a morning's tour' I had no compunction in suggesting you abandon (in order to improve) the circular excursion I myself had recommended and that you digress to Sesseruwa.

SESSERUWA. Still not as famous as it ought to be, chiefly I suppose because it lies well off the beaten track, Sesseruwa is not only interesting to the 'touristic' tourist as well as to the more pensive one but also sequestered rather than

inaccessible. There are, in fact, several routes to it. But the one through Ehetuwewa—turn left off the Galgamuwa/Nikawewa road on the crest of the rise just on the hither side of Ehetuwewa bazaar, and then right at Kuda Katnoruwa—is the simplest to trace; and only the last two miles (beyond Katnoruwa) are bad road.

Sesseruwa's present name is popularly derived from Ras Vehera: *vehera* a shrine, or holy place; and *ras* the many-splendoured rays that emanate from the Buddha's presence. It was one of the largest of Ceylon's pre-Christian monasteries—there are said to be over a hundred caves at the site, which covers two considerable hills—yet, although on the brows of many of these caves (above the 'drip ledges' that proclaim them artificially adapted to habitation) are inscriptions in the stone, and not a few proclaimed by the style of lettering a from at least the 1st Century BC, no legible record of the *vihara's* ancient name appears in any.

It would be interesting to know—but again one cannot know—if since its foundation the vast site was ever wholly abandoned. There are certainly signs that from time to time restoration in a modest way was carried out, if only in small sections. In the ancient Image House, for example—itsself a cave—do not fail to ask to be shown an ingenious detail in the construction (or re-construction) of the ranks of sedent Buddhas of stucco: the folds of whose robes are modelled in packthread lightly plastered over, surely a work of comparatively recent centuries. And even more obviously recent (as it now exists) is a little suite of caves, the so-called Bhatiya Tissa Lena: *lena* a grotto, named for a monk who inhabited them within living memory; which you should be sure and see; for, despite such *bangala* refinements as the use of concrete, the presence of a verandah-like porch, and the intrusion of casement windows, the whole gives an excellent idea of how the old cave were adaptable to weather-tight and comfortable and charmingly homey living.

SESSERUWA'S BEST-KNOWN feature is, of course, the great standing Buddha so like—yet so utterly unlike in detail, execution and effect—the famous colossus of

Awkana. There can be no question of the latter's artistic superiority; yet the Sesseruwa figure borrows a rugged, earthy nobility from its setting (hewn as it is from a vast curtain of rock that covers a whole hillside). Under a slanting light—the statue faces south—and preferably when the grey-white illumination from a sky of broken cloudwrack brings out, as invariably it does, every coloured highlight, then, from the top of the steps to the *lagum-ge*, with the little valley between the image and you delicately starred with temple-blossom shining bright out of the glaucous green of their foliage, the image acquires by contrast a kind of ponderous Antaeon authority that Awkana, too much a 'work of art', never quite achieves. But this, I admit, asking a bit much of circumstance in order that you may behold under the most favourable conditions a work that, whatever may be said for it, is not great sculpture.

There is rather a perceptive tale locally told to account for the inferiority of the Sesseruwa statue. It was begun (so runs the tale) on the same days as its Awkana rival, by an overweening stone-carver pupil who had challenged his *guru* to a contest. Whoever finished first was to sound a bell—the sites are only six or eight miles apart as the crow flies—and public acclaim should adjudge the winner. The master's bell, however, pealed while the pupil's work was still barely roughed out; whereupon the pupil, being nothing if not a true Ceylonese, dashed down his tools in self-exaggerated shame and vanished, never again to be heard from.

A hardly less perspicuous story is related of another Sesseruwa exhibit: an ancient bedstead, with heavy roughly-carved legs, which you will be shown if you ask. This, it is said, was built to the order of a local chieftan whose desire for luxury—or it may have been status—seems to have outrun his political judgement; for, after all, was it not a later chieftan's desire for a tile-roofed house that in a manner of speaking led to the fall of the Kandyan throne? The Sesseruwa bed seems to have excited not much less royal jealousy, though the Sesseruwa chieftan when a Commission of Inquiry called to establish the truth of the *lese*

majeste seems to have shown himself rather less mettlesome! He explained that the opprobrious bed had been intended all along only piously, as a gift to the sangha; and as such, of course, it had to be bestowed.

GALGIRIYAWA. If I had to choose, as pleasure giving, a single ruin (a group of ruins, rather) in this fantastically abundant area, I should nevertheless have no hesitation whatever in making my choice: Galgiriyawa (turn left at MP 12 on the Galgamuwa/Nikawewa road, drive 2½ mls. to Kambuwatawana, and, thence turning left again—but now on foot—accomplish the ¼-mil. walk, including an easy climb, to the site). I know of none lovelier or more evocative or in which it is easier to spend hour upon hour meditating upon mutability, considering the real natures of permanence and illusion, or (if this is not your line) contemplating nothing but the sheer variety of beauty—natural, as well as hoarily handmade—about you.

GALGIRIYAKANDA. (I have mentioned our particular hill often before, in other contexts) is a most intricately convoluted range of sizable mountains rising to nearly 2,000 feet in this area of virtual plain. (Elsewhere we have vast boulders and lesser hills; but this range is five miles long, and a quarter of it is as high as Kandy. The known ruins, thank goodness, are on its lowest slopes.) The entire range, however, is heavily forested—calamander wood is said to grow here; and that curious tree *siviliya*: *Commiphora caudata*, I think, with its emerald-green bark continually peeling to a bright copper—and its sides are a maze of vast precipitous boulders, so that its extent has never been thoroughly explored. Besides the gorgeous site I have mentioned, with its dozen or so caves drip-ledge and, some of them, brow-inscribed; its flight upon flight of shallow stone-cut steps leading no one now knows where; its very large artificial pond overhung by gnarled temple trees twisted by time (has controversy established just how old are the oldest temple trees!) and on every hand green vistas of immemorially cultivated lands and the blue tanks that feed as ever they have fed them, framed and removed from actuality by proscenia

and wings and ground-rows of uncompromising stone; or when you lift your head, trembling cliffs and precipices of grey and green-mantled rock seeming to bend and bow beneath the weight of traffic of the clouds. besides this site, as I was saying, I personally know of only one other, an obviously early one, above the tank at Ihala Embogama. C. W. Nicholas, nevertheless—supported by every villager in this region—implies that the whole of Galgiriyakanda is riddled with caves anciently adapted as monastic cells (a proposition I am not in the east about to deny) and actually conjectures—most convincingly—that somewhere on the mountain or one of its outliers should the ruins be sought of the Vessagiriya Vihara of the early *Mahavamsa*.

Nicholas, however, quoting (and apparently accepting without question) certain of Codrington's locations, himself tends to mislead. He speaks of a group of caves—rather clearly our group—near *Kaduruwewa*; yet no caves have ever been locally known at the *Kaduruwewa* he identifies. On the other hand, there is a *Kadurugaswewa* just at the foot of the slight climb to our site. Again, he mentions Codrington's identification of the ancient tank *Giriya-vapi* 'with present *Galgiriyawa* Tank near the 9th mileon the Galgamuwa-Nikawewa road.' But there is on such tank—nor could any tank ever have been in historic times—at that particular point. There is a *Galketiya-gama* Tank not far from the 10th milepost, however, even closer than *Ihala, Embogama* to the ruins I have mentioned; though the modern village called *Galgiriyawa* is two miles away, on the other side of the *Galgiriyakanda* massif, and a mile-and-half south of 'our' ruins. The fact seems to be that the area has simply not been explored sufficiently by trained archaeologists for any first-hand identifications to be made.

MEANWHILE I recommend this place to you once more. Antiquarian, I urge it upon you! It is outstanding. Much of our romantic and melancholy pleasure—it is melancholy; not in the sense that it is sad or gloomy but (it is like *Jaques'* melancholy) in that it is essentially pensive in its contemplation of the absolute, the Past, instead of the flibbertigibbet present or the inane future—much

of our peculiar pleasure, I say, is that our ruins lie in wild places or at sufficient remove from the poking handiwork of contemporary man! The heart of a town—or the heart of a 'colony' is an abrasive setting: at all events, for the antiquarian with his subjective, inexpressible approach. Though I suppose the archaeologist pure and simple is pleased enough to find his facts anywhere: if below the pavement of a Main Street, so much the more convenient! For the pure and simple antiquarian, well, *Galgiriyawa*—as it is—is for us.

There is a final group of sites I intend to write about most conveniently strung along, or just off the *Nikaweratiya/Moragollagama* Road which the *Galgamuwa/Nikawewa* road that we have lately been more or less following and the *Anuradhapura/Kurunegala* road along which we began our survey both join. About halfway along the road, at *Maho*, is a resthouse: very star-less!

KAIKAWELA. Beginning at the roadside (right) nearabout MP 13½ and extending from it more than half a mile is a rocky ridge full of caves, many bearing inscriptions of which some date back to the 1st Century BC, evidence of a monastery of considerable size. Here it was (I seem to remember) that Muller the pioneer epigraphist in Ceylon first recognized the use of the 'hal sign' which has the effect of suppressing the vowel sound inherent in a Sinhalese consonantal letter.

YAPAHUWA. My only reason for treating this magnificent—this touristically most interesting and atmospherically fascinating—site as cavalierly as I shall is that it is already, and deservedly so well known. A great deal of easily available material has been written about it. It is reached from *Nettipola Junction*, MP 14½, by a clearly marked sideroad. Perhaps it is less well known that the loveliest Chinese artifact to be excavated in Ceylon (the exquisite celadon bowl now on view in the *Anuradhapura* museum if it has not been transferred to *Colombo*) was discovered here.

Be sure and make the easy climb to the summit of the great crag; for the view is glorious and typically discloses the *Vanni* landscape. Explore the strange little *oubliette?* which has been exposed

under the famous Staircase too recently to be explained in any guidebook. And when you visit the so-called Dalada Ge (which it is not) outside the eastern ramparts, test the strange though not unique metallic bell-like ring that the stone of which the *makaratorena* is carved gives forth.

GAL-SOHONA KANATTA. This Cemetery of Stone Tombs (which is what the name means) is a graveyard of cists from the too-little-studied Stone Age of Ceylon's history. It lies almost opposite (across the road) from Kondadeniya Temple two miles south of Yapahuwa along the same minor road.

DIYABETTAGALA. Round the lower slopes of the beetling pinnacle of which you obtain a forbidding view from the Yapahuwa staircase are the remains of yet another pre-Christian monastery—a wonderfully wild place still—to which access is by a very minor road from Pahala Nettipolagama (MP 17½, nearly) and then on foot. I will say only that it is worth the getting to!

NIKAWEWA KANDA. It is fitting that the last of our list—though I repeat that the list could be enormously extended—should be again a little gem of a site, with its small cave temple hanging, as it were, from the side of the Nikawewa crag like a wild-bees' nest. The cave itself is now a horror of pious desecration at the hands of modern-day restorers; but the site is unspoilable; and there are other delights than the inside of the cave. One is the view out of it; another is the way to it which tunnel by ancient steps through jungles so close that there is a green roof overhead almost all the way. Turning right-handed at the top of the steps brings one to the cave across a slightly disconcerting slippery rocky traverse bordered, however, by a charming lily-pool to take one's mind off whatever rish there is! Turning left-handed brings one to the colossal ruin of a brick-built recumbent Buddha which is worth visiting. At the foot of the hill is the most beautifully symmetrical ba-tree one has ever seen; and at one of the flower altars around it is a little, artless, altogether, 'folk', wooden image of the sedent Buddha more engaging than any other image that I know.

Although the temple is generally named for the village of Nikawewa near which it lies (the turn-off is to the left of the road a little short of MP 25) it is often also referred to as Nagala and appears as such on the One Mile map; but see Nakolagane, in last week's article. Whether the termite-eaten wooden statue of Prince Sali now in the Colombo museum and said to be 'from Nagala' came from the ancient Nagala or this one I do not know.

KRAAL OR SLAUGHTER?

Operation Buffalo

By R. Kahawita

The *Tribune* of 2nd August, 1975 highlighted the above subject in the "Letter from the Editor". It is only a month ago that I had a letter from the President of Wildlife & Nature Protection Society of Ceylon, who was alarmed at the excess buffalo population in Yala Sanctuary (not the water buffalo variety described by "Fly by Nite" sometime back). His reference is really to the Yala buffalo which is being slaughtered by the "Jeep Safari".

The President's—W. N. P. S.—letter refers to a Buffalo Kraal successfully conducted in 1935/36 to provide the then colonists of Minneriya and Polonnaruwa with a pair of buffaloes each for cultivation purposes. That is almost 40 years ago when the farmers knew what they wanted and the bureaucrats knew what the farmer needed most, and how to plan irrigation projects to provide all the needs of the farmer within a colonisation scheme.

According to the *Tribune* article the "Jeep Safari" was also for a similar purpose—to provide the Kegalle Co-op. farmer with buffaloes, but the jeep riding Brigade, according to the *Tribune* article, seemed to have misunderstood what the Kegalle farmer wanted. The Brigade must have thought what was needed was buffalo meat and not live buffalo to pull his plough.

Buffalo Kraaling is a much more strenuous an undertaking than Elephant Kraaling. Having noosed the animal, taming and training is much more risky and difficult

than any other wild beast. Buffalo has a one track mind and in his wild state the only sense it has is self preservation. That is why the average villager would have aptly termed the jeep riding Brigade—"Mee Gon Kattiyak"—set of buffaloes. One cannot expect the jeep riding boys to understand the temperament of the buffalo.

The peasant society that depended on the buffalo to plough his field and for his manure has disappeared long ago with the establishment of the "Kangaroo Tractor Unit" and similar socialist-inspired community mechanisation of agriculture. The new peasant farmer with his mini-plot of land has become mechanical without knowing why and the wherefore he is doing a particular cultivation operation, and his operations have been mechanised with two wheeler tractors, etc., etc. He does not want buffaloes today but tools and spanners to while away his cultivation time adjusting his new implements or—stand and stare while some "expert" does the work for him. The Buffalo has disappeared from his ken and even given a wide berth when he encounters one in the field—leave alone riding it to work with his plough.

It is interesting to know that after years of economic progress and the creation of a new socialist society, the human buffalo, who conceived the new society is thinking of the animal buffalo after several years of "mechanising the farming ideas."

That society which organised the Buffalo Kraal in 1936 has disappeared long ago and has been replaced with the above new society which has no use for this animal, except for the kind of safari referred to in the Letter from the Editor. In this context, it is more humane to kill the surplus buffaloes and sell the meat to the butcher, than foist a captured animal on to a peasant who has no use for it nor knows how to handle the animal to his advantage.

If the move now is towards the normal farm animal—the buffalo—there were plenty of buffaloes that could have been saved from the butcher and given to the farmers if the powers that are knew what they wanted. This buffalo population disappeared with the Land

take over under the Land Reform in 1973. Large numbers of buffaloes were passed on to the butcher for lack of land for animal husbandry. I am aware of several units of large buffalo herds that were sold to the butchers in the wake of Land Reforms. The Land Reforms did not provide land for animal husbandry, nor does it plan for animal grazing etc., etc. Like the buffalo, the implementation officers rushed into reforms without knowing what the consequences will be of such hasty action. At the moment I myself is making an ineffectual endeavour to preserve a breeding herd. When the land on which I was keeping the animals were taken over, I arranged to move them on to another's land. Now this land is also to be taken over by the so called The Productivity Committee under the "waste land ordinance", because the Committee does not understand that animal breeding is also an agricultural undertaking needing land for grazing and rearing. I have communicated with the Minister, the Land Reforms Authority with no relief. What the officials want is destruction and not development. I am now bargaining with the butcher to get the best price for my Prize animals. This is what I conveyed to the President—W.N.P.S.

Now getting back to the "Operation Buffalo", it may be, that the President's (W.N.P.S.) inquiry about the buffalo kraal of 1936, was prompted when he heard of the ambitious scheme with all the romantic overtones, etc. of "jeep riding cowboy" stunts and the resulting massacre that was taking place in Yala. Kraaling cannot be undertaken with the farming society we are creating in our jungle fastness. Jeep riding cowboys are more in their line today. What made human life bearable in these regions then have been destroyed in the name of progress. What was human and the exemplary way of life that society have been replaced by distrust, suspicion, and envious of the neighbour; mutual help into ne's need has been replaced by spying which is now a rewarding virtue according to our socialism.

Inania of this, that and the other

Shout From The Hilltops

By INNA

It seems as if the past of other people must be raked up willy-nilly when our purses are empty.

I went downtown Maradana some months ago to buy some bread and curry and my bread was wrapped for me, mind you. I read anything and everything that comes my way and have always done so on the principle, "no day passes without teaching me even one line". Naturally, on the open market there are no secrets, and when I get bad answer papers of 1960 in 1974, I am not alarmed and not unduly worried.

But if I'm let into the secrets of the purchase of a tractor in Jaffna or in Padaviya or any place and I find the name of the purchaser etc. I crumple the paper and throw it away. Why rake the correctly done or incorrectly transacted business deals of a bygone day? They may cease to be state secrets after a lapse of time, but in these days of witch-hunting and jew-baiting, one could always find something to condemn the condemned and to damn the damned and thus add injury to injury.

I am deeply disturbed to find that certain people are so economically down, and (morally low!) that they sell government papers and filed secrets as soon as the decade is over. Under my nose here is a paper from a plantation. It is in diary form and is from a ledger sold by some hard-up lad or adult to the boutique. Or can it be that the master threw it in the WPB and the eager 'kolluwa' or the so-called 'podian' picked it up to supplement his meager savings? Whatever it be it reveals a story of weakness.

I would not have read it had it not been in glaring bold letters: a friend of mine in it. The poor fellow. It is ten years since. And he has had a moment of weakness and taken the plantation vehicle and come a little late. May be he had reprisals, but it is all on the open market. I'll suppress the

name though it is there. I'll throw the paper away after this life-saving and reputation-saving Inania column-article of this time:—

18.11: I heard the sound of a vehicle going in and out. I reported it to D. It left at 6.30 and came back at 8 p.m. Who took it?

On inquiry (written in another ink and by another hand): On inquiry I came to know it was Mr. X. I told him not to open the gate. .p.m.

21.12: After 21 days, Mr. X (same X as above) has torn up such and such a ledger page. He should not have done that.

Students of Tea secrets should not be let into wanton secrets of this sort, some might say. Others might like the revelations. Here's the last item on this one page in which a few plectains were wrapped and given me in a hill-country town:

3.2: "The cost of manufacture is on the high side for January, last month. According to estimates 460 labourers should have been used for manufacture of 32213 lbs. but according to the distribution.." (and here, the paper ceases its story, for I took only one paper in which he wrapped the plantains).

The sellers will probably take care to save their own reputations. But if it is another man involved, then anyone can come in and take a 'scoop'.

Why?

No need to introduce legislation, but I do not think confidential ledgers, log-books and the like should be sold as "waste paper."

Dignity of man.....

K A Z I — 20

Hanwella, Ratnapura & Wellawaya

By ANATORY BUKOBA

June 5,

On the other side of Hanwella, on the east, the high level and the low level roads from Colombo to Ratnapura join up. The town lies on the low level road, the shorter of the two. On the steps of a tea boutique I read Dr. Bryan de Kretser's letter in the Nation, perhaps the first of anything he has written, this one on his trip,

and that of his wife, to India. Those, inside, invited me in, two young men working there, and an even younger Tamil boy. The man in charge, young himself, was the younger brother of the owner. He did not strike up a conversation. The others spoke to me from time to time. They wanted me to sit down and said they would tell me when my bus arrived. The hoppers being made here, as I sat on, were substantial, unlike those made in the Wanni. There were also cakes of flour, yellow like the sorghum cakes I have eaten elsewhere.

At another boutique, the bread buns, the best way I can think of describing them, were thirty-five cents, not the fifty cents they are sold at all over the rest of Ceylon. The *anamalu* plantains were twenty-five cents, ten or fifteen cents cheaper than I have known that size sold anywhere else in the island. The manners of those in both boutiques were quiet.

The place I was going to was a large farm, constituted, as it was at present, only eight years, I gathered. I walked along with two girls, one an Anglican, the other a Buddhist, knowing no English. The Anglican told me, in English, of sericulture, all the details, all aspects of it as it affected those on this farm. A manifold operation, carried on, the various processes, in different places, miles apart. Most of what she told me I was incapable of taking in, the wealth of detail, the facts and the figures; but I do remember that a thousand five hundred yards of silk came out of a single cocoon, not much bigger, I would have thought, than my thumb. Sericulture, as it was practised here, was a highly modern operation, quite up-to-date in whatever machinery was used, and it was just one department of this large farm.

The demeanour of everybody here was what struck me most. I imagined, they all lived in some together in cottages. Those, I met, seemed glad to meet me and to talk to me, and I had arrived just after dusk, at the least propitious of times, or the time of the day. Each place has its own character, no two places are alike, but just taking into account the youth in this farm, I am reminded of what I wrote in my first Kazi on Mawanna.

Late on that night I was looking for a house, a bus journey away. I had still a distance to go, and I dropped in at a boutique for a meal. I mentioned the village, and a lad said he had many friends there. So I told him whom I was looking for. The name stamped him, and the *mudalali* asked me for the man's initials. Then at once he knew whom I wanted. As a few reading this may have something to learn, I had better explain. It is the old Sinhalese custom, and possibly Tamil one, too, of using one's own name as a surname, and the first letter of each of one's father's names as one's initials, so whom you know a man's initials, you can have a good guess as to his father, and know him through his father, whose name is probably better known to you than that of the man.

Then I came across the old story, from the mouth of a stranger: *Do not go along the road, you will be robbed, wait for a bus.* The road was very lonely, no houses, but it did not occur to the stranger that the robber might come off worse in an encounter. Anyway, I countered this by saying I was not worth robbing, and, as it turned out, I was glad I did not wait for a bus.

June 11,

Five years since I had seen the house, but all met me as if I had been there a day or two ago, and perhaps the welcome was the warmer for my being almost a stranger, unexpected; and on the eve of a wedding at a friend's house, or rather a relation of theirs, a wedding for which I did not stay. The father was away, the mother looked young, and the eldest son, a man now, had features that I thought could only be those of one who had a superlatively clean life; the second son was perhaps a scamp, if my memory from years before served me well, and the third son I would describe as a man of steel as regards his character if the eyes of a man shows forth his characters, there were others in the family but I would get lost if I went on.

The Ratnapura area is one of gems, and you do not have to dig for them; the first foot of top soil is enough, and there is pretty well every colour of gem. This reminds me that all Africa is much the private property of one or

two companies because of the diamonds found there. Possession of a diamond means nothing if you cannot trade with it, unless you want it for yourself as a pretty bauble monopoly of the trade means everything. I am going to use this Kazi on Ratnapura to throw my net wide, if I can do that in the space of the two pages left me.

To get your price for anything you have to control the sale. It would not do to put every diamond out on sale. As money is only worth what it can buy, diamonds sell best where the foreign exchange returns is more valuable, and that means Europe. When all countries in Africa were given independence, the deed had the effect of making the continent the private possession of two or three multi-national firms more than it was before, for the newly independent countries applied the old colonial immigration laws even more sternly. To keep the diamond trade a monopoly, other Europeans have to be kept out of Africa, those Europeans who may find the time to start poking their noses in diamond finds.

The Sahara looms in most men's minds as large as Everest. The cheapest and easiest route into Africa is up the Nile. Now that Sudan is no longer a bottle-neck with its stringent transit policy as seems likely, the reputation of General Amin in Uganda serves the same purpose, if the newspaper reports are to be believed. It is not so important what any man is, it is his image in the public eye that counts. A Catholic had confessed to me about two years ago, that he had thought he would have trouble getting some medals, religious ones, through the Customs, then he found that Ceylon was not what it was painted, and that we were indeed free and not communists as he had imagined.

The gem policy in Ceylon seems to me to serve government's greed for foreign exchange, if that and not Ceylonese' natural desire to have it. Our gems must in the long run be a rival to diamonds, and the multi-nationals that control diamonds must be as much against illicit foreign trade in gems as the government and even more so, to protect their own interest in diamonds. Gems sold to the Indians will not be half as much a threat to them as gems sold to Europeans.

The sacking of European planters almost let the bottom fall out of the tea trade, although it took some years. There is no need here to trace the various steps that led up to it. Here Ceylonization only served the multinationals, just as Africanization is serving these same firms in Africa. It is a very short sighted policy. Yet we go on hunting everywhere for foreign investment in this country, another short-sighted policy which can only whittle away our independence, in a way that men on their own never will, and by men here, I mean foreigners. The visa tax is another excellent way of helping the multinational firms, nothing could help them more, for it keeps out of this country the type of foreigner we could perhaps do with. We could do without a few of the old rich men, compared to these.

June 12,

On the night of April 4th 1971, Radio Ceylon said that two policemen had been shot from the back of a moving lorry on a road near Wellawaya, and I think it went on to say that one of them had been killed outright. When it simultaneously said that a curfew had been clamped down on five districts, I think we knew at once that the events foreboded in the press, by its news of caches of handmade bombs being found here and there, had begun. The following evening came news that a phenomenal number of police stations had been attacked. I think an afternoon curfew had already been imposed, and on Good-Friday we had that all day curfew.

Before the Ella-Wellawaya road had been quite finished, and I think it was in 1970, I made my way down the newly-made road from Ella, as far as the road had gone, and I went along a footpath a mile or two to where that road coming from wellawaya had reached. I had to travel about nine miles to a youth venture that had been started by some friends of mine. I have only just paid my second visit to that same place. On the first trip I was nearly killed on the way back. I think I stopped for a bath in a mountain stream. Then out of sheer idleness I stopped for ten minutes at another place. I had not set off more than a few minutes when there were some blasts and an avalanche of rock came rolling down the moun-

tain side right where I would have been if not for that second halt. I scrambled up that mountain side as quickly as I could to where the bull dozers were already at work, smashing more rock down the mountains and I was furious because a man with a flag had not been put on the path along which I had come. Then I was hailed by a man of authority who asked me to come up to his side. He said he had written to this local authority and about the biasing and insisted that he was under no obligation to put a man out with a flag. I said there had been several of us on that path earlier that morning. He drove me to where he stayed and gave me the finest meat sandwiches I have ever had, made by his wife. This was to make up for my being, what he described as a little agitated when he first saw me.

This time I made the journey by bus from Weellawaya. All the buildings at the farm seemed to have changed their appearance. It was a rushed visit as it was already late in the day. My particular friend was there this time. He had been absent on my first visit. He was fifty one when he first started this venture; he was fifty six now. He lived by himself. He had two married families around him. The single lads he had sent home one by one when he could no longer afford to support them. One married family was now self-supporting, a family from Jaffna; the others had to rely on occasional employment he gave the father. The family had five children; I had not asked about the others.

My friend lived in quite a substantial house, of wood, and a straw or grass roof, I think, *Illuk* it was. What was original about the house was that it was substantial and of wood, and that it had a most artistic, Robinson Crusoe type of entrance. My friend as far as I could gather was virtually a hermit. He had thought himself to cook, and somehow by virtue of his own vocation, managed. He had his books, and the inside of his house looked, in (retrospect) not unlike that of a carthusian cell. I did not want to impose myself on him or I would have stayed.

The valley between this place and Ella is very narrow, and provides agriculture for the two or three houses of people in the valley.

These houses had had to be evacuated in the road-making days. This time I travelled at night. In the dark there seemed to be boulders as big as buses fallen on the road at one place, on both sides, down the middle of which our bus mended its way like a man on foot.

IN THE JUNGLE

Encounter With A Rogue Elephant

By J. L. M. Obeysekera

Almost every villager at Kadikawe was in terror during Munneswaram season. It was during this season that the Elephants from Wilpattu sanctuary invaded the jungle villages in the Puttalam District. Kadikawe was one such village where I had a most thrilling experience. This being a true record of a series of similar events I wish to place it before the readers of the popular journal—TRIBUNE.

Kadikawe in the District of Puttalam had been a jungle village surrounded by thick forest, twenty years ago. Today it is a vast area of flourishing coconut plantations. Rich land owners from low country have settled down at Kadikawe and have started extensive cultivations. As a result no traces of forest clad lands are now seen except a few huge trees left here and there by the great destroyer of forests—Man. As a result of the clearings that took place in the area, the forest belt has now shifted itself into a distance of ten or twelve miles from village Kadikawe. Hence, the story of my adventure took place twenty years ago when I was teaching in a rural school in the village, Pallama, in the vicinity of Kadikawe.

Cecil Mahattaya was my friend and owned a few acres of jungle lands cleared for coconut plantations. They were crown land given over to middle class citizens for development. These few acres too lay within the village Kadikawe. Our hobby was to go on hunting expeditions to the jungles close by. These trips were often arranged on rainy days for the hunting bore fruit on such

days. Cicil Mahattaya provided us with guns and ammunition. He too gave us the best tracker Marshal Aiya who knew the forest as his own compound. Apart from the fact, he could sense the animals by scent and also could use the shot gun so dexterously that seldom he failed to get a kill if his gun ever made a bang. So we had no fear of the dangers that awaited us in these unknown impenetrable jungles.

It was on a new moon night we set out from Kadikawe village. The time was 8 p.m. We walked slowly along the banks of Deduruaya till we approached the very gates of Wilpattu Sanctuary. Only a few stars in the sombre horizon cast a dim and distant lustre in sky. Now and then the deep silence of the forest-clad locality was broken by an intermittent alarm call of an owl or a Kirala bird. A distant Hoo... of a growling bear and its mate was audible in the night breeze that blew from the distant Kalaoaya jungles. These solitary sounds came in the wind as if to warn us an approaching danger.

I whispered to Marshal for I heard the distant thud of heavy tumpheting. Marshall too had already sensed the same but pretended not to mind it too much. A few yards we had walked, when, to our utter dismay a running cow came towards us. I thought it was a frightened animal and it made a headlong rush to the tank-bed where we were already standing.

Seeing us, the cow suddenly changed its direction. Marshal the tracker got hold of my arm with a firm grip and I thought that some danger was lurking behind. We stood still as if we were the three Men on the bell Tower in Flanor Isle. We stood not long. Soon a crash of a tree in front, put us into a great panic. I flashed my torch light in the direction where the crash seemed to come. To my utter horror there stood a few yards ahead of us the huge dome of a head of the notorious Rogue Elephant of Kadikawe. It was the ferocious rogue nicknamed 'Kabaraya' for it had several gun-shot injuries on its flanks. The bull shepherd triumphed as if the fury of the hell fire broke out upon it. I felt that I was loosing ground under my feet and knew nothing.....

When I regained consciousness, I found that I was lying in a village-boutique close by. Marshal was with me giving me sort of first aid by fanning my face with a towel. My forehead was wet and I felt the scent of eau-de-cologne applied on a handkerchief. After a few hours from my death-like sleep (swoon), to which I had been instantly subject to, I learned from Marshal that I had a narrow escape of grim death from the Rogue Elephant of Kadikawe. I still remember the event as if it happened yesterday.

TREES

Value of Afforestation in Drought-prone Areas

Hyderabad, Aug. 1.

Mr. B. P. Maurya, Union Minister of State for Agriculture, said here to-day that afforestation and soil conservation programmes had a direct link in ushering in the well-being of the people in drought-prone areas, as such schemes helped to prevent failure of monsoons and check silting in reservoirs. He was inaugurating the first all-India workshop for training Collectors and officers in charge of drought-prone area programmes in various States. The 10-day workshop is being held at the National Institute of Community Development.

Mr. Maurya said the aim was to have 33 per cent of the total land area covered by forests, as against 20 to 23 per cent now. The Wildlife Council of India had urged that forestry be brought in the Concurrent List so that more emphasis would be laid on afforestation. Drought-affected areas were among the most backward. Covering 19 per cent of the total area and accounting for 12 per cent of the population, they represented a major factor contributing to regional imbalances in the country.

Judged by any standard, Mr. Maurya said, these areas constituted a major source of instability in the national economy. They re-

mained a continuing source of strain on financial resources. Successive finance commissions had pointed out that at the all-India level, the expenditure on drought relief had been rising steeply. In fact during recent years this expenditure had assumed staggering proportions. For instance, in Rajasthan during 1969-70 and 1970-71, the Plan outlay of the State was less than Rs. 100 crores, whereas the total drought relief expenditure in those two years was Rs. 105 crores.

In this context, the need and urgency for an integrated development of drought-prone areas were considered, and that was also the background for starting a rural works programme in 1970-71 in areas primarily falling within 54 districts along with some contiguous areas of another 18 districts. In order to make a dent in the problem and to ensure a faster drought-mitigating multi-dimensional development of these areas, it was necessary to reorient the programme on the basis of an area development approach. In recognition of this reorientation the programme was re-designated as the drought prone areas programme at the time of the mid-term appraisal of the Fourth Plan.

The strategy for the drought prone areas in the Fifth Plan, the Union Minister said, was towards integrated development of the entire district, by development and management of irrigation resources, soil and moisture conservation and afforestation. The programme also envisaged changing of the agronomic practices, livestock development and development of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labour. Earlier Mr. Mohammad Zaheer, Dean of the National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad, welcomed the gathering. Dr. Abdul Mueed, Principal of the Academy of Rural Development at Comilla in Bangladesh is attending the workshop.

FOR NEWS
BEHIND THE NEWS

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LSSP View Of Current History

IS IT NOT TRUE that as late as on August 29, 1975, LSSP's *The Nation* spoke with assurance that the troubles within the UF would be patched up with a compromise solution? That by this time other political observers who have their ears to the ground were more or less certain that the parting of the ways had come and that the die was already cast and that the announcements about "changes" would be made at the SLFP Working Committee meeting on Monday September 1? That these notes are being written on August 31? That we have the PM's statement that a major decision would be made soon? That whatever the outcome on September 1 and thereafter it is essential to have on record in the columns of *Tribune* just what the LSSP had felt and said at this crucial time? That in our issue last week we had set out what *The Nation* had written in its issues of August 15 and August 22? That this is what it said in its latest issue of August 29 on the front page under the heading U.F. CRISIS CONTINUES... IS CLASH OF INTERESTS BASIC?

The crisis within the United Front continued to drag out this week with no visible solution. On Monday evening Messrs. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, and T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, returned from Moscow. They denied that they had been asked by anybody to cut short their visits to the Soviet Union and stated that they had completed their programmes as scheduled. They reported to the Prime Minister on Tuesday morning and then set to work to resolve, if possible, the crisis in the Front. Backed by a fresh appeal from the Communist Party for a meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the United Front to discuss the problems that had arisen between two of its members, a meeting of representatives of the three parties met at "Temple Trees" on Tuesday afternoon. On the Sunday preceding the arrival of the two SLFP

Ministers from Moscow, a group of six SLFP MP's had a long interview with the Prime Minister, at which they explained their anxiety about the situation that was developing. On the same day, Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe, Coordinating Secretary to the Prime Minister, addressing a meeting of SLFP Women's Organisations at Attanagalle, made an appeal to the parties of the United Front to settle their differences through friendly discussion, without permitting reactionaries to raise their heads once more. She said that the very decision of the Government to nationalise the sterling company estates had agitated the capitalist class and in this situation the people had to be extremely vigilant. According to available reports, the three-party meeting at "Temple Trees" took place in a cordial atmosphere, but it did not produce any immediate results. The problem of the Finance Ministry, to which we referred last week, continued to dominate the situation above all other problems. It appeared that one side wished to effect a change in this Ministry somehow while the other side was just as desirous of preventing such a change. Although much mediation was put into attempts to break this deadlock even subsequently, it seems correct to say that no formula has been produced to enable this.

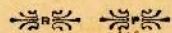
It would appear on the surface therefore, that the United Front and its Government are threatened by what is primarily a dispute concerning personalities or a clash of personalities. But this is the form in which most political disputes pose themselves. Whatever be the problems of incompatible temperaments, conflicts revolve around the clash of interests. The present conflict in the United Front would be capable of resolution through a single meeting between the personalities concerned, were there no clash of basic interests. What has to be determined is whether there is such a clash of the basic interests of the parties concerned in the United Front.....

IS IT NOT SIGNIFICANT that the LSSP and *The Nation* should place such high hopes on Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe's capacity to turn the scales in order to help the LSSP to retain the portfolio of Finance? That *The Nation* also seemed to derive comfort that

six SLFP backbenchers—the Janavegaya group—had interviewed the PM on this subject? (That *The Nation* either does not seem to know or has chosen to ignore what is widely known regarding what the PM told this group of SLFP MPs?) That *The Nation* was not satisfied with its frontpage pcp story alone? That on the last page (of the four page paper) in its *Notes & Comments* it had a high falutin peroration entitled DEFEND THE UNITED FRONT? That it was essentially a LSSP sermon on post-1956 history? That the text began (again!) with Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe?

In these dark and critical times one ray of brightness is without doubt the report of Mrs. Sunethra Rupasinghe's speech at Attanagalla. What she said on that occasion so closely parallels what we ourselves said in these columns last week that we are encouraged to dwell on the matter at further length. Certainly her speech, considering her official as well her personal situation, was greatly encouraging to all those who stand steadfastly by the unity of the progressive forces in the country. With the strident and shameless vituperation against the Left emanating from the *Times* Group and the *Ada* and their making and unmaking of Cabinets during the last week, it looked to the world at large as if there was not one single voice raised in defence of a front that was born of historical necessity and had lasted, in and out of power, for nearly eleven years. Mrs. Rupasinghe who is herself one of the principal sufferers from an assassin's bullet in 1959 called attention to the tragic death of her father, Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, in political circumstances which bear a striking resemblance to what obtains today....

That the rest of the lengthy piece was an indignant LSSP view of the history of that period? That discerning progressives and dialectical (not mechanical) Marxists will not accept as realistic or correct the highly over-simplified and LSSP-oriented history of the post-1956 period? That such sermons and perorations make agreements, settlements and compromises more difficult?





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A Snake Stone

A stone that sticks to the wound caused by a snake bite and falls off when the patient is out of danger may sound very much like a fairy tale. But it is true. Here are a few facts.

Deep in the wild of Brazil a Jesuit Missionary came across remnants of a once famous Red Indian Tribe. All the years he worked among them, he noticed that among thousands of patients no one was ever brought to him to be treated for snake-bite. Yet, he knew the country well and he knew people were actually stung by snakes. One day, it transpired that the old village doctor had an infallible remedy for such snake-bites. Was it just sorcery or magic? Did he use any charm or chant any mantram? No, he only applied a small black stone to the wound, the stone stuck to the wound and fell off only after the patient was cured. Try as he may the missionary could not obtain the secret from the Red Indian. Yes, he had been good to them, he had been like a father to the tribe. But that was a secret handed down from his forefathers and that secret he meant to keep for his family. On his deathbed, however, the old snake bite specialist sent for the Missionary and revealed the secret to him. Diffidently at first, then with greater confidence, the missionary made large use of the wonderful stone. The results were quite amazing. The snake-stone of the old Red Indian Chief worked wonders. The missionary sent samples of it to his brethren working throughout South America and in far away Central Africa. From everywhere came news of the wonderful cures effected. But the formula of the wonder stone remained a dead secret. Hundreds had used it, thousands had been cured by it, yet, no one knew the secret but the old missionary from South America. How is it then we are in possession of the secret? Yes, strange though it might appear, we keep the secret now. It is a long cry from Brazil to Ceylon but the long and short of it is that the dying missionary confided the secret to two nieces and these, when unable to make any use of it entrusted it to a missionary leaving for Ceylon who in his turn left it to us.

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